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# Nature of the Political Participation of the Oraon Community of Barind in Bangladesh

Khan, Md. Mahfil

University of Rajshahi

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# **Nature of the Political Participation of the Oraon Community of Barind in Bangladesh**



## **Ph.D Dissertation**

### **Researcher**

**Md. Mahfil Khan**  
Session: 2009-2010

### **Supervisor**

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Rajshahi University, Rajshahi-6205

**Institute of Bangladesh Studies  
University of Rajshahi  
Rajshahi, Bangladesh**

**September 2012**

# Nature of the Political Participation of the Oraon Community of Barind in Bangladesh



**Ph.D Dissertation**

**Researcher**

**Md. Mahfil Khan**

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Institute of Bangladesh Studies (IBS), Rajshahi University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

*Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D)*

*In*

*Political Science*

**Institute of Bangladesh Studies  
University of Rajshahi  
Rajshahi, Bangladesh**

**September 2012**

*Dedicated*  
*To*  
*My parents*  
*Especially*  
*To*  
*The sacred*  
*Memory of my beloved mother*  
*Hazera Khatun*  
*Who passed away when I was twenty four*  
*And*  
*My beloved wife Rozina Ahmed*  
*Who is my spirit for research*

ড. মো. রুহুল আমিন  
অধ্যাপক  
রাষ্ট্রবিজ্ঞান বিভাগ  
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## Certificate

I have the pleasure to certify that the dissertation entitled "Nature of the Political Participation of the Oraon Community of Barind in Bangladesh." is an original work done by Md. Mahfil Khan. He has completed the research work under my direct supervision. So far as I know, the dissertation has not been previously submitted to any university/ institute for any kind of degree or diploma.

I also certify that I have gone through the dissertation and found it satisfactory for submission to the Institute of Bangladesh Studies (IBS), Rajshahi University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science.

 17.09.2012

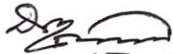
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## Declaration

I do hereby declare that the dissertation entitled "Nature of the Political Participation of the Oraon Community of Barind in Bangladesh." submitted for the Ph.D. degree to the Institute of Bangladesh Studies (IBS), Rajshahi University is an original research work carried out by me under the direct supervision and guidance of my learned supervisor Dr. Md. Ruhul Amin, Professor of Political Science, Rajshahi University, Rajshahi. No proof of the dissertation in any form has been submitted to any university/ institute for the award of any degree or diploma. This research is a fresh one and has not been contributed by anybody else. The sources incorporated in the thesis have been duly acknowledged and cited for clarity.

  
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## Abstract

Political participation is an important aspect in the arena of political science. It ensures productive and durable changes and may also be conceived as an undeniable human right in the context of equality. The world is becoming enriched with different resources but human right is on the brink of danger. So, people's participation of all aspects is an imperative to recover the human rights. Most of the Bangladeshi is ethno linguistically homogeneous. Nevertheless, there is a distance among the more advanced or the civilized people and the tribal people though all are the citizens of Bangladesh whose different basic rights are ensured by the constitution of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh. There are 45 tribal communities in Bangladesh. Among them, the Oraon is one of the remarkable communities. Their number is more than one lakh and they live in the 16 districts of the north Bengal. So, as the citizen of Bangladesh, to know their nature of political participation is an imperative.

The purpose of the study is to investigate the 'Nature of the political participation of the Oraon community of Barind in Bangladesh.' Almost all of the Oraon community people live in the villages with other communities including the Bangalies. As compared with others, they are a little bit indifferent on political participation and they do not realize the importance of their individual vote. Therefore, to know their political participation is the demand of the present era. This thesis describes different aspects related with their political participation; nature of their leadership, participation in local politics, participation in national politics, pattern of their political party choosing and finally whether there any political discrimination is prevailing as compared with others of the country.

The study is based on data of two Oraon inhabited villages of Brind in Bangladesh based on Ninth national parliamentary election of 2008 and union council election of 2011. Against this background, the research study seeks to provide a wide description of how the political participation of the Oraon community people in the local as well as the national politics is. To investigate these questions, I employ both qualitative and quantitative research within a certain boundary of the Oraon community.

