

**The Mundas: an ethnic community in the south-west coastal region of Bangladesh (Buno/kuli/Sarna/Horoko, Adibasi, Indigenous people during the British period coming from Ranchi).**

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### **Abstract**

The Mundas (Aborginal) are an ethnic community of the Kingdom of Royal Bengal Tiger of the Sundarbans. The Mundas are called ‘Sarna/Buno//Kuli/Horoko/the neglected Tribe. During the British period, the Indigenous people travelled to Bangladesh about coming from Ranchi, the capital of Jharkhand (Bihar) and have been here ever since. The group is one of the Indian largest scheduled tribes. The Mundas practice indigenous religion, distinctive culture and play. They are excellent in singing, dancing, drinking, various working, catching fish/crab, shrimp, collecting wood and honey etc. They also trust in ghosts (Bhut) and spirits- both good and bad and call on them to either help someone who is sick or to do damage to another person. Their cemetery is called ‘Masna’. They also dedicate Hen for the rituals celebration for their God (Sing Bonga-The Sun). They believe that, after death the soul come back at their home and save them different types of dangers. They follow their ancient process or their forefather’s direction. During the fiestas, they serve rice wine ‘Haria /Tari’. They are addicted Rat’s meat, Snails, Crabs, Pigs, wild Cats, Civet and dead animals due to injuries. They speak in ‘Sadri’. Their greeting word is ‘Johar’

**Keywords: The Mundas; The Munda; Indigenous people; Aboriginal (Adibashi); ethnic community; Buno; Kuli; Sarna; Horoko; The most neglected Tribe;**

“(Filho, & Jacob, 2020)”

## **Introduction**

The Mundas (Adibashi) are aboriginal tribes; a social and national development depends on all class people. There are many tribes in Bangladesh; the Mundas are one of them. Bangladesh is developing day by day, but there is no development basic need of tribe people (in the Mundas). They are also struggling in the natural disaster like cyclones (Sidar, Aila, Mohasen, Comen, Foni, Bulbul, Amphan, Yash, floods, salinity intrusion, famine, heat waves etc) and the COVID-19 (Corona) pandemic. The present practice then certificates resilience with a special focus on the human subsistence of the profane the Mundas habitation near the Bangladesh Sundarbans Forest. They are most deprived and neglected community in the south west part in Bangladesh. The Mundas (Adibashi) are restricted to a tiny of crippled presence where introduced superstition and social discrimination have undermined their own strength, cultural values, language and traditions. The fact that groups of the Mundas (Adibashi) live also in the coastal areas of South West Bangladesh in the district of Khulna and Satkhira is almost absolutely unfamiliar and denied by both the greater Bangladeshi and the Bangladesh Government let alone the world.

Most of the Bangladeshi and world people know absolutely nothing about this tribal group of people who have been able to preserve their ethnic identity in spite of many obstacles. Those who have a little bit of knowledge about the Mundas call them ‘Buno’ which means, ‘people of the forest;’ that is uncivilized and savage people and therefore considered unfit for human association. In the social ladder of Bangladeshi people the place of the Mundas is below the untouchables whose general conditions in every aspect are much better than the Mundas. That famous definition given by Mahatma Gandhi about the Untouchables of India as the people of the 4Ls can be applied to this group of people as well. The Mundas of the South West

coastal region of Bangladesh are really the last, the last, the lowest and the lost among the poor people living in this part of the country (Fr. Luigi Paggi S.X. 2003 and M. Dash 2002).

The South West Coastal Region of Bangladesh consists of the Districts of Khulna, Satkhira and Bagherhat, together with the southern part of Jeshore District. The region is influenced by the ocean tides coming up from the Bay of Bengal through the numerous estuaries and creeks which cut across the Sundarbans forest. This region comprises the land, which was cleared for human settlements out of the Sundarbans mangrove forest.

