
Erection of Megaliths in Burial Ground of Gond Community: An Ethno-archaeological Study of Boden Block, Nuapada

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***Abstract:** Megaliths are the large slabs or huge block of stone used as burial monuments. These monuments are sporadically found in different parts of the country. Erection of these megalithic structures is mostly associated with cult of death and its practices. Although megalith culture represents the advanced society of Iron Age, yet megalithic tradition has been a rich cultural trend among the tribal communities. This rich cultural trend is also prevailed among the Gond communities of Boden block of Nuapada district in Odisha. Erecting stone pillar or slabs either natural or sometimes trimmed near the burial ground is a very old practice of the Gond communities of Boden block. During survey author has identified such erected structures near the Gond settlements. From historical records and ethnographic studies we can find that many tribal societies have a particular belief and practice relating to death. Like other tribal people, the Gonds of this densely forest region has a unique practice of erecting Menhirs at the buried spot. This paper will discuss about 3 burial sites, where erection of Megalith by Gond people has been noticed in this area.*

Keywords: Megalith, Gonds, Boden Block, Burial, Memorial Pillars, Menhir, Tradition

Introduction

Large stone structures dotted on the landscape provide valuable insights into the India's cultural past. Many of these structures and stone pillars are related to death and funeral practices. These are called megalith. The term Megaliths are derived from the words "Megas" which means great and "lithos" means stone. So megalith refers to the monuments built of large stones. Megaliths are used for various reasons. Sometime it is used as boundary wall and sometimes used as a memorial stone for deceased man (Kumar, V. 2011). But Particularly Megaliths are funerary monuments represented by various types and sizes. These Megalithic burials may be classified into six major categories. Such as Dolmen, Cist, Menhir, Sarcophagus, Topical, Cairn circle, Burrow etc. According to U.S. Moorti megalithic burials may be in two board categories of "sepulchral" and "non-sepulchral". The sepulchral category is proper burial and the non-sepulchral are commemorative or memorial in nature (Moorti 1986:3). The

construction of such structure by using huge pieces of stone took place in Neolithic period and also continued till the Iron Age (Rao 2000:110-114). However, the origin of Megalithic culture is still obscure. The custom of erecting Megalith as a memorial stone is seen among the different tribal communities of India living in Central, North east and Southern part of the country. The beliefs of various tribes differ with respect to stone and erect stone slab or pillar during the death rites (Marak 2012:78).

