

The Folk Songs of Central India

By

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The folk-songs of the aborigines of Central India are abundant, and so varied that they seldom leave out any critical event, either in individual or communal life, worth mentioning. The folk-songs comprise (1) the songs of recreation, (2) the dance-songs, (3) the songs connected with rites, (4) the songs of marriage, (5) the songs of birth, (6) the songs of death, (7) the songs of hero-worship, etc.

The songs of recreation are the Dadariya and Dadara songs. The Dadariya forms a couplet, well-rhymed, and often portrays the passion of love- the flame which flickers for a moment. So are the Limtera songs. The Dadara songs are vigorous love-songs. They are longer in comparison to the Dadariya. They usually portray free love. The songs are employed at child-birth also and then the event of birth is alluded to in a sensuous way.

(2) The dance songs are also mostly love-songs.

(1) The *Karma* songs are famous. They are sometimes as short and well-rhymed as Dadariya or long and free verses like Dadara. Their subject matter is mostly love, but sometimes local events are also described.

2. The *Ri-lo* and *Re-la* songs are entirely love songs, mostly conversations between marriageable cousins. They can be long or short and rhyme is dispensable.

3. The *Saitam* songs are much of the nature of the *Karma* both in form and subject-matter.

4. The *Suwa* or *Parrot* songs are the largest ones, each song depicting a story. The metre is irregular and rhyme out of question.

5. The *Danda* or *Sela* songs are incorporated in the Phag and hence are varied in composition as well as subject matter. They comprise descriptions of the season, love-songs and licentious songs also.

(3) Songs pertaining to rites:-

1. *Marriage songs*:—Abundant are the marriage songs, varied in composition and subject matter. They are a) love-songs, b) descriptions of the rite in operation, and c) abusive sex-songs,

(2) *Birth-songs*:—The birth songs usually describe child-birth and various medicines that should be taken at that time.

(3) *Funerary songs*:—They are sometimes very long and describe the riddle of life and death or short songs of fun. They give an insight into the tribal beliefs about death and survival of the soul. The metre is irregular and rhyme is often sacrificed. It is the refrain that plays a very important part here.

(4) *Hulki*:—The Hulki songs are either dedicated to the gods or to love. They are usually long and badly rhymed.

(5) *Gaura songs*:—They are long songs sung by women alone in Balaghat, Mandla and Chhattisgarh and describe anything except conjugal love.

(6) Budhadeo's songs, Ratmai's songs etc. are songs dedicated to the particular deities and are often long.

(7) *Pig-sacrifice*:—The songs of this rite are of medium length but usually very obscene.

(8) There are besides ballads which are devoted to hero-worship. They are very long, badly rhymed and monotonous.

Sentiments in the songs:—The peculiarity of the songs in this culture province, as they are sung by the aborigines and the lower caste Hindus is that they are chiefly love-songs. The Dadara, Dadariya, Mokhamalin, Lintera, Bilwari, Hulki, etc., deal with all kinds of love between man and woman viz. love between marriageable cousins, between a man and his elder brother's wife or wife's younger sister. Love affairs of a married woman are fairly illustrated in these songs. Then come other forms of love, viz. love between brother and sister, parents and children, though it is never so fervent as the former. Love between brothers or sisters is rarely mentioned. No heed is paid to other relatives except in marriage-songs in which they are merely mentioned. No sentimental tribute is made to the neighbours.

Nature of the songs:—Though various songs and their names have been given before, it will not be out of place to discuss their nature and show how one form differs from the other, as also their regional distribution.

(1) Dadara:—Of all the songs the Dadara form is the most widely

spread all over the Hindi-speaking parts of Central India. Dadara being the Hindustani form of songs, it flourishes most in these parts and hence a Gond Dadara (though it is never sung in the Gondi dialect) is a very poor form of poetry compared with that of Jubulpur, Hoshangabad and Saugor Dadaras.

Phag:—Even more widespread are the Phag songs. With the exception in the purely Gondi parts, especially south-east of Drug where the aboriginal population is considerable, the Phag is sung everywhere in Central India. The songs also have filtered down from the Hindus to their aboriginal brethren. The licentious spirit of the songs and their vigorous tone is very much appreciated by aborigines. The Maria in Ahiri and Ojha Gond as well as all tribes in Chhattisgarh have taken to the Phag. In the northern parts of Saugor and Hoshangabad and in Chhindwara and Jubulpur the Phag is very popular and vigorous.

Dadariya:—Originally the Dadariya belongs to Chhattisgarh. It is also very popular in Mandla, Balaghat and Jubulpur. In Chhattisgarh the Ahir or Rawat are expert in the composition of Dadariya and following their example other lower caste Hindus and aborigines have been singing their own Dadariya in the local dialect. The Baiga and the Gond, the Sahis and the Savar have mastered the art. It is only the independent little community of the Kamar who have not yet taken to it. They sing their own Mokhamalin or 'beauty of the forest' songs which correspond to Dadariya very much. It is interesting to note that in spite of the adoption of the Dadariya from the common stock of culture each tribe has developed it in its own way and laid its stamp on it and so a Baiga Dadariya is different from a more sophisticated Gond-Dadariya and that in turn from the Rawat Dadariya. It is chiefly the style that brings out the difference.

