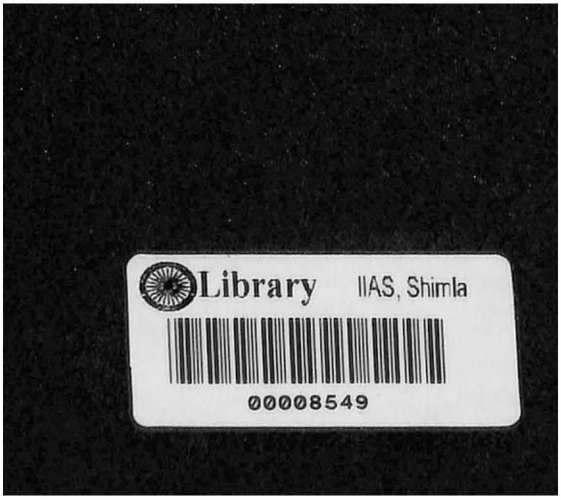
RURAL PROFILES

II

Edited by
D. N. MAJUMDAR
Lucknow University, India



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Contributors :

BRYCE RYAN et. al.
D. N. MAJUMDAR
PRABHAT CHANDRA
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Ethnographic & Folk Culture Society, U. P.
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INTRODUCING THE VOLUME

The papers printed in this volume are meant to assist us in understanding the importance of rural studies and also to help the planners and administrators of our country to test their policy and action therapy in the context of the rural background that often is completely ignored. Prof. Oscar Lewis has suggested a comparative science of peasant society which he thinks is slowly emerging. Even if it does not take shape in the near future, it is certain the interests of anthropologists in India are being increasingly directed towards understanding rural life and peasant communities, particularly because they constitute a major element in the population of the south Asian countries, which are economically backward. Colossal efforts are being made to level up the rural communities in India, and the community planners are making a big bid to size up the expectation of the people and rehabilitate rural life. In the wake of this gigantic task, anthropologists and rural sociologists have to offer recipe, critically appraise administrative policies, and build up a basic literature on rural life and its problems. The task of appraisal and evaluation of programmes must not be left to the administration alone, but should be taken up in right earnest by the social scientists, for the cause is common and the stakes are great. There is a feeling in the minds of the social scientists of our country that they have not been given their proper place in the task of community planning or in its implementation, but I think, this has made the literature on rural life and analysis of rural problems more objective, and therefore more useful, as ultimately, the policies and programmes must gear themselves to facts and scientific appraisal of these facts.

What we want to-day, is to understand our people, our rural people particularly, whom we have ignored and left to themselves. The adoption of English as the medium of communication among the educated people of our country, the introduction of formal school education on western lines, the exodus of ambitious and substantial rural families to cities and towns, the scope of employment in urban industries and in liminal cities, have helped to create a schism in our social and cultural life. The urban ways of life have been geared to technology, while rural life seeks its moorings in agriculture. The divorce has become so real that even we do not feel 'any consciousness of mind' with the peasant population ; we have ignored the latter and marched in seemingly opposite directions. The future of India lies in healthy communication between the two ways of life, urban and rural, interchange of ideas, community of interests, a common social conscience, and a feeling of homogeneity—and not heterogeneity. We have probably over-emphasized the fact of diversity, and the time has come when the common elements of our culture, our common aims and aspirations and our common cultural heritage should receive new appraisal and evaluation.

The papers in this volume and the previous volume of Rural Profiles, have been reprinted, to make them available to those who need information on village life, and rural problems, but who may not have the time or the interest to seek them in the various issues of *the Eastern Anthropologist* where they lie littered.

The Ethnographic and Folk Culture Society is grateful to the contributors whose papers have been reprinted here, and whom we have introduced separately. If this volume receives similar reception to the one given to the first volume, our hopes for the future will not fail.

Lucknow
30th April,
1960

D. N. MAJUMDAR

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RURAL PROFILES

CONTENTS

SECULARIZATION PROCESSES IN A CEYLON VILLAGE*

BRYCE RYAN, L. D. JAYASENA AND D. C. R. WICKREMESINGHE

Pelpola is a quiet village of 400 peasant families thirty miles south of Ceylon's capital city. Through four centuries it has been in European contact. During those years it has bowed to western influence while preserving its distinctively Sinhalese heritage. The present century has probably brought more rapid shifts in Pelpola's life, but the groundwork for current transitions is found in the 18th and 19th centuries. The introduction of hundreds of Portugese words and many family names testifies to the influential presence of these early invaders from the West. The force of the Dutch lay in such diverse directions as the introduction of a European legal system, and, of peculiar significance to this village, a canal linking certain villages to urban markets. In Pelpola this stimulated the early growth of a hand-fabricated tile and brick industry.

The most crucial historic event for Pelpola's integration with the larger world came at the beginning of this century. Rubber was introduced to the area. At this time about one-third of the village lands were sold off to absentee rubber estate proprietors, and village landholders also planted rubber on their own lands. The estates became a source for wage labour, especially for women, while village-owned rubber stimulated not only money economy but direct interest in world market trends. Whereas other crops, particularly rice, had been viewed more as subsistence than as market commodities, rubber was accepted as a useful stranger. In contrast to the venerated and ritualized paddy, rubber was a means to an end whether it yielded rents, profits or wages.

An encroaching money economy and associated wage labour structure might well have startling implications for a peasant village, and indeed these have been significant factors for Pelpola's secularization. However, it is important to bear in mind that at no point has the village left its old economic base for a new one. Rubber was added to paddy, wage labour was added to peasant proprietorship and village agricultural labour. Adjustment to the new without repudiation of the old is typical of many of Pelpola's responses to forces seemingly in conflict with traditional life. The full effect of pecuniary, capitalistic and individualizing forces associated with rubber were eased by the persisting cushion of a traditional economic life.

* The data upon which this paper is based may be found in the book by the same authors, Sinhalese Village, University of Miami Press, Coral Gables, Florida, 1958. Statistical statements are derived from surveys in which 100 household heads were interviewed during 1951.

Many influences other than strictly economic ones have brought Pelpola into the orbit of the western and secular world. Market involvements of course stimulated communication and transportation lines. The new orientations of a modernizing state brought a government school as well as new political concepts and important services. Government bureaucracy, postal services, suffrage, and socialized health and medical programs developed gradually through the present century. Probably the most dramatic event since rubber in Pelpola's long transition was that of World War II. With this conflict, in which Ceylon as a then British colony was aligned with the Western democracies, world tensions were brought home to the village. Nearby Colombo was bombed, military installations offered employment to some Pelpola men, and normal trade channels were disrupted. Rationing schemes and rice collection programs plagued the villager. Ceremonialism in rice production bowed as the exigencies of war thrust upon the villager the rational devices of a government shifting the economy to a war footing. Rubber prices boomed and with this came new prospeirty and renewed interest in market processes—all of this away from subsistence—reciprocity but consistent with the long trend toward secularism and gesellschaftlich features.

Upon such a background as this, we find Pelpola today a seeming jumble of the traditional and the non-traditional. Buses share the road with bullock carts and bicycles; castes, professedly of unequal birth, share equally in suffrage and institutional facilities ; contractual wage workers refuse employment offered by a "bad" neighbour; peasants having their paddy machine-hulled preserve ritualism in threshing and winnowing; local businessmen have gained in economic power but prestige lies with the families rich through inherited lands. One may return from the city cinema to participate in a demon exorcizing ceremony. A man who drives a modern automobile has his paddy cultivated by techniques which were centuries old when Ceylon came first into Western contact. Yet, for all the seeming contradictions this village shows little or no evidence of disorganization. Overt conflicts are few; normative deviance is rare; even the poor have their daily rice; faith in the supernatural is strong and serenity in the Buddhist way is valued and, we believe, real. Pelpola lives well in some dynamic balance between a sacred traditionalism and forces of secularization. How has the new moved in upon the old to form this new and smoothly functioning composite ?

For operational purposes, we assume that the process of secularization is composed of several measurable facets or dimensions. These are rationality in economic affairs and in reference to the natural world; increased regard for material values, increased regard for status by achievement rather than by ascription, political individualism, increased valuation of decision making by individuals rather than by

families : increased participation in special interest and audience type groups. Conversely, increasing secularization implies diminished reliance upon traditional ceremonies and folk beliefs. This conception of secularization sees it as a multi-dimensional process, the various parts of which may or may not be functionally or causally intertwined.

On the basis of crude, exploratory techniques, we attempted to test the following hypotheses. (1) The villager's degree of secularization in regard to each facet of the process is associated positively with participation in urban centered diffusion media. (2) An individual who is secular in one facet of the process tends also to be secular in all other facets as well. Finally, we would suggest some lines for explaining Pelpola's smooth transition in response to secularizing forces.

Generally speaking, participation in urban centered diffusion media is associated with secular values and behavior in respect to each of the separate facets of secularization. (See Table I). Participation in diffusion media was measured by extent of newspaper reading, trips to cities, years of schooling, and a test of knowledge on affairs of other countries. Each of these variables was positively associated with secular value professions in regard to status and other matters, acceptance of rational agricultural practices, wide use of western material culture items, and participation in audience type groups, *i.e.*, cinema attendance. The least association was observed in reference to the acceptance of technical innovations in agriculture .....an area in which Pelpolans have, in recent years, been peculiarly resistent to change. On the other hand, many ideological or value professions are highly secular and at the same time markedly influenced by contact with the outer world. Thus among the most traditional third of the respondents in regard to value statements only 8 per cent were regular newspaper readers as compared with 54 per cent of those most secular in value professions. The score made on a possible ten point international knowledge test was 2.2 for the most traditional in values, and 6.2 for the most secular. Similar but usually smaller differences are found when the most and the least secular in respect to each other facet are compared in their participation. It could not be determined which, if any, form of participation or contact is particularly influential for secularization.

In regard to the direct inter-relationship among the various facets of secularization, the evidence points tentatively toward the existence of secular and of traditional social types. (See Table II). Persons who are secular in value professions, for example, tend also to be secular in audience participation, use of western material culture, agricultural techniques, and in the neglect or disbelief in traditional ceremonies and folk practices. It is doubtful if any of the single

contingencies upon which this claim of consistency is made would be statistically significant. However, when we attend to the small extreme groups, the most and the least secular in regard to each facet, those most secular in values are more frequently among the most secular in each other facet. Those most secular in audience participation were more frequently among the most secular in all but one of the other facets. Four-fifths of the comparisons made in this manner are in the expected direction. These results are not to be viewed as demonstrations. They are crude, exploratory indications. But whatever weight they may hold falls on the side of consistency in the patterning of secularization. Tentative support is given belief in the existence of a secular social type as suggested by Leo Silberman in his concept of the "social entrepreneur." [1]

It is impossible to state on quantitative grounds, which facets of secularization have moved most fully into the village milieu. We believe, however, that the political status, and certain economic values of Pelpola are rather close to those of Western, urban peoples. On the other hand, marriage and family values seem highly traditional. Special interest and audience groups are present but are almost inconsequential in significance before the continuing importance of primary affiliations. Alacrity to modern science and technology is mixed. Where science saves lives and technology saves labour, receptivity is possibly as great as in gadget conscious America. Where farm technology serves production at the cost of increased labour, Pelpolans cling stubbornly to their primitive devices and put their extra labour time into wage work outside the village—possibly a very rational secular decision indeed, in the circumstances.

With all Pelpola's mixture of secular thought and behavior with its traditional institutions, nothing remotely resembling community chaos or even disorganization has occurred. Changes yes, malfunctioning of institutions, deviance, bitterness, or anomie, no. Western medicine is valued, but the "native doctor" is still honored. Equality in institutional life is advocated for all castes, but caste endogamy and pride in caste birth is strong. Women do wage work outside the home, yet patriarchalism and the large family ideology appear not to have suffered. One is tempted to conclude that Pelpola has achieved something very important—the best of two seemingly irreconcilable worlds.

We believe that two different sets of conditions lie behind this smooth transition. The first of these relates to the long period of time within which non-traditional forces have been operating and the second to the inherent nature of traditional Sinhalese social

[1] Silberman, "Social Entrepreneurship—The Mauritian Case," (mimeo) University of Chicago, 1955.

integration. Pelpola has been in a Western type legal and political milieu for several generations. It had an anti-caste and anti-feudal government early in the 19th century. There was a developing self-government early in the 20th century. Plantations, highways, western medicine, and market prices are not new. However, machine technology in production is still embryonic. Without trauma and drama the new has been creeping in upon the old not in a manner suggested by Marxian or even by culture lag concepts, but rather in a fashion implied by Charles Horton Cooley in his concept of "tentative social process." [2]

Yet time alone cannot reconcile the irreconcilable. It is essential that we study the social and cultural organism upon which the new secular forces have operated. Elsewhere, in collaboration with Murray Straus, it has been suggested that the Sinhalese have had a pecular capacity to retain essential features of a traditional order while easily adopting many new modes and values[3]. The responsible feature of Sinhalese social organization we termed "loose structuring" in its socio-cultural integration. Sinhalese society is guided by principles more than by precepts. Role specifications have been imprecise. Alternative modes of conformity have been tolerated to role norms and to universal norms. In a wide range of situations, quite different alternative courses of action have been normative. Even non-normative conduct has often been treated tolerantly. It is reasonable that people who live by principle should respond to acculturative forces differently from those who emphasize rigid prescriptions of conduct and absolutistic standards in norms and social relationships. It is of special significance that religion, Theravada Buddhism, has never aligned itself with a particular social order. And a religion of reason and the "middleway" stands in contrast to one, say, of faith and the "straight and narrow way."

Frequently Western influence has operated to limit rather than upset traditional norms; certain alternatives have been diminished while others, equally traditional, have been emphasized. Inexactness in kinship reciprocities has permitted redefinition rather than disruption. Science in the form of modern medicine has limited but certainly not deposed the demon dancer and the herbalist—the three are possibly more complementary than they are competitive today. Barring catastrophic innovation, such as industrialized rice production or collectivization, there is every reason to believe that Pelpola will move on as it has, accepting the blessings of an inventive and commercial world, and redefining matters of tradition with unconscious

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[2] Social Process, New York : Scribners, 1918, Chap. 1.

[3] Bryce Ryan and Murray A. Straus, "The Integration of Sinhalese Society," *Research Studies of the State College of Washington*, Vol. 18, pp. 179–227.

gradualism. The smoothness of Pelpola's transition is not a testament to wise planning in technical aid but rather to a folk wisdom manifest in a flexible ethos.

