

Ornaments of Dongria Kondh

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Since time immemorial, making of ornaments and adornment constitute to be an integral part of art and aesthetics of tribal life. The treasure of styles, designs, materials and techniques that tribal traditional craft of jewellery and ornaments has inherited through ages, now has grown to a booming cottage industry. The indigenous traditional ornaments are now not only in great demand among the cross section of people in the country but worldwide.

Man's fascination for jewellery dates back to pre-historic days. In the Museum of Tribal arts and Artifacts, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, an attempt has been made to display the traditional ornaments and costumes of the tribes in general and Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) in particular to preserve and document the vanishing crafts. The Museum has a good collections of as many as 1481 ornaments out of which 966 piece of ornaments of 17 tribes and PTGs have been displayed. The Hall No.1 and Hall No.2 of the Museum showcase 911 and 55 different tribal ornaments respectively. The contribution of the Dongria Kondh (PTG) to the precious ornament collections includes 17 different items.

The Dongria Kondh community is a section of the Kondh community of Orissa. They are identified as a Primitive Tribal Group of Orissa.

The Dongria Kondhs live in villages located in Niyamgiri hill ranges of Eastern Ghats particularly in Rayagada district. They live in about 120 villages, which are situated on hill slopes, spurs and valleys in Bisam Cuttack Block and Muniguda Block of Gunupur Sub-division and Kalyansingpur Block of Rayagada sub-Division. Shifting cultivation with horticulture is their main stay.

The design and style for adornment of Dongria Kondhs reflect their ethnic identity. However with the passage of time the younger and educated youths among them do not prefer to continue such tradition of wearing ornaments in different parts of the body. But still in remote areas there is fascination for the ornaments. Dongria Kondhs' strong desire of adorning the jewelleryes and ornaments is described below in picturesque details.

This paper is based on the direct observation made on different ornaments of the Dongria Kondhs displayed in the Tribal Museum at SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, on the people at Kurlia and Parsali areas of Rayagada district and also on the data collected from secondary sources as indicated in the references.

2. Socio-Religious Significance

The Dongria people like the other tribals use ornaments with a view to giving the identity of their community. "Since life's activities have to

be imbued with meaning, ornaments soon took on the amulets and talismans, protectors of the body and spirit and symbols of status and identity It is a characteristic feature of tribal to wear most of the ornaments they possess, both as a measure of security and status" (Jaitely, 1990 : 89, 93). The Dongria Kondhs exhibit their distinctiveness in their clothes, adornments and hairstyle. From the very look of a person's wear one could know that he or she belongs to the Dongria tribe.

The socio-economic status of the Dongria people is easily assessed from the quantity and quality of ornaments they wear. Usually the well-to-do people wear gold ornaments. Use of gold ornaments of more weight indicates the social position of the Dongria chief. The Dongria shaman, Beju/Bejuni, who acts as a linkman between the living and dead, and god and goddesses adorns himself with glittering gold ornaments religiously to attract gods and goddess for the welfare of people and the community. On the contrary, the widows use less ornaments than the old women. Similarly, a lady after delivering child reduces her use of ornaments in comparison to the newly wedded women.

"Festivity are marked by the congregation of men and women in all their colourful dresses and adornments as if competition with one another to attract or get attracted, at the same time to love and be loved (Nayak, 2006 : 33). The Dongrias, irrespective of their age and sex, love beauty. The ornaments and jewellery they use help add their bodily beauty. The bachelors (Dhangadas / Dhangidies) adorn ornaments fully to attract each other. Dongria Kondh boys and girls exchange gifts of ornaments in the dormitory as symbols of love. The Dhangadas present finger rings, hair clips and *pajas* to their beloved ones. Out of love and affection, a maiden sometimes puts a clip into her lover head hair. Further, some

girls and boys wear many bead necklaces that count the numbers of lovers they have. About 15 to 16 holes are made on ear of a girl after her birth and the rings "Kiyu Murmas" are put in these holes, which symbolize the Dongria Kondh custom. If any Dhangidi does not put these earrings 'Kiyu Murmas', a Dhangada hardly choose her as life partner.

