

BHUYAN (Bhuinya):

Location(Major):Keonjhar, Sundergarh, Jharsuguda, Mayurbhanj, Sambalpur, Angul

Language: Odia (Indo-Aryan)

Population: 306129

Major Festivals: Magh Poda, Am Nua, Ratha Yatra, Boram, Nua Khai, Bui Khai, Makar, Pus Punei



The Bhuyan tribe, possibly named after the Sanskrit word *Bhumi* (land), is divided into Hill Bhuyans, who maintain traditional lifestyles, and Plains Bhuyans, who are more influenced by Hindu culture. They typically live in small, homogenous villages located in hilly or forested regions, with nuclear families forming the basic social unit. Their society is organized into lineages (*Kutumba*), clans (*Khilli*), and villages, with strict exogamy rules and various forms of marriage such as elopement and capture. The Bhuyans worship Dharam Devata (Sun God) and Basukimata (Earth Goddess), and observe a two to three-day death pollution followed by a communal feast. Traditional governance is maintained through village panchayats led by a *pradhan* and larger regional councils called *pirha panchayats* headed by a *sardar*.