The inhabitants used to cultivate rice on that low-lying land during the rainy season by building temporary dykes to prevent tidal incursion and by constructing temporary sluice gates to let out surplus of rainwater. After the harvest the mound and sluices were dismantled and the tides were given free play again. Nowadays, in many parts of that vast area, rice cultivation has been replaced by shrimp cultivation, which has brought a real economic disaster, for so many poor people and great abundance to only a few very rich people. Along with this economic upset, an ecological disaster is also occurrence in those areas.

Human settlements happened at various times in history and for different reasons in this area. There were those who had been living here basically from pre-historic times. Later at various times different communities emigrated from their original homelands to escape either from conflict or famine or other calamities and sought refuge in the vastness of the Sundarbans forest or in the maze of rivers and creeks of the low-lying flat land. Then, there are those people from over packed regions who were attracted by this region by its high productivity.

Lastly, during the nineteenth century, the Zamindar (land lord), who received fixation of forest land from the British East India Company, imported aboriginal tribal people from India to clear the forest (N. R. Sarkar 1899).

### **Objectives of the study**

Bangladesh is one of the most packed and middle income countries in the world. There are many castes in our country. The Munda is one of them. The COVID-19 (Corona) and natural disaster (such as: torrid cyclones, floods, salinity trespass, hunger and heat ripple) took away livelihoods. Bangladesh will not go to vision 2021 and 2041 without the Munda people. Specific goals are to know about life style of Munda people to contribute the Digital Bangladesh for good governs middle income country by 2021 and development country by 2041. The Mundas need the right, dignity, honors, social status and freedom. There is no excuse for development of all sectors without the Munada people. We need to exercise their language, culture and own vision of development for the Mundas. In solving the climate, biodiversity crises, preventing the emergence of contagious diseases and financial disaster, we must ensure that the Mundas knowledge is owned and shared by the Munda communities themselves. The caustic inequalities of Munda people, to full recognize the abuse they have endured, and to celebrate their knowledge wisdom. The world should need necessary step for developing the Munda community.

### **Methodology of the study**

***Study Area and Duration:*** The Mundas of South-west Bangladesh are dispersed in 43 small villages situated in four different Upazilas in the two District of Khulna and Satkhira That have been chosen purposively. I have taken written and oral permission to disclose all or

necessary information to the participants in the study. This study was completed for a period of about 2 years from 2019 to 2021.

***Sampling Framework:*** Before gathering ultimate data a preparative base line observation was driven a total number of 330 household leaders, about 1850 people were filed. In the practice, about 40% of the total (N=330) households as well as 1850 people were approved through namely Koyra Upazila in the District of Khulna, Tala, Debhata and Shyamnagor Upazila in the District of Satkhira.

These are the names of the villages where the Mundas of Tala Upazila live under 2 no Nagorghat Union Parishad, Asan Nagor, Arodangi, Bakkhali and Horinkhola. Under 9 no Kholishkhali Union Parishad Krishnonagor and Gacha Durgapur.

These are the names of the villages where the Mundas of Shyamnagor Upazila live under 12 no Gabura Union Parishad, Gabura, Jelekhali, Parsemari and Dumuria, under 10 no Atulia Union Parishad, Magurakuni, under 9 no Burigoalini Union Parishad, Datinakhali, Burigoalini and Abad Chandipur, under 8 no Ishwaripur Union Parishad, Khagra ghat, Sreefolkati old, Sreefolkati new and Dhumghat (The capital of Protap Paditto, Land Lord / Zamidar), under 7 no Munshigonj Union Parishad, Uttar Kadomtala and Jelekhali, under 6 no Ramjannagor Union Parishad, Taranipur, Vetkhali, East Kalinchi and West Kalinchi, under 5 no Koykhali Union Parishad, Keoratoli, Sapkhali and Shalkhali under 3 no Nakipur (Sadar) Union Parishad, Kashipur and Badoghata,

These are the names of the villages where the Mundas of Koyra Upazila live under Kayra Sadar Union Parishad, Tepakhali, Nolpara, Majherait, under North Betkhashi Union Parishad, Sheik Sardarpara, Boro Bari, Pathakhali, Horihorpur, Gazipara, Kacharibari, Botul Bazar, under South Betkashi Union Parishad, Anktihara, Binapani, and Jorosingh.