Dadariya is not popular, though not altogether unknown to the aborigines in Seoni. They call it 'Jangli Dadariya'.

Karma:—The local distribution of Karma is the same as that of the Dadariya, with Jubulpur and Seoni left out. It is of primitive origin and hence its absence in Jubulpur.

Bilwari:—It is entirely a central Indian production corresponding to the Karma. It is sung in Saugor and Damoh chiefly.

The Limtera:—The Limtera rain songs resemble the Dadariya. The scarcity of rain in central India causes a festivity at its advent.

Birha, Biriya:—The Birha songs resemble Dadariya in structure and are spread in most Hindi speaking parts of the area. The meaning of the word is 'separation' though the sentiment expressed in them often is

joyous and licentious and the tone vigorous. Yet the use of Birha is varied, and also its subject matter. In Mandla and Balaghat it forms a part of the bride's ceremonial weeping. In the Kosta of Chhattisgarh and former Chapa state it is the devotional song dedicated to the goddess Bhavani, which is also adopted by the Gonds. In Seoni the Birha-songs are employed in funerary rites by the Gond and also by the Korku in Hoshangabad, though they comprise gay sentiments about love and village gossip.

The Gondi songs:—The Gondi songs except the ballads are invariably connected with dance. The Ri-na is the commonest form and can be sung all round the year. The Hulki is the autumnal song and now connected with Diwali. Excepting Hulki, Ri-na and Ri-lo are sung by all Gond, and even the Korku and the Baiga and allied tribes. The original Gondi dialect is preserved in the southern portion e.g. Chanda, and Balaghat and Betul only and a little in Seoni and Chhindwara. In the rest of the country only the Hindi imitation is found.

The seasonal cycle of songs:—The employment of the songs in various traditional rites and dances gives them a seasonal significance, viz. the harvest-song can only be sung when the crops are getting ready; the Divali and the Phag when the festivals are in full swing. Yet the passion for singing makes men and women sing a variety of songs all the year round. In Chhattisgarh, for instance, when work is to be done in the field, or when men and women collect fuel, in the dry season when little work is being done in the fields, the Dadariya are sung vigorously. During harvest the Karma-songs are sung. The Gaura are sung by women at the end of the rainy season. Then come the Suwa songs and Divari. Next come the Phag-songs and then again Dadariya.

The variety and a complete cycle of seasonal songs is however wonderfully preserved in Saugor. From the full-moon day of Jeth till the coconut day men sing the 'Ser' songs which is a Hindustani variety. Then come the Limtera rain-songs. The Bilwari is sung for a short time when rain-crop is reaped. Then come the autumnal Divari songs (which are primarily sung by the Ahir). In winter the Rahi songs comprising Phag, Khya and Suwan are sung. Then come Bilwari again when the winter crop is ready. In the beginning of summer the Bholake git, comprising the Sohag, and the Dadara are sung. These songs are dedicated to god Shiva. They go on till the Ser begin.

Songs

From the Baiga in Drug:

Dadariya

Man:

1

'I shall eat it' said you
And plucked the mango.
I shall come said you
And it turned out false.

Man:

2

The coins in the bag
Are spent on prostitutes.
Now, look heartily at the treasure
That belongs to others.

Man:

3

It pains my sight
Your speech puts my heart on flame.
Oh! Don't give your daughter to the impotent.¹
Let her remain an old maid.

4

When a proper match is made
The little girl shall be happy,
Happy shall be the young man.
Eat basi, oh young girls of the village,
Let all emotions be satisfied.

Woman:

5

The lover makes fun of me in the kodo field,
In Gadhai market he winks at me,

1. The fear about impotence is very striking here.

He calls me by the river and coaxes me.

6

The fragrant flower of Karonda
 Why have you put it in the hair,
 While walking on the road
 Oh! why did you put it?

From Gonds in Drug:

7

The raw mango is small
 The plantain is big
 Say, Ram, Ram,
 Time is passing

Man:

8

So long as the woman stays
 Man gets company,
 My word remains
 As long as you live.

Woman:

9

The hair well combed
 And vermilion put in it
 I shall come to-morrow,
 Do not worry.

Man:

10

One bundle of reeds
 And one 'ber' tree is used (for the house)
 Why are you sitting
 On leaves of 'Bodal'² in water?

2. A plant like lotus grows in water. Its leaves are broad.

Man:

11

The box of vermillion is of gold.
With a lid of silver,
Our friendship is life-long
You give me dreams.

Woman:

12

Well is the weapon struck,
Well indeed is the arrow shot,
Who is this forest hunter³
That kills the bird⁴ in front?

Man:

13

I have climbed the tree
I wait.
You do not speak,
My heart is tortured.

Man:

14

The cold water in the jar
Is polluted by the crow,
You harsh woman,
You must be taught a lesson with a rod.