TABLE I

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VARIOUS ASPECTS OF SECULARIZATION AND CONTACTS WITH THE OUTER WORLD*

Type of Secular Behavior	No. of Cases	Mean Trips to City 1951	% Reading Newspaper		Mean yrs. in school	Mean Score on Intern. Knowledge
			Reg.	Never		
Value Statements						
Traditional	23	24	8	39	3.6	2.2
Moderate	40	33	25	30	4.6	3.4
Secular	24	42	54	4	5.3	6.2
Technical Innovations**						
Traditional	27	28	22	33	4.3	3.3
Moderate	27	32	22	18	4.9	4.0
Secular	21	35	38	19	5.4	4.3
Audience Participation						
Traditional	63	28	21	32	4.2	3.4
Secular	24	45	50	8	5.4	5.2
Retention of Folk Beliefs and Practices						
Traditional	34	31	29	26	3.5	3.2
Moderate	22	29	9	36	4.0	3.5
Secular	31	39	39	16	5.4	4.9
Western Material Culture						
Traditional	58	28	22	31	4.0	3.1
Moderate	14	33	28	22	4.6	4.2
Secular	15	50	53	7	6.8	6.7

* For bases of classification in reference to traditionalism and secularization, see Sinhalese Village, *op. cit.*, Note that audience participation is operationally defined as cinema attendance. This might be considered a type of contact as well as a form of secular behavior. Conversely extensive knowledge is both an indication of contact and a manifestation of secular interest. Divisions of responses into categories were made to achieve three groups of nearest possible equal size.

**Cultivators only.

TABLE II

INTER-RELATIONSHIPS AMONG DIFFERENT FACETS OF SECULARIZATION

	Per cent in Most Secular Third in respect to					
	Values	Audience Participation	Technology	Traditional Practices	Western Material Culture	Knowledge
Values						
Most Conservative 23 cases*	—	9	36	9	31	13
Most Secular 24 cases	—	33	29	63	69	68
Audience Participation						
Most Conservative 63 cases	25	—	28	32	33	25
Most Secular 24 cases	33	—	28	46	33	46
Technology						
Most Conservative 27 cases	22	15	—	33	33	22
Most Secular 21 cases	29	24	—	24	38	29
Traditional Practices						
Most Conservative 34 cases	9	29	29	—	38	24
Most Secular 31 cases	35	36	25	—	40	42
Western Material Culture						
Most Conservative 58 cases	10	28	27	31	—	31
Most Secular 29 cases	44	28	29	41	—	52
Knowledge						
Most Conservative 30 cases	10	13	15	20	13	—
Most Secular 27 cases	63	41	27	48	46	—

* The 23 lowest cases in respect to value secularization score. Whenever possible the groups chosen for comparison in this column constitute the bottom and top thirds of all scores in the designated secularization facet.

RURAL LIFE AND COMMUNICATION

D. N. MAJUMDAR

Mohana is a medium-sized multi-caste village in Uttar Pradesh, about eight miles north of Lucknow, the State capital, towards the Lucknow-Sitapur road. It is connected with Lucknow by six miles of metalled, motorable road and, at exactly the sixth mile-post, by a *kacha* feeder road, motorable in dry weather, but generally covered by bullock cart, bicycle, *ekka* or on foot. The last two-mile stretch is not easily negotiable in the rainy season when the feeder road becomes slushy and, at places, knee-deep under water. The nearest post-office and railway station is about three miles north-west of Mohana; the nearest police station is about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the south-west.

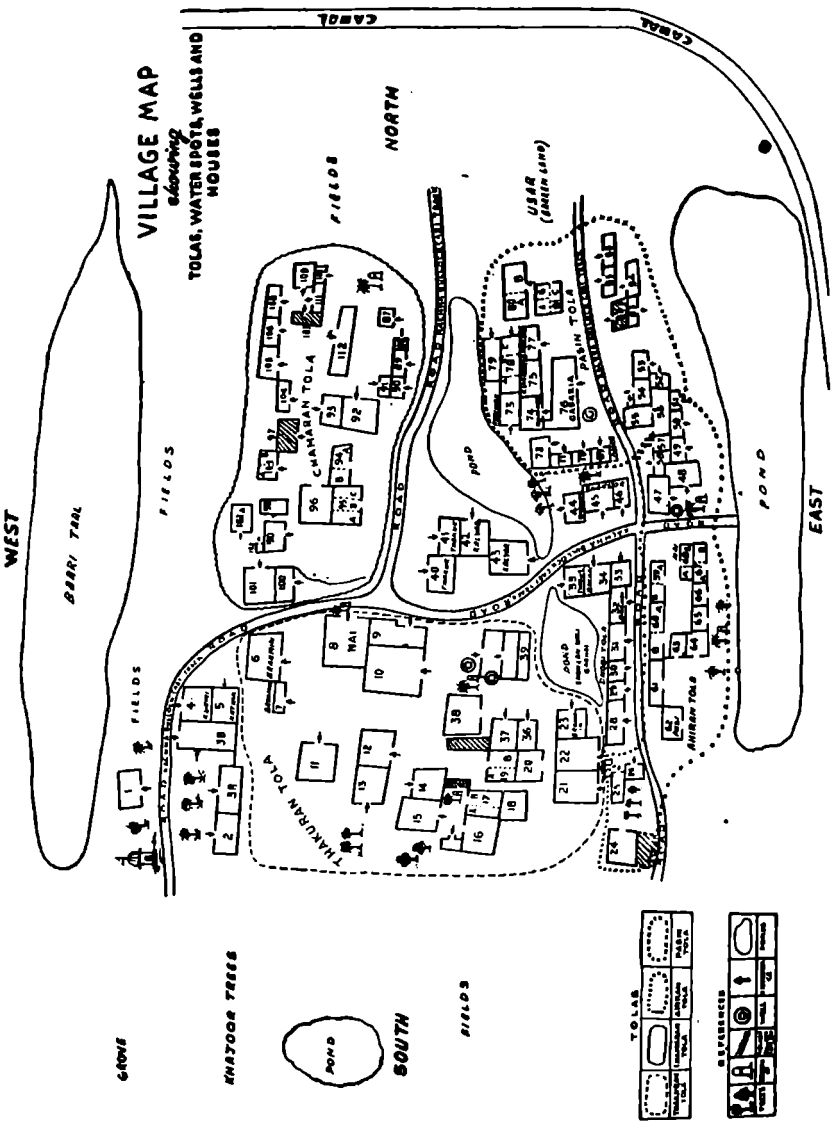
Mohana is mainly an agricultural village. Of course, in a place where caste distinctions are rigidly marked, there would be the traditional caste professions, and so in Mohana, a Nai is a barber, but he is also an agriculturist; a Dhobi washes clothes, but he also cultivates the land. So it happens that 99 per cent of the villagers are farmers working either on their own lands or on the lands of others for payment. The Gadarias have completely given up their caste profession of animal husbandry. The Bhaksors alone, and there are only two Bhaksor families in the village, have stuck to their traditional occupation.

The Thakurs are the dominant caste, not because they are numerically preponderant—a dominant caste is not always a numerically preponderant caste. A few families, owning land and a higher level of living, a single zamindar family with its extended kinship ties, may exercise big influence in the village and may determine and decide the pattern of village life and the nexus of the ties between the various castes living in the village. The Thakurs own the land, they are proprietary cultivators, they may corner the major portion of the village land, the other castes have willingly or unwillingly to serve them and live by serving them. Even if a caste is numerically dominant in a village it need not be socially dominant. It is only when the caste has a dominant status in other villages, *i.e.*, in a group of neighbouring villages, the numerical preponderance in a village can be cashed. The majority concept is a modern democratic one. Indian villages probably never exercised majority rule, or accepted majority verdict. The feudal India did not compromise with numerical strength. Besides, a lone Brahmin, a Sadhu, a Zamindar, a lone

social worker, has exercised more influence than a numerically preponderant community in the village. The backward classes, scheduled castes, preponderate in many villages, even a particular caste like the Lodha or the Pasi may be numerically the largest caste in a village, but authority and importance may attach to the few upper caste families, or to the zamindar family; that is, the social matrix of the Indian village.

The Chamars in Mohana constitute 23.5 per cent of the village population and the Thakurs 21.5 per cent—the rest of the population is divided into 13 other castes. While the Thakurs are second in the list of numerical strength, they hold 40 per cent of the land in the village. This fact alone would account for the economic dominance of the Thakurs. As they are also the propertied caste, their prestige and influence are beyond cavil. In many villages, the dominant role in the village may be shared by the petty shopkeepers and Baniyas who live by lending money to the villagers, and their importance can be gauged by the amount of jealousy and hatred shown to them by the upper castes of the village. With the abolition of the Zamindari system in U.P., the Thakurs have lost both in economic and social status, and are frantically making a bid for maintaining their hold on the village. Some have become moneylenders, and are competing with the Sahukars or the Baniyas, some have opened grocery shops in the village and one finds a kind of chaos in the context of rural occupations and inter-caste relations.

The village Mohana, inspite of its nearness to urban centre, still maintains its rural pattern, and although occasional contacts exist with the city, the village is not a communicating one. Yet contacts with city-life are not wholly absent. There are a few people who have to visit the village officially, and from them the villagers gather a great deal of information on varied subjects. Any government information with which the villagers should be acquainted is taken to them by the Lekhpal or Patwari. If there are changes in the land tax or some announcements regarding government property, it is the Lekhpal's duty to impart the information to the villagers. It was he who told them of the Government Scheme of consolidating land-holdings, and also explained to them what it was, and enumerated the advantages of the scheme. Besides such official information, the Lekhpal further furnishes them with other bits of news that he gathers in the city. Then there are the tax-collectors from the Malihabad Tahsil (including the Lekhpal) and from the District Board, who have a fund of interesting information for the villagers about the happenings in their respective places. The postman is a very rare visitor to the village, for even when there are letters to be delivered he sends them through the Mohana boys studying at the Higher Secondary School at Bakshi-ka-Talab.


VILLAGE MAP
showing
TOLAS, WATER SPOTS, WELLS AND HOUSES
WEST
NORTH
EAST
SOUTH
BARRI TAAL
FIELDS
CANAL
POND
GROVE
KHAJOOR TREES
THAKURAN TOLA
CHAMARAN TOLA
PASWAN TOLA
AHIRAN TOLA
USAR (BARREN LAND)
TOLAS
REFERENCES

Contacts made by the villagers

Some of the villagers go to Lucknow daily, for a few are employed there. Then a few take milk to Lucknow for sale. There are others whose visits to the city, though not daily, are frequent. The Dhobis have a few clients there, and those who have shops go to Lucknow and Itaunja markets to purchase goods. All these people, while chiefly concerned with their work, glean all sorts of information from the people with whom they come in contact.

Melas (fairs), markets, wrestling bouts—in fact any gathering are all occasions for fact and fiction passing from mouth to mouth. Marriage parties from Mohana to other places, and *vice versa* are frequent. At the annual *Holi* celebrations the Thakurs from nine other villages also assemble to greet one another a happy *Holi*. Amidst such rejoicings information, valuable and otherwise, is acquired and also passed on.

Among others who figure prominently in the dissemination of news and ideas are the students who are at Bakshi-ka-Talab school. Close to Bakshi-ka-Talab is Andaura where a National Extension Service Centre is functioning. When the boys return to the village after school, they tell the villagers not only of what they were taught in school, but also of the tractors and other agricultural equipments which they see at the N.E.S. centre. One day one of the teachers at the Bakshi-ka-Talab went to the class room with his convocation gown and it provoked comments and gossip in the village. In Achhra Man (7 miles away from Mohana) is a small fountain pen factory, and the students of Bakshi-ka-Talab often go there to purchase fountain pens. Gopala, the owner of the factory, is a widely travelled man, and the students listen to him with great interest. Gopala is a relative of Parag Lohar of Mohana. So Parag also visits him often.

Those taken into police custody, know something about the punishments meted out to offenders, identification parades and how they are carried out, and also of the alleged bribery and corruption among the police officials. When a villager is arrested, those who have been arrested before advise him as to how he will be questioned and how he should answer the questions.

Centres of Information in the Village

The *Pradhan* of the Gram Sabha is the administrative authority of the village. The Lekhpal takes all the government information first to the *Pradhan*. Then there is the *Sarpanch* of the *Adalti panchayat*, who is the judicial head. So he has a knowledge of the various quarrels and how they were settled. He knows the working of the *panchayat*. A *chaukidar* is employed by the police on Rs. 5/-

a month, and it is his duty to inform the police of any serious quarrels in the village. He has with him a record of all the births and deaths in the village. He informs the *Pradhan* of new entries in the records.

There are a few villagers who by virtue of having done a bit of travelling are looked upon as possessing more knowledge than the others. P. Shukla was a compounder in the army during the 2nd World War, and even now he has a stock of medicines with him, and he advises the villagers about the treatment of various diseases. R. Singh has visited many places. He has been to Rampur (to take dips in the Ganges) and to Sitapur (to attend the *Shiva Ratri* fair) several times. He has also been to Barabanki, Rai Bareilly, Pratapgarh and Sultanpur with marriage parties and to Gonda on personal business. He goes to Lucknow almost every week, sometimes oftener to make purchases of victuals and other articles, and sells them in the village. He has passed the Hindi Upper Middle Examination. A. Singh has been only to Kanpur, Barabanki and Lucknow, but he likes to talk about himself and his adventures. Bux Singh is a widely travelled man and has been to many places outside India, for he was in the army. The brothers R. Singh and M. Singh were also enlisted as soldiers. All these people still talk of the interesting adventures in which they were involved, and from them the villagers have heard about China, Russia, Japan, Turkey, England, America, Germany, France and Burma. The strange talk about these distant countries attracts everyone's attention, and the villagers talk about the noseless or flat-nosed Chinese and the loquacious French. The villagers have heard about a few places of pilgrimage in India such as Hardwar, Prayag, Kashi, Kanpur, Neemsar, Gola Gokaran Nath, and Badrinath.

Dissemination of News and Ideas within the Village

Messengers:

The villagers cling to the old method of sending messages through messengers, the messengers employed being Nais and Pasis. Messages to neighbouring villages and even to Lucknow are sent this way. Quite often the Nai is instrumental in settling marriages, especially among the Thakurs, for he is sent round to look out for suitable brides and grooms. The services of the Nai are required for sending messages regarding ceremonies connected with birth, *mundan*, marriage and death. Notices about panchayat meetings are also sent round through Nais. A Pasi is also deputed to convey messages regarding child-birth, *mundan* and marriage, but he never carries the message of death and its associate ceremonies. Apart from messages pertaining to ceremonies and functions, confidential messages and documents

are also sent through Pasis, for they are trust-worthy people. Letters containing urgent messages to places outside Mohana are never posted as the villagers are not sure when the letter would reach its destination. In fact, they are not sure whether it would reach its destination at all. Usually a member of the family himself goes to convey urgent and important messages, and when this is not possible a Pasi is despatched instead. The messenger goes on foot or on a cycle.

Conversation:

Conversation is the common way by which the exchange of ideas and information takes place. Any fresh topic is sure to be discussed in the evening gatherings. Topic after topic is taken up, one topic leading to another in the course of the conversation. For instance, when the boys studying at Bakshi-ka-Talab related the incident of one of their teachers having come to the class in his convocation gown, all those present were greatly amused and listened to the boys with interest. Then one of the villagers who had been in the army talked of the dress of the Burmese. Discussion about a quarrel in the village leads to a talk about the police, chiefly about their inefficiency and their eagerness to accept bribes. Then it leads to the stringent financial position of the villagers and so on. Young and old take part in these conversations. The teacher of the village primary school talks on many interesting subjects. Agricultural taxes, politics, modern changes in food and dress, cinema shows, religious festivals and ceremonies—a veriety of topics all are touched upon, sometimes seriously, but often lightly. The Congress government, tax collectors, police, village leaders, *panchayat* members—no one is spared, all are judged and criticised by the villagers. Conversations on these topics are not confined to the evening gatherings alone. Anywhere and any time two or more people get together there is some topic of common interest to them. Man must talk and talk he does too often and too much. The villager is no exception.