This is the names of the villages where the Mundas of Debhata Upazila lives under Parulia Union Parishad Patakhali.

**Table 1 Study Area, Sample size and the Data Collection Methods**

<i>District</i>	<i>Upazilas</i>	<i>Munda's Villages</i>	<i>Sample Size</i>	<i>Case studies</i>	<i>Data collection methods</i>
Satkhira	Shyamnagor	23	150	1	Questionnaire  Interviews, scheduled interview, informal meeting, group discussion, observation and literature review
	Tala	06	42	1	
	Debhata	01	8	1	
Khulna	Koyra	13	130	1	
2	4	43	330	4	

Both person to person and household leaders were considered as the unit of analysis of the study. In achieving the objective, blending of several participatory Rural Appraisal and other methods such as scheduled interview, informal meeting, group discussion, observation and literature review were The Mundas.

The investigation work is quantitative in nature. The 43 villages of Shyamnagor, Tala, Debhata and Koyra Upazila is the belt of this practice. The arguments behind choosing these areas are many aboriginal communities living permanently. All the Mundas (aboriginal) of Shyamnagor, Tala, Debhata and Koyra who have lived about 220 years ago, have been here ever since (Krishnapada 2017). The four Upazilas of Bangladesh has selected purposively where most people live below the poverty line. They always face natural disaster (Harican-

1988, Sidor-2007, Aila-2009, Comen-2015, Fony, Bulbul-2019, Ampan-2020 and Covid-19, etc) the four Upazilas are Shyamnagar, Tala, Debhata and Koyra.

For this investigation work, both primary and secondary data has been collected. Primary data collected from field investigation and secondary data was collected from different papers, books, Articles, NGO- Sundarban Adibasi Munda Sangastha (SAMS), media and other documents. For primary data, interview and observation techniques have been used. Moreover interview schedule has observed in which both open-ended and close ended questions included for data collection through face to face interviews also executed. The collected data has processed after essential checking, re-checking and editing data was analyzed using the Ms Office Word -2007. Ethical standards were maintained in every stage of the practice.

#### **Finding of the study:**

***Table-2: Age of the Household Leaders and Community Leaders (Matbor/ Pahan (Priest)/ Sardar) of the Mundas.***

<i>Age</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
18-40	20	6.06
41-60	180	54.55
61-100	130	39.39
Total	N-330	100

***Table-3: Occupation of the Household Leaders and Community Leaders (Matbor/ Pahan (Priest)/ Sardar) of the Mundas.***

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Farmer	45	13.64
Day Labor	128	38.79
Seasonal Labor	108	32.73
Carpenter	18	5.45
Other	31	9.39
Total	N-330	100

***Table-4: The Munda People living in the Sundarbans areas***

<i>Serial No</i>	<i>Upazila</i>	<i>Village</i>	<i>Pahan/priest</i>	<i>Family</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total Members</i>
1	Shyamnagor	23	38	407	870	841	1711
2	Koyra	13	14	358	834	641	1475
3	Tala	06	10	120	279	261	540
4	Debhata	01	02	07	21	11	32
Total	04	43	72	892	2004	1754	3758

**Source census made by SAMS (Sundarban Adibasi Munda Sangastha)- 2020.**



**Table-5: Problems Faced by the Mundas.**

<i>Types of Problem</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Education	210	63.64
Water	330	100.00
Housing	305	92.42
Health care	310	93.94
Social Discrimination	320	96.97
Writing own Method	330	100.00
Entertainment/Cultural Practice	325	98.48
Religious Institution	330	100.00
Digital Bangladesh	315	95.45