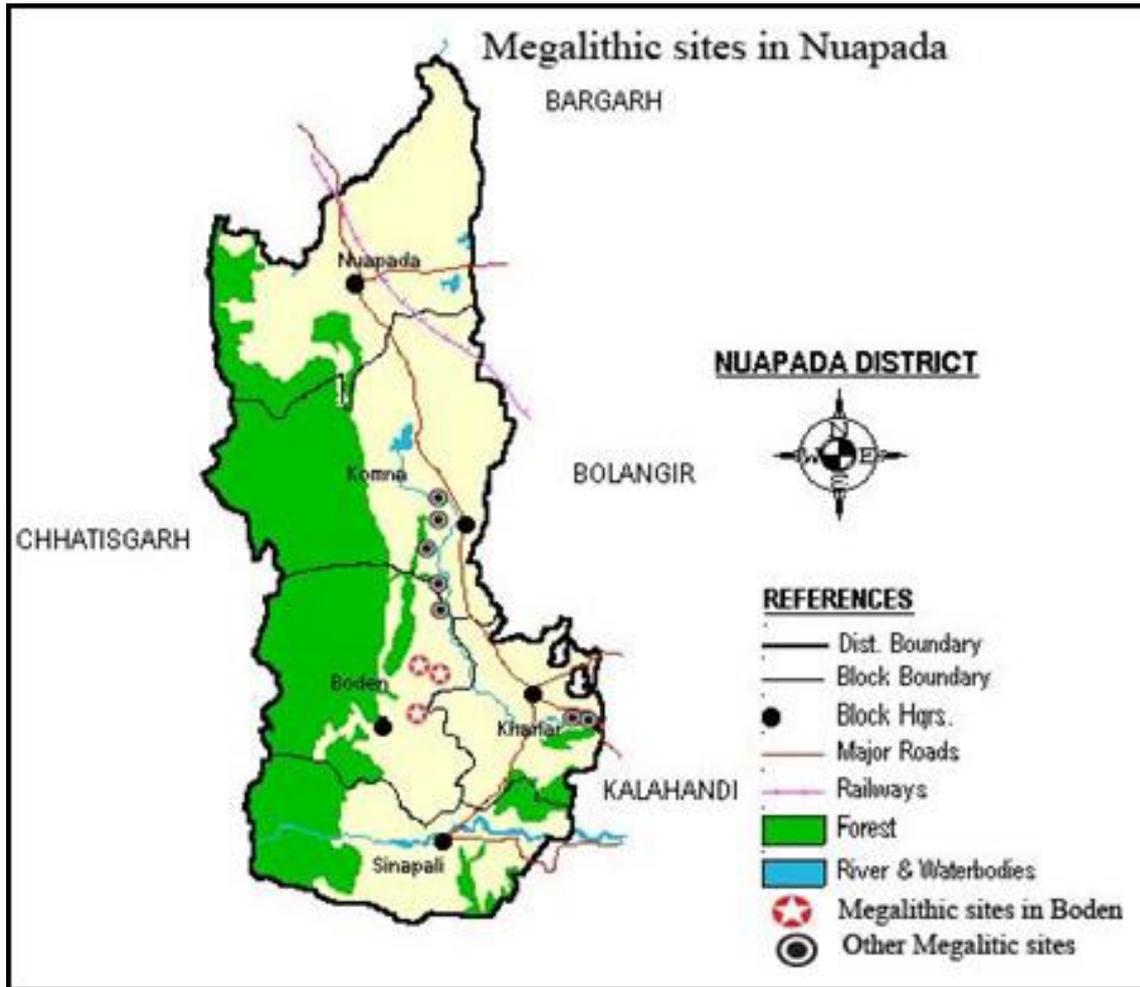


Figure 1: Megalithic sites Nuapada (From District Resource Map)

The Gond people have firm believe that the spirit of the dead reside in stone. Thus, they place a single or multiple stone at the burial ground. Erection of Menhir or alignments and ritualistic offering in commemoration of dead is common among the Gond communities practicing megalithicism (Sudyka 2011:361). The Gond tribal of the south western part of Odisha have similar practice among them. This part of Odisha is dominated by many tribal communities. The area being hilly and densely forest region, it has been home land to many primitive communities. However, the study area is a hilly tract and basically five kinds of tribes have dominated. They are Gond, Khond, Bhunjia, Chukotia, Savara etc. During the field survey, the erection of many Menhirs at the burial sites near the Gond settlements has been noticed. Such living tradition of

Menhir is also observed at many tribal populated places of Nuapada district (Figure 1) of western Odisha. During our field study we have visited many Gond villages. Their settlements drew our attention towards their traditional life style and cultural activity.