Katha Ceremonies:

Katha ceremonies are means whereby values are sought to be imparted to the villagers. The *Katha* of *Satya Narain* (the true god) is a collection of many short stories dealing with the lives of people who worship him and also with the lives of those who neglect his worship. Each story has one or more morals in it. Three of these stories are given below :

Once a Brahmin went outside the country in the interests of his business, and after a time returned with two boat-loads of diamonds, and gold and silver ornaments, worth several lakhs of rupees. When he neared the shore, *Satya Narain* himself went to him in the guise

of a *Sadhu*, and asked him for alms. The Bania unwilling to part with even a little bit of his wealth, replied that he had no money to give, and that in his boats there was only worthless material. The *Sadhu* went away saying, 'As you say'. When the Bania looked into his collection of wealth, he found that the diamonds, and gold and silver had all turned into worthless stuff, fit only to be thrown away. The Bania then went in search of the *Sadhu* and found him sitting under a tree near by, and requested him to restore his wealth, promising that he would never again utter a lie or be so miserly. The *Sadhu* granted him his request, so that the Bania got back his wealth.

2. This same Bania was not blessed with any children, and one day he made a vow that if his wife bore him a child, he would perform a *pooja* to *Satya Narain*. In due course of time, his wife gave birth to a girl. When he was reminded of his promise to perform the *pooja* to *Satya Narain*, he said that he would fulfil the promise when the daughter was married. Years passed by and the daughter was married, but there was no sign of the Bania performing the *pooja*. His son-in-law was now his partner in business and they both went on a business tour. On the way they were arrested on a charge of theft. The Bania's wife remembered the promise, and performed the *pooja* to *Satya Narain*, and consequently her husband and son-in-law were released.

3. A king was returning home and was dead-tired after a chase. He rested under a tree for a while. At a distance the Ahirs of the village were offering *pooja* to *Satya Narain*. Seeing their king, they first gave him the *prasad*, but he would not accept it because it was given by Ahirs who were below him. He left the *prasad* under the tree and went home, but when he reached home he found that all his 100 sons had been killed by some means. He realised it was a result of divine wrath. So he went back to the place where *pooja* was performed and took the *prasad*. When he went home now, he found all his sons restored to life again.

Many another such story is recited, but it is doubtful whether the *Katha* ceremonies have any reformative value for the village. The villagers enjoy the story alright, but the moral of it fails to arrest their attention, at any rate they do not realise that they should put their morals into practice. Many of these villagers do not know the aim of the *Katha* ceremonies, for they believe that if they are present at the recital, they have performed their duty. Merely listening to the *Katha* is taken as performing a *punya karya* (a good deed), and is looked upon as a sort of 'passport' to *Swarg* (eternal bliss). So one can, without exaggeration, say that *Katha* ceremonies in the village, do not serve the purpose originally intended.

Education:

The Primary School of Mohana owes its existence to the kindness of an ex-zamindar of the village who donated his newly built house to the villagers to be used as a school. To pay the teacher the villagers had to contribute a little, and the zamindar gave the rest. By and by the school was recognised by the District Board. Now there are two teachers working in the school. In the history of the school, there have been times when it has not functioned well, but at present it is run smoothly and efficiently. Hindi, Arithmetic, History, Geography and Nature Study are taught in the school. Games are a part of the regular school routine. *Bhajans* and *Keertans* are organised on Saturday afternoons by the school teacher. Further, the children are taught cleanliness, tidiness, honesty and punctuality. Thus, the children who attend school are supposed to cultivate these good habits. Some of the boys after finishing their education at the primary school in the village, join the higher secondary school at Bakshi-ka-Talab, where they develop a broader outlook. It is generally seen that boys studying at Bakshi-ka-Talab are better behaved than the others, and it is hoped that they will have a good influence in the village. However, the attitude of the villagers, particularly, the higher castes has to change before any substantial good can come out of education.

Attitude of the villagers towards Education and other Modern Amenities

Education:

When the primary school was started in 1942, there were only ten boys attending it. From the very beginning the higher castes were opposed to the establishment of the school. They do not want their children to study, nor do they wish the low-caste children to attend school. There were and still are several reasons for their aversion to education.

Before the abolition of Zamindari, the Thakurs were rich, and there was no need for the boys to study. They had not to hunt for jobs, for they were amply provided for. All that they were supposed to learn was to extract labour from the low-caste people and collect taxes from the tenants. Besides, the general belief was that once the boys received education, they would become 'dandies' acquiring all the vagaries and caprices of the degenerated city youth, and would help the people of their families neither in the house nor in the field. Further, the Thakurs do not like their children to sit with the low-

caste children. They were opposed to low caste children studying, because they realised that education would improve their status, and consequently they would claim equality with the higher castes. They are still opposed to education mainly because of the last mentioned reason. Brahmins also oppose it, because it would bring about equality of all castes.

Some of the lower caste people did not like to send their boys to school, because their help was wanted in the field or at home. Often, little boys of six and seven years had to go out to work and earn something to help the family. Others, like the Dhobis, felt that education would not in any way be useful for their children, for they would finally turn to their caste-professions.

But on the whole the lower-castes favour education, because they realise that it would help them to shake off the aggression of the Thakurs and others who exploit them. The local money-lenders contributed towards the consciousness for education in no small measure. Their exhorbitant and fleecing rates of usury made the villagers desperate. The high rate of interest which increased according to the wishes of the money-lenders kept the illiterate debtor at the creditor's mercy, since he would never know as to what was being entered in the accounts. Often enough, the poor debtor would toil and slave and save enough to pay off the debt only to find that the amount to be paid mysteriously doubled or trebled itself. The debtors are not given a receipt for the amount paid, on the plea that they are illiterate. This made them favour education. They are eager to educate their children to keep a better account of loans and repayments. The same argument holds good in the matter of paying taxes. Again, those who could read and write got employment in cities easily. These instances speak much in favour of education and the number of low caste children in the school, is increasing rapidly.

The standard of the boy's performance in school depends to a great extent on the attitude of the guardians towards education. Of the few high caste school-boys, many are indifferent to what is taught in school, and some of them are 'pronounced dunces'. But the low-caste children are industrious and diligent, and naturally their performance is good. The pity is that many of the low-caste boys cannot join the higher secondary school at Bakshi-ka-Talab, owing to economic reasons.

The villagers think that girls do not need education, the argument being that sooner or later they will marry and settle down in their homes, and any knowledge they receive of History or Geography will be a mere waste. So the villagers opine that it is enough for a girl to learn to read and write, so that she can read and write letters if the necessity arises.

The Postal Service:

The villagers show no appreciation of the postal service. They rarely receive letters and money orders find their way into the village only once in a blue moon. The general feeling is that the postal service is very unreliable and incurs a great deal of unnecessary delay. There is truth in what the villagers say, for once a letter reached the village, two months after its despatch, when it should have reached its destination the next day. However, the main reason for the villagers' dislike of the postal service is their illiteracy. They have to find a literate person to get their letters read or written. If the message to be sent is of a confidential nature, it involves greater difficulties. The roundabout way in which a confidential letter is dictated and written, conveys a message totally different from the one intended to be conveyed. Similarly, there is hesitation in getting one's letters read by someone else, if one expects confidential messages in them. So the villagers stick to the old methods of sending messengers or taking the messages themselves and resort to the postal service only when the distance is very great.

Radio:

There is demand for a radio in the village. The demand is more vocal and persistent among those who have listened to the *panchayat-ghar* programme of the Lucknow station of the A.I.R. Those who have been to film shows in Lucknow are also keen to have a radio set in the village, for they know that film songs are relayed particularly by the Radio Ceylon. Though the demand is great, no one is prepared to take up the responsibility of looking after the set, if one is installed in the village. Even the *Sarpanch* is not willing to shoulder this responsibility. So the idea of asking the government to have a set installed in the village was dropped.

Newspapers:

Newspapers are not popular among the villagers, and even if they are supplied to them free of cost, it would not benefit them. One reason, for this unpopularity of newspapers, is the illiteracy of the villagers. If one reads out the news to them they listen, but that too only for a short while. There is so much of work to be done that they cannot afford to waste their precious time in such '*trash*' (so it appears to them). One of the investigators of the Department of Anthropology used to read out the papers to them sometimes. The first day, there were many people sitting round, then as days passed by, their interest ebbed, and the investigator had to give up reading the papers to them. S. Singh, an employee in the High

Court at Lucknow, attributed the villagers' apathy to news to its strangeness. They do not understand it and do not believe anything of it. Most of the items seem to them to be same or similar. After all, what does it matter to them what happens elsewhere ? Leave alone the far-off countries of America, England, Russia or China; what heppens in Bombay or Delhi or Madras does not interest them. They know nothing about Border Incidents, Kashmir Problems or Goa. Their world is small and their horizon limited.

Urban Contacts : Advantages and Disadvantages

If the newspapers speak of something that happened in Burma, the villagers are not interested, but when a person who has been to Burma, tells them something about that country, they listen with great interest. The villagers learn not by reading, but by listening. Thus, city dwellers who visit the village, and villagers who visit the city play the chief role in broadening the outlook of the villagers. To increase contacts with the city, cycles have come as a boon, and they are the only means whereby the villagers can get to Lucknow quickly, the other alternatives being to walk or to go on the melon carts. But contacts with the city besides serving a good purpose, have also a baneful influence on the villagers. The young men are always waiting for an opportunity to go and see a film, and many of the films are not only useless, but even harmful to the simple villager. Losing faith in god, a blind adoption of the dress and styles of the city people, and squandering their wealth on worthless stuff are few of the other evils of urban influence. Thus, to a villager, gaining knowledge means also losing one's character; hence some villagers would rather be ignorant.

Political Affiliations

During the last elections, the villagers supported the Congress party, and Jodh Singh, one of the prominent villagers claims to have composed a poem urging the villagers to cast their votes in favour of a particular candidate. A rough translation of the poem is as follows :

Do not give your vote to Bhaiyaji
The rightful owner of it is Sopiji
Bhaiyaji is running a big show
Trying to tempt everyone
But he takes bribes in secret with the Zamindars
And lets the throats of the villagers be cut
So, don't give your vote to Bhaiyaji
The rightful owner of it is Sopiji.

If you give your vote to Bhaiyaji
He will become the Chairman of the District Board
And then he will tax each and everyone
But if you give your vote to Sopiji
He will become the Chairman of the District Board
And will help all without discrimination
So, don't give your vote to Bhaiyaji
The rightful owner of it is Sopiji.
Go to the polling booths in Bhaiyaji's car
Eat the sweet-meats of Bhaiyaji
But give your vote for Sopinath
And don't forget him, when you cast your vote
Because for your sake O ! brother farmers
He has been to prison
And suffered hardships in furthering your cause.
So, don't give your vote for Bhaiyaji
The rightful owner of it is Sopiji.

Jodh Singh is of the opinion that many villagers voted for Sopinath because of his efforts and because of this poem.

Though many of the villagers voted for the Congress party, they are by no means satisfied with the present Government. Their complaint is that land taxes, revenue taxes and water taxes have been increased, but on the other hand, the price of wheat has been cut with the result that the villagers are subject to economic hardships. They feel that the present government does nothing for their good but is only eager to levy more taxes. The present government must go; it does not matter which party comes into power, as long as it is not the ruling party. Even if the new party should prove worse than the previous one, the villagers will not vote for the former again. Such are the vehement opinions of the villagers. The fact is that the villagers know very little about the working of the present government but are critical of it due to certain reasons.

For one thing, this government brought about the Zamindari abolition and so the Thakurs, who were prosperous land-owners have a grudge against the Government. The lower castes who profited by the Zamindari abolition are also not pleased with the government, for the present tax-collectors are very strict, while in the olden days the Zamindars were not so. Further, they feel that if the Government could deprive the Thakurs of their lands, it could very easily take away their lands too, and they look upon the Government scheme of land consolidation as a step towards robbing them of their lands. In Zamindari days, the higher castes were very helpful to the lower castes in many ways, but they are not so now. Formerly, the Zamindars used to settle all disputes, and if anyone was arrested by the Police,

the Zamindars spoke up for him and got him released. Now the Panchayat and Gram Sabha are dominated by the Thakurs and they sometimes take a supercilious attitude towards the lower castes. Further, if any of the lower caste people is involved in a police case, the Thakurs no longer help him.

The most bitter critic of the present Government is Pandit Shukla who attributes the present relaxation in inter-caste relations to the Government. In his opinion deviation from the traditional caste rules is dangerous to the Hindu community. There are many others of Shukla's mind, who feel that the Government has no right to interfere with caste rules which are the affairs of *Bhagwan* (God).

Comparing the present Government with the old foreign rule, the villagers say that under British regime they lived peacefully and that the Government did not interfere in their affairs unnecessarily. Further at the time of the British rule, they say, that justice was meted out with fairness and the wrongdoer was punished, but now often the wrongdoer escapes and the innocent is punished, for there is much corruption and bribery among those in power. There are a few villagers who say that they would be happy if the British came back, for they say that there is no one in this country who is able to administer justice well. On the other hand, most people are anxious that they should have a hand in the administration of the country, particularly of their village.

'In the next elections we will vote for the American Government', said a villager once, and when it was pointed out to him that there will be no American candidate, he said, 'then we will not vote for any party'. When Mr. S., an American research scholar was in the village, he frequently doled out money to the villagers, so he was looked upon as a kind and generous man. Hence there are a few villagers who say that all Americans are good and trustworthy, and would prefer American rule to either the British or the present Governments. But opinions to the contrary are not lacking, for some say that Mr. S. was generous only because he wanted some secret information from them.

The villagers do not know much about politics or Government affairs or about the different forms of Government. Democracy, to them, is the same as Monarchy. Those who go to Lucknow have heard the names of the parties—Congress, Socialist, Communist and Jan Sangh, but they know nothing about the aims and objects of these parties. Villagers do realise the importance of elections, and know that they have the power to a certain extent of selecting or rejecting those who are to be in authority.

But the main test they apply to judge the competence of the administration, is their own welfare—what the administration has done or can do, the rest is no concern of theirs. Here lies the field

of human relations, completely untouched, anonymous and vacant, and here lies the opportunity of the social scientist to create conditions for better realisation of their hopes and ambitions and of their obligations in a Welfare State. Education alone cannot achieve miracles. We have placed all our eggs in the same basket. There are fields of human potentiality, and understanding which require to be discovered, if we want to rehabilitate our villages. Mere going back to the village would be continuing an illusion.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS IN A MALWA VILLAGE

ADRIAN C. MAYER

One of the major influences of recent years on the Indian countryside has been the concept of what is called *pañcāyat raj*—ths rule of the *pañcāyat*, or elected committee—within the village and the local region. The inauguration of these committees is by no means of recent feature in many parts of India. In Madras, for example, village committees date from as long ago as 1884[1] and village, *taluk* and district committees were operating in one form or another in most of the provinces of British India[2] and in many Princely States[3] before India became independent. The difference between the periods before and after 1947 lies in the greater emphasis now being placed on the role of the local committees in the administration and development of the country,[4] and the added responsibilities which are given to them. In some States, for instance, it is proposed to make over the headman's tax collecting duties to the village committee, which used previously to have only minor administrative functions.