Woman:

15

The lentils look red,
The youth from the bungalow
Looks a tender diamond

3. Lover.

4. Girl.

Man:

16

Mother shouts,
 Father threatens,
 Who is this enemy
 That calls you in the street?

Woman:

17

Of gold the 'bhikhari'⁵ is made.
 Your speech is like wind
 Beyond one's hold.

Jungli Dadariya of the Gonds in Seoni:

Woman:

18

It is evening now
 And you made love to me,
 But it is time for me
 To go home.

Man:

19

Small is the lava bird,
 But its wings are broad.
 Your love is on surface only,
 In your heart is falsehood.

Man:

20

There are leaves of pipar
 Make the sweet 'batiya'.⁶
 Sprinkle water on the place

5. Ear ornament worn by men.

6. A preparation of gram flower commonly known as Sev.

Only half the night remains.

Man:

21

The banks of the river
Are gradually falling,
The tide of youth,
Is slowly subsiding.

Woman:

22

My youth and your strength
Go away from here.
Many people are here.

Woman:

23

The roots of 'Keu'
Cannot be strung together
The water of the Narbada
Is not digestible.

Man:

24

To get the cucumber
To the window of the bungalow
My life depends on you.

Woman:

25

On every bank of the river
The 'airi' bird walks.
The girl, the enemy walks away
Leaving her father and mother.

Man:

26

The water in the jar

Heat it.
 Now is your youth blooming
 Be charitable.⁷

Woman:

27

Beaten with a stick
 The 'gajabel' creeper falls down.
 In your curly locks
 Who puts oil?

Man:

28

The raw betel nut,
 Is cut with a nut-cracker,
 Your garment is kept on the ghat
 Faith is there indeed.

From Bilaspur:

Man:

29

Your mind is fickle,
 Mine is dejected.
 You stand in water
 But I die of thirst.

Woman:

30

A fowl is eaten
 Only with water.
 I have become an ascetic
 For your sake.

31

The bullocks of Chapa town
 Are yoked to the oil-press.

7. A request for sex-union.

I ask water from the club.

32

The elephant walks
On a new street.
The woman with her breast
Covered with sari
Waits.
Red, red looks the lentil.
The unfortunate Hiralal
Where does he stay in Kora?

Woman:

34

Horses walk on a new road.
The gentleman from Kora
Is hidden in the army.

The Dadariya of the Gond and Hindus from Bilaspur:

Man:

35

Because you called have I come.
I am tormented by heat

The Dadariya of Sahis in Bilaspur:

Woman:

36

Beaten with a stick
The 'gajabel' falls down.
The tuft of your hair
Adorned with bells
Let it be tied with a thread
And oiled well.

Man:

37

There's chaff of 'Kodo'

Near it sit 'bharelu' birds.
 Let us hear fine names
 (of men) from you.
 And your person surely be
 As pure as ever.⁸

Man:

38

Wonderful are the abuses
 Given at the top of voice.
 For nothing at all
 Scandals are raised.

Woman:

39

The tailor stitches a jacket and a shirt.
 To keep up friendship,
 Or to break it,
 Rests entirely on your wish.

Woman:

40

You put on a jacket
 And on it wear a shirt.
 My remembrances about you
 Forge up again and again
 Though they seem
 To rest for a while.

Woman:

41

You eat 'pan'
 And twirl the moustache.
 For your love
 Half a bottle (of wine)
 Is needed.

8. This implies a taunt.

Woman:

42

Great and glorious
Is your creation, Oh God!
Since your (lover's) words
Have become so rare now.

Woman:

43

On the cot you sit
With feet resting on a seat.
Now there is nothing to be given,
Nothing also to be accepted,
At least speak nicely with mouth.

Woman:

44

The stale rice-gruel
Is eaten with salt.
I cannot let you go
Having tested your virtue.

Woman:

45

Vegetable is picked up
When it's tender and fresh.
Love is picked up
In the beginning of the month of Asadh.

46

In every thicket
A wild pig squeaks.
In the field
In the field
Sings the lover.

Woman :

47

In a plate stale rice-gruel is kept,
In a bowl is kept salt.
I burst out singing Dadariya
You stand still and listen.

Man :

48

I walk on the road,
It's hard with stones,
My body is wet with perspiration,
Oh! just throw the dhoti here.

Woman :

49

The leaves of palas
Are stitched with thorns.⁹
Let this body live or perish
I shall not leave you.

Man :

50

In Savan and Bhado
The 'Kasi' flowers bloom
In your house,
The hearth is neatly dunded.

51

What a fine red vegetable this is,
It is full of stones.
Oh husband's younger brother,
Have some regard for the father-in-law.¹⁰

From Dhanuhar and Said in Bilaspur :

9. Leaves are stiched together to make a leaf plate.

10. Red vegetable is the menstruating woman.

Man:

52

Small is the female bird,
Big is the male bird.
Take my good-bye, Oh girl,
When I go away.

Mokhamalin songs of the Kamar:

To the jungle I go
To cut the wood.
To Barula bazaar I go
To buy a bottle (of wine),
Khamalin¹¹ and China.¹²
To make love for five days.