Geography of the Study Area

The District of Nuapada was a part of Kalahandi District until early March 1993, but for administrative convenience, Kalahandi District was divided into two parts; Kalahandi and Nuapada. Nuapada District now comprises five Tehsils such as; Nuapada, Komana, Khariar, Sinapalli and Boden. Nuapada district is in the south-western part of Odisha, lying between latitude 20° 0' N and 21° 5' and between longitude 82° 20' E and 82° 40' E. The boundary of the district extends in the north, west and south to Raipur district in Chhatisgarh and in the east to Bargarh, Bolangir, and Kalahandi district of Odisha. The district has an area of 3852 Sq.kms and has a forest area of covering 1849.69kms. The population of Nuapada district is 6, 10, 382 as per the census of India 2011. Out of which 225841 (37.11%) are scheduled tribes. The prominent among them are Gonds (66.56%), Sabars (12.30%), Saora (5.82%) and other tribal communities (15.20%). As the Gonds are forest dwellers, they are in majority in villages adjacent to forest region of Nuapada. Geographically, it is a transitional zone between the Chhattisgarh plains and the coastal plains of Odisha and mostly consists of mountainous and hilly regions, interspersed with rivers and valleys. The study area has many mountains; chief mountain peaks among them are Sunamudi (1884ft), Poti Donger (1629 ft), Sirli Donger (1668 ft), Patdarha (2184 ft), Katpar of Khariar (2915ft). The plains of Nuapada subdivision are also fringed by rugged hill ranges stretching southward, which belong to the main line of the Eastern Ghats and contain extensive plateaus of about 4000 ft (1200 m) in elevation with thick tropical vegetation. They contain such mineral deposits of laterite, graphite and bauxite. The area is drained by the rivers like Udanti, Indra, Sunder, Undar and its various small tributaries. The river Indra originates from Potidonger reserve forest and after traversing for about 25km in the district Nuapada in an easterly direction, it joins the right bank of the Sunder at Lambipani. The area is rich in fertile soil that supports the cultivation of cotton and rice. The area has also dry deciduous forest containing varieties of floral and faunal species. This dense forest is catering the need of thousands of tribal and taming their families by supplying forest products.

Previous Study on Megaliths

The Deccan and southern part of the country have largest number of megalithic sites as compare to other parts of the country. In 1823 Babington found a megalithic site in Kerala for the first time. Thereafter hundreds of megalithic sites have been explored by scholars in south India and across the country. In 1873, Breeks tried to correlate Megalithic practices with some of the customs and rituals practiced by the tribal, living in the region of the Nilgiri Hills of Tamil Nadu. In the later years of the 19th century, Alexander Rea (1902-03:111) excavated a number of megalithic sites in South India. A decade later, Hunt (1924) published the result of the excavation of Megalithic graves in

Andhra Pradesh and by the end of the first quarter of the 20th century; a number of Megalithic sites had been excavated. However, the first attempt to place the South Indian Megaliths in a chronological framework was made by Sir Mortimer Wheeler, who excavated the sites of Brahmagiri and Chandravalli in Karnataka in 1944 (Wheeler 1948:181). The megalithic monuments were later searched, documented and classified by Krishnaswami too (1949:35-45). There are also sporadic references of megalithic sites, with different types such as dolmens and menhirs (Mohanty and Selvakumar 2002; Thakuria 2010;) found in Peninsular and South India. While studying the Karnataka megalithic monuments, A. Sundara (1979:333) concluded that Megalithic structures are *“the varied tomb types in different geological zones are essentially due to the traditional affiliations rather than environmental influence.”* Hence, Megaliths are not only limited to south India but also spread in other part of the country particularly in central India and north eastern India. Tribal societies of Northeast India particularly the Khasis and Nagas are reported to have elaborate practices of Magalithicism (Marak, 2012:67-82).

T.C Sharma (1984:1-21) has also suggested that there are large numbers of Megalith dotted in the landscape of Khasis and Jaintia hills in the region of Meghalaya. Majority of Megalithic types are found from North Cachar hills and its adjacent area. Karbi anglong and some parts of Assam area have also numerous Menhirs, Dolmenoid and Menhir alignments. These megalith structures provide valuable information regarding the cultural tradition of various tribes of India (Sundara, 1979:331, Sudkya 2011:359, Mendaly 2016:3). In this context, the tribal communities living in western part of Odisha are also not an exception to this culture. They had megalithic practices and are also continuing erecting Menhir as their belief and practice till today. So far the research on Megalith of Odisha is concerned, In 1943 Haimendorff published his work on Bodo and Gadabas which was the first evidence on living megalithic tradition on tribal groups in Odisha. Later on some megalithic sites located on the confluence of the river Mahanadi and the Tel was first reported by R.D. Banerjee (1929:64). S.B. Ota during his field survey in 1981-82 reported many early historic and megalithic sites in Boudh. Subsequently the site was surveyed by the German team headed by Paul Yule (2006:43) and suggested that the site was belonging to Iron Age period.