This policy is not without risk. Accounts have been published to show us that, because of internal factors, the village committee may not work smoothly. In one place, for example, lowcaste numerical predominance enabled the control of the Village Committee to be wrested from high-caste land owners. But the latter would not support the program of the Village Committee, and they had enough money to defend themselves in a suit brought by the Village Committee against them. The Committee's members were not wealthy enough to finance the case and bring about their compliance, and finally stopped trying to make the Committee work.[5]

Such situations have been mentioned in other village studies too[6]. And the main emphasis of the writing about *pancayat raj* has so far been on the progress and difficulties within the individual village.

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1 Rao, 1954 : 104.

2 see Tinker 1954 : Chap. XI for a survey of committees in this area.

3 e.g., the description for Kolhapur State (Rao 1954 : 51).

4 It is, however, notable that the Indian Constitution only makes necessary the development of village bodies. Regional committees are not mentioned, as Sastri remarks (Sastri 1957 : 29), and I suggest that this is in line with the general lack of emphasis and even data for this intermediate level of local government.

5 Cohn 1955 : 71–2.

6 e.g., Marriott n.d.: 106–08.

There is discussion of the formal aspect of local government at other levels[1] but little information on its actual operation. This is in line with the general trend of research, which has centred on the village.

But, just as anthropologists now agree that a study of a single village does not give an adequate picture of Indian rural society, so other levels in the hierarchy of local government are also worthy of attention. In this article my interest centres on Village Committees (*gāṅv pañcāyat*) composed of several nearby settlements[2], and on the Central Committee (*Kendra pāncāyat*). The latter is a body composed of representatives from a number of Village Committees, these being elected by the Village Committee members from amongst their number.

There are two inter-connected aspects of the Central Committee's operation. One concerns the sessions of the Committee, and deals with the actions it takes, and the relations members have with each other. The other is the effect that the Central Committee has on relations between the villagers who are not representatives. Clearly there can be no hard and fast division between the two; for the attitudes of the villagers towards the Central Committee will be influenced by the attitude of their representative. But the two can be separated for the purposes of research into a study of the Central Committee in session, on the one hand, and a study of the elections to the Central Committee on the other. For it is during the elections that the villager's attitudes are clearest.

Elections to the Central Committee have a different significance from those to the Village Committee. This is not just because the former is a more influential body, whose membership carries prestige. It is also because the Central Committee members are true representatives of their Village Committees, whereas the Village Committee members do not necessarily have any greater influence in the Village Committee than fellow villagers who are not members.

The difference lies in the traditional and the present constitution of such gathering, and it is expressed by the two words 'council' and 'committee'. The former is defined as 'an assembly or meeting for consultation or advice', the latter, on the other hand, is 'a body of persons appointed or elected for some specific business or function,[3] The main variation is the lack of specific membership in the case of the council, and the presence of a clearly defined membership of the committee.

This is well shown by my Indian data. The subcaste or village council traditionally may have a leader (*sarpa c, jāt patel*) and a

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[1] see, for instance, Venkatarangaiya's discussion of the policy of devolution of power from officials to District Committees (Venkatarangaiya 1941.)

[2] There is a Village Committee for every 1, 200 people and most settlements fall short of this population.

[3] Both definitions from the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary.

definite number of caste or village elders as its members. But the general public of subcaste or village can, in fact, contribute to the discussion on equal terms. And the feeling of the whole meeting, rather than that of the senior members, tends to be considered when a decision is to be made. The Village Committee, though having elected members, also tends to be a council. The several settlements which compose it are geographically close, and people can come to its meetings quite easily. The gatherings are, in my experience, held in a public place where anyone can come; and members of the Village Committee appear reluctant to take decisions unless they are sure of popular support. There is little of the system of representation at this level.

The Central Committee, on the other hand, is much more nearly a committee than a council[1]. Its meetings take place far from the villages, in the market town; and its deliberations concern wide policies which affect all the villages in the Committee, but about which individual villagers may not have definite opinions. Its decisions are taken without discussion by any but the representatives who sit on the Committee.

Because the Central Committee depends solely on its members for action, the elections of these men, and of a chairman from amongst their number, are more important than the elections to the Village Committees. The latter may reflect factional patterns in the village, but do not necessarily alter the pattern of action. If, for instance, faction A is in control of a Village Committee, with a faction B outside it, it is quite possible that there will be deadlock with no agreement possible over the work to be done. If, later, faction B is elected, and faction A is then outside, deadlock may continue to reign. For though the composition of the Committee has changed, there is the same lack of concensus which inhibited action by the former Committee.

This situation would not arise in the Central Committee, for the support of factions outside the Committee is not necessary here. Such factions could, of course, prevent resolutions of the Committee from taking effect in the villages, but they cannot block decision-making by the Central Committee. The only cases of deadlock in the Central Committee would occur when both factions were represented on the Committee, but these would only be temporary. In one case, the weaker faction stayed away from Committee meetings for several months, and so prevented a *quorum*. But then the supervising officials ruled that its members would lose their seats if they did not attend. And, once a *quorum* existed, the weaker faction could only delay action but not prevent a vote eventually being taken, when a simple majority brought about the Committee's decision.

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1 Use of the term *panchāyat* for both forms of body is confusing, I think, and I have therefore used the English words only.

The material that follows describes electioneering in a Village Committee which I witnessed in 1956 in Madhya Bharat State. My main purpose is to draw out of this account the nature of inter-village contacts stimulated by the new forms of local government. For such contacts are new in an area into which local government was introduced only in 1946, and they are creating another aspect of village and inter-village affairs. The account deals with the selection of leaders of the Village Committee as well as of the representative to the Central Committee. Not only did both take place at the same time, but the electioneering at the two levels was inextricably mixed, as we shall see.

The Village Committee was composed of three nearby settlements. The most important of these, Piplia, lay on the main road and had a population of 557 in 1951. The Village Committee took its name, and it provided five of the seven members. The village of Imlipura was reached from Piplia by a mile of cart track. It contained 591 inhabitants, but contributed only one member to the Village Committee, a fact I shall return to. The third settlement, Sarukheri, was little more than a hamlet, having only 103 people. It stood quite near Imlipura, and sent one member to the Village Committee.

In August, 1956, the Village Committee met to elect members to the following positions; the chairmanship (*sarpañc*) and vice-chairmanship (*up-sarpañc*) of the Village Committee, and its representatives in the Central Committee and the Justice Committee (*nyāy pañcāyat*). The Central Committee had existed since 1951, being originally composed of representatives from thirteen village Committees including Piplia. But at the beginning of 1956 it was merged with other Central Committees to contain men sent from fifty-two Village Committees, as well as four 'reserved' seats for women and Harijans. The members of the Justice Committee, on the other hand, had been reduced from those sent by thirteen to those sent by five Village Committees. In both cases, however, the respresentatives sent from Piplia would be part of a larger local government institution.

The choice of the Central Committee representative was not only a matter depending on the Piplia Village Committee's internal politics. For this representative would help to elect the chairman of the Central Committee from amongst his fellows. And a rivalry had started over that election which covered all the constituent villages. The main contestants for the chairmanship of the Central Committee were a Rajput and a Brahmin. The latter lived in a village called Bercha, which bordered Piplia. And so it was that a close Rajput colleague of the Brahmin came to Piplia on the day before the election, when candidates were to be formally nominated.

Though he came to ensure that a representative friendly to the Brahmin candidate would be sent by Piplia to the Central Committee,

the Bercha Rajput did not give this as the reason for his visit. Instead, he maintained that he had heard that the meeting was likely to produce dissension, and that he had therefore come along as a neighbour or boundary brother (*kāṅkar bhāi*) to help towards a peaceable decision.

This was the one and only time that I heard the term 'boundary brother' used. And, indeed, the impression it gives of ties of cooperation and affectionate concern reaching from one village to another runs counter to other accounts I was given of inter-village relations. Formerly, it seems, villages were separate units, linked only by the ties of kinship between their inhabitants of the same subcaste. In the unsettled days of the early 19th century, villages were maintained by the courage and acumen of their headmen, who had to defend the place from marauders. Later, in the days of under-population of the land, a successful headman was one who could keep his villagers from leaving the settlement[1].

Under these conditions, rivalry between headmen of nearby villages was common. This sometimes took the form of boundary disputes. Village boundaries were sometimes marked by pillars (*mināra*) in which were immured distinguishing signs (*nishān*) of the adjacent villages. But even these safeguards did not prevent minor alterations of the boundaries. And villagers talk of a yearly 'beating of the bounds' by the headmen of bygone days, to see that no land had been taken from the village (and presumably to do some encroaching themselves, if possible). Boundary cases still occur, too, though they are now settled in the Courts and not by the prowess of headmen.

Apart from such times of hostility, there has been a general feeling of separation and disassociation between villages. This is evidenced by the way commensal rules apply over the locality. For the castes from whose hands a caste group cannot eat may vary from village to village. In one settlement, for instance, Rajputs and Khatis eat each other's food; in another settlement they do not do so. The dilemma in which visitors are placed is solved, in the words of a Rajput; "We accept the customs (*rivāj*) of the villages where we are guests, unless they concern the low castes... For instance, suppose the Rajput and Khati of Piplia village go on a wedding party to a village where Rajputs and Khatis are allowed to eat together, though they do not do so in Piplia. They will eat in the one line with their hosts; and it will not be penalised by the Piplia subcaste councils if there are [to them] forbidden people in that line. For this is the custom of that

1 The famine of 1899–1900, and the influenza epidemic of 1919 were the last checks to the population, which since then has risen steadily. There is now no empty land.

village." In this way, villages were to some extent separate social systems. Inter-village contact existed mainly between kin, and even quite near villages might therefore be without contact if they consisted of different sets of endogamous subcastes. In fact, there was often little subcaste correspondence. Rajputs, for instance, existed in only 8 of 24 villages near to Piplia. Lack of kin and subcaste ties did not, of course, prevent people from knowing about other villages. My own informants were quite able to tell me which were 'prosperous', "quarrelsome", 'unreliable', 'backward' villages, etc., even when they had no subcaste mates there. Usually they judged from the quality of the headman and the influential men of the village. But this is not the same as having personal contacts with these villages.

I have stressed the relative separation of nearby villages because it puts the present increase of inter-village contacts into perspective. This increase comes on the one hand between the two or three neighbouring settlements which have been joined into one Village Committee; and on the other hand it can be seen in the wider area, between the fifty-two village Committees of the Central Committee. Both aspects emerged in the electioneering at Piplia.

The situation in Piplia found by the Bercha emissary, whom I shall call Dalip Singh, was as follows. The Village Committee was composed of : Ranjit Singh, a Rajput (of a different endogamous subcaste from Dalip Singh's); Tarlok Singh, a Rajput and a relative of Ranjit Singh; Gopal Prasad, a Brahmin; Gopal Prasad's wife, as the woman member and Bheru, a Balai, as the Harijan member. All these lived in Piplia; the other members were Husein, a Muslim from Imlipura, and Badrilal, the headman of Sarukheri. Of these, only the first three men and Husein were eager to have a post in the Village or Central Committee, and it is with these that the account mostly deals.

Dalip Singh arrived at Piplia at about one o'clock. All the members had assembled (save for the Balai and Gopal Prasad's wife; these never came, but could have been summoned if their votes had been needed). With them was the Piplia schoolmaster, in charge of registering the nomination papers at four o'clock that afternoon. The actual election was to take place at eleven o'clock next day and, thanks to the schoolmaster's large and noisy alarm clock, both operations were carried out on the dot. Since this was a time of peak agricultural activity, both meetings were held without a crowd of villagers to witness them. It was an exceptional circumstance, and one that enabled me to assess the changing currents of alliance with greater precision than if a dozen men had been talking at once.

Canvassing for the four positions at stake was made at two levels. The first was that of rivalry between members of the Piplia Village Committee as to who should be the new chairman. This was partly

based on long-standing differences between Ranjit Singh and Gopal Prasad (the latter had been headman of the village, but had been forced to relinquish this hereditary position in favour of the former some ten years ago). And partly it was based on a clash of local patriotism between the men of Piplia and Imlipura. The second level was represented by Dalip Singh's activities. Overtly designed to prevent disputes in the Village Committee, they were actually aimed at the selection of a representative for the Central Committee who would support the Bercha candidate for the chairmanship of that body. And so in the day's discussions both new kinds of inter-village contacts were present, those centred on the Village Committee, and those on the Central Committee.

Within the Village Committee, Ranjit Singh (the incumbent) and Gopal Prasad were rivals for the chairmanship; and at the level of the Central Committee representation, Dalip Singh was in favour of either Ranjit Singh or Tarlok Singh—for both Gopal Prasad and Husein were thought to be against the Bercha candidate for the Central Committee chairmanship.

The meeting began with an appeal for unity by Dalip Singh. Speaking as a 'boundary brother' he made a long speech about the virtues of unity in a committee, and ended by hoping that the four men would each be given a post, and that nominations would be unanimously made. The assembled Village Committee members echoed these pious hopes, and then allowed Dalip Singh and Ranjit Singh to leave the meeting house and talk privately.

Ranjit Singh at once said that he would support Husein for the Piplia Village Committee chairmanship if his own candidature looked like being unsuccessful. This he would do to prevent Gopal Prasad filling the post. Such reasoning suited Dalip Singh perfectly; for one of his aims was to keep Husein away from the Central Committee representation. He therefore proposed that Husein be nominated as chairman, and that Gopal Prasad be sent to the Justice Committee—an innocuous post which is often used as a consolation prize. This left the reliable Ranjit Singh for the Central Committee, and Tarlok Singh as vice-chairman of the Village Committee. Ranjit Singh agreed, and they returned to the meeting house, where Dalip Singh broached this plan, in his role as mediator.

The answer was an impassioned speech from Gopal Prasad. For generations his forebears had been headmen of Piplia, he said. And now that he had been deprived of this position because of a (to him) petty misdemeanour, he should at least be the Village Committee chairman. Appealing directly to Ranjit Singh, who sat with eyes on the carpet and fingers twisting, he asked for a chance to run the Village Committee for three years, as Ranjit Singh himself had done.

Was the latter so selfish as to let the control pass to a resident of Imlipura ?