54

While I was cutting paddy
I was touched with the elbow,
'No! I did not' says Chini,¹³
Yet I am smitten by love.

55

The bullock for carrying loads
Will not carry it.
The woman on the river bank
Will not give tobacco.

56

Sharp is your axe,
Make a small hut.
I have left my parents,
You are taking me far away.

57

To the jungle I go
To cut sticks.
To my sweet-faced love

11. Lady love, the beauty of the forest.

12. Lover.

13. Lady lover.

I shall give a golden Sari.

58

From Sankara comes the girl,
The Ravan¹⁴ belongs to the fort.
When my girl bosses,
The river Pairi changes its course.

59

A little basket of cane is wanted.
Then make one, my little sister,
Oh! Biran-purin Bai,
Go, big brother to the king.
To Pingesargarh you have to go
And you must walk and walk and walk,
Take with you *ladus* and sweets made in oil,
My big brother, the 'Sarai' flower has bloomed
Tell the king¹⁵ not to rule in a barron country.

60

If you love me with heart and soul
Bring me not heart (of a game), my boy.
My love! My life! It's a warm heart,
Go my boy, and set up a trap for the peacock.

61

What fun it is for the lover
If the girl is only kind to him!
Oh! What a fun it is!

62

To the jungle I go to cut sticks,
And a youth of this village
Hits me with his fist.

63

When torrents of rain came

14. The mud image of Ravan which is found in every village on the Dasara day. Here the word Ravan means the hero, the lower.

15. The lover.

With the wind,
Then came my boy to me
On his own accord.

64

The mahua fruits on the road
Are falling down.
The man in the dhoti
Attracts my fancy.

65

When the pipe is smoked
The smoke rises up.
The beads on your neck
Enhance your beauty, my boy!

66

On the boundary of the village
The 'airi' bird is in food-search.
The chief of the village
Bears it a grudge.

67

The vegetable from the river-side
Dropped down the road.
Small are the earthen pots,
Arrange them neatly in a pile.

68

Woman:

The pot is small
I shall press the rice in it.

Man:

Do it silently
Or I shall kick you.

The Limtera rain-songs from the Gond and Hindus in Saugor:

69

It is drizzling,
Small drops of rain are falling,
My neighbour woman,
A stranger to this place,
Is drenched.
It is drizzling
Small drops of rain are falling
My neighbour woman is drenched.

70

Wait under the 'nim' tree
Oh amorous man!
My mind is so pleased
When you wait,
Oh my lover.

71

My husband is gone to an other country,
My eye-sight is far-reaching.
The lover united
And has now gone far away.

72

With white-wash
A building dazzles.
A man gets dazed
When he sees this woman.

73

The stick is broken,
The cattle has run away,
The Ahir stands crying.

74

Small is the girl,
With a fork-like vulva,
And the penis is like a big pestle.

75

Get up, oh stick,¹⁶
The cattle have run away
Get up, as long as the Ahir is crying.

76

The tale of the 'Kahir'¹⁷ fruit
Is always long.
The Ahir woman stands there
Weeping.

77

I am a stranger
And your guest,¹⁸
Let me for a while
Rub your breasts.

78

The garden is beautiful,
The cucumber is ripe.
Be always coming to our place,
Oh sipahi.

79

He ties the dhoti firmly,
And wanders in the wood.
To me it seems
That an elephant has come.

80

His body strong and stout
Appeared like a cylinder,
To the woman.

81

The earth shakes
Even when trodden gently.

16. The Ahir plays a prominent part as an adept lover in the folk-songs of Saugor.

17. 'Kahir' is a long hard fruit, compared here to the penis.

When my lover walks softly
It did not shake.

82

Underneath the folds of the garment
Are three bags.¹⁹
Oh my cloves²⁰ are spoilt.

83

The mattresses are torn,
The bedstead has become loose.
Get down, oh lover,
Bid me good bye.

84

The dry 'kodo'
Cannot be eaten.
My lover has betrayed me,
I am getting dried up.

85

Had I been at mother's place
I would give you collirium.
Oh darling! I come to your house,
And for a week
Collirium is stopped.

86

The rosiness of the mother's place
Is seen on the cheeks.
The rosiness of the father-in-law's place
Is seen on the bones.
In mother's place small girls live,
In father-in-law's place young women live.

87

The 'hadguwa' flowers

18. The idea is that hospitality requires the guest to be pleased at any cost.

19. Male genital organs.

20. Clitoris.

In Gopura village.
 In lover's courtyard
 The 'Niwaragiya' flowers.

88

When a fence is broken
 A way is made.
 Go away stealthily,
 Let no one know.

'Bholake git' songs from Saugor from Gond and Hindus:

89

Walk cautiously,
 Oh my husband's younger brother,
 Let no harm befall you.

90

The thorns of cactus
 Are very long.
 My sari will get entangled in them
 And shall tear.

91

The shade of the 'babul' tree
 Is poisonous.
 Take down my load, sir.

92

In the bungalow,
 There is a rush of men,
 The garment of the fair queen
 Is torn.

93

I met the Narmada
 As if I met my father and mother,
 I left the Narmada
 As if I left my father and mother.

