

CHHATTISGARHĪ, LARIĀ, OR KHALTĀHĪ.

This dialect is commonly known by the first of the three names given above, Chhattisgarhī, or the language of Chhattisgarh. The district of Bilaspur forms a portion of that tract, and is known in the adjoining district of Balaghat as Khalōṭī. Chhattisgarhī is also spoken in a part of the latter district, and is there known as Khalṭāhī, or the language of Khalōṭī. To the east of the Chhattisgarh plain lies the Oṛiyā-country of east Sambalpur, and the Oṛiyā Feudatory States. To the people of those parts, the Chhattisgarh country to the west is known as the Lariā country, and hence Chhattisgarhī is there called Lariā.

The head-quarters of Chhattisgarhī are the two British Districts of Raipur and Bilaspur in the Central Provinces. Here, and in the western portion of the Sambalpur district, the language is spoken in its purity. In the south-west, however, of Raipur, the local language is a form of Oṛiyā. Chhattisgarhī is also spoken in considerable purity in the Feudatory States to the south and west of the two main districts,—*i.e.*, in Kanker, Nandgaon, Khairagarh, Chuikhadan, and Kawardha,—in the north-east of the Chanda District, and in the eastern portion of the Balaghat District where, as already said, it is known as Khalṭāhī. To the east of Bilaspur, it is spoken in the Feudatory State of Saktī, and in parts of Raigarh and Sarangarh. North and east of these last lie the Tributary States of Korea, Sarguja, Udaipur and Jashpur. In the first three the Aryan language is a sub-dialect of Chhattisgarhī, called Surgujā, which is also spoken in the western portion of the last.

The following table shows the estimated number of speakers of Chhattisgarhī :—

Number of Speakers.	Number of speakers.
Chanda	31,300
Raipur	1,260,000
Bilaspur	1,146,000
Sambalpur	147,000
Balaghat	88,300
Kanker	36,100
Nandgaon	174,000
Khairagarh	159,494
Chuikhadan	32,979
Kawardha	88,000
Saktī	23,174
Raigarh	127,000
Sarangarh	48,433 ¹
TOTAL	3,301,780

Besides the above Chhattisgarhī is also spoken in the neighbouring Oṛiyā-speaking States and in Bastar State, in which the main Aryan language is the Halabī dialect of Marāṭhī, by settlers from the Chhattisgarhī, or as it is here called the Lariā, country. In Bamra, the greater part of the west of the State is entirely occupied by them. The following are the estimated figures :—

Bastar	13,141
Bamra	3,900
Rairakhol	43
Sonpur	2,100
Patna	5,750
Kalahandi	7,850
Orissa Tributary States	1,311
TOTAL	34,095

¹ Revised figures.

Finally, the following are the figures for the Surgujā sub-dialect :—

Korea	36,174
Sarguja	293,164
Udaipur	35,208
Jashpur	20,000
TOTAL	384,546

Besides the above, six broken dialects, as named below, are spoken in Chhattisgarh and the neighbouring Feudatory States by aborigines who have forsaken their ancestral tongues, and try to speak the language of their Aryan-speaking neighbours. These are rather jargons than dialects, and it will be understood that the correctness of the Chhattisgarhī depends a great deal upon the personal equation of each speaker. The following are these broken dialects :—

Name of dialect.	Where spoken.	Number of speakers.
Sadrī Korwā	Jashpur	4,000
Baigānī	Balaghat, Raipur, Bilaspur, Sambalpur, State Kawardha.	7,100
Binjhwarī	Raipur, States Raigarh, Sarangarh, Patna .	9,662
Kalaṅgā	State Patna	600
Bhuliā	States Sonpur, Patna	13,560
	TOTAL	34,922

With reference to the above, it is necessary to explain that the term 'Sadrī' is used in this part of India to imply the form which an Aryan language takes in the mouth of an aborigine. Thus, Sadrī Korwā means the form which the local Aryan language, in this case Surgujā, takes in the mouth of a Korwā. Similarly, the Sadrī Kōl of Bamra means the form which an Aryan language, in this case the Kurmālī sub-dialect of Magahī, takes in the mouth of a Kōl.

Two dialects have been inserted in the above list which have not hitherto been classed as Chhattisgarhī, *viz.*, Kalāṅgā and Bhuliā. They have hitherto been classed as dialects of Oriyā. They are both clearly forms of Chhattisgarhī. Kalāṅgā and Bhuliā, when written, are written in the Oriya character. Four dialects, which were originally classed as forms of Chhattisgarhī, have been removed from the list. They are Halabī, Bastarī, Bhunjiā, and Sadrī Kōl. An examination of the specimens of Halabī shows that it is, rather, a mixture of Chhattisgarhī, Oriyā, and Marāṭhī, and can most conveniently be considered in connexion with the last-named language. Bastarī and Bhunjiā are only other names of Halabī. On the other hand, Sadrī Kōl, which is only returned from the Bamra State, is a form of Bihārī spoken by aboriginal tribes. It is identical with the Kurmālī sub-dialect of Magahī spoken in the Manbhum District. It is a curious little island of Bihārī in the midst of an Oriyā-speaking population.

No information is available as to the number of speakers of Chhattisgarhī in other parts of India. The following is the number of speakers in the country in which it is a vernacular :—

Chhattisgarhī spoken at home	3,301,780
„ in the neighbouring Oriyā States	34,095
Surgujā	384,546
Broken Dialects	34,922
	TOTAL . 3,755,343

So far as I know, Chhattisgarhī has no literature. As elsewhere in India, itinerant bards have a repertoire of songs and stories which they recite when called on. Several of these have been published by Mr. Hirālāl Kāvīyopādhyāya in the grammar mentioned below.

AUTHORITY—

HIRĀLĀL KĀVĪYOPĀDHYĀYA—*A Grammar of the Dialect of Chhattisgarh in the Central Provinces written in Hindī by Mr. Hirālāl Kāvīyopādhyāya, translated and edited by George A. Grierson, Esq., O.S. Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol. lix, 1890, Pt. I, pp. 1 and 101. Separate Reprint, Calcutta, 1890.*

The usual phonetic rules of Eastern Hindī regarding the shortening of the antepenultimate vowel apply to Chhattisgarhī, and need not be repeated here.

The forms that strike a stranger, who is familiar only with the pure Eastern Hindī of Oudh, are, the sign of the Dative-Accusative which is often *lā* even in the Accusative, and the plural termination *man*. which may be compared with the Oriyā *mānē*. It is believed that the following sketch of Chhattisgarhī grammar will be found to contain all that is necessary for the understanding of the specimens given on the subsequent pages.

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