Dongria Kondhs not only decorate their body with different ornaments but also use them for their self-defence. The jewellery on the wrists and arms, and foots are used to combat the enemies. The metals are the best possible weapons for the Dongria Kondhs to protect from wild animals and during quarrels with outsiders. Apart from giving them an alluring look, the jewellery also support them at the time of need.

3. Men and Women Adornment

"Both men and women in most archaic form of societies used to adorn different parts of their body in definite proportions, of course the man differing from a woman in specific form. The six *hexa-divisions* of body composing the seats of adornment, beauty and love are the zones, such as, respectively from head to toe : head and face, neck and thoracic, arm, waist and pubis, ankle and foot" (Nayak, 2006 : 33).

Dongria Girls wear three rings in their nose. The boys wear two nose rings. Boys don't use hairpins at bun, anklets and toe rings. The parents of the Dongria Kondh make their babies adorned with nose rings, earrings, bangles and waist chains after one month of the birth and continue to add more jewellery items as the babies grow older. From their late childhood, boys and girls adorn their bodies with different jewellery items till they get married. Further, women continue to add different jewellery till they attend motherhood. Likewise male members lose interest towards jewellery when they stop visiting girls' dormitory.

The statement below furnishes the traditional adornments of Dongria men and women.

Women Ornament	Men Ornament
Local name (with English Equivalent)	Local name (with English equivalent)
Sipna (Hairpin)	Sireni (Mini comb)
Chipna (Hair clip)	Murma (nose/Ear ring)
Aska (Hairpin / Small knife)	Kagudika (Neckband)
Murma (Nose/Ear ring)	Ata Suta (Waist chain)
Nanguli (Ear ring)	Singidisapa (Finger ring)
Kagudika (Neckband)	
Mekadika (Bead necklace)	
Taka mekodika (coin necklace)	
Ata Suta (Waist chain)	
Teduapaja (Flat bangle)	
Kajapaja (Thick bangle)	
Milapaja (Thin bangle)	
Andu (Anklet)	
Puyumudi (Finger ring)	
Kendukali (Toe ring)	

(Source Banaja, ATDC, Bhubaneswar, 1995 : 17)

The above statement indicates that the female folk are more inclined to adorn themselves than their male counterpart. Women, especially young ones deck themselves with various kinds of ornaments worn on different bodily parts, such as head, neck, ear, nose, hand, finger, waist, ankle and toe.

4. Dongria Kondhs' Adornments from Head-Hair to Toe

Atop the head down to the toe of the foot, everywhere the Dongria Kondhs use ornaments and jewellery. A statement showing the names of Dongria ornaments, raw materials used and the period of use sourced from Tribal Museum located in the campus of the SCSTRTI, CRPF Square, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar is placed below.

Dongria Kondh Ornaments

Sl. No.	Name of the object Local Name	English Equivalent	Materials Used	Period of use
1.	Bala Chapa (Chipna)	Hair Clip	Imitation	Regular
2.	Aska	Hairpin (Small knife)	Iron & Brass	Regular
3.	Sipna	Hairpin	Aluminium	Ceremonial
4.	Murma	Nose ring	Brass	Daily
5.	Murma	Ear ring	Brass	Regular
6.	Nanguli	Ear ring	Brass	Regular
7.	Kagudika	Neck ring	Brass, Aluminum	Regular, both boys and girls
8.	Taka Mekadika	Coin Necklace	Aluminum & cotton thread	Ceremonial
9.	Mekadika	Bead necklace	Beads	Regular

10.	Khagla	Neckband	Iron	Regular
11.	Pania	Comb	Wood/plastic	Regular
12.	Ata Suta	Waist chain	Brass	Regular
13.	Sana Pajan	Bangle	Mixed brass	Regular
14.	Bada Pajan	Bangle	Mixed brass	Regular
15.	Puyumudi	Finger ring	Brass & Copper	Regular
16.	Kalumudi	Toe ring	Brass	Regular
17.	Andu	Anklet	Brass	Regular

(Source : Bulletin Tribal Museum, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar)

The following give an account of different ornaments used by the Dongria Kondhs starting from the head down up to the toe.