In the Last decade of twentieth century P.K. Behera (1995:176) discovered 11 cairn circle types of megalithic remains in Burla near Sambalpur. In 2017 He also explored the Middle Mahanadi valley and discovered megalithic monuments at Amudda. This discovery at Amudda, made a significant contribution to Megalithic culture of West Odisha which is represented mostly by cairn circles, short menhirs with cairns and dolmenoid cists, located very close to the exposed surface of the Iron Age-Early Historic sites. He took two trial trenches at the site to understand the culture sequence as well as stratigraphic context of the megalithic structural remains of the site. After this excavation, for the first time it has brought to light that an Iron Age habitation site which is associated with megalithic remains. A cairn circle which was revealed from the site along with various ceramic assemblages are of Late Iron Age-Early Historic period (Behera *et al* 2017:965). The exploration made by B. Mishra has also brought to

light some megalithic sites in middle Tel valley (Mishra 2011:183). Recently, S. Mendaly has also reported some living megalithic structures in Bhella, Jharnamal and Rokul in Nuapada district (Table 1, Mendaly 2015:4). The work of the above mentioned scholars has brought to light more than 30 early historic as well as megalithic settlements in the western part of Odisha. However, two types of Megalithic monuments are invariably encountered in western Odisha such as Menhir and Stone circle. In this paper discussion has been made to understand the erection of menhir by Gond communities of Boden block at their burial ground.

Table 1: Megalithic Sites Explored in Nuapada District, Odisha

Sl. No.	Site Name	Location	Block	Megalithic type	Reference
1	Binopur	20° 17' 54.17"N 82° 37' 34.05"E	Boden	Burial Ground	Recently explored
2	Sunapur	20° 16' 38.20"N 82° 36' 36.42"E	Boden	Burial Ground	Recently explored
3	Katapada	20° 17' 22.87"N 82° 36' 59.91"E	Boden	Burial Ground	Recently explored
4	Bhella	20° 31' 26.72"N 82° 36' 21.33"E	Komna	Burial Ground	Mendaly 2015
5	Jharnamal	20° 35' 48.06"N 82° 36' 54.04"E	Komna	Burial Ground	Mendaly 2015
6	Murhaparha	20° 42' 14.55"N 82° 35' 11.80"E	Komna	Burial Ground	Mendaly 2015
7	Khaira	20° 30' 50.02"N 82° 37' 08.23"E	Khariar	Burial Ground	Mendaly 2015
8	Rokal	20° 15' 59.10"N 82° 41' 37.97"E	Khariar	Burial Ground	Mendaly 2015
9	Nehena	20° 15' 01.61"N 82° 47' 03.24"E	Khariar	Disturbed Habitation Stone Circle	Mishra 2011
10	Sandohel	20° 15' 17.21"N 82° 48' 17.03"E	Khariar	Stone Circle Disturbed	Yule 2006

Historical Background of Gond Settlements

Tribal societies are the earliest known societies in human history. Among these tribes, the Gonds are the largest number in Middle India or Gondwana region. People of Gond tribe are scatterly living in different parts of India and having a population of about 7.4 million. Since 9th century Gond tribes had settled in central India (Shamrao 2016). Their territory came to be known as Gondwana which is modern Madhyapradesh, Chhattisgarh and Western Odisha. Around 14th century this tribe became a dominant royal community in modern Chhattisgarh and Western part of Orissa (Saha A.P, 1976: 65). It is said that there were as many as 18 forts or Garhs in Western Odisha. Among the 18 Garhs of western Odisha, Gond had exercised their political power over 10 Garhs of Western Odisha. Out of these Garhs only 4 Garhs are