**Table-6: Social Water Problem of the Mundas**

<i>Upazila</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Shyamnagor	150	45.50
Koyra	130	39.40
Tala	42	12.70
Debhata	08	2.40

	Total -330	100.00
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***Table-7: Education Problem of the Mundas***

<i>Range of Education</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (N=330)</i>
Higher Education	09	2.73
Secondary Education	41	12.42
Primary Education	81	24.55
Signature Knowledge	91	27.57
Illiterate/ Tip	108	32.73
Total	N-330	100

***Tble-8: Housing Problem of the Mundas.***

<i>House</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Mud House	202	61.21
The hut/Slum	103	31.21
Made of Brick house	25	7.58
Total	N-330	100

**Table-9: Health Care of the Mundas**

<i>Treatment System</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Kabiraj (Scrub)	255	77.27
Quack	55	16.67
Health Institution	20	6.06
Total	N-330	100

**Table-10: Social Situation of the Mundas**

<i>Social Layer</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Low	330	100
Middle	0	0
High	0	0
Total	N-330	100

**Table-11: No Knowledge about Digital Bangladesh of the Mundas**

<i>Digital Bangladesh</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	15	4.55

No	122	36.97
No Comment	193	58.48
Total	N-330	100

**Table-12: Opinion for Improving the Mundas Problems**

<i>Opinion</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
To Increase basic needs	45	13.60
To Supply Drinking water	55	16.70
To Increase Government help	18	5.50
No Comment	200	60.60
Other	12	3.60
Total	N-330	100

## **Discussion**

The Munda people travelled to Bangladesh about 220 years ago from Ranchi, the capital of Jharkhand and have been here ever since. They are found in Koyra, Debhata, Tala, mainly near the Sundarbans in the Shyamnagar Upazila. It lies around 350 kilometers away from Dhaka. They Munda,s are originating in the states of Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Chhattisgar and Arunacal Prodesch of India. Ranchi is more or less the epicenter of this area called ‘Chatanagpur’. It includes part of Odissa, Madhya Pradesh and west Bengal. To Muslim

Historians, Chotanagpur was known as 'Jharkhand.' The Mundas (Adibashi) are one of the strongest groups among tribal people (A.B.M. Rasheduzzaman2006, M. Dash 2002, B.M. Khalequzzaman2006, M. Kamal 2010, K. Munda 2017 and S. Sarkar 2018). Birsa Bhagwan, the leader of messianic movement, among the Munda people of Chotanagpur is certainly the best known and the most famous one. Actually, such a Messiah appeared and claimed to be by God to liberate from their extortioners. About 200 years ago, the Munda were separated of their ancient land rights by the British Land Settlement Act which turned them from owners into tenants who could be removed at will by the landlords. Between 1790 and 1832 the Munda revolted seven times against their landlords but with no success (Fr. Luigi Paggi S.X. 2003).

### ***Myths about the origin of the Mundas***

According to the the Mundas, creators, 'Singbonga and Ote Barm' created a boy and a girl and placed them in a cave. These two gave birth to 12 daughters and 12 sons. These boys and girls became 12 couples. Then their gods ordered them to go to different parts of the world to spread the lineage and send different elements to take with them. 1<sup>st</sup> couple chooses meat and they are known as 'Cole' or 'Ho' The 2<sup>nd</sup> couple chose the meat of another animal and became known as 'Bhumij' and 'Matkum'. The 3<sup>rd</sup> couple chooses vegetable and and takes the name 'Shudra'. Another couple took snails and became known as 'Bhumian'. Other 2 couples took pigs and became known as 'Santal'. What was left was chosen by the other couples and their family name is 'Ghashi'. Thus the Mundas are subdivided into different races (m. Kamal 2010).

### ***Naming Mundas***

There is difference of opinion about the etymological meaning of the word 'Munda'. Many people think that the word Munda comes from the word 'Murha'. Here in the Munda language, Murha means the root of the tree. Many Mundas say that the word Munda comes

from 'Mur'. The head is twisted in enchanted language. Most of the older Mundas trust that the word Munda comes from Murha or Mur (S. Sarkar 2018).