The average literacy rate of the Oraon in Rajshahi district is only 5.6%. Their social status, economic condition as well as annual income is also very negligible. They have a little bit communication as well as the competition with the more advanced people. Overall, they are backward in all aspects as compared with other communities of the country. However, no remarkable development steps for their rapid upliftment have been taken on behalf of the state or GOs and NGOs.

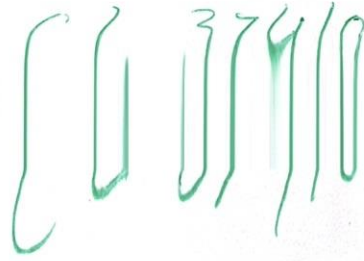
The study reveals that five tiers oriented leadership of the Oraon community is present in Barind. They elect their leaders in democratic way and most of them obey their leaders. Their leadership is conducive for the general Oraon people for procuring their different rights. It is proved that there is an indirect influence of these leaders upon them in local or the national election. It is remarkable that their political participation is better than that of other communities. The political participation of the Oraon male in local election is 96.15% and in the national election is 99.36%. On the other hand, the political participation of the Oraon women in local election is 97.44% and in national election is 98.72%. It is noteworthy that the political participation of the Oraon women is better than that of the Oraon male. All of them obey the election behavior. None of them violates the election law. It is also good sign that in spite of having different types of the influences upon them, approximately 31% Oraon community people change their political party if their chosen political party does not work well for them as well as the nation. At the same time, 47% of them also say that changing political party repeatedly creates the hindrances on the way to the political stability of the country. 40% Oraon people in local and 39% in national politics had no freedom of political activities that is the subject of thinking earlier. Besides; hindrances on the participation in procession and meeting, shortage of ability to vote the chosen candidate, lack of evaluation based on their worthiness in the political party, shortage of the political communication with the local chairman and MP, negation upon the importance of their different opinions, lack of having sitting capacity in a row like other of the political party, victims of different oppression for choosing their own political party, lack of participation in the decision taking process of the government development, shortage of position in local political committees, shortage of empowerment, shortage of free movement and so on are some of the remarkable political discriminations upon them.

The state should take the immediate initiatives to remove the above mentioned short comings of the Oraon community. They have also suggested that the political party should culture the democracy, mitigate the absolute power of the party head, make leadership from the root level, elect or select party head for a certain period of time, need at best 4/5 political parties in the country, include Adibasi in the management and leadership of the political party, perform regular worker conference and party's internal election.

If the state, political party, GOs and NGOs, different agencies of home and abroad, public-spirited persons of the country come forward to co-operate them on their different backward aspects, their entire betterment may be possible that make them educated and economically well to do. As a result, their nature of political participation both in local and national level will be more effective that may bring the entire and comprehensive political development and the nation may get freedom from the political chaotic situation and instability removing all sorts of the unconventional political participation.







# **Nature of the Political Participation of the Oraon Community of Barind in Bangladesh**



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**Researcher**

**Md. Mahfil Khan**  
Session: 2009-2010

**Institute of Bangladesh Studies  
University of Rajshahi  
Rajshahi, Bangladesh**

September 2012

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Md. Mahfil Khan  
Ph.D Researcher