located in Modern Nuapada and Kalahandi district. As the Gonds were forest dweller, they settled themselves in the villages adjacent to forest region of Nuapada. According to Historical account, among those 18 Garhs of Western Odisha Komnagarh, Gudagarh, and Kholagarh had been dominated by Gond tribes. These three Garhs of Gonds form the Khariar Zamindari which is now a part of Nuapada district. Our study area Boden block was a part of this Khariar Zamindari and now it is a newly formed block of Nuapada district. However, four major categories of Gonds are seen in the villages of Boden Block Such as; Raj Gond, Amet Gond, Drugond and Muria Gond. (Dalton 1960:68) These four types of Gonds lived in the densely forest villages like Babebir, Karangamal, Litisargi, Larka, Pharsara, Bairigaon, Bhainsadani, Palsada, Khaira, Rokal, Karlkote, Sunapur, Damjhar, Nagapda, Sardhapur, Binopur, Mundagaon, Jharnimal, Rundibasa, Dandeibasa, Khudpen, Rajpur, Amguda, Keirapadar, Budhapada, and Salepada etc. Besides, Gond people have also their majority in the other blocks of Nuapada district. Thus the Gond community has majority in this region. They are divided into number of sections who are differed in their nature and these sections are ordinarily endogamous (Saha 1976: 65).

The original groups constituting the Gonds may have existed as small clans in isolated forests and hilly regions as gatherers, fishermen and hunters. Due to the absence of roads and communication in this region, this area is not too much affected by modernization. This inaccessible part of Odisha is also known for its rich mineral deposits and forest products. Nature had created a much favourable environment for these tribal communities to live here. The region being occupied by dense forest, the Gond Adivasis basically dependant on these forest for collection fuel wood, mahua, tendu, honey various types of roots, medicinal plant and other wild products. The hills and forest surrounded by Gond settlements are useful for hunting game for them too. Most of the people were seasonal cultivators, cattle herders and gatherer of forest products. Therefore, the subsistence pattern of tribal communities of this locality is based on the agro-pastoral economy. The Gond adivasis being the real inhabitant of this region, they have enriched their indigenous cultural traditions, beliefs, rituals practices. These activities and practices represent their community identity. They are also identified by a peculiar kind of rituals on which they believe. In this context, Pandian stated that festive occasions of tribal communities encompass rich and diverse elements of both intangible and tangible cultural heritage. They play a principal role in most societies as expressions of cultural identity through the collective values and beliefs that they represent (Pandian 1995). Similarly the Gonds of Nuapada have their own cultural tradition. Practice of Megalithicism is one of their traditions associated with death rituals which are noticed in all the Gond settlements of Boden area. They have a common practice of erecting Menhir near the burial site as the memorial stone.

Death Customs of Gonds in Study Area

The death rituals and its practices of Gond communities are an integral part of their culture. After the death of a person usually they cremate or bury their dead. They have firm belief that human being has a life force and a spirit in him. On the death of human