The Mundas are also called 'Sarna' people. Sarna refers to a grove of 'Sal' trees where the Mundas used to venerate their God and their spirit. The word 'Sarna' is used to designate the ancestral religion of the Mundas. By extension the term 'Sarna tribe' is applied to the Mundas of Ranchi in Bangladesh (the Sundarbans Area) which the Mundas have migrated. The word Munda is thought to have come from a Sanskrit word, meaning the chief of the village. The word 'Munda' basically means the head of the community. The Mundas also believe that they were born from the head of Mahadev (God) and that is why they are known as Munda or Muriyari (M. Kamal 2010).

The Mundas call themselves 'Horoko' which means 'men.' They are also proud to call themselves 'hero-co' which means people. But they are also elated to be addressed as Munda. Ironically, the word "Munda" means a man of prestige and wealth (Fr. Luigi Paggi S.X. 2003). Linguistically the Munda belong to the large Austro-Asiatic family like the Santals and the khasis. Ethnically the Munda belong to the broad group of Proto-Australoid and speak the Mundari dialect of the Austro-Asiatic family (Fr. Luigi Paggi S.X. 2003 and M. C. Perucca, M. K. Munda and M. R. B. Razzaque 2010). It is nagging that their Hindu neighbors gave the name to them. The Munda Society has six subdivisions as (a) Raja, (b) pahan, (c) Mundari, (d) Compart, (e) Nag, (f) Bashi (K. Munda-2018). Every Munda village has a traditional leader (Montri or Minister), the Matabbar or Sardar, the person that goes to community if some problems appear in the Mundas community. He resolves conflicts among the community according to the type of crime. The maximum punishment is to keep the offender or his family in solitary captivity or to feed 22 grams of matabbar and its comrades (Institute of Bangladesh Studies Rajshahi University-2018). However, there is no class division in the infatuate society.

***Reason for coming to Bangladesh from Ranchi***

The mundas have not available historical record about the arrival of these people to south-west Bangladesh. According to oral tradition the arrival of the Mundas to these Southern regions can be divided into four situations (Luigi 2003, M. Kamal 2010 and S. Sarkar 2018).

1. They were employed as ‘Lathials’ or ‘guards’ in the Royall household in British period.

2. When Indigo plantation was started in this part of the country the planters brought them for working in their fields.

3. When at the closing of the 18<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Jamindari system was introduced and landlords got leases of large lots of land in the Sundarbans forest the Munda’s were brought to clear the jungle and establish agriculture in those cleared lands.

4. Due to ‘Poverty.’

The Mundas were agricultural labor but brave, stronger and clearing jungle specialist in throwing obeisance. The physical power and diverse experience pay attention to the British Government. And so, they displaced the Sundarbans. The Munda living near the Sundarban forest are the descendants of those the Mundas who arrive to clean the jungle and obtain cultivable land out of it (M. C. Perucca, M. K. Munda and M. R. B. Razzaque 2010 and S Sarkar-2018,).

As already stated, a little bit of anthropological and ethnographic research has been done on the Mundas living in Northern Bangladesh but absolutely nothing has been written about the Mundas living in the coastal region of South-Western Bangladesh. The only ‘Literature’ available about them consist in a few articles appeared on newspapers and a few short reports written by NGO people. ETV (Ekushe Television), The Daily Star 2000 (Newspapers), G. Noonday, *Jonokonto* 2002, R. I. Montu GaonConnection 2002 (newspapers) also broadcast a short report on the Munda’s living in this part of the country. It may also be interesting to report a few short quotations from those few available sources:

A very interesting article appeared in “the GaonConnection” on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020. This is what he wrote: “Bangladesh’s indigenous Munda community in the Sundarbans faces hunger as livelihoods dry up” The Munda community, with its root in India, living in the Sundarbans of Bangladesh is out of work in the COVID-19, buried under debt and in extreme sorrow.