94

The mother's house is lost to me now,
 And the courtyard of this house also
 Has become a strange place.

95

Do not wear a fine garment,
 Oh fair woman!
 The entire form of body
 Is seen through it.
 I am standing in the courtyard
 Oh! Bring my fine garment.

96

The juicy mangoes from the garden,
 Taste sour to her,
 She started eating tamarind,
 The branch of the tree
 Hanging above the well
 Near the nim tree,
 In the corner of the garden.
 Oh! It's a nice place
 To meet the sweet-heart.

The Dadara of Gonds in Drug:

97

Standing in the courtyard,
 What are you thinking of,
 Oh fair woman?
 What are the armlets made of?
 What are the bangles made of?
 Of what cloth is the bodice made
 That hides the two breasts?
 Standing in the courtyard,
 What are you thinking of,
 Oh fair woman?
 The armlets are made of silver
 And bangles of gold.
 The bodice is made of silk

That covers the breasts.
 Standing in the courtyard
 What are you thinking of,
 Oh fair woman?

98

With eyes cast down
 She sits at a distance.
 When she was bathing
 In waist deep water,
 She branded the heart of Selam.²¹
 You are going, oh Selam
 Give me a ring as a token of love
 We shall meet again.
 Some say, Selem lives
 Beyond the Nim grove
 And he holds a rose-bunch in his hand.
 Some say, Selam lives
 Beyond the Nim-grove
 And holds a pen of gold in his hand.

99

From the pot of 'surama'
 My 'Surma' has been stolen.
 The Brahmin's son was my lover,
 He left a book on my bed.
 My 'Surma' has been stolen.
 The goldsmith's son was my lover.
 It was he who left the nose-ring in my bed.
 My 'Surma' has been stolen,
 A Pathan's son was my lover,
 And he left the penis on my bed.

The Ser songs from Gonda and Hindus in Saugor:

100

The oil burns,
 The wick burns,
 But the lamp makes a name.

21. viz. Salim: Name of a Pathan.

The son wrestles in the ring,
It's the father's name that is praised.

101

I have not eaten the curds,²²
My mother! I did not eat the curds,
My hands are clean,
My legs are short,
How can I reach the high hanging vessel?
Early in the morning I went after the cows
And at dusk I returned home.
Mother! I did not eat the curds,
The suspicion of all falls on me,
I am always taunted—
They say—
Oh! Take that stick of yours
And also the blanket
As if you were a stranger
Get away from here—
Chandrasakhi then gathered
Krishna in her arms
And pressed him smiling to her neck.
My mother I did not eat the curds.

102

On a high bedstead of sermar²³ wood
The Penihar calls us.
Crying loudly,
My lover, the sweetheart,
Oh my friends,
From where did the rider come?

The Dadara of Gond:

103

Make a plunder, Oh Navalsa! Banjara.
From what quarter comes the Banjara?

22. This is a song which gives the typical description of the childhood mischief of Krishna.

23. The cotton tree.

To what quarter will he go?
 The Banjara belongs to an unknown land,
 He goes to the west.
 What have you loaded, oh Banjara?
 Make a loot, oh Banjara
 I have loaded cloves,
 Big cardamons are loaded by the nabab Navalsa.

Lullabies of Gonds and Hindus in Saugor:

104

Small are the feet of the baby boy,
 Make anklets for him, oh goldsmith.
 The baby will put on the anklet
 And go to his maternal uncle's house,
 Small are the feet of the baby boy.

105

Swing, baby, swing,
 There's a flower on your cap,
 The cap is tearing,
 The flower is spoilt.

The Sajani from Saugor, of the Gonds:

106

On the bank of the river
 A sage fetches leaves of 'bel' tree.
 There are no leaves on the tree.
 On that tree a deer feeds,
 The deer has no head
 It was so designed by heaven,
 There is no point to its toe,
 That deer was cut,
 And the deer has no flesh.²⁴

24. The song puts before us the riddle of life. The deer is the soul of man. The 'bel' tree is the tree of life. The limbs of the deer are the human limbs. The soul is invisible and life unsubstantial yet the phenomenon of life appears to be real. It is essentially a Hindu idea but presented in primitive manner. So also the reference of the 'bel' tree is significant. It is considered sacred by Hindu and is an emblem of Mahadeo the lord of Death. Hence the song suggests the mystery of death also by the last two lines.

The Bhajan of Gonds in Saugor:

First remember the Gurudeo.
 Next think of Ganpati.
 Mother and father are Gurudeo.
 Bow the head before the saints,
 All saints have come together.
 And shown mercy.
 Now listen to the story
 With rapt attention.
 The deeds of Ram are well known,
 There is no adequate measure
 To estimate them.
 Pleasing to the eyes of all is
 The son of Dasarath.
 On account of the abduction of Sita
 He made an attack on Lanka.
 His army was many millions and billions,
 It is beyond count.
 How much army he brought with him!
 The wife spoke thus (to Ravan),
 Send back Janaki
 From where she comes
 Let her go back to Ajodhya.
 Listen to this tale of wonder
 People have heard it.
 The darling son of Dasarath.
 Oh Ravan! He has come with an army
 Which seems to belong
 To the city of the gods.
 As the crowds of men and women
 Fold their hands and bow down
 From where else this respect can come?
 He is endowed with Chakra and Padma.²⁵
 He is like a string of jewels
 And speaks sweet words
 How will his parents²⁶ live?