## Glossary

Agua	:	Communicator or Mssenger
Bangladesh Oraon Parhha / Raajee Parhha:		Digari National Council
Baigas	:	Male President
Baiga	:	Female President
Barind	:	Barind is derived from the Sonskrit word 'Brind' that means high land in English.
Be-Lar (Coordinator) Council	:	National Executive Council
Be-Las	:	Male President or Female President in national level
Bhaiyari Parhha	:	Digari District Council
Cabinet Member	:	The member of the organizational tiers of the Oraon community
Chilpi/ Fudna	:	The source of power i.e. these are the symbol of Darmesh, Pachoa A-Lar, and Panch.
Clan	:	A totemic group among the Oraon
Danda Katta/Farir of the Bheloa:		The symbol of the gratefulness
Darmesh, Pachoa A-Lar, and Panch:		The name of their supreme God
Dharti Urbas	:	International or Foreign Affairs Secretary in national level
Digari	:	The name of Oraon organization
Dudh Bhaiya or Digari Parhha	:	Upazila Digari Raja Council/ Digari Upazila Council
Illaqadars	:	Those who had been granted land by the Maharaja of Chhotanagpur for the services they rendered
Jurir	:	General Male or Femal Member
Kakragari	:	One kind of vehicle through which the rustic people transport their local goods
Karhsa Bhandra	:	The Symbol of the constitution of organizational tiers
Lahanti Akhrha	:	It is an organization of the Oraon. Each of the housewives credit the morsel rice from their daily rice for cooking and when it becomes a handsome amount, it is kept in this organization

	through an account that is run by the Ashrai, Gogram Brance, Godagari, Rajshahi.
Lar Edu	: Education, Culture, Research, and Publication Secretary
Lathial	: It means the Chowkidar
Mandal/Maral/Mahato/Headaman:	These are the title of Chief of the society
Nasimon	: One kind of vehicle through which the rustic people move from place to place
<b>Padda Panch</b>	: <b>Digari Village Council</b>
Parechar Urbas	: Publicity Secretary
Parhha	: A confederation of several villages
Parhha Panch	: Digari Union Council
Prodhan	: Next to the position of the headman of the society
Rickshaw	: One kind of vehicle that contains three wheels i.e. try-cycle through which the masses move locally from one place to another place.
Sangi Baigas	: Male President
Sangi Baiga	: Assistant Female President
Sangi Be-Las	: Assistant Male President or Female President in national level
Sangi Tisgu Urbas	: Assistant General Secretary
Tempo	: It is one kind of vehicle too through which the rustic people move from place to place
Tiba Kha-Pu	: Tressurer
Tisgu Urbas	: General Secretary
Van	: One kind of vehicle that contains three wheels through which the local goods are transported from one place to another place

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABIK	—	Adivasi Bikas Kendra
AC	—	Assistant Comissioner
AD	—	Another Development
AFF	—	American Freedom Fight
ASP	—	Ashrai Sathi Prokolpa
AUB	—	Adibashi Unnyan Board
BAL	—	Bangladesh Awamiligue
BC	—	Before Christ
ASA	—	Association of Social Advancement
ASEDO	—	Association for Social Economic Development Organization
ASP	—	Ashrai Sathi Prokolpa
BBMUP	—	Barendra Bahoo Mukhi Unnayan Prokolpa
BNP	—	Bangladesh Nationalist Party
BORDA	—	Bangladesh Oraon Research and Development Association
BRAC	—	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CARE	—	Cooperation of American Relief Everywhere
CEO	—	Chief Executive Officer
CS	—	Civil Society
ESS	—	Encyclopedia of Social Science
FGD	—	Focus Group Discussion
FR	—	Frence Revolution
GOs	—	Government Organizations
HSC	—	Higher Secondary Certificate
ICCPR	—	International Convent on Civil and Political Rights
IID	—	International Indegineous Decade
ILO	—	International Labour Organization
IYY	—	International Indegineous Year
IR	—	Industrial Revolution
IT	—	Information Technology
LDCs	—	Least Developed Countries
LE	—	Local Election
LP	—	Local Politics
MDG	—	Millennium Development Goal

MP	—	Member of Parliament
NAP	—	National Adibashi Parishad
NE	—	National Election
NGO	—	Non Government Organization
NP	—	National Politics
OSOST	—	Oraon Social Organization Study Team
PGD	—	Post Graduate Degree
RDA	—	Rajshahi Development Authority
SES	—	Socio-Economic Status
SSC	—	Secondary School Certificate
TNO	—	Thana Nirbahi Officer
TSP	—	Third System Project
UCE	—	Union Council Election
UDHR	—	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNO	—	United Nations Organization
UP	—	Union Parishad
VGD	—	Vulnerable Group Development
VGF	—	Vulnerable Group Fund
WCEFA	—	World Conference on Education For All
WED	—	World English Dictionary
WV	—	World Vision