Another a very interesting article appeared in “the Daily Star” on December 01, 2015. This is what he wrote: ‘The Munda people of the Sundarbans’ The Munda are an ethnic community of the Sundarbans mangrove ecological zone. They are found in Khulna, Jeshore and mainly near the Sundarbans in the Shyamnagar Upazilla as well as Joypurhat and greater Rajshahi. They live surrounding the world famous Sundarbans mangrove forest and depend on the ecology for their subsistence and livelihood.

### ***Deity of the Mundas***

The local Mundas said that they adoration include Sing Bonga, Buru Bonga and Ikir Bonga (Bonga means deity). The Mundas are who live in the south-western of Bangladesh (the Sundarbans areas), after saying the name of Ranchi district and the name of the village, the rituals and festival are performed by remembering the name of their forefathers. Sing Bonga (the Sun) is the main God or creator (A. H, Jahangir 2015, in INDIANMIRROR and BANGLAPEDIA). The religion of the Mundas is the original religion. That is, trees, stone and animals are worshipped things.

Ranchi district is named after this Richie Buru hill, in the past, only tribal’s used to come here and adoration. Their deities were worshiped here and there was no idols here at that time. Now there are various types fetishes including Shiva’s idol, Ram,s idol, kali ma,s idol, Mansa Ma,s idol and Hanuman’s idol and there is always a large crowed of tourists. The Mundas still respect this mountain (Richie Buru hill) as the holiest place (K. Munda 2017).

### ***The condition of the Mundas***



The Mundas of the Sundarban are gradually decreasing in number day by day. On the other hand the numbers of local Bengali people are increasing due to continuous immigration in the area from the neighboring places. The Mundas take this type of Bengali settlement in their areas as a threat to their cultural wholeness and an excessive pressure on their environmental habitation (N. A. Khan ed 2000). The Munda people who still live there say that at least half portion of their group had to face such economic and social hardships that some Munda people decided to leave Bangladesh and took harbor around Bongaon, a small town on the way to Calcutta in West Bengal.

At present, the Mundas living as they do on the western coast of Sundarbans, the world's famous mangrove forest, their development depends on wages. They earn working to collect fish, honey and crab in the Sundarbans forest surrounding rivers and channels, cutting wood and nypa fruticans (Goal pata), in shrimp and crab farms, in paddy fields, share cropping or in brick kilns (S. Roy-2019). Sometimes local businessmen use the Munda people as labor in collecting of natural resources from the Sundarbans. Working they must, without working, they will have no money and no food. Today, the COVID-19 had not hit the Munda community in 43 villages. While the lockdown in Bangladesh begun around mid-March in 2020, the prohibition on fishing in the sea (two months every year). Very little public and private aid reaches the Mundas. In order to survive, they have taken a loan. The Mundas are also socially late. Barely anyone is literate.

There are three large groups of the Mundas:

1. The Compact
2. The Kharia
3. The Mankin.

The groups living in the Sundarbans region of Bangladesh belong to the Compact tribe and are grouped in various chains (M. C. Perucca, M. K. Munda, M. R. B. Razzaque 2010 and

BANGLAPEDIA). The dominion to a clan is dispatched through a patrilineal system/patrilineal system. The Munda people inherited link names from their progenitor from India as they narrated us and these are dispatched from generation to generation like water flows in a river. Members of the same race cannot marry each other because they are considered relatives (BANGLAPEDIA). But the Mundas can marry people belonging to any other clans without any variety or hierarchy. People of different clans live together in the same village. No marriage is agreed among people belonging to several tribes.

The Mundas are an endogamy tribe. They usually do not marry outside the tribal community because to them the tribe is consecrate. Their most of the family systems are nuclear type consisting of father, mother and unmarried children. Usually, after marriage the couple set up their independent family (S Sarkar-2018). But in the observing areas, the Mundas live mainly extended families. Women go to their husband's house after the wedding and live with his parents and brothers. The wedding is arranged by the parents consulting horoscope. However, the family ties are very highly valued in the Munda People.