25. Chakra and Padma are the disk and the lotus signs on the hands of great men, supposed to be the emblems of royalty.

26. The allusion to 'parents' shows the lack of precision in relating the details of the Ramayana. Ram's father was not living then. The Bhajan is an

In whose house
 There is a boy like him.
 You are foolish and fickle
 All now what you have been.
 Send her back
 From where she comes.
 Now Ram comes to your place.
 Serve him respectfully
 You have become sad through love,
 Tears flow from your eyes
 Look at the beauty of the hero.
 My Janaki who seldom closes her eyes,
 Is greatly reduced,
 Try to please her.
 Her love is getting crushed.

A cradle song or lullaby of the Kamars in Raipur:

The bedstead is made of gold.
 Of silver is made the cot.
 Sleep, my chief.
 Let the subjects call
 And wake you.
 What shall I do?
 My chief grunts,
 And says 'hu hu'
 Sleep, my chief,
 Let the subjects call you.
 Say so and you will have the 'gendo' leaves.
 Say so and you will have the 'gudo' leaves.
 The infant chief
 For the sake of his subjects,
 Goes to the bazar of Borigaon;
 Go my little chief,
 Hold a green umbrella,
 Put black collirium,
 Let the eyes shine,
 Let the people be awe-stricken,
 Tie the turban.

episode from the Ramayana and is entirely traditional with no primitive stamp on it unlike in so many other cases we have come across.

Go, little man, dazzling
 Straight to the bazar.
 He went and stood
 Watching the bazar,
 Umbrella in his hand,
 Slippers on his feet.
 Take five cowries, oh subjects.
 I shall buy *ber* fruits in Borigaon bazar.
 Come all subjects
 And have tobacco and pipe
 And I shall go home.
 Oh mother, I had been out
 For a business concerning the subjects
 That's why I am late.
 And this nasty girl is beating me.
 Five men walked behind
 Five men walked behind
 Five in the front
 Water for washing feet
 Is kept ready for the little chief
 Be seated on the cot, oh chief.

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Two 'keu' roots have to be cut and pierced,
 Three 'kendaru' roots have to be cut and pierced.
 Oh little girl! It's a woe
 To grind 'madiya' corn.
 Great is the pain of bearing your own children.
 It's a pleasure to see other people's children.

The Gotul-git:

The Ballad of Deogarh

So-la-re-la-re-re-re-la-re-re-la.

110

Listen, oh people, listen,
 Who is this king?

He is a great king,
He is the king Maragudi,
Great is the Maragudi king.
Who are these queens?
Who is this great queen?
This is queen Bandosiri.
Bandosiri is a great queen,
The king's own Bandosiri
Oh! What a great king he is!
What plans were made?
Oh what a great king!
The king of which fortress it shall be?
Of which fortress shall be the queen?
Oh the great queen!
Of Sirel fortress shall be the king.
Oh! the great king!
Of Paralkoti shall be the queen²⁷
Oh the great queen!
Of Sirel fortress shall be the king.
Oh! the great king!
Of Paralkoti shall be the queen.²⁷
What plans were made?
Oh! The great king.
Call the watchmen,
Call the Thakur and his wife,
Call all the citizens
The Sipahi went running at the king's call.
Oh! the great Sipahi.
The invitation business
Which would take eight days
Was finished in three days' time.
The watchmen went
And the subjects were ordered to be ready.
Whose counsel was taken?
It was the queen Bandosiri.
Fierce fight raged.
Oh! it was a great battle.

27. The sister of this queen named was given as a gift to the king of Sirelgarh.

It went as far as Khairagarh.
 The battle went on
 With heavy casualties.
 The king of Khairagarh,
 He was sleeping on the bedstead.
 There was a lame kotwar,
 There was the lame kotwar of Khairagarh.
 He noticed their (enemy's) movements
 Oh! He noticed their movements
 Limping, the Kotwar went to the king
 Oh! Sire, where are you?
 Nengi, Jogi, Pande and Pardhan have come
 Oh Sire! Where are you?
 Who has come?
 What is this riot about?
 The Nengi went to the Kotwar's place
 Where is the Kotwar!
 Wake up, oh Kotwar's wife
 Some (subjects) went to the king's palace
 'Sire! Oh Sire! They called out.
 Get up, Oh King! Get up.'
 The king says: what is it
 Where are the Nengi?
 Oh king, there is an armed battalion
 Robbery and destruction are going on.
 Listen to the cries coming from the people
 The fighting is going on.
 All preparations for the fight are made,
 What is the enemy?
 Let one who is prepared to face the enemy
 Come forward and accept the Bida²⁸
 The lame Kotwar took the Bida
 And limping went away.
 Bida was given to the king of Deogarh,
 The king got ready quickly,
 The horse was harnessed,
 The elephant Hiramoti also was brought.