4.1. Hair Clips

Beauty conscious Dongria Kondhs have their distinctive hairstyle. Dongria Kondh women and men make their hairstyle more beautiful by using different hair clips and silver pins. The girls decorate their heads with as many as fifty types of hair clips and their buns are set with more than ten types of hairpins.

Jatpuri and deta hair clips are made of iron, brass, copper or silver. After combing hair properly, a girl puts these clips on her head hair. These clips keep the hair in the desired position and protect against the wind. Both the boys and girls use these clips.

Tirmodera, a silver pin, is struck to the chignon so that the hair twist at the back remains in a fixed position. It is a long pin fitted at the centre of a decorated disc. Besides, four small chains hang from the periphery of the disc. The hair clips are serially fixed on both the sides of the head above the ears.

Sipna is a kind of scissor like hairpin made of aluminum. It has two beautiful rolled staged

flower designs close to each other. It is put on the chignon at the back of a woman's head. In the past, this type of hairpin was designed like grills of birds. Subsequently the design has been changed. Generally *sipnas* are used on the bun during marriage ceremonies and on festive occasions.

Besides, the Dongria women like to put small knife (*mila katra*) in to the hair on both sides of the head, and both men and women fix combs on their head hair.

4.2. Nose Rings

Mungeli Murma is a nose ring worn by the Dongria Kondh women. It is made of brass or gold and designed by Ghasi, a scheduled castes community. A Dongria Kondh child, after one month of its birth is gifted with '*Murma*' by the parents. A girl puts three rings, two on the upper part of the nose and one in the middle part inside the nose. A boy puts only two rings, one on the upper part of the nose and the other in the middle part inside the nose. The nose rings are usually made of gold. Thus the Dongrias take special care while using the ornaments. The use of a '*Mungeli Murma*' identifies a child as a Dongria Kondh and as a matter of pride. Especially, this ornament, after its use, is not gifted

to any one. The dongria nose ring hangs and dangles below his nose till last breath.

4.3 Ear Rings

The ears of Dongria Kondh girls, women and men are fixed with small rings for the decoration. The Dongria use about 16 earrings in their ears. This is called *murma*. In the ears the women use *nanguli*. It is twisted to look like a snake. The Dongria male use a single *noli* (ear ring) in each ear. The different ear rings they use are as follows.

The *Kiyu murmas* are small rings, made of Gold and silver, put into the holes made on the ears of a girl. As per the Dongria Kondh custom, about 16 holes are made on ears of a girl after her birth and the rings are put in these holes. Besides, they wear one *Kute* (Ear bolt) on the upper part of each ear and one *Nanguli* (Snake ring) below the soft part of the ear. '*Kute*' is made of gold or brass. '*Kute*' is a bit wider and sharper than '*Murma*' and the lines on the '*Kutes*' made them more attractive. But '*Nanguli*' is made differently with a special size and shape. A silver stitch is bent and wringed into a snake size and the last part of it is bent like a hook and the upper part of it is made like a man. *Nanguli* looks like a snake having its hood and tail. It is believed that the use of *Nanguli* keeps snake away entering into the ears during the sleep.

4.4. Necklace

Mekadika is a kind of glass beads necklace with different colours like red, yellow, blue and black. A Dongria Kondh boy generally wears five to six or even more necklaces of this kind. The glamour of these necklaces really fits the corpulent figure of Dongria Kondhs. The Juvenile zest of getting love is best expressed through these necklaces. A girl very easily surmises the economical status of a boy from the quality of the

necklaces he uses and prefers to select him as the prospective life partner.

It is believed that the numbers of beloved of a Boy is guessed from the number of *Medikas* he has worn. On different occasions, he gets these gifts of necklaces from different girls. These gifts are the symbol of pure love. Being please with the gallantry, dances, songs and humors, girls offer their love to the boys. The boys remember and feel the presence of their beloveds even they are far away from each other. Till the marriage, the names of the girls remain unexpressed because of the fear of social disgrace.