being, the life force is reincarnated into another earthly existence (Shamrao 2016). Thus, the Gonds have their own concept of death. According to Gond mythology, the dead were believed to be greatly interested in the affairs of the living. So the Gond tribal has a keen desire to maintain contact and to solicit the presence of the dead to minimize the difficulties of the living. They have a respect for the dead as a result they performed death rites to fulfill an obligation to the deceased. The funeral rites were part of the metaphysical significance that the death occupied an important occurrence in the birth-life-death cycle (Sudyka 2011:361). After the death of a Gond man, the family members and relatives put some water and *haldi* (turmeric) powder to purify the dead body. The male family members and their kins take the dead body to burial ground which is called *marghat* (Burial ground). The eldest son or brother comes to *marghat* with all the primary material which was used by deceased such as spade, pottery, arrow, bamboo stick, drum, bow etc to be put with the dead body (V. Kumar, 2018). The grave is dug in such way that the head shall lie to the south and the feet to the north direction. The idea behind the positioning the dead is that the deceased had to go to the home of the heavenly deities. The Gond also places some stone on the burial ground and erects the memorial stone in honor to the dead too. During the exploration, author visited the Cremation ground of Binopur, Katapada and Sunapur which are located at a distance of 8 to 10 kilometer away from Boden. The burial ground of Sunapur is situated along the road side where as the burial ground of Binopur is located very close to a rocky cliff area only 0.5 km away from Binopur village. It was noticed that as the burial ground is situated in a small rocky hills, it is very much easy for people to procure the raw material from the sites and use them for erecting menhir near the spot. People might have used some iron objects to quarry the stone from the parent rocks. After burying the dead, heap of stones are accumulated over the grave and another elongated pieces of stone is kept which is known as Menhir. Sometimes the people put stones in the name of deceased. For all the tribes dead body is extremely sacred and so it has to be properly buried. Thus the Gond also bury the dead properly. The disposal of the corpse ended with the installation of Menhirs in the north and south direction of the dead. The menhirs found in these sites vary in height from 35-125cms. Very often these Menhirs are well chiseled with giving rectangular shape to it but sometimes rough or natural untrimmed menhirs are also placed. According to Sidney Hartland, the chief objects of the proper disposal of the corpse is the fulfillment of all the rites and customs in connection therewith, are to free the living from the defilement of death and to give rest to the deceased (Hartland 1964:6). This kind of Megalithic practice is a tradition among the Gonds of Boden block of Nuapada. Such living megalithic culture in this locality provides strong hints regarding their belief systems with regard to mortuary practices.

Megalithic Sites of Boden Area

Binopur (20° 17' 54. 17" N, 82° 37' 34.05" E): The site Binopur is situated north east direction of Boden Block head quarters. It is only 1.5 km away from the village Binopur. The site is a burial ground of the Gond community located in the west

direction of village. More than 30 burial structures have been notice in this site (Figures 2 and 5). In some structures menhirs have been erected in north south direction and some have only cairn heaps. This is a common burial ground of the Gond communities living in this village. Cairn heaps and Menhirs are the most common types of megaliths found in this village. It is also noticed in this site that the people are using the huge block of stone from the Rocky outcrop situated near the site.



Figure 2: Menhir with cairn heaps at Binopur



Figure 3: Trimmed elongated Menhir at Katapada



Figure 4: Trimmed Menhirs positioning north-south at Sunapur

Sunapur (20° 16' 38.20" N, 82° 36' 36.42" E): Sunapur megalithic site is situated only at a distance of 9 km from Boden and 2 km from Binopur in northern direction. It is also a cremation ground of the Gond community located south to the village. Here large numbers of Stone slabs have been used for the burial purposes. Erection of wooden pillar has also been noticed (Fig-4). This grave yard had 18 burial structures and are characterized by cairn heaps and menhirs. Some burial structures have heap of natural stones lying over the graveyard. The menhirs placed in this site are elongated and found in north south position. These Menhirs have been used as memorial pillars in this site.

Katapada (20° 17' 22.87" N, 82° 36' 59.91" E): The village Katapada site is only 3 km east to the village Sunapur and only 10 km from the Block head quarters. The site is located near a seasonal stream. Only 7 burial structures are found at this site which belongs to the Gond communities. Small stone slabs are found lying near the graveyard and Small stone slab are also place on some buried structures. Cairn heap and Menhirs are the most common types of megaliths found in this village too. Menhirs found at this site are trimmed and are of much height (Figure 3). In this village individual graves have also been notice in the agricultural field.