28. To accept a Bida means to accept the challenge of vanquishing the enemy; to offer Bida in court also is a sign of bestowiny honour on the recipient.

All the preparations for the battle were accomplished,
 The ancestral weapons were taken out,
 Swords big and small were taken out,
 In the left hand the king held the weapon
 And prayed to the gods.
 The king prayed to Budha Deo,
 Now the shouts of 'catch oh! Catch'
 And kill, oh kill', were heard by the king
 The horse was made to gallop.
 And the king reaching the battlefield
 was surrounded on all fronts by the fighters,
 Neither mother nor brother,
 Nor the relatives and women did they know
 Such was the bloodshed.
 Three hundred men were killed,
 The men of Khairagarh thus fell.
 The king of Deogarh conquered
 'You have won' thus proclaimed
 The cock at day-break.
 The vanquished king of Khairagarh,
 Said so—I shall give you whatever you ask for.
 Let your kingdom be yours!
 What shall I do with it?
 Give your Hirobai to me
 I want nothing else
 He had to give her,
 Then the Khairagarh king's nose was cut.

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*The Ballad of Durgopal*²⁹

Above lies Deogarh, below rests Chanda.
 The rulers of Deogarh are worshippers of the gods.
 In Tadai-yakha lived Raja Koksar
 His son was Kesarsay.
 And Durgopal was the son of Kesarsay,
 His grandmother was Singal-agar Moti,
 His mother Vimalratana Moti,
 Says Durgopal to his mother, Vimalratana Moti.

29. From an Ojha.

'Mother? have I any relatives?'
I do not know said she

(Grandmother says) :

'Listen, child Durgopal,
Your uncle Changay's house is at Vadki,
And uncle Granduraja's home is at Nagpur'.
As you say, oh grandmother,
Did they quarrel with anyone
Were they killed by anyone?',
'No, we never fought with any one'.

— — — — —
The letter was despatched by them,
To Vadki Nagpur with a messenger,
In Vataki Nagpur the Kacheri was full,
At one end was held a durbar,
The two messengers, the brothers stood there,
First they said 'Hanumanji' and then 'Ram, Ram'!
From Deogarh have they come?
What makes them come here! Oh say!
If we tell by mouth it will not be believed,
We have a confidential letter, please read it.
The confidential letter was read,
From the purse tied at the waist five rupees
were given to them.
Go, boys! to the watch house
Go and eat something.
He took the letter and went to the palace.
Look oh! Rani! Your nephew's letter.
Oh! Raja, he is your nephew also
And yet you do not go to him.
Now shall I go, oh Rani
Go! Oh Rani! And bring a box.
So the box was brought.
It was opened with a key.
He took out two gold coins,
And also two hundred rupees,
Now shall I go to the town.
He sent the box down with a servant,
Which he wanted to take with him.

He put on a new cracking shoe,
Took a coloured stick,
Put on new clothes
And started for the town.
He reached the town,
And asked the whereabouts of the goldsmith,
Here he is, Oh sire! You are welcome!
Oh! son of goldsmith,
Take out all costly ornaments
Be seated, Oh Maharaj on the woollen rug.
Here are the costly ornaments.
From these ornaments
He took bangles to put on hands,
Anklets for feet, and a shining necklace,
And also an ear-ring.
He gave a gold coin.
He closed the ornaments in the box
And started with the servant boy.
Oh! Servant boy! Let us go to the Marwari's shop.
So they reached the Marwari's shop.
Oh Marwari boy, take out costly clothes for us.
The Marwari boy made the Maharaja sit on a cot,
And placed costly clothes before him.
The Raja picked up a dhoti and placed it inside,
And a gold cap and a cloak also.
He paid hundred rupees for it.
He put that in the box and closed it.
The two started their way again.
On the way they came across a shoe-maker's shop,
Oh! Shoemaker's son, can we have a pair of shoes?
It is here, Oh Maharaj.
And he placed before them a golden shoe,
He chose a pair of shoes,
Worth Durgopal's feet.
On their way they saw a confectioner's shop.
Oh servant boy! Go to the confectionery,
And bring sweets worth a rupee.
He put them also in the box
And returned to the palace.
The Rani saw him.

Here is, oh Raja, water kept in a gold vessel
To wash your feet.
So (having washed his feet) the Raja sat down
What have you brought, oh Raja?
See it yourself.
The Rani took out the things from the box.
How much have you brought, oh Raja.
When shall you start?
When you cook something for the children to eat.
Then shall I go.
So I shall prepare the things immediately.
So the Rani made preparation for cooking.
And the Raja got up.
Bring the bullocks for which
I paid a gold coin each.
Bring the cart with a cloth-covering and be ready.
The Rani finished her cooking.
Oh Raja! Are you ready?
Here, oh Rani, the cart covered with cloth is ready
Put the box inside.
And with the box, a basket of clothes
Also should be kept inside.
Now everything is ready, Oh Rani.
Come, we shall dine, Oh Raja.
The Rani gave water from a jar
To wash his mouth,
Placed also a sandal wood seat for him.
And a dish of gold.
The Raja ate the dinner and got up.
The Rani also left the dish and got up,
She brought water,
The Raja washed his mouth
And sat on a chair.
The servant boy gave the Raja pan to eat
And the Rani sat down to eat again.
Oh servant boy, put oil in the cart.
It is done, Oh Maharaj
The Rani had finished eating
She ate pan,
So the Rani was ready.