# Map of Bangladesh





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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Prelude

The term 'participation' is treated differently that can play a significant role in any arena of social activities including economic, political, managerial, religious, cultural or familial. People's participation ensures productive and durable changes. Participation may also be conceived of as human right in the context of equality and group rights ensure equal and full participation of a designated group of a society in any activity. In democracy, every citizen does not contribute directly to the governing of the state. The people participating in election elect the representatives who make decisions on behalf of them. For this reason, political participation is very significant. There are many forms of political participation in democratic system; voting, demonstrating, writing to the representatives, joining a pressure group etc. Generally political participation means any voluntary activity of the person for influencing the governmental decision making. The basic subject matter of the political participation is the political activity within a political party or an organization which regards itself as a pressure group.

In accordance with the census of 2001, the total population of Bangladesh is 123851120. Among them, urban population is 23.1% and rural population is 76.9%.<sup>1</sup> As the ethnic group, the Bengali are 98% and including its tribal people and non Bengali Muslims are 2% of the total population according to Bangladesh statistics of 1998.<sup>2</sup> 77% of the total populations live in the villages.<sup>3</sup> About 30 lacks tribal people of approximately 45 tribes live in this country with this massive rural people. There are two types of tribal people in Bangladesh; the plain land's tribal people<sup>4</sup> and the hill tract's tribal people<sup>5</sup>. About 33 tribes who live in the plain land are called plain land's tribal people and the rest of 12 tribes who live in the hill tract are called hill tract's tribal people. The plain land tribal people live in 16 districts of north Bengal.

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<sup>1</sup> *Population Census 2001* (National Report, Provisional), Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Planning Division, Ministry of Planning.

<sup>2</sup> [www.answers.com/topic/bangladesh](http://www.answers.com/topic/bangladesh), Accessed on July 24, 2010.

<sup>3</sup> *Statistical Year Book of Bangladesh* (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 20<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2000), p. xxiii.

<sup>4</sup> The plain land's tribal people of northwestern belt are the Santal, the Oraon, the Mahato, the Mahali, the Mundari, the Paharia, the Pahan, the Sing, the Rajoar, the Lohar, the Turi, the Murari, and Koar etc. Source: Mohammad Abdul Jalil, *Uttar Banger Adivasi Lokojibon O Lokosahitya: Oraon* (Dhaka: Bishya Sahitya Bhoban, 2001), p. 41.

<sup>5</sup> The hill tracts tribal people especially of Chitgong are the Chakma, the Tanchonga, the Mog or Marma, the Kuki, the Lusai, the Murong, the Tipra, the Senduj, the Pankho, the Bonojogi and the Khumi. Source: Abdus Sattar, *Auronya Jonopode* (Dhaka: Nowroje Sahitya Sambhar, 2007), Acknowledgement page.

The Oraon are the plain land tribal people and the number of the Oraon in Bangladesh is approximately one lakh and fifteen thousand. In accordance with the census of 1991, the number of their population was shown only 11,296. But according to their claim, their actual population is more than one lakh.<sup>6</sup> As an upazila, the number of the Oraon in Godagari, Rajshahi is more than any other Oraon inhabited upazila in Bangladesh. There, the number of the Oraon people is 6638.<sup>7</sup> The tribes in Rajshahi district are 17. Among them the Santal, the Oraon, the Mahali, the Mundari, Paharhia and the Mahato are remarkable. The number of the population of Rajshahi District is 11, 90914 and among them, the number of the tribal people is 35578 which is 2.99% of the total population.<sup>8</sup> These tribal groups are playing a significant role for the national development and the advancement of the country. The Oraon community of this country is not out of them. They along with the Bangalies actively participated in the different local and national rebellions and upsurges from the struggle against the British to the liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971.<sup>9</sup> So it is crying need to know the nature of the political participation of the Oraon community and to comprehend the nature of their political activities from the perspective of the national interest.