Economic system of the Mundas both men and women are involved in various activities; They have a reputation as stronger, hard worker, brave and loyal. Usually, they are exploited a fair wage. The careers of the Mundas male members household are day and seasonal labor. The Mundas women, a part from housework. They are also engaged as day labors in agriculture or shrimp farming, and generally do not have the opportunity to work as maids in houses of Bengali people because they are considered as low-caste and unholy.

### ***Social and religious ceremonies***

The religious exercise of the Mundas is separate from other ethnic group. 'Sing Bonga' is the God of the Mundas. 'Sing Bonga' tonal translation is the Sun-Spirit, The moon and the stars which are considered living witness of their cult and special piety is devoted to the 'Karam tree' (which protected their progenitors hiding them while they were fleeing from

the opposition). They also worship some Hindu deities and as the entire Sundarbans roomer, they also believe in and pray to 'Bon Bibi' the deity of the forest. The Mundas pray the souls of their progenitors. They pray to and call them especially during the lifecycle rituals and they have specially celebrations dedicated to the progenitors. In every stage of rituals of passage (child birth, adolescence, marriage and death) of the Munda's has different them from normal life of the community. They traditionally practice many other rituals (Puja) such as Mage Puja, Karam Puja, Shoshi Puja, Sharul Puja, Gohil Puja, Pahari Puja, Valua Puja, Kali Puja (they arrange used by the conventional Hindu Kali Puja), Hari Puja, Durga Puja, Murgi Puja, Natun Khay Puja, Marriage Puja, Shama Puja, Shaol Puja. Purahit (religious leader/ Pahan) of own community leads the Puja (ritual). Besides, the Munda's remember Gazi Peer, Banbibbi, Gazi Kalu, Champaboti and Dhakhina Ray. In the many rituals and festivals, they only practice a few number of rituals and festivals such as Sarul Puja, Pahari/Dangri Kharam Puja, Karam Puja, Sohrai Puja, Gram Sara Puja/Gram, Natun Khaoa Puja, Valua/Velva Puja (R. Munda & R. S. Manik 2009).

### ***Culture of the Mundas***

The cultural exercise of the Mundas is also separate from other ethnic group. The Mundas also believe in ghosts (Bhut) and spirits- both good and bad and call on them to either help anybody who is sick or to do damage to another person. The Munda community also dedicate some Hens for the rituals celebration like as White hen, Red hen, Black Hen, Brown Hen and Mixed Hen for their God (Sing Bonga-The Sun) and spirituals power. They believe that, after death the soul come back at their home and save them from different types of dangers (R. Munda & R. S. Manik 2009 and B. M. Khalequzzaman 2006).

The Mundas have their own distinct language, history, social structure and religion. The Mundas speak in 'Mundary/Nagri/Sadri' language among them (M. Kamal 2010). They teach this language to their children. This language similarities with the Hindi language, through

Bangle and Persian words are in the Mundas language. The Mundas greet 'Johar' (Good Morning/ Assalamualaikum/ Namaskar) with raising both hands, and they reply 'Johar Johar' twice (K. Munda 2017). Ethnically they belong to the broad group of Proto-Australoid and speak the Mundary dialect of the Austro- Asiatic family (Fr. Luigi Paggi S.X. 2003). Mentionable those, the Mundas use bangle language with the neighboring people but it is totally unapproved in their ritual and celebration but there is no written method.

The Mundas have a own flag and there are three colors (1) White (the symbol of Shing Bonga/the Sun), (2) Red (the symbol of Buru Bonga/the Hill), (3) Green (the symbol of Ikir Bonga/the Ganga) (K. Munda 2017). The Mundas love community celebrations. They are very community oriented. Their life is punctuated with social, agrarian and religious, which bring them together for communal celebrations where drinking of rice beer and singing and dancing, have a very important place. It is said of the Mundas that a child learns to dance as soon as he can walk and learns to sing as soon as he can talk.