Dongria Kondh maidens are very fond of *Mekadika*. They use many types of *Mekadikas* such as *Pitda*, *Kala*, *kambiti*, *Murmanga*, *Hinga*, *Kidti*, *Teba*, *Kagudi* etc. The different names given to these necklaces are based on the colour of beads, designs and materials used in their making. The girls also love to wear the necklace called *Ahali Hara*, which is made of different coins. The *Ahali Hara* is a set of coins (50 paise and 1 rupee) in a string having holes on to the coins. Girls show their financial status wearing this type of necklace. The neckbands like *Kagudi* or *Khagala*, made of iron, silver and aluminum is also very attractive. It's a round shaped ornament worn round the neck of a girl. The neckband is framed on a strong circular shape iron wire with hooks at its two ends. It is made by the local ghasis. At the age of five a Dongria Kondh girl starts wearing *Khaglas* (neckband). A maiden uses seven to eight *Khaglas* in her neck.

At times, the Dongria Kondh women, girls and children also put a kind of bead necklace round their neck, which is made of about 300 very small rounded beads, like mustard seeds, set in a thread. Many wealthy females are seen wearing such nice necklaces. Besides, a girls *Kambiti*, a bead necklace made of small glass

balls of different colours to win the hearts of youths. The Dongria use a *Kaincha mali* tightly tied round the neck. They also use *mali* made of brass.

4.5 Ornaments used on Hands

The Dongria women use more than 25 bangles and *khadus*, which have much social value. The *Tedwa*, *khadus* and bangles of different designs adorn the hands of unmarried women.

Pajan or '*Kayumla* is a kind of bangle worn by "Dongria Kondh" women. It is made of brass and aluminum. A young woman normally puts on 15 to 25 bangles on her arms and hands. The Dongrias with the help of the local artisans make the ornaments with all possible artistic care and different flowers and geometrical lines are engraved on them to make the designs attractive.

Every married and unmarried young woman wears such *Kayumala* bangles, though the young boys and old women wear comparatively less. Unmarried young women decorate her with varieties of bangles during the years they attend the dormitory and early years of marriage. Among the bangles, '*Tedwa*' is a very thick, heavy and prominent one weighing about 250 gm. It is used as weapons to save the Dongria women from unwanted male persons.

4.6 Finger Rings

Dongria Kondh don't leave their fingers uncovered. They wear atleast one ring in each finger. Even they use multiple rings in each finger. They use different kinds of finger rings (*mudi*), made of metals like silver, bronze, brass and copper and most often they present the rings to their lovers. The rings are decorated with different motifs and designs. Their rings are named differently according to the use in the different fingers. The *puyu* ring is put on thumb and on

forefinger, *tamba* ring on middle finger, *baras* and springs on ring finger and *muya* on the little finger.

The *puyu mudi* is made of bronze, designed and finished by the Ghasis artisan. There are four beautiful round shaped flowers at the top of the ring. The middle part of every flower is designed and crafted with different pictures. *Tamba mudi* is a coiled ring. It is made of copper and found in the market. The *rasa mudi* or *ranga pajan* is made of silver and put on ring finger. Its not quite round in shape - 4 small silver stitches are bent and at the two ends two roses are made. The two ends of the ring are not joined together. The '*singri sapa*' ring is made of brass and silver, the middle part of which is crafted with beautiful flowers and different kinds of linings. It is made and sold by the Ghasis. The *muya* ring is made of silver and put on the little finger. The ring is designed with a reflection of mango tree and its leaves, and that indicates inseparable attachment of Dongria Kondh with the bounty and beauty of nature.

4.7 Waist Chain

The Dhangadas use *ata suta* (waist thread) and the Dhangidis waist *dory*. Dhangidies use silver threads round their waists. It is costlier and sold in the market. Still, a Dhangidi manages to wear three to four threads at the age of about 10 years. The use of the waist thread by the Dhangidies prevents their clothes from sleeping away. Using this, they make pockets on their cloth near the waist part that help them carry different things.