## 1.2 Identity of the term 'Barind'

The archeologists opine that the entire Bangladesh is a Delta. In the pre-historian era, the entire belt was the bottomland of the ocean. In the time immemorial, this Delta named the Vangabhumi including the Himalaya slowly as well as gradually grew upward from the downward of the ocean and after that, the human civilization<sup>10</sup> was developed. The Himalaya belts and its bottom lands at the very beginning grew upward from the downward of the ocean and the Northern part of Bangladesh was one of them. After that, the Southeast part of Bangladesh and at the extreme last,

<sup>6</sup> Mazharul Islam Taru, "Oraon", *Adibasi Jono Gosthi* (the indigenous people), ed. by Mesba Kamal, Zahidull Islam, Sugata Chakma (Bangladesh Asiatic Society, 2007), p. 222.

<sup>7</sup> Mazharul Islam Taru, *Bangladesher Adibasi Sangskriti* (The Culture of the Indigenous People in Bangladesh) (Dhaka: Katha Prokash, 2008), p. 92.

<sup>8</sup> Mohammad Abdul Jalil, *Bangladesher Santal: Somaj o Sangakriti* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 2003), p. 91.

<sup>9</sup> Mesbah Kamal, Ishan Chochroborti, and Jobaida Nasrin, *Nijbhume Parabasi: Uttarbanger Adibasir Prantikata Discourse* (Alien in Own Land: A Discourse on Marginalization of Indigenous People in North Bengal) (Dhaka: Dibyaprakash, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition 2006), p. 27.

<sup>10</sup> It is very difficult to say from when the human civilization was inaugurated in Barind tract. The historians have found out a symptom of a developed civilization of approximately 1500 years back of the birth of Jesus Christ from the 'Mound' (Dhibi) of the king of Pandua which was situated on the southern bank of the river of Ajoy in the district of Bordhoman of West Bengal. It is noteworthy that in that time the Eastern India was aryanized. About most of the historians opine that this aryanization was spread out all over the Bengal including the Barind tract. The evidence of human civilization was got in the extreme last segment of the Vedic era or its immediate later when the Aryan colony or the civilization was spread out. The elaborate information as to it is available in the Bramhonnya literature like Puran, Mohavarat and so on. Source: Soiod Md. Mozaharul Islam, "Barendra Auncholer Lokosongit": *Alkap*, An Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation (Rajshahi University: Folklore Department, 2000), p. 9.

the low lands of the Southern part of Bangladesh grew up from the ocean bed. In accordance with this information, the extreme high and ancient land of Bangladesh is the 'Barind' which is proved by the history.<sup>11</sup> Barind is the synonym of Barindah, Varendra and Varendri, which is proved by the epigraphic and the literary records. Epigraphic sources have been got through the inscription of 967 A.D. in which a Brahmana immigrant has been described as Gauda Cudamant and Varendra dyotkarina, in the Telchar Grant of Gayada Tunga Deva, in the Silimpur Stone Inscription (in the Bogra district) of Prahasa and the Kamault Copper Plate of Vaidyadeva, king of Kamrupa, in the Tarpandighi (in the Dinajpur district) and Madhainagar (in the Pabna district), Copper Plate Grants of Laskmana Sena and in the Deopara (in the Rajshahi district) inscription and the literary sources have been got through Sandhaya Kara Nandi of the 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D. who mentioned Varendri as the Janakabho or the father land of the Polas, Minhaj- E- Siraj who came to Lakhnawati in about 1243 A. D. called the eastern wing of the Ganges as the Barind or Barindah, Lama Tartanatha of the 16<sup>th</sup> century A.D. mentioned that the Varendra was subjugated by Deva Pala in 850 A.D.<sup>12</sup> Besides, the term 'Varendra' or 'Varendri' has been used in the Kulajt and the Sangskrit literatures and even in Tabaqat-i-Nasiri.<sup>13</sup> The geologists anticipate that the land of Barind was formed approximately 25000 years ago.<sup>14</sup> So far as the knowledge goes the ancient Bengal was divided into different parts named the Pundra, the Gauda, the Rarho, the Sombho, the Bozro (Bromho), the Tamrolipi, the Samothot, the Horikel, the Bongo and so on and each of these parts was the separate kingdom.<sup>15</sup> Among these, the Pundra with its crescendo turned into the Pundrabardhana in the fifth and sixth centuries and also turned into a remarkable administrative department named Bhukti of the empire of Gupto. This Pondrobordhon is also the synonym of the Barind.<sup>16</sup> It is one of the traditional names among the ancient habitations of Bangladesh. Its relationship with the history of ancient Bengal is very close. The name of Barind which was mentioned as the 'Father land' of the Pal kings in the epic of 'Ramcharitam' by Sandhaya Kara Nandi and the name of Barind was also seen from the 9th or 10th century.<sup>17</sup> In accordance with the research and the consideration of the history, Rajshahi, Chapainababgonj, Noagaon, Natore, Bogra, Rangpur, Dinajpur, and a small segment of Murshidabad and Maldoho districts of West Bengal, the belt consist of Drjiling and KuzBihar are treated as the 'Barind tract'.<sup>18</sup> In accordance with

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, Pp. 8-9.

<sup>12</sup> A.K.M. Yaqub Ali, *Aspect of Society and Culture of the Varendra, 1200-1576 A.D* (Rajshahi: Shalimar, 1998), Pp. 39-40.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Md. Abdul Karim, "Barendrer Koiborto Bidroho o Akti Bismrito Audhaya", *Bangladesh Asiatic Society Patrika*, 27<sup>th</sup> Volume (Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 2009), p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, Pp. 1-2.

<sup>17</sup> A K M Yaqub Ali, *Varendra Anchaley Musslim Itihas-Oitijho* (Muslim History and Heritage of Varendra) (Dhaka: Somoy Prakashan, 2002), p. 22.

<sup>18</sup> Soiod Md. Mozaharul Islam, *op.cit.*, p. 9.

Sandhaya Kara Nandi, the royal poet of 12<sup>th</sup> century stated the riverian belts of Ganges in West (Mahanonda) and the Korotoa in East as the 'Varendri' (Boshudhashiro) and Pandronagore (Varendro Mondal Churamoni).<sup>19</sup> He also stated that the greater Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Bogra, and even may be Pabna (Padumba) are included in Barind and praised that Varendri was the foremost place of the earth and Paundravardhana was its crest-jewel.<sup>20</sup> It is assumed that Varendra formed a component unit of the Gauda or Lakhnawati kingdom.<sup>21</sup> Later on, Minhaj-i-Shiraj, the great historian uttered this Barin / Barind against the terms 'Varendro' or 'Varendri'. 'Barin' is the Persian word which means dryness. In the true sense, the Northwestern part of Rajshahi is dry and due to the consecutive dryness, this belt is offering the alarm of desertification. The word 'Barin' is very popular and familiar to the inhabitants of Barind.<sup>22</sup> The term 'Barin / Barind' was found in the Ramayona of Krittibas, the renowned poet of fifteenth century. On the other hand, Mr. Raverty who is the translator and the annotator of the 'Tabakat-i-Nasiri' opine that Barind is derived from the Sanskrit word 'Brind' that means high land in English.<sup>23</sup> The land of Barind is higher and drier than any other lands of Bangladesh. In the meantime, the support of this meaning was got in the currently invented Arabic Shilalipi during the reign of Sultan Nasir Uddin Mahmud Shah (1442-1459) in the village Navagram of Tarash Upazila in Pabna.<sup>24</sup> The exact territorial jurisdiction of the Barind is very difficult to determine.<sup>25</sup> So far the knowledge goes; the mother land of the Bangla Language and the Bangla Literature is this Barin / Barind. Kanhupa, Shobaripa, Sorhupa, Luipa and so on, the writers of the Charjapada which is the ancient sample of the Bangla Language were the inhabitants of this Barind land.<sup>26</sup> The terms 'Barind, Varendra' and 'Varendri' are found in different sources and at the same time, it is difficult to say which of these terms emerged first and which of these came last. As to this, according to B.C. Sen, the term 'Varendri' was found from the epigraphically sources and the term of Varendra seems to have been later innovation, used mainly in the genealogical works, according to A.K. Maltra, the terms 'Barind, Barinda and Varendra' are the corrupted form of Varendri and according to N.N. Vasu, Barind was the earlier form which was later on transformed into its pure Sanskritized form of Varendri or Varendra and he added that over all parts of Rajshahi district, the old alluvial high land of late rite formation is called Barind which was Sanskritized by the Sena period and got the circulation.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>20</sup> Md. Abdul Karim, *op.cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> A.K.M. Yaqub Ali, *Aspect of Society and Culture of the Varendra*, p. 39.

<sup>22</sup> A K M Yaqub Ali, *op.cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>26</sup> Md. Abdul Karim, *op.cit.*, Pp. 2-3.

<sup>27</sup> A.K.M. Yaqub Ali, *op.cit.*, Pp. 39-40.

### 1.3 Identity of the Oraon Community

The Oraon is one of the major plain land tribal communities in Bangladesh. There is no other name to identify them. The meaning of the term *Oraon* is yet unknown and unclear.<sup>28</sup> The Oraon are spelled differently as the Aurang, the Oran, the Oram, the O rao, the Uraon, the Urao and the Urang. There are contradictory opinions among the scholars of anthropology about the identity of the Oraon community. Generally the origin of the Oraon community is relatively obscure but it is clear that in past, their livelihood in the past clustered in and around the forests. At times, for food deficits, they used to get engaged in farming.<sup>29</sup> Anthropologically they are Austric and according to linguistic doctrine, they are Dravidian. Modern anthropologists opine that the Oraon, the Malpahari and the Santal are Proto-Australoid category. But their physical structure, dark brown complexion and semi curly black hair proved that they are Dravidian category.<sup>30</sup> The Oraon are the second largest tribal group of Dravidian category in India numbering 1,133,000 in accordance with the census of 1961.<sup>31</sup> In Bangladesh, they are also the second largest tribal community of plain land. They call themselves Kurukh (Ploughman) in accordance with one of the name of their mythical hero-king Karakh.<sup>32</sup> The name of their language is also Kurukh which is a language of Dravidian group. Some bodies say that there is no Alphabet of their language and their literature is cultured verbally. They also think that their Alphabet has been lost with the pressure of the historic cruelty.<sup>33</sup> But the researcher has found the book of the Alphabet of their language.<sup>34</sup> Kurukh belts of Barind in Bangladesh are Thakurgaon, Dinajpur, western part of Noagaon district and special part of Rangpur district.<sup>35</sup> Some of them are also called Sadri.<sup>36</sup> The name of their language is also Sadri which is included in the Indo-Irani language group, is comparatively simple to utter.<sup>37</sup> Sadri belts are a special segment of Rangpur district, Gaibanda,

<sup>28</sup> Abul Barkat *et al.*, *Life and Land of Adibashis: Land Disposition and Alienation of Adibashis in the Plain Districts of Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Pathak Shamabesh Book, 2008), p. 165.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>30</sup> Mazharul Islam Taru, *op.cit.*, p. 93.

<sup>31</sup> Clarence Maloney, "Tribes of Bangladesh and Synthesis of Bangladeshi Culture", *Tribal Culture in Bangladesh*, ed. by Mahmud Shah Qureshi, IBS Seminar Volume (Rajshahi: IBS, University of Rajshahi, 1984), p. 19.

<sup>32</sup> K.N. Sahay, "Oraon", *Encyclopedic Profile of Indian Tribes*, ed. by Sachhidananda R.R. Prasad, Vol. iii (L-P) (New Delhi: Discover Publishing House, 1996), p. 771.

<sup>33</sup> Dr. Mazharul Islam Taru, "Oraon Somprodaer Shikha o Songskriti", *Sthanio Itihas*, 1<sup>st</sup> Volume (Rajshahi Heritage: Archives of Bangladesh History Trust, 2008), p. 62.

<sup>34</sup> Soinda, Narayan Oraon, KAILGA: *Tolodong Siko Mne Kurukh Probeshika*, (Ranchi: Sattya Bharati, 1998), Pp. 1-39.

<sup>35</sup> Mazharul Islam Taru, *op.cit.*, p. 97.

<sup>36</sup> Budla Urao, "Oraons Among the Bangladeshi Aborigines", *Tribal Culture in Bangladesh*, ed. by Mahmud Shah Qureshi, IBS Seminar Volume (Rajshahi: IBS, University of Rajshahi, 1984), p. 131.

<sup>37</sup> Dr. Mazharul Islam Taru, *op.cit.*, p. 62.



Bogra, Joypurhat, Sirajgonj, Natore, Rajshahi, Chapainababgonj and eastern part of Noagaon district.<sup>38</sup> Kurukh as a language is original and unmixed but Sadri is the conglomerate of different languages of Kurukh, Orya, Urdu, Hindi, French and Bangla. The dissimilarity between the Kurukh and the Sadri language is moulding the obstacles among the Oraon community. Though there is a difference between them in arena of conversation, their basic style of conversation is almost similar with each other. Besides, the Bangla as the third language is contributing a prime role among these two types of the Oraon community. All of them can speak and understand the Bangla language fluently. As a result, there is no problem in the arena of conversation among the Oraon of different belts of Bangladesh.<sup>39</sup> They are divided into three groups; I. Hathsangia, II. Upersangia, III. Katrio. There are 68 clans in the Oraon community.<sup>40</sup> Their surnames are Kachhua, Toppo, Tirki, Bandra, Kishpotta, Baroar, Dhanoar, Kujur, Minj, Back and Kawa.<sup>41</sup> The Oraon being allured by the then British government, the Zamindars and petty Zamindars of North-Bengal came to this territory with the Munda and the Pahan from Orissa, Chotanagpur, hill tracts of Rajmahal due to make the fallow land into the cultivable land weeding the jungles in the seventeenth to eighteenth century.<sup>42</sup> They also believe that they came from Ranchi, in southern Bihar.<sup>43</sup> The Oraon physically are characterized by dark brown complexion, even and blunt nose, thick lip, round skull in shape, black and semi curly hair, black eyes and medium stature.<sup>44</sup> They are patrilineal and like other general people of the country, the son of their family inherits his father's title, gotra and property.<sup>45</sup>

#### 1.4 History of Political participation of the Oraon Community

The Oraon are very significant segment of the tribal community in Northwestern part of Bangladesh. Though they were very few in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in this territory, now a remarkable number of the Oraon live here and their number is more than one lakh. They are very bright for their own behaviors, social customs and traditions. They have also the history of a lot of struggles and the upsurges. They are very patriot in spite of having their set back on education. They have also name and fame as a liberal community.<sup>46</sup> Some of the struggles and the upsurges of the Oraon community are stated below.

<sup>38</sup> Mazharul Islam Taru, *op.cit.*, p. 97.

<sup>39</sup> Mohammad Abdul Jalil, *op.cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>40</sup> ICDP- KARITAS Dinajpur, *Gothantantra: Bangladesh Oraon Parhha* (Constitution: Bangladesh Oraon Council) (Dinajpur: KARITAS, 2008), p. 7.

<sup>41</sup> Budla Urao, *op.cit.*, Pp. 131-132.

<sup>42</sup> Mohammad Abdul Jalil, *op.cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>43</sup> Budla Urao, *op.cit.*, p. 131.

<sup>44</sup> Mohammad Abdul Jalil, *op.cit.*, Pp. 43-44.

<sup>45</sup> Budla Urao, *op.cit.*, p. 132.

<sup>46</sup> Dr. Mazharul Islam Taru, *op.cit.*, p. 58.