At this, Husein jumped up, crying that Imlipura had as many people as Piplia and its inhabitants were just as qualified as the Piplia men to hold the Village Committee chairmanship. It was wrong to have parties (*pālti*—a derivation from the English word) of this kind, he continued amid a growing clamour as others started to talk. Gopal Prasad was trying to assure Husein that he was not hostile, but had only been rhetorical, and Ranjit Singh started to tell Gopal Prasad that the village headman should also be the Village Committee chairman, and that he therefore claimed the post as his 'right', but would let Gopal Prasad carry on the actual operation of the Committee as vice-chairman if he wished. Only Dalip Singh sat silent, though he had been the foremost opponent of such internecine argument. As he said afterwards, the quarrel between Husein and Gopal Prasad was to his advantage, for though it was now certain that neither would support the other for the Village Committee chairmanship, this would also apply for the place on the Central Committee, where he feared that one of them might oppose the Bercha candidate for the chairmanship.

By the time the tumult had died down, it was after three o'clock. Amidst warnings from the schoolmaster that the time limit for nominations could not be deferred by a minute, Dalip Singh appealed to Ranjit Singh to stand down and so prevent the need for a vote. (By this, Dalip Singh calculated that either Gopal Prasad or Husein would be elected, and so be kept away from the Central Committee representation). But Ranjit Singh was adamant, saying that he would sign a bond giving Gopal Prasad the real power, if he would only stand for the vice-chairmanship. Afterwards, people hinted at irregularities in Ranjit Singh's administration, and said that the reason he wanted to prevent Gopal Prasad's chairmanship was to make sure that he would not discover them on taking over the files and accounts as headman.

Deadlock having been reached, everyone started to fill out candidature forms. This was done privately, and rumours floated around the room that everyone had entered for the chairmanship, that nobody had done so, and so forth. But at four o'clock precisely the schoolmaster announced two candidates for the Village Committee chairmanship—Husein and Gopal Prasad, and a sole entrant for the vice-chairmanship—none other than Ranjit Singh.

The contest between Husein and Gopal Prasad was to be expected, in view of their dispute of the last hour. But Ranjit Singh's withdrawl was a surprise for everybody. He had presumably reckoned that Gopal Prasad could be sure of at least three votes—his own, his wife's and the Balai's. But he himself could only count on his

own and Tarlok Singh's, since he knew that Husein would now enter the contest and would vote for himself. He therefore withdrew and swung his own and Tarlok Singh's vote behind Husein. The deciding voice thus lay with Badrilal, who had up to now been ignored and silent, as presumably befitted the emissary of such a tiny village.

Now, at once, Badrilal became the centre of persuasion and flattery. Each side vied for his favour, and Dalip Singh took him aside and hinted that he vote for Husein—for in that way the latter would become chairman and so ineligible to go to the Central Committee. Badrilal was, in fact, non-committal. It was said that he would give his vote to the party which gave him most refreshment at the nearby liquor shop during the evening.

At this stage, people broke up until the next day's election. Dalip Singh went home well pleased, calculating that either Gopal Prasad or Husein would be shielded from the Central Committee by being elected Village Committee chairman, and hoping that another post would be found for the survivor.

At the election next day, there was no need for a vote. Husein had withdrawn his name; for he had learnt during the evening that Badrilal would provide the fourth vote for Gopal Prasad. The latter was then declared elected, with his rival Ranjit Singh as vice-chairman, and he thereupon made a speech promising to do his utmost for the Village Committee, and to work for the sake of unity in all its deliberations.

Dalip Singh, who had come over from Bercha with one of that village's headmen, then spoke, saying that the major business of the meeting was yet to come, *i.e.* the election of the representative on the Central Committee. He stressed the power of the Central Committee, the large amounts of money available for grants to the Village Committees, the number of villages assembled under its aegis, and the need to send only the most qualified man as representative. But this speech lost most of its effect, for the Piplia men counted the election to their own Village Committee as the important feature of the meeting. Gopal Prasad, in answer, opined that this matter could easily be settled, and the Bercha men at once started to feel their way towards finding out his views, since he was now the most influential man on the Village Committee.

The first fact to emerge was that Gopal Prasad thought Husein to be unsuitable for the Central Committee. This was hardly surprising, after their contest. More significant was his remark that Husein's desire for a position on the Village or Central Committee was prompted by a fellow Muslim in the nearby village of Faura. He castigated this man as a meddler in the affairs of other villages, and hinted that it was well his efforts had been frustrated. Now, this Muslim was known to be an opponent of the Bercha candidate

for the Central Committee. This indicated to the Bercha people that Gopal Prasad was on their side. Disregarding the fact that his remarks about meddlers could equally well apply to them, they at once started to sing his praises, as though they had never supposed that he was against them. Soon after, another indication of Gopal Prasad's views came in talk of the situation in another village. Here, he spoke well of a fellow Brahmin who was engaged in an election contest with a Rajput opponent of the Bercha candidate.

Having settled whose side Gopal Prasad was on, it was an easy matter to agree on Tarlok Singh as representative to the Central Committee. Though certainly not the most qualified person for that post (being only semi-literate), he was an inoffensive person, known to favour the Bercha candidate. Gopal Prasad himself was sent to the Justice Committee, and Husein was thereby left with no position at all. Later, I taxed Dalip Singh with this contradiction of his point that each of the four men should have a post. The only reason he gave for this reversal was that Husein was unreliable, being a Muslim. But he had himself supported Husein at one time, and he was clearly excluded to please Gopal Prasad. So the elections ended, with speeches of mutual esteem, and fulsome declarations that the unity of the villages had not been disturbed.

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The distinction I made between a committee's internal operation and its connexions with the general population represented is valid for the Village as well as for the Central Committee. The ways in which people of different villages regard each other may or may not be reflected in the relations between Village Committee members. In one kind of situation, the leaders of the Village Committee can also be the most important people in the group of villages, and thus the 'natural' leaders for any such combination. On the other hand, each constituent village may think itself superior, though providing leaders who are roughly equal in influence and status to each other. These leaders may not yet have come into conflict if they are of different caste, and have thus not had a basis on which to act together. But they will be rivals on any Committee they attend together.

Examples of both situations can be seen in the locality around Piplia. In one four-settlement Village Committee the main part is played by a Rajput headman. His lineage has provided leaders in the largest of these villages for many generations, and he himself is wealthy and his position as yet untouched. The other villages have Khati, Ahir and Gujar headmen of more recent vintage, and these are content to subordinate themselves to their chairman. The Rajput is powerful, his village the most important, and the Village Committee runs smoothly.

In Piplia, on the other hand, there is no such congruence. Piplia itself is the major village of the three. Though it is small than Imlipura, its position on the road and its former status as the seat of a landlord have given it prestige. Further, the headmen of Imlipura are Muslims, and their position is less assured since 1947. Though there have been no overt manifestations of prejudice, people are unwilling to give them much power. But the men of Imlipura do not accept Piplia's preeminance on the Village Committee. As Husein said, they feel that they also have men qualified to lead the Committee. There is therefore conflict between Piplia and Imlipura as villages, but no corresponding division in the Village Committee. For the Imlipura representative is not powerful enough to split the Committee seriously. Here, Piplia men could lead, were it not for the rivalry between Ranjit Singh and Gopal Prasad which has slowed up the Committee's activities.

On the whole, most Village Committees are composed of a main settlement and lesser villages, for it would be hard to find places exactly equal in numbers and influence. Where there is marked inequality, the tendency is for people of the larger village to do all the work (often only in their own village) and for the smaller settlement to retire completely. This was so in the case of Bercha, a village of some nine hundred people, which had been coupled with Palia, a village of only three hundred and fifty. No work had been done in the latter, and its representatives rarely came to the meetings. They felt 'jungly' (as it was said) in front of the more sophisticated Bercha folk. This might have been obviated had the leaders been of the same subcaste, and thus kinsmen; but the Bercha people were at the same time of higher caste status. The Village Committee worked fairly smoothly because the relations of its members from different villages were the same as the relations between the villages generally.

The operation of the Village Committee, then, depends in part on two things; the relations between the leaders, and the relations between the villages they represent. Disputes occur between members of the Committee, whether they come from the same or from different villages; and they depend on personal factors, as well as on relative status, etc. Differences stemming from relations between villages as wholes[1] are rather different. Though to some extent reflexes of the relationships of members, they are also based on the constitution and reputation of the villages joined in the Committee (e.g. the position of Husein in the electioneering corresponded to the weak position of the Muslim-dominated village of Imlipura).

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[1] By 'wholes' here I include no more than the people who are concerned with the Committee. The inter-relations of say, Harijan castes in different villages would have little effect on the Committees in this area.

The problem of selecting villages to group together in a Village Committee is one which may exercise the administration. At present I think that the groupings have been made largely for administrative convenience. Some appear not to be working very well. Thus, Bercha and Palia are divided by a fairly steep range of hills and communication is difficult. When added to the differences of size and dominant caste, this goes a long way towards explaining why there is not more participation in the Village Committee by Palia men. To the north of Bercha, on the other hand, lies Palassia, a village of the same size as Palia, but easily accessible from Bercha and with a headman who is a Khati, a caste which is numerically, though not politically, dominant in Bercha. It would seem easier to have cooperation between Bercha and Palassia than between Bercha and Palia, and the Village Committee might have been constituted thus.

But this is all highly speculative. It might well be argued that villages with the same major caste groups would be more liable to quarrel than to cooperate, since the affairs of the caste would be brought into the arena of the Village Committee. Nevertheless, such hypotheses need to be measured against the working of the Village Committees: for their proof or disproof will tell us something about the effectiveness of the Village Committee.

The difficulties inherent in the multi-village Village Committee are reflected in the fact that in some cases these have been disbanded, and uni-village bodies formed[1]. The successful Committees appear to be almost as large as some of the Central Committees I have described. Thus, in Cochin the average number of voters in a Union (the smallest type of Committee) was 12,000[2] and the Union Boards in Bengal had between ten and twelve villages each[3]. These are bodies large enough to avoid petty inter-village disputes, perhaps; but the two-or three-village Committee, with a total population of under 1,500 is less likely to do so[4]. A novel solution, and one which has not to my knowledge been adopted, was that nearby villages could 'federate' for specific tasks over which they wanted to help each other, and would then separate into univillage Committees afterwards[5]. This would minimise the risk of having unwilling bedfellows in a Committee, who were powerless to escape each other's embraces. But the administration needed for such a pattern would have to be very flexible, perhaps more so than is practicable.

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[1] Rao 1954 : 7.
[2] Drummond 1937 : 40.
[3] Tinker 1954 : 200.
[4] Tinker remarks that factions were less prevalent in the Bengal multi-village Unions than they were in municipalities : (1954 : 206).
[5] Drummond 1937 : 47.

The history of the Piplia election is interesting. A period of intense canvassing ended in the withdrawal of rivals and the unopposed election of a single man for each post. I do not know what happened during the evening between the first and second days, but it was evidently sufficient to make Badrilal's object of support public. This dislike of an open vote is widespread in rural Indian society[1]. It springs, perhaps, from the ideal pattern of the *pañcāyat* which should take none but unanimous decisions, whether truly or only overtly, and this, in turn, may express the unwillingness of people to estrange those with whom they must live in close contact in other spheres of life. Of the eight Village Committee elections I noted, no fewer than six were decided unanimously. It is the days before the election, rather than the polling day itself, which are often more significant for the observer.

The elections in Piplia also marked a stage in the canvassing for the Central Committee's election of officers. For Dalip Singh took the opportunity to come and assess, and influence, which way the Piplia vote would be cast. This he did as member of a more important village and the dominant Rajput caste. We must note that he did not fill the role of an outside arbitrator. There was no expectation of an intermediary who would help in the elections, as there is in so many other activities. (For instance, marriages are contracted through a match-maker, most business deals have a broker, and people are generally unwilling to have important conversations without a middleman). Dalip Singh's canvassing, and his efforts to find a peaceful solution, were accepted as one among several such endeavours; and there was no real attempt to let him allocate the posts, though this was mentioned to him as a polite gesture.

It is a commentary on the relative isolation of nearby villages that Dalip Singh should have wondered whether Gopal Prasad was an opponent of the Bercha candidate for the Central Committee chairmanship (especially when both were Brahmins). It is also significant that the way he found out Gopal Prasad's views was by identifying his caste and kin ties with people in other villages whose views were known. For the basis on which many representatives to the Central Committee decided which candidate to support for the chairmanship was caste membership. This is hardly to be wondered at, in the first election in a newly constituted body. Many representatives would have had no contact with the candidates (neither socially, nor as fellow Committee members). They thus seized on the only link which they had with either candidate—common caste, or membership of a caste with which they were more in sympathy.

Both candidates condemned 'casteism', saying that they should be

[1] Not only in India, but also amongst overseas Indian (*cf.* Mayer 1956 : 101).

judged solely on their capabilities. But, in fact, they also played on this easy method of recruitment. Sometimes the common caste link was between candidate and representative. But sometimes it was between the candidate and the most powerful person in the representative's village (as in the case of the Bercha Brahmin candidate and Gopal Prasad.). There is in the latter case no correspondence between the caste of the representative and the candidate for whom he voted (e.g. Tarlok Singh supported the Bercha Brahmin, rather than his Rajput rival). But caste undoubtedly played a major part in the elections.

The Central Committee may thus be a factor of change in several ways. It may draw villages together through common activities in Committee meetings : it may bring closer ties through electoral alliances between villages (or it may estrange them): it may affect Village Committee elections, insofar as these are reflexes of Central Committee manoeuvring: and it may provide a focus for the rivalry between castes in the region. In the latter context, we might say that caste becomes a political division of society, at the same time as it is losing its position as a ritual division.

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HINDU SOCIAL ORGANISATION IN VILLAGE MAJRA

PRABHAT CHANDRA

Majra is a typical Indian village situated in the most beautiful surroundings of the Doon Valley in Uttar Pradesh. This village lies on the borders of the city of Dehra Dun and is on the second milestone on the Saharanpur road. It faces the mighty Himalayas in the north and the Siwalik hills in the south while the two great rivers, the Ganga and the Jamuna, flow along the other two sides of the valley. The village is situated at an altitude of 2000 ft. above the sea level and is spread over an area of 302.39 acres out of which 261.05 acres of land are under cultivation. The temperature ranges from 40°F in winter to about 108°F in summer. The annual rainfall varies from 80-100 inches. The *Kharif* crop is sown in the months of June-August and is harvested in the months of September and October. Then it is followed by the *Rabi* crop. The conditions of soil, climate and rainfall have made this region ideal for rice cultivation. The Basmati rice of Majra takes its place with the best rice that is produced in any part of the country. Rice is the chief *kharif* crop in this part of the State while the important *rabi* crops are wheat, maize, barley, peas and charry. Sugarcane too is produced once a year. But the agricultural production seldom reaches the optimum point due to the general backwardness of the region. A farmer has, on an average, less than 6 bighas of land which is much less than the size of an economic holding. The old and obsolete methods of farming, defective arrangements for water distribution, absence of adequate facilities for the marketing and finance of agricultural goods and a multitude of other factors have all conspired together in rendering the rural economy of Majra a deficit one. Land reforms have been introduced in Majra since the abolition of the Zamindari system in the State but only 51 per cent of the farmers have so far acquired *Bhumidari* rights in land. We have 43 per cent *Sirdars*, and 6 per cent *Assamis*. The annual revenue assessment of the village is reported to be Rs. 3600/-

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The total population of Majra at present is 1689 out of which 1193 persons are Hindus, including the Harijans. The rest of the population consists of Sikhs, Christians, Muslims, etc. The entire rural population consists of 325 families out of which 242 are Hindus and Harijans. The present survey covers all the 242 families consisting of 1193 persons.