4.8 Foot Ornament

The feet of the Dongrias are also not free from the touch of ornaments. Usually they adorn their feet with anklets and toe rings. Anklet (*andu*) is a specially made foot bangle made of brass. It

is about one kilogram and worn by some matured girls. One finds it very difficult to put it on the foot. The part of *andu* that rests upon the joint is semi flat and doesn't give more pain. The linings drawn on this bangle make it more attractive. The dance becomes really fantastic and amazing when Dhangidies use this. Dhangadas get fascinated to see this and dance with special rhythm.

The Dongria use toe ring (*kada mudi* or *amta mudi*) and other finger rings of the foot (*Jhat asi mudi*). Both the rings, *amta mudi* and *Jhat asi mudi* are made of brass. Dhangedies of ten year old or more than that start wearing these rings.

5. The Making of Ornaments

5.1 Materials Used :

The use of materials and natural objects derived from the forests and metals available in the markets for making the Dongria ornaments. "Fruits, roots, leaves, seeds, stones of different colour, teeth, bones and nails of different animals are also used in the making of ornaments. The sophistication of ornaments and jewellery is seen with the tribals when they use different metals like iron, copper, aluminum, silver, brass, gold and a kind of white metal in their making" (Sahoo, 2006). Moreover, getting decorated with Jewellery is also a societal necessity in which the tribal youths fancy, fashion and imagination are felt. The use of flowers on special occasions like dancing or marriage ceremony is also noticed.

5.2 The Ornament Makers

The ornaments of the Dongrias are the products of the ingenious creation of the village artists, like Dom/Ghasi, the local Scheduled Castes but the designs are given and values are added on them according to the Dongria cultural imperatives. The Dongria Kondhs having special interest in metal ornaments contact the jewellery

makers of different castes like Ghasi, Muli, Thatari, Kansari, Bania etc. in neighbouring villages. The Ghasi, a scheduled caste community in the locality is main jewellery artisan of the Dongria Kondhs.

The Dongria Kondhs mostly purchase ornaments from the neighbouring SC communities. They also make some of their ornaments by using raw materials collected from the forests and some ornaments are purchased from local weekly hats/markets.

The Dongria Kondhs' uninterrupted adorning of jewellery and ornaments reflects their ethnic identity and ethos. But this traditional art has now undergone changes and that the ornaments and jewellery are made in contemporary designs and motifs that cater to the tastes, choices and preferences of the people of all ages and all places. Some of the traditional ornaments of the Dongrias under the force of modernization are losing their significance and meaning to the young ones. The interruption of modern trend has reduced the quantity of ornaments used by the tribals to some extent. However, still there are some people of this communities, who have been able to keep the adornment of olden times intact. GOs and NGOs are now coming forward to extend helps and supports for promotion of making and marketing Tribal ornaments with a view to generate employment and earnings among the tribal artisans and entrepreneurs. Needless to say that the present forms and designs of the tribal jewellery have a great demand within the countryside, in the metropolis as well as in the global market.

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Sanitation : 5 Points

1. We must have a mission to provide sanitary facilities to all dwelling units in rural areas by the year 2010. Since the facility is still to be provided for over hundred million dwelling units, we should target provisioning of sanitary facilities to atleast twenty million dwelling units per year. While providing this facility we should ensure provision of adequate water supply.
2. The mission must be executed through Village Panchayats in conjunction with societal establishment mobilized for this purpose in each of the village. Preferably it will be useful to empower the women in all villages to execute this programme.
3. The Ministry of Rural Development can organize state-wise training programme to train the members of Sanitation Missions in construction and maintenance of modern sanitary facilities. Imparting of the training can become a public-private partnership programme. Programmes aimed at employment can be tuned to give such workers good income as well.
4. The Sanitation Mission has to make the entire village community dynamic with the mission and will also provide employment opportunity for certain number of people.
5. Educate the children right from the age of three to make use of sanitary facilities. This should become part of the total sanitation campaign. Every family and teachers of Montessori school take up this as a family task.