Come, oh Raja, let us make a move.
Oh Rani, we must take four servants with us.
The servant boy yoked the carriage.
Come, oh Rani, be seated.
They sat in the carriage.
The servant boy walked in front.
Prepare one more cart for myself,
So the cart was prepared.
In front goes the Raja's carriage,
Behind goes the Rani's carriage,
Let us go, oh servant boy, to your Deogarh.
They came upon the road to Deogarh.
The mango-groves of Deogarh were faintly visible.
Gradually they seemed to come nearer and nearer.
Oh! The royal office is working in full swing.
The voices are heard from the buildings,
They reached the royal office.
Your uncle has come.
So, a palanquin was despatched
And also a line of soldiers for reception.
They brought him to the office.
They fell to his feet and brought him there.
The Rani went to the palace,
The Raja entered the office
Oh! Durgopal's uncle has come,
A thousand homages were paid to him,
The Raja sat on a chair,
Durgopal gave him due respects and said:
When my father died you did not come.
You did not attend the funerary rites also,
What was the cause of the estrangement?
No child, Because I was ill I did not come.
So he bluffed him.
And started a talk on various insignificant topics.
Afterwards he got up from the office.
With his son (brother's son) he went to the palace
Now he had an interview with the queen.
He stood near his mother
Mother! I have come to see you
But you never come to my place.

Oh son! You never turned up though your brother died.
He again bluffed and gave an excuse.
He then called his Rani.
Oh Rani come here,
Bring the box.
The Rani brought the box and placed it there.
The Raja with his key opened the box,
He gave the dhoti to Durgopal.
He then gave him the bangles with the tiger-emblem,
He also gave him the ear-ring,
And the anklets,
And the golden cap,
And the golden pair of shoes,
So behaved Durgopal's uncle.
The durbar was held.
For three days it went on.
Oh child Durgopal, I am going home now.
Oh! Child! My elder brother had a dish give it to us.
It is your property! oh uncle!
Give us elder brother's horse,
It is yours, Oh uncle.
Give us elder brother's elephant.
With this however the enmity began.
Now twice he was offended.
The rage went from his (Durgopal's) feet to the head
Now I see your dodge, Oh uncle.
Here is the burden of your gifts,
I throw it away.
Durgopal took away the bangles
And in great rage threw them away.
So he took off the shoes from his feet
And threw them away.
He got up from the chair,
And left the office.
After this quarrel
Gandu-raja reached his carriage.
Come, oh Rani, sit in it.
Immediately they started
And reached their town.
He travelled straight to Chanda.

There the royal office was working.
Near the office the carriage was stopped
And went to the office.
Again the greetings were offered.
The Rani went to her mother in the palace,
The Raja sat in the office.
Oh boy! You always come here in good spirits,
Why is your face so dejected to-day.
With shame he did not tell the truth.
Oh maternal uncle! nothing has happened,
And talked about other things.
When the office was dismissed
He went to the palace with his maternal uncle.
Oh maternal uncle! Your grandson beat me
Oh! He is your son! What does it matter!
No! Maternal uncle! I shall with force
Carry away every thing from that house.
Will you thus, my boy, rob your own house?
Oh uncle! Give me your army.
Thus he persuaded him.
And the army from Chanda was ready.
More troops came from Vatki Nagpur
They arrived in front of Deogarh
And the bullets were discharged.
The loud noise produced from this
Reached the ear of Ganda Teli.
At this hour which robbers have come?
Ganda Teli made ready the bullock,
Took the shield in his hands.
In one hand he held the sword
With a jump he sat on the bullock,
He woke the army,
The Teli lead it.
A fierce fight went on
Head after head was falling.
There was a great roar,
The battle went on fiercely,
The army was slaughtered,
The army was slaughtered,
Half the army, that was left only fled.

The army was killed.
 Ganda Teli alone returned to his home.
 Ganda Teli reached the Deogarh office.
 The office was working
 Greetings were offered to him.
 You have done indeed well.
 In leading the army
 This time shall be recorded.
 Half the kingdom of Vatki-Nagpur is yours.

Conclusion:—The songs fairly illustrate how the regional culture affects the ideology and the form of songs and steals a march over the tribal culture even in the so-called most secluded places of the province, so far as the ideology and form of the songs is concerned.

The two ballads however form a contrast to the rest of the collection as they strictly give us some of the episodes from the genealogical records of the Gond kingdoms at Deogarh and Chanda. Such records are nowadays being fast forgotten and only available in pieces. They are primitive in form and spirit. They lack the vigorous tone to fit the subject matter. These ballads are called 'The songs of the Gotul' and were looked upon as an item of study of the unmarried Gond boys in the dormitory.