Erection of Megalith as a Tradition

The tradition of erecting megaliths is commonly found among the tribal communities living in Northeastern, Eastern, Central and South India (Sharma 1984:354, Krishnaswami 1949:35, Kumar 2018:689, Marak and Jangkhomang 2012:67). Although megalithic practice is prehistoric in origin, still it is practiced by many hill tribes India. The custom of erecting menhirs or alignments of stone slabs and dolmen in honour of

the dead is practiced by some primitive tribe of Odisha too. In this context, we can derive some clues on the megaliths associations by observing the practices of the Gond tribe who still include megaliths in their death ritual as well as religious beliefs. The Gonds communities of Nuapada, particular the Gonds of Boden block still construct megalithic monuments for the dead. Thus 'Megalithism' may be considered as a living tradition in this locality. Nuapada is one of the most primitive centers of the tribal culture has the most exclusive and ancient pattern of culture, in relation to the Megalithicism as it is followed in the means of death ceremonies mainly in the tribal context. Though the early pattern of megalith monuments are rare, the Gond people still followed this tradition with certain modifications. The Gond people erect the memorial pillar or Menhir in memory of the deceased; and it is called as "*Uraskal*" in Gondi language (Elwin 1959, 1991:22). These upright standing structures are common in burial ground. The Gonds mention three reasons for erecting pillars "first, the spirit of the dead not to wander after death; second, they must not worry or harm the descendants; third, they must help by bringing rain and driving away the harmful spirits". Notwithstanding, the construction of megaliths was a massive endeavour, requiring the active involvement of their community. The huge slabs required for constructing the Menhirs were cut from the natural rock using the primitive mining technique. Huge Stone slabs and pillars were used for erecting these megalithic structures and are usually quarried from the local hills or rocky outcrops. It is said that the rock is heated to the desired level and cooled rapidly by dousing it with water. As a result the desired shape of stone piece is removed from the massive rock (Kumar 2011). During the disposal dead, the articles used by the deceased are also buried under the memorial along with an iron ring. Relatives of deceased come to the grave ground to erect the *Uraskal* (Menhir) on any auspicious day that comes seven days after the completion of the death ritual (Deo 1973:). They come with elongated stone pillar and erect this as Menhir and cairn heaps are placed over it. Sometimes wooden pillars are also placed instead of stone pillars. The erection of memorial also has the classification with the separate term of cultural patterns of sacraments for those who have died unnatural death. However, the practice of megalithic culture seems to carry the concept of unity and human power in the society (Haimendorff, 1979:280). Within accumulation to the composite of memorials or stone for social prestige and status put up by the clans, the Gonds of Boden area have erected a series of stones connected with funerary and ritualistic purpose.

Cultural Significance of Gond Megaliths

The Gonds of Boden area have continued their own cultural practices in the process of their social formation, without much interaction with the other culture. Those who are staying inside the forest and hilly region, they are continuing this Megalithic tradition strictly. Generally, most of the tribals including the Gonds have been considered animists in earlier times before they were Hinduised. It has been said that natural objects such as stones, trees, mountains, rivers and certain places were believed to be the abode of the spirits and demons. The belief to spirit and life after death has made

this community to respect the corpse or dead body (Rao 2000:110). Proper disposal of dead with due respect is a part of their culture too. Thus, natural or trimmed block of stone called as Megalith, practiced by them is an insignia of death rituals. Erection of Menhir in burial spot reflects their traditional behaviours, habits, activities, feelings and thoughts that has passed through generations, making it a culture among them. This practice seems to connect the entire community into oneness by traditions, which lead to unity in social and cultural spheres. In addition to this, The Gonds are controlled by the rules and customs for the projected behaviour of their societies (Moorti 1986:8). The megalithic practice is involving their whole communities, because setting of such huge stones in a heap or erection of a gigantic Menhir or the placing of massive stone slabs is not possible by one or two individuals. Thus, this concept underlies the arguments towards the connection of Megalithic structures to social identity patterns. Such cultural habit is also seen as one aspect necessary to create stable social communities in constantly growing populations and also indispensable agents of the creation and maintenance of society (Saha A.P 1976:68). This culture is bringing social as well as the cultural unity among the Gond community of this area. Megalithism as a custom and tradition is still intact among them despite the impact of acculturation and exist in unique form having a distinguished position in this locality.