The Hindu population of this village falls into two groups, the high caste Hindus and the Harijans. The former included the Brahmins, Rajputs, Khattris, Vishyas, Jains etc. The Harijans have a relatively lower social status and consist of the Kumhars, Dhobis, Nais, Chamar, Passi, Bodh, Bhangi. The various castes of the village can be arranged in the descending order of the social status with the Brahmins occupying the highest position. They are followed by the Rajputs who claim to be the Kshatriyas. It was not possible for us to correctly ascertain whether the Khattris have a higher status than the Vaishyas or vice versa because each of these castes claims to have a higher status than the other. The ancient records of the country show the Brahmins to be the highest group followed by the Kshatriyas (Rajputs) who were a warrior class. The Vaishyas constituted a business community and occupied the third place on the social scale. The modern Khattris probably were not there. But since the Khattris and Vaishyas are now engaged in more or less the same type of activities, we can safely bracket them together.

An interesting thing that we have noted amongst the Harijans of the village is the fact that they too are divided into two social groups. This division is based on the difference in the occupations. The Kumhars (potters), Nais (barbers) and Dhobis (washermen) are doing a relatively cleaner type of work and so enjoy a higher social status than the Chamars (cobblers), Pasis (scavengers) and Bhangis (sweepers), etc., who are included in the other group.

This caste system is the basis of the Hindu social organisation in the village under study. Each caste is strictly endogamous although a few cases of inter-caste marriages have been reported to us. A caste is generally divided into a number of subcastes but in this village only the higher castes have reported them. We came across the following subcastes amongst the higher caste Hindus in the course of our investigations :

Brahmins : Sharma, Dhimar, Raturi, Low, Bhardwaj, Bhardawan, Saraswat, Savar, Ghore, and Uppadhiya.
Rajputs : Karanwal, Ahluwalia, Maharati, Thakur, and Rawat.
Khattris : Soni, Khurrana, Arora, Budhwar, Ahluwalia, and Varma.
Vaishyas : Gupta, Aggarwal and Garg.

The Ahluwalia are included amongst the Rajputs as well as the Khattris. The Harijan castes did not report any subcastes.

Caste and Education

Our investigations in the village show that 67.3 per cent of the respondents in the village are absolutely illiterate persons who cannot even sign their names and are obliged to put their thumb impression whenever they have to sign any paper, The District Board is running

a primary school for the children in this village. Our investigations have shown that 26.8 per cent of the residents have received education upto the Matriculation standard while only 5.9 per cent of them have read more. The following table shows the statistics regarding castes and education.

TABLE 1

CASTE AND EDUCATION

Castes	Number of		Illiterates (Percentage)	Educated (Percentages)	
	families	members		Upto Matriculation	Above Matriculation
Brahmins	54	246	55.2	34.1	10.7
Rajputs	69	381	55.1	38.8	6.1
Khattris	18	75	48.0	32.0	20.0
Vaishyas	12	72	47.2	47.2	5.6
Other castes	13	72	79.0	19.3	1.7
Jains	1	6	66.6	33.4	Nil
Kumhars	12	63	95.2	4.8	Nil
Chamars	12	51	88.2	11.8	Nil
Dhobis	8	28	71.4	28.6	Nil
Nais	3	26	96.1	3.9	Nil
Passis	10	41	95.1	4.9	Nil
Other Harijans	30	142	97.9	2.1	Nil
Totals	242	1193	67.3	26.8	5.9

The above table clearly shows that the higher castes in the village attach greater importance to education; the Khattris and the Vaishyas have the largest number of educated persons. They are followed by the Brahmins and the Rajputs in order. The Brahmins, who were originally priests and scholars, seem to be losing ground in this respect. The percentage of illiteracy is very high amongst the Harijan families of the village. Our estimates show that only 7.6 per cent of the Harijans have read upto the Matriculation standard although many of them have not been able to pass this examination. We did not find a single Harijan in the whole of the village who had read beyond the Matriculation standard. The Dhobis and Chamars have, however, shown a higher percentage of educated persons than among other Harijans.

ECONOMIC LIFE

The largest percentage of population in this village is engaged in agricultural occupations like farming, rural industries and crafts,

etc. Nearly 18.5 per cent of the total rural population works as agricultural labourers. The following table shows the occupational distribution of the population.

TABLE 2

OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION

Occupations	Percentages
Farming	32.3
Rural industries and crafts	23.2
Agricultural workers	18.5
Independent businessmen, traders and shopkeepers	8.8
Other employees	17.2

In order to study the occupational distribution of the various castes in Majra, we have taken into account only the gainfully employed persons in the 242 families. Thus, out of 1193 persons, 405 were engaged in the various types of occupations while the remaining 788 persons constituted the non-earning class. This included women, children, old and invalid people, etc., and so have been excluded from this analysis. The distribution of castes according to the occupations is Shown in Table 3.

The table shows the change in the hereditary occupations of some of the castes in the village Majra. The Brahmins, who were originally priests and scholars, have now taken up almost every type of "clean" job. Thus, out of 81 gainfully employed Brahmins in the village, 51.86 per cent were engaged in farming, 7.40 per cent in rural industries and crafts and independent business each, and 29.64 percent were employees. The last group included school-masters, clerks, shop-assistants, etc. Only 3.70 per cent of them were found to be working as agricultural workers. Although economic pressure has forced the Brahmins to give up their hereditary occupations, still they attach great importance to the "cleanliness" of the job. None of them is prepared to do the work which is generally regarded to be "low", for example, the work of a barber, cobbler, washerman, etc. The Rajputs too are represented on almost every type of occupation which the rural society can provide them. Thus, out of 105 gainfully employed Rajputs, 51.42 per cent were farmers, 20 per cent were employed in services, 17.14 per cent in rural industries and crafts, 8.57 per cent in business, and a very small percentage of them (2.87) were agricultural workers. The Rajputs in this village are less fastidious about the cleanliness of the job than the Brahmins. They are willing to do every type of work except the "very dirty" one like that of the

TABLE 3

CASTES AND OCCUPATIONS

Castes	Number of Persons			Percentage of population in each occupation					
	Earning	Non-earning	Total	Farming	Rural industries & crafts	Agricultural workers	Independent businessmen, traders, etc.	Other employees	Total
Brahmins	81	165	246	51.86	7.40	3.70	7.40	29.64	100
Rajputs	105	276	381	51.42	17.14	2.87	8.57	20.00	100
Khattris	27	48	75	44.44	—	—	44.44	11.12	100
Vaishyas	18	54	72	33.33	16.67	—	33.33	16.67	100
Other castes	23	39	62	8.71	17.38	26.08	8.71	39.12	100
Jains	1	5	6	—	—	—	100.00	—	100
Kumhars	36	27	63	—	100.01	—	—	—	100
Chamars	18	33	51	50.00	16.67	33.33	—	—	100
Dhobis	8	20	28	—	—	—	100.00	—	100
Nais	3	23	26	—	—	—	100.00	—	100
Passis	13	28	41	—	—	100.00	—	—	100
Other Harijans	72	70	142	8.34	—	61.11	18.05	12.50	100
Totals	405	788	1193	32.3	23.2	18.5	8.8	17.2	100

sweeper, butcher, scavenger, etc. They are more interested in the income which a particular job can provide them. The Khattris and Vaishyas have no objection to farming and 44.44 and 33.33 per cent of them respectively were engaged in it. Moreover, they are excellent businessmen and a comparatively small percentage of them are interested in service.

So far as the Harijan population of the village is concerned, our investigations show that nearly all the Kumhars, Dhobis and Nais were carrying on their hereditary occupations of potters, washermen and barbers. These three constitute the upper class Harijans and consider themselves to be superior to the Chamars, Pasis, etc. There is not much of social intercourse between the higher and the lower classes of Harijans, the distinction between the higher and the lower classes being based on the difference in occupations. The upper class Harijans are fully satisfied with their jobs and are not willing to accept another work and are anxious to raise their incomes from their-hereditary work. Their prestige, in a way, depends upon their ancestoral professions. But a significant change has taken place in the case of the Chamars. Only 3 out of 51 Chamars were found to be doing cobbler's work. Nearly 50 per cent of them have now taken up farming while 33.33 per cent of them are agricultural workers. All the Pasis in the village were found to be working as agricultural workers.

An attempt has been made by us to arrange the various castes of Majra, according to their incomes. Since the interviewees were not in a position to give their incomes very accurately, rough estimates of income were prepared by us on the basis of the information furnished by the interviewees themselves. The following table shows the average income per family in the various castes.

TABLE 4

CASTES AND INCOMES

Castes	Number of families	Average income per family
		Rs.
Jains	1	175
Khattries	18	138
Rajputs	69	129
Vaishyas	12	124
Brahmins	54	91
Other castes	13	76
Kumhars	12	73
Chamars	12	60
Dhobis	8	59
Passis	10	51
Other Harijans	30	48
Nais	3	37

The above arrangement of castes according to the incomes shows that the Brahmins, who enjoy the highest status in the social hierarchy and are so particular about the prestige of the job, get the fourth place. The Khattris of the village, who are mostly farmers, independent businessmen, traders and shopkeepers etc., top the above list. The Khattri families of Majra are enjoying a better standard of living than the others. They are followed by the Rajputs and the Vaishyas.

Amongst the Harijan families, the Kuhmars and the Chamars have the highest level of incomes. The Kuhmars have the highest status amongst the Harijans of the village and at the same time have the best standard of living... But the Nais, who occupy the second place in the Harijan social hierarchy of the village, have the lowest level of incomes. The Dhobis occupy the third place on the economic as well as the social scale. The Chamars, who occupy a very low position on the social scale, take the second place on the income scale.The relative position of the other lower castes on the income scale is obvious.

Nearly all the high caste Hindus of the village are enjoying a relatively higher level of incomes than the Harijans. The lowest income per family amongst the high caste Hindus was Rs. 76 which was more than the highest average monthly income enjoyed by a Harijan family which was found to be Rs. 73.

Our enquiries in this village have further revealed that nearly 30 per cent of the families were involved in debt; the debt per family ranged from Rs. 30 to Rs. 2000, the average being Rs. 340. About 35 per cent of the Brahmin families, 19 per cent of the Rajputs, 78 per cent of the Kumhars, and 25 per cent of the Chamars were found in debt. The other castes did not report any indebtedness.

Inter-caste Relations

The influence of Hindu traditions on social attitudes and values is to be seen in the inter-caste relations in the village. A casual visitor to the village is sure to be greatly impressed by the peaceful atmosphere which generally prevails every where, but latent jealousies and caste rivalries manifest themselves on all important occasions like marriage, social gatherings, village elections, etc. The reorientation of social attitudes and values in a society where the human relations are conditioned by the rules of endogamy and hypergamy has not been consistent with the growth of modern ideas and rational thinking. Poverty, illiteracy and the hold of religious ideas are mainly responsible for the general backwardness of the rural folks here. All the castes are strictly endogamous and insist on marriage within the caste. Our investigations showed that 91 per cent of the people in the village are vehemently opposed to the idea of inter-caste marriages. The high caste Hindus, particularly the Brahmins, were strongly against

such marriages which they condemn as foreign, irreligious and immoral. But the insistence on this rule of marriage diminishes as we move from the Brahmins towards the lower social groups. Thus, all Brahmins, 96 per cent Rajputs, 95 percent Khattris, and 89 per cent Vaishyas had insisted on marriage within the caste. Amongst the lower castes the Kumhars have flatly refused to have marriage relations with the other castes. Our enquiries amongst the Harijans of the village further showed that 97 per cent of the Nais, 96.6 per cent of the Dhobis, 89.3 per cent of the Chamars and 71.5 per cent of the Pasis were not in favour of inter-caste marriages. We had received a 100 per cent negative replies when the families, which were opposed to the idea of inter-caste marriages, were asked the question," Will you allow your children to be married in a different caste if you get a better match there ?" Some of the interviewees went to the extent of telling that they will prefer their children, particularly the daughters, to remain unmarried rather than commit the sin of marrying in a different caste.

Only 9 per cent of the 242 families of Majra have no objection to intercaste marriages. The Rajput, Khattries and Vaishyas amongst the higher social groups, however, pointed out that they would be willing to marry in a different caste only if such a caste had a good social status. In no case they were willing to marry in the Harijan families because such unions were considered by the members of their families to be the cause of social disgrace.

More interesting arguments were advanced by some of the Harijan families who were prepared to have matrimonial relations with the outsiders. They pointed out that their social status was already low and could not be lowered any further if they married outside their castes; on the other hand, they argued, that it is likely to go up. The Pasis and Chamars, thus, pointed out that their social prestige is sure to go up if they can marry in the higher castes.

An interesting form of snobbery exists amongst the lower castes of Majra. The Chamars and Pasis sometimes condone the sex offences if they are committed against the members of the higher castes. We came across a case of elopement in which a Chamar boy and a Brahmin girl were involved. The girl belonged to a different village. But when the matter came to light, the offender was let off after giving a feast to the members of the community. The girl, however, was refused admission in her own family. A caste is willing to condone the sex offences of its boys but generally takes a very serious view if the girls are found to be guilty of the same offence. The lower castes are generally not prepared to condone the offender, even if he be a boy, unless he is responsible for "poaching" a high caste girl.

The high caste Hindus generally object to inter-mixing and inter-dining with the members of the lower castes. But their attitude

varies with the social status of the castes. The Brahmins are not prepared to eat *kachcha* food touched by members of any other castes. They, however, have no objection to eating *pucca* food if it is touched by members of the other castes. The *pucca* food is cooked in *ghee* which is a product of the sacred cow and so purifies the food even if it is touched by others. The Rajputs, Khattris and Vaishyas have no objection to eating food touched by the higher Harijans like the Kumhars and Dhobis but have serious objection if it is touched by the Chamars, Pasis, etc. Similar is the attitude of the Jains. Even some of the high caste Harijans are not willing to eat food touched by the lower groups. Thus, the Kumhars have a serious objection to eating anything touched by the Chamars. The lower castes, however, have no objection if their food is touched by the higher caste people. No one objects to eating food touched or cooked by the Brahmins.

Similarly, the Harijans, particularly the lower ones, have to sit separately from the Brahmins when they go to the village temple. They are also not allowed to draw water from the same well from which the high caste Hindus take. There are four wells in the village; two of these are for the Hindus, one for the Muslims and one for the Harijans. The Kumhars and Dhobis take water from all the wells except the one meant for the Muslims.

The above study shows the intimate correlation between the economic and the social life of the people. Poverty and illiteracy have conspired with casteism and social traditions in keeping the residents of Majra under conditions of perpetual backwardness. The factors have created a vicious circle since each one of them is the cause as well as the effect of others. No social reformer should therefore try to separate one set of factors from the others. The high caste Hindus have certain economic and social advantages over the others. But inter-caste rivalries resulting from class consciousness, which is a natural consequence of the caste system, have made it rather impossible for the people to cooperate together in creating a healthy social atmosphere in the village. The Harijans are the worst victims of social exploitation. This explains their economic backwardness also. A reorientation of social attitudes and values through the process of education is, therefore, essential for jural development and social reconstruction.

