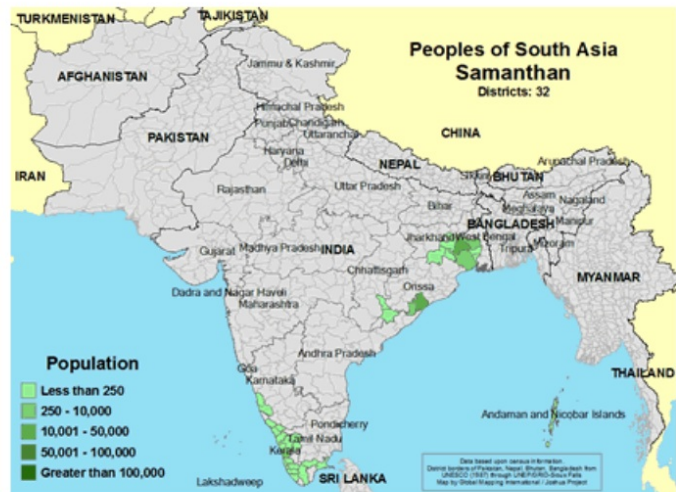


SAMANTHAN



Population: 47,000 Religion: Hinduism

Christian: 0% Language: Oriya



The Samanthan are one of the few traditional horticultural communities living in the Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa. They practice podu, the slash and burn cultivation, where they clear the jungle hill slopes, burn the trees and grow the crops in the ashes.

The Samanthan have a strong sense of community living. Every activity of the village is carried out by all the families working in close cooperation with each other.

During the seed festival known as "Biccha Parbu", the Samanthan worship the village goddess "Jakiri Penu" by offering animal sacrifices. The Samanthan believe that sowing seeds mixed with the sacrificial blood will impress the fertile powers of nature.

Their religious pantheon consists of various gods and goddesses, who are symbols of various forces of nature. The availability of food in the jungle, the fertility of the Earth Mother, the rainfall and also the outbreak of epidemics are supposed to be dependent on the mercy or wrath of the respective gods and goddesses.