The Mundas show a varied universe of festivals and cult, Pujas, which dispose of specific, sang and dances. The place of buries here is called 'Masna' in Sadri language. This 'Masna' is steel used by the Mundas (K. Munda 2017 and R. Munda & R. S. Manik). The cycle of ritual traditions traditionally repeats the yearly recited social- economic actions and is concerned the moon calendar. Cult is accomplished by the single families, the tribe or the whole community in order to get benefit, welfare, enrichment and protection from disasters. The cult are an important occasion of social connection among the Mundas, restarting the communitarian ties among the people living in the same village and fastening the link between the current generation and the progenitors of the tribe before starting the ritual of the pujas held at the village level all the adults (man and women) have a meeting with the village leader in order to discuss the ultimate social and related problems existing among the families and solve

it before courtesy the ritual. Once the entire possible disputes have been solved the celebration can begin. If anyone refused the community rules, he will be ostracized from the own society.

### ***Food of the Mundas***

The foods of the Mundas are all eater. Different types of fish were on their diet. As a separate tribe, the Mundas are fond of Rat meat (they call mete horin), Snails (they call ghonga), Crabs, Pigs, wild Cats and Civet and dead animals due to injuries (like Hen) etc. At one time they did not know how to cook and eat these things well. The Mundas do not eat beef because of their religious tradition. But it has economic significance for their family existence. Tari / Haria (local wine made by the community)' for the drinking adult members together is necessary for any festivals. The Mundas are not satisfied if they do not drink Haria in entertaining guests and worshiping. They remain unhappy. So, they want to beat them in all the work. There is no substitute for Haria Wine (M. Das 2002, B. M. Khalequzzaman 2006 and M. Kamal 2010). The Mundas suffer from social discrimination due to this food intake. The Mundas boys and girls at school cannot mix with their classmates.

### **Recommendation**

The novel corona virus disease (COVID-19) pandemic along with the Cyclone Foni in 2019 and Cyclone Amphan in 2020 that hit the Sundarbans have broken the back of the Mundas community which has been forced to take loans from private parties at hefty interest rates to feed their hungry stomach. Tragically, the deprived lives of the Mundas in South Western Bangladesh have not changed for centuries. While globalization and the speed at which current changes are transpiring capture the attention of leading thinkers worldwide, the Mundas sit and wonder why nothing changes for the better in their community. At least, this is a beginning for the Munda! At least, they are beginning to question why changes for the better have not happened within their groups. When a few of the elders were questioned about what changes

have they seen for the better in their villages, sadly, they could not think of one improvement. Their wants for the future are very basic. They only desire what others consider to be basic necessities.

The Mundas could be greatly helped through the following these areas:

1. Drinking Water
2. Education
3. Health Care
4. Human Rights
5. Financial Development
6. Preservation of Cultural Identity: (Matbor/ Pahan (Priest)/ Sardar)
7. Housing
8. Voice in the Government
9. Social Status
10. Religious Institution.
11. Entertainment

Eventually, the Mundas should be given position of leadership at least at the local Government level. Until the Mundas are able to develop leaders from within their own groups, non Munda leaders need to become more aware of the Mundas plight and what services the Mundas are entitled.

## **Conclusion**

The Covid-19 (Corona) pandemics with natural disaster have left the Mundas staring at hunger and starvation. Improvement of the Mundas situation is dual: change must come from within and change must come from outside. The Mundas themselves need to start to decide what changes they wish to bring about in their villages and how they are going to assist in the

process of improving their lives. The greater Bengali society, the government and the world must take some responsibility for not maintaining these painful conditions to continue and help work as cooperative partners with the Mundas to help uplift the situation. Any governmental and nongovernmental intervention should come forward to helping this indigenous people in a sustainable way.

### Footnotes

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