SOCIO-CULTURAL BARRIERS TO RURAL CHANGE IN AN EAST BIHAR COMMUNITY

N. Akhauri

I

Of late we have come to realise in course of our experiments with the numerous Community Development Projects, that the key-cause of the misery of the Indian mass is not purely an economic one. It remained the common feeling till the last phases of our pre-independence relations that the root of India's misery lay in its economic backwardness. But the modern social scientist begs to divert from the aforesaid line of thought in the light of his experiences and rigorous observational conclusions as a field-worker in rural India. He has planned and introduced several schemes of rural development into the national life, in collaboration with the sincere efforts of the people's government, and has seen most of them pushing ahead with little success in face of certain socio-cultural resistances to rural change. These various obstacles to culture-change, viz., lack of people's participation, rural prejudices, factions, alcoholic addiction, illiteracy, leadership-problems, personality-deviations, certain problems of communication, caste and interests etc. combine to form a Barrier-Complex. This complex of resistances, with manifold intensity and strength, acts as a positive hindrance against the innovator and his recommendations. Attempt has been made, in this paper, to present an analysis report of the structure and function of this barrier-complex, in relation to an east Bihar village.

II

The village is situated at a distance of 15 miles east of Bhagalpur and 9 miles from Sabour where the Bihar Agricultural College is located. There is a good metalled road linking Bhagalpur and Sabour, but the 9 mile distance beyond Sabour has to be covered on *kachcha* village road lying in the low agricultural land. The village has yet another access, via Ghogha Railway Station which lies at a distance of 5 miles from the village. The village is surrounded by *chaurs*, *i.e.* low agricultural land, on all sides, which remains flooded with water for four months a year in the rainy season, when boats are the only means of communication.

Surrounded by orchards of mango, *lichi* and palm trees, the village wears a really romantic appearance from a distance. From within,

the village is spatially divided in three *tolas*, which form a compact congregation of households and demarcation between them becomes difficult for an outsider. The community comprises of 372 households residing in 231 houses of the village. A survey of households in 1957 revealed that the total population is 2034, representing various castes viz., Rajputs, Kayasthas, Kurmis, Yadav, Mohammedans, Teli, Bania, Hajjam, and Ravidas. Majority of the population is from the low casts, but the old dominance and authority of the Rajput minority is anyhow still continuing. Economically, it is not a well-off community, but for a few families and households, who too are feeling broken on account of the failure of crops continuously for the last two years. Literacy is really low, and there are about half a dozen persons who have received college-education mostly in Bhagalpur. Social customs and ways of living show ample reflections of the culture of Bengal, probably because of geographical contiguity. Precisely, the village represents the typical rural community in this part of the country.

III

The village exists within the C. D. Block, Sabour, for the last four years. The community has variously experienced its inclusion within the jurisdiction of the Project in course of these few years. Tit-bits of changes are also observed here and there, but our evaluation does not reveal the success of the Project in the achievement of the basic aims of the C.D. Programme. Physical achievements of this Project, which, by their very nature, become quite apparent, comprise of the distribution of some seeds and fertilisers, a pedigree bull, a pedigree goat, two community radio-sets, some loans to individuals by the cooperative society, financial aids to the construction of some compost pits, wells, one latrine, one drain, a one-mile *kachcha* road, one silo-pit, and one foot-and-mouth trough, a few demonstrations of the Japanese method of paddy cultivations, and conversion of the old Lower Primary School into a Junior Basic School. Most of what has been described above are having a functionless existence in the community, on account of their introduction without proper motivation of the village-folk. Again, the physical achievements of the project are very poor, keeping in view the area and population of the village.

As far as the fulfilment of the basic aims of the C.D. Programme is concerned, our evaluation has revealed that the people have not conceived the programme as a self-help process. This is quite evident from the lack of peoples' participation at various stages, and in most of the cases, schemes have been completed within the amount sanctioned by the Project. On account of the play of various selfish

interests in the village, and the improper handling of the village-groups, the village is torn into factions, with the result that the smooth functioning of the community institutions and social organisations has become almost impossible. This phenomenon of the loss of social cohesion under the influence of these disruptive forces becomes most pathetic when we remember that the ultimate aim of the Community Development Programme is the emergence of a healthy and strong community itself.

IV

The talk of introduction of scientific methods in rural life and industry has somehow precipitated various types of rural prejudices in the belief-structure of this community. Agriculture has remained one important concern in the development programme of the Community Project in which this village lies. But quite a good number of recommendations to increase yield have found it hard to become popular among the cultivators in face of various agricultural prejudices. Thus chemical fertilisers are believed to ruin the soil in the fields and their produce are said to taste bad, stale early, or spread leprosy. Inspite of two demonstrations in the village, and frequent clarifications from the Department of Agriculture, the Japanese method is thought of as practicable only where huge water resources are available. Crop-insecticides are believed to be more harmful to the soil and the crop than the pests and diseases themselves. Love for the tradition and the old method has created prejudices against most of the scientific methods in agriculture, viz., artificial insemination and castration of cattle, improved agricultural implements, compost, improved seeds and green manuring.

Unfavourable attitude towards other methods of improving the general rural life prevails among the village folk. Criticisms of the modern education, particularly female education, as imparted in towns and cities, is common gossip. Group prejudices and caste stereotypes are proving really disastrous in the way of village-uplift. Most of the public aids for rural reconstruction are missed by the village on account of the existence of group-conflict and caste-tension. Precisely, the extension-worker has been working with great difficulty along the work-schedule and the development programme, on account of the various rural prejudices.

The average personality in the village presents a series of psychopathological problems for the psychiatrist and the social planner. Pessimistic in outlook and approach, it is hard to make him believe in the proverb, "No risk, no gain. "Even an hour of stay in this village is enough to view the garb of pessimism in which the village is clad miserably. Its effect on initiative action and output is too

tremendous for the community. This lack of confidence over future usually results in idling and inactivity, amassing idle money, undue dependence on Providence, decrease in working efficiency, alcoholic addiction, unwillingness to work, criminal behaviour, and what not.

Even if one is not sure of the causal relationship between the two, alcoholism and criminal behaviour have been observed as behaving like correlates in the folk-personality structure. About half a dozen illegal distilleries of native *mahua* wine are known to have been secretly functioning; and perhaps the same is the number of villagers residing in jails convicted for dacoity charges. Minor clashes and litigations are too frequent events for the village to be mentioned. In short, the pathetic plight of the folk-personality needs careful diagnosis by the social psychologist.

The Extension-worker is said to be the pivot of the C.D. Programme, and his sincerity, training, and skill are the determinants of the implementation of the Programme; and also prerequisites to the successful working of the Community Project. Leakages in point of the above have been responsible for only a partial success of the working of the C.D. Project in which our village lies. The village under study does not possess the reflections of the sincere working of the trained personnel.

For various reasons the personnel concerned have been taking more interest in the achievement of the physical target than in their responsibility to educate the masses, arouse their consciousness, and seek people's participation, which perhaps are the basic aims in the C.D. Programme. Their method of handling the various caste and interest groups in the village has shown inadequate training for such work and their poor understanding of the rural social structure. The usual development procedure for this village has always been along the master frame of community development, as dictated from the top, without assessing the felt needs and the ritual framework of the community under consideration. A feeling of dedication while working for village uplift, and a sense of respect for the sentiments of the community have hitherto been found untraceable on the part of the extension workers. These, precisely, are the weaknesses of the system of communication which form an element of the Barrier complex as analysed here in the paper.

The environment of communication has recently become an important item of study in several studies on rural Community Development. The social structure in which the extension worker has to work and deal with people means much in point of determining the acceptance or rejection of the innovation. Recent studies of rural communities by Oscar Lewis, Dhillon and S. C. Dube deserve special mention in this connection. Factions, first of all, have been described as obstacles to rural development. Villages in this part of rural India are

best illustrative of the evil effects of factions in the interest of respective communities. Various case studies prepared in relation to the numerous disputes in the village reveal the existence of two distinct factions based on a complexity of causes. It is really interesting to note on the village map showing 372 households, that all six Rajput families located on one extreme of the map form the chief nucleus of the village politics, either controlling or interfering with almost all activities of the binuclear community. They have the real support of a few other local leaders and some other households, but the rest and majority of the village population of all castes except Rajput hang around the other nucleus. Sick of the traditional authoritarian rule of the above six families, they have chosen to launch a struggle for existence against the dominating minority, under the combined leadership of four persons of different castes. Historically, the origin of these factions can be traced back beyond a decade, but with a different polarisation of the village population. The present power structure which has taken a definite shape for the last four years had the last Panchayat election as the precipitant cause. Interpersonal relationship has been turning more and more bitter and complex since then. There have been violent disputes on various issues in this period, mostly concerning the common economic and political interests of the community. Some important among these disputes imply,

(a) ownership of the palm tree orchard surrounding the village pond,
(b) use of the community boat,
(c) construction of the community hall,
(d) election of *mukhia* in the local Panchayat Election,
(e) management of the property of the Kali Temple, and
(f) right of fishing in the village pond.

These various issues have been really responsible for the loss of social cohesion and disruption of community consciousness. Life in the village is troubled and interpretation of even an insignificant human behaviour is made in terms of party politics. Much harm has been done to the community on this account and our research-team even has to move, act and behave with vigilance, tact and caution. Details of the case study of a particular dispute have been given in a latter section.

This unfavourable environment of communication is further worsened on account of the play of several other factors. Leadership pattern in the village, as partially described above, is a serious detriment to social work. Authoritarian type of leadership is trying its best to retain its dominance on the new or the democratic type. People are feeling helpless when unable to find a leader for themselves in the instable disequilibrium of the period of transition. Ignorance of the

reality and illiteracy of the villagers is further aggravating the deterioration of the situation. Alcoholic habits make them an easy prey at the hand of the evils in the social structure, and its hard on the household economy in a period of continuous failure of crops. Poverty, which has remained their unfailing compaign all along, has its separate role in the rejection of an innovation, even if the fellow is convinced about the gain in acceptance. All these factors, acting together, help in the worsening of the environment of communications.

V

To sum up, the various resistances to rural change can be enumerated as follows:

A. *In relation to the mass to whom the recommendation is carried.*
   (1) Rural Prejudices,
   (2) Personality-Deviations,
   (3) Rural Illiteracy,
   (4) Alcoholic Addiction.

B. *In relation to the carrier of the Programme.*
   Faulty communication, referring to
   (1) the training and
   (2) sincerity of the innovator.

C. *In relation to the environment of communication.*
   1. Poverty of the village-folk,
   2. The caste-factor,
   3. Leadership-pattern and problems,
   4. Rural contravention or factionalism.

D. *The Programme Itself.*
   It does not take into account the felt needs of the community, and special traits of the rural cultural framework.

VI

The numerous barriers facing the innovator in the rural development programme, as diagnosed separately in the preceding sections, do not comprise a sufficient statement of the complex of resistances. Our field of study—the community under consideration—does not bear the mark of their working in as isolated ways as discussed previously. On the contrary, they have been found foiling the attempt of the extension worker individually, in sets of resistances, and also in the form of a Barrier Complex.

Barriers or resistances as isolates have been variously described in the preceding sections. Cases have frequently been found where a number of obstacles to innovation have been found working conjointly in the form of a Barrier Set. Thus failure of a campaign of

village cleanliness, as sponsored by the young, enthusiastic, basic-trained school-teacher, can be attributed to three of the above causes, (a) the sick-personality of the villagers, (b) caste-stereotypes and common prejudices against the basic system of education, and (c) village-factions, because the school functions under the solitary influence of the Rajput-group.

Widening the scope of this finding a bit further, and expanding the consideration to a greater number of resistances, we arrive at the hypothesis of Barrier Complex. An intimate understanding of the innovation process in the field-conditions has revealed that most of the resistances acting in the field reach a state of balance or compromise in the community framework at a given time, and create a total environment of their own, which resists the innovation with multiplied force in the form of a complex. We have a number of illustrative case-studies concerning several innovations, events and disputes in this village. Case study of a recent innovation may be mentioned at this point:

> Construction of a Community Hall in the villages was sanctioned by the Project about an year ago, and promises of financial aid by the Project were made. More than a year has passed, but all attempts to complete the construction of the Community Hall have miserably failed, and the sanctioned government aid is expected to lapse by the end of this financial year. Not less than three sites for the aforesaid construction have been selected and rejected by now. The first one was rejected after the donation and registration of land; the second, after the foundation-stone was laid; and the third, after the walls had been raised about 4 feet high. Conflict to the extent of bloodshed has once been averted on this very issue, on the third and the present site. Last but not the least, Section 144 of the I.P.C. has been promulgated by the police on this site for the last one month. Local leaders have been frequently running to the Project Headquarters, the District Headquarters and even to the State-capital in this connection, but it has been of no avail so far.

It is, however, obvious that existence of the two factions is primarily responsible for the failure in having a Community Hall for the village. But a closer analysis of the dispute over the innovation reveals that the key-cause is inseparably mixed with numerous other resistances to rural change. Interests—economic and political are another very important reason. The usual procedure for such a construction by the Development Project is by allowing the contract for construction to one of the local leaders. As this implies profit, there is keen competition in the village, mostly factionwise, for getting contracts. In the above case, the contract was settled by the Project with the second faction—the leaders of the dominant low-caste-

majority. This jealousy has been lurking since then in the heart of members of the first faction. Again the contractors in this case have been trying to construct the hall at a distance from the Rajputtola, so that their voters in future village-elections may not have the usual fears in going to the community hall to vote according to their choice. Dispute over site-selection means dispute over location of the community hall in their respective areas of influence in view of the future village elections. Still another barrier hindering this innovation is the improper handling of the situation by the project-personnel, i.e., defective communication or faulty method of innovation. Caste-stereotypes and group-prejudices too have their important role in aggravating the situation. Interwoven with the above causes are the illiteracy and poverty of the rural population, compelling them to allow their own exploitation at the hands of local leadership based on selfish interests. All these exemplify the existence of the complex of interwoven causes as responsible for hindering the acceptance of the innovation.

VII

The functional relationship between any two or a set or between most of the barriers giving rise to the Barrier Complex can be traced during the process of innovation in a suitable rural community. It must, however, be confessed that the pattern of the Barrier Complex must vary from one rural community to another, depending on a number of factors. But for any community, most of the resistances, at a given time, it is believed, form a net-web, a balance, or an equilibrium. This definitely changes along the time period, as it changes in space, from one community to another—and this probably is the only optimistic point about it for the social scientist.

Murch harm has been done on this account in the field of rural community development since the launching of the Community Development Programme throughout the country. This must be taken as a real eye-opener for the social planner and the social engineer. The need of the day, as such, is to organise comprehensive research on the above in relation to the various rural communities throughout the country to formulate the laws of behaviour of the complex of resistances under varying conditions.

