

Notes on the Kurmis of North-Eastern Madhya Pradesh

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The Kurmis, also called Kunbis, are a caste of Hindus whose main pursuit is agriculture. It is a very large caste ; in 1931 almost six millions were returned as Kurmis. The caste is widely distributed over northern India, especially in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh¹, but also on the Deccan, in Gujarat and Kanara.

I. Mythology, Religion and Magic

1. Origin

There are four sub-castes among the Kurmis. They are the Chāndānāvū or Kurmi Patel, the Sēnkādāvū or Kurdumbansi Thākur, the Lodhi² and the Pāthāria. The Chāndānāvū group is purely vegetarian while the other three

¹ Cf. R. V. RUSSELL and HIRA LĀL, *The Castes and Tribes of the Central Provinces of India*. London 1916, Vol. IV, pp. 16-103.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 112-120.