Figure 5: Menhir without Cairns and a Quarry site at Binopur

Discussion

During the visit of all the burial grounds of Boden area, it was noticed that erection of Menhir was a very common practice from time immemorial among the Gonds of

Boden block. We can see the people of this community erecting the Megaliths whether they may reside in dense forests or in villages. Rarely Megaliths are erected in the villages situated near the urban areas. The significant features of these burials are that either these are cairn heaps or two Menhir positioning north south. Besides, almost all the graveyards are very close to the Gond settlements only at a distance of 0.5km to 1.5km. Each Gond settlement has its own graveyard. The area of these graveyards is small and can accommodate only less than fifty dead bodies. It is also noticed that, while erecting the menhir people use the local granite available nearby outcrops (fig-5&6). Almost all the existing Menhir explored in this area are trimmed and shaped. However cairn heaps are basically the natural boulders. There are also some observable similarities between the megaliths of the past and those of the living megaliths of Gonds of this area. But it is certainly difficult to measure the gap between the megalith of past and the present tradition of practicing megalith of Gond community. At Present, Gonds erect a series of stones connected with funerary and ritualistic purpose. These can be considered as funerary stones which are linked with commemorative purpose but the ancient structure are basically the graves. Haimendorf (1943) was of the opinion that the ritual associated with megaliths of India is to gain prestige for the living and to establish links with the soul of the dead. He further expressed that it is well coordinate system of custom and beliefs and a philosophy of life and nature. Hence the practice of megalithic culture seems to bear the testimony of unity of tribal community and human power in the society as a whole.



Figure 6: Cutting mark on Rock slabs at Binopur Stony Outcrop

Conclusion

The disposal of the dead has taken a variety of forms among tribes all over the country. Different ethnic communities have different practices. The Visibility of Megalithic structure in this region has been an indicator of vibrant tribal culture of Gond

community. The Gond people have still maintained their cultural identity and showed their social presence in this forest tract. However, with the passage of time, the cultural behavior this community has changed to a little extent. Except the people living in forest and extremely rural area, no other people of Gond community living in semi urban and urban area have such practice now. There are many problems that obstruct the practice of this tradition. Many poor Gond people are also unable to bear cost of community feast which is offered after the erection of menhir at the burial ground (Kumar, V. 2018). Some people of rural area also they are not taking too much interest to erect these stone structures because they have no time to spend looking for suitable stones for menhir. Further, the tradition of erecting commemorative stone has been replaced by the installation of crude and rough megaliths. Now a days, it is also difficult enough to find a proper surface stone in the hills or outcrops adjacent to the burial ground. Import of huge block of stones from hills to home and giving them a perfect shape by chiseling is also time consuming process. With the advent of modernization and urbanization the Gonds of this locality have come into direct contact with the Hindu people. Thus, there is the strong influence of Hinduism on the tribal culture. The tribal culture has also been undergoing a certain degree of change through a process of acculturation. Many Gond people have adopted the Hindu way of life making their own tradition obsolete. Such adaption to a new culture brought significant changes in their traditions, customs, values, and religious beliefs and rites. There was a time, when the Gonds, particularly living in this region were considered to be the most cultured community. But for the last few decades, a great change has taken place in their traditional life. Their cultural sanctity is deteriorating gradually being affected by frequent interference of outsiders or due to acceptance of modernization by them. Moreover, the existing megalithic structures are now on the verge of ruin. Some of the Megalithic monuments of this area are also destroyed due to construction of Biju express way linking from Nuapada to Nawarangpur as well as canal and dam construction over the Indra River. Despite all the adversity, the Gonds of Boden has retained their traditional behavior, possess the same spirit and truthfulness as it was in the past. In this way Gond tribes have made their own contribution to the development of the world's most complex religious structure represented by the religious life of millions. Further study of Gonds particularly to their economy, society, religion, ritual practices and other cultural aspect with multidisciplinary approach in forthcoming future may help us to comprehend their socio-cultural behavior well to a greater extent.

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