FEATURES OF KINSHIP IN AN ASUR VILLAGE

R. K. JAIN

The network of social relationships constitutes one of the major interests for the social anthropologist. While most of the relationships can be studied as they crystallise into specific organizational units such as the family, the clan, the moiety, a holistic comprehension of the warp and woof which knit the pattern of social life especially among the so-called primitive people can be obtained by the study of their kinship system, which to quote Murdock, "is not a social group, nor does it ever correspond to an organized aggregation of individuals. It is merely . . . a structured system of relationship, in which individuals are bound one to another by complex ramifying and interlocking ties"[1] Kinship, which in anthropological literature today refers to the relationship of an individual by affinity as well as consanguinity has been referred to as, "the rod, on which one leans throughout life"[2] As culture advances, contacts become more numerous and the number of associations multiplies, kinship ties start loosening their hold upon the people. But under primitive conditions where the size of the population and the village is necessarily small, and where the canvas of interpersonal relationships is restricted to the clansman, the man in the next house and the co-worker on the field, relatives by consanguinity and affinity figure prominently at every turn and twist of the life-stream of an individual. That is why the social anthropologist whose main concern is still with primitive life gives an important place to the study of kinship, and kinship studies are a special feature of anthropological moorings.

Of the many polemics in the field of kinship studies none has proved so pregnant and promising as the one seeking to discover the relationship between kinship terminology, a primarily philological phenomenon, and the sociologically important behaviour patterns towards individuals referred to and addressed by various kinship terms. While the problem has been studied against field data by the British 'Africanists' in Africa, by Radcliffe-Brown in Australia and by his students of the Chicago School against North American ethnography, systematic field investigation in regards to this question has not, it would seem, engaged the attention of the student of Indian kinship. I have ventured to study this problem in the light of the data collected from the Asurs of Jobhipat during a brief sojourn among them in the winter of 1957-58.

[1] Murdock G. P. Social Structure, 1949, pp. 92-93.

[2] Firth, Raymond, 'We the Tikopia', 1936. p. 269 quoted in Lowie, 'Social Organization', p. 59.

In the interests of precision and a certain sense of direction in the inquiry it was thought advisable to start with a well formulated hypothesis. In order to find one, I turned to the three cornered controversy between W. H. R. Rivers, A. L. Kroeber and A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, regarding the relation of kinship terminology to social organization. While Rivers held that there was a causal relationship between kinship terminology and social organization or that the characteristics of a kinship nomenclature are determined 'rigorously' by social or sociological factors, Kroeber's contention was that the features of a system of terminology are determined primarily by language and reflect psychology not sociology. To quote Radcliffe-Brown, on the other hand, "In opposition to Kroeber, and in a certain sense in agreement with Rivers, I hold that all over the world there are important correspondences between kinship nomenclature and social practices"[3] Radcliffe-Brown, however, differs totally from Rivers in maintaining that there may not be *causal* relations between kinship nomenclature and social practices. He only reiterates his earlier statement that "we can expect to find in the majority of human societies, *a fairly close correlation between the terminological classification of kindred or relatives and the social classification . . . the former is revealed in kinship terminology, the latter . . . specifically in the attitudes and behaviours of relatives to one another*"[4] With this statement of Radcliffe-Brown as the hypothesis the present investigation sought to find out how far the data on kinship among Asurs of Jobhipat tends to bear it out or reject it.

Field Techniques

The data to be obtained was clearly of two sorts: (1) regarding kinship terminology, terms of address and reference, and (2) concerning behaviour patterns between important relatives. The techniques were, therefore, chosen accordingly. Interviews were by far the most numerous and observation, for the most part non-participant, was mainly used to check information obtained from informants. Information regarding the pattern of behaviour between relatives was obtained in as many families as possible and at fire-side talks between members of neighbouring families. As it happened there was no birth, marriage, death, tribal hunt or panchayat during the period of our stay in the village. Nevertheless the celebration of their after-harvest festival which drew relatives (mostly affiines) from neighbouring villages did extend the scene of coactivity for observation.

[3] Radcliffe-Brown, A. R., 'The Study of Kinship Systems' in Structure and Function in Primitive Society, p. 61.

[4] Radcliffe-Brown, A. R., 'Kinship Terminologies in California', American Anthropologist, N. S. XXXVII quoted in Murdock, Social Structure p. 107.

A serious handicap was the language difficulty which could be circumvented but partially by conversing with the people in an amalgam of pidgin Hindi, Bhojpuri and a few critical words of their own dialect.

The interviews were not structured, although information was collected along predetermined lines. Most of the interviews were devoted to the gathering of genealogies which were collected from persons of all ages and both the sexes, although the majority of them were elicited from males, the women being more shy and less able to understand our speech. Attempt was made to record genealogies and behaviour patterns in one and the same interview, but it was found difficult to keep the respondent's interest from flagging after 15 to 20 minutes' exercise in kinship algebra. The reluctance, sometimes, of the respondent to tell about his father and great grand-fathers was successfully met by evoking his family pride by saying that he should feel proud in recalling the names of his glorious ancestors. One case study, that of Birsa's marriage, provided some valuable information regarding the role of various relatives during a person's marriage. Efforts were made to ensure the reliability of the data by comparing genealogical tables obtained from related individuals, by cross checking information from different interviews, by resorting to a few group interviews, and also, mainly, by verifying information by means of observation.

Asur Kinship System

The Asur kinship system was studied in Jobhipat, which is one the four *tolas* (Jobhipat, Titua, Tewarpani, and Narma) of village Narma in the Gumla Sub-division of District Ranchi in South Bihar. The district of Ranchi lies between 22° 21' and 23° 43' north latitudes and between 84° 0' and 85° 54' east longitudes. Literally speaking, a *tola* is translated as 'ward'. But the character of Jobhipat as an autonomous unit is put to relief by its possession of a panchayat, a headman and four local '*deuris*' (religious functinaries). Its dependence on village Narma is manifest mainly in that the common '*pahan*' (head priest) of the four *tolas* resides in Narma.

Jobhipat is situated about 98 miles west of Ranchi along the motorable Bagesakhua-Kujampat Road which bifurcates south-west from the Ranchi-Netarhat Road at the 92nd milestone. The tola is located in the extreme north-western corner of the District on a hill about 3,620 ft. above sea level. The total area is about 1,000 sq. yds. Topographically it resembles the top of a table with slopes on all sides. There is a deep descent in the north-western direction, and here about 500 ft. below Jobhipat is a 'Jobhi' (surface-spring). The *tola* derives its name from this 'Jobhi' and 'pat' which is a general term for plateau.

The populalon of Jobhipat is only 172 of which 90 are males and 82 females. The following table gives the age distribution of the population :

AGE	NUMBER OF PERSONS
Infants (upto 5 years)	27
Children (5 years to 9 years)	27
Adolescents (10 years to 18 years)	43
Adults (19 years to 34 years)	45
Adults-Old (34 years and above)	30
Total	172

The total number of homesteads in Jobhipat is 27 out of which 21 are Asur, 4 Munda and 2 Oraon. The population of Jobhipat seems to fall into four more or less distinct clusters of homesteads designated here as clusters A, B, C, and D for convenience. The following table gives the tribe-wise, cluster-wise distribution of the population :

CLUSTERS	TRIBES			
	ASURS	MUNDAS	ORAONS	TOTAL
A	40	8	5	53
B	52	1	8	61
C	19	12	—	31
D	27	—	—	27
Total No.	138	21	13	172
percentage	80.2	12.2	7.6	100

(Based on the census of the village taken by us in December, 1957)

Radcliffe-Brown speaks of 'Kinship system' in a comprehensive and all-embracing manner, meaning by it, dyadic relations between person and person in a community, social groups unlilateral and bilateral ; rights and duties of relatives to one another and social usages observed in social contacts, ancestor worship if it is to be found, and finally, terms used in a society in addressing or referring to relatives. Kinship terminology, according to this connotation of the term kinship system is, therefore, as much its part as kinship usages. For our purpose, however, the term 'kinship system' is better used in its more limited sense as "the pattern of social usages observed in the reciprocal behaviour of persons who are, or are regarded as being related by

kinship or affinity"[5] while the question of kinship terminology will be considered separately.

Spatial proximity or remoteness and proximity or remoteness of relationship are important factors in regulating the frequency and intensity of interpersonal relationships between various relatives in the village. The family relatives gain priority over all others in this respect. Besides these close associates, the paternal kinsmen, especially the male siblings of the father and their spouses and children are relatives with whom contacts are most numerous. Maternal kinsmen usually belong to another village, and hence the limit on contacts with them. The common patrilocal pattern of residence is, however, disturbed in some instances by matri-patrilocal residence. The children of a man who comes to the village as *ghardamad* and settles there even after establishing his own household, have closer contacts with their maternal kin as compared to the relatives of their father. Contacts with affinal relatives are relatively few because mates are usually acquired from outside Jobhipat. Nevertheless, the proximity of these villages enables a regular exchange of visits by in-law relatives. Thus, while the members of one's own family group and the paternal kinsmen are the closest relatives of a person, his maternal relatives and affines also enter what may be described as "the circle of close relatives". Ready at his beck and call in the hour of need are also his clansmen in the village. More distant relatives rarely figure in the life of an individual. The usual pattern of behaviour between relatives is characterized by a willingness to help one another in straightened circumstances, by cooperation in any undertaking and by hospitality. Nevertheless, quarrels and ill feelings between near relatives are also usually heard of, although they do not undermine to any ignominious degree the normal pattern of reciprocity and sharing in one another's sufferings and celebrations.

The following is a delineation of some of the patterned modes of behaviour between various important relatives in Jobhipat.

Parents and Children

The normal pattern of relationship between father and son is that of superordination and subordination. The father hands down the family tradition and mores of the society to his son by way of formal and informal instruction through the use of the authority he commands over and the obedience he demands from his son. It is the father who delegates to each of his sons his share of responsibility in day-to-day work. For whatever potential of change in the traditional father-son relationship the Asur Avasiya Vidyalaya may have, there does

[5] Royal Anthropological Institute, Notes and Queries on Anthropology, 6th ed., 1951, p. 76.

not seem to be a major alteration in the usual pattern of superordination and subordination between father and son at the present day. The father continues to exercise his authority and as Gendra told me in one of our more informal chats, his son Budhu runs away to the school for the fear that he should be complained against truancy to the headmaster by his father. The father is also an affectionate elder for his son. The concern with which a suitable daughter-in-law is sought by a man and the munificence with which the son's affines are treated are but two instances of the many ways in which this affection is manifest. It is the son's duty to support his father in the latter's old age. This, however, is an ideal, turned to actuality only in cases where the father is physically incapable of doing any active work. Normally a man continues to lead an active life till the age of 60, by which time he also retains most of his prerogatives as the family-head.

Relations between mother and son, though of the same general type as between father and son are characterised by more tenderness on the part of the mother and by grant of greater liberties to the son. When married, a son is expected to take sides with his mother rather than with his wife in case of a quarrel between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. But this is an ideal, not always observed. The mother plays the same role in the life of her duaghter as the father does in that of his son. She trains up a girl for tribal womanhood while the father arranges a suitable match for his daughter.

Grand-parents and Grand-children

A relationship of privileged familiarity obtains between both paternal and maternal grandparents and grandchildren. There is a lot of joking and hilarity between these two classes of relatives which is strongly reminiscent of similar relationships described by the late S. C. Roy among the Oraons. This pattern of reciprocal ridiculing, teasing and vocal exchanges does not obtain so intensely between grand-children and maternal grand-parents largely due to the distance separating them. Scarcely was there an informant whose eyes did not brighten up and whose lips did not betray a smile of understanding at the mere mention of *aja-aji* and *nati-natin* (grand-father-grandmother and grandson-granddaughter) relationship. As the Asurs will themselves tell you, there is no other relationship which allows so much *hansi thattha* (joking and hilarity) between relatives. The grand-father would jokingly remind his grand-daughter that he is still young in spirits, and that he would not let his girl (the grand-daughter) be married to anyone other than to himself. In extreme hilarity sometimes a grand-child besmears the clothes of his grand-parents with food. A grandson would sometimes pour

water in his grandfather's *jhara* (rice beer) and would put the blame on his grand-mother when the culprit is searched for. Such relationship between these alterante generations, nevertheless, cannot and do not lead to marriage. Incidentally, mention may also be made of the custom of naming the grandchildren after grandparents, mostly the grandson after the father's father.

Although it would require a thorough analysis of the Asur social structure before a more competent explanation of the joking relationship between grandparents and grand-children can be attempted, yet certain features of their kinship behaviour point strongly to the one offered by Prof. Radcliffe-Brown in his attempt to explain privileged familiarity between alternate generations. Joking relationship between grandparents and grandchildren, he holds, is "a method of ordering a relation which combines social conjuction and disjunction".[6] The element of attachment or conjunction in this relation accrues from the fact that the grandparents and grandchildren are united by kinship; that of separation or disjunction because the two are seperated by age and by the social difference between those who are entering and those who are retiring from active social life of the community. Since the grandparental generation in contradistinction to the parental generation is not entrusted with the task of handing down social tradition a relationship of reciprocal privileged familiarity between the alternate generations provides an excellent mechanism for combining the conjunctive and disjunctive interests. We have already examined the authoritarian role of the father in Asur kinship; the relations of grand-parents and grand-children can then be regarded as "a foil to those of parents and children".[7] This conclusion is supported by Asur kinship terminology, which as we shall see, makes a clear classificatory terminological distinction between relatives belonging to the immediately ascending proximate generation and those belonging to the second ascending generation.

Agnatic Relatives

The one feature which clearly and observably sets the agnatic relatives of a person apart from his maternal kin is the frequency of contacts with the former as against the latter. The fundamental behaviour patterns are not found to differ markedly. Because of his presence in the hamlet, usually in a hut next door, the father's brother, whether elder or younger, accompanies the party which places the stick (*lathi tekna*) at the threshold of bride's house, signalizing the final settlement of match for a boy. The attitude of the ego towards

[6] Radcliffe-Brown, A. R., 'On Joking Relationship', reprinted in 'Structure and Function in Primitive Society', p. 97.

[7] Fortes, M., 'The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi.' 1949. p. 230.

his father's elder brother is marked by a sense of respect, in some instances more than one has for one's own father. Father's younger brother is also respected, although, sometimes the attitude verges on to comradeship especially when the difference in age between nephew and uncle is not much. At the time of his marriage the paternal uncles's wives are allotted duties as the needs of the hour demand. They pound rice in *dhenki* (wooden pounding machine), prepare *marua* (a cereal) paste from which dishes are to be cooked for the marriage feast and rub oil on the bridegroom's body.

Maternal Relatives

As the mother usually belongs to another village and always to a different clan, the frequency of social intercourse between mother's brother and his nephew is much curtailed. Marriage provides an occasion for the meeting of all relatives and a mother's brother attends his niece's marriage with a pitcher-full of *jhara* (rice beer) and 4 seers of rice. Asked whether relations with one's mother's brother were more affectionate than with father's brother, the informants were not able to give a definite answer. There is no privileged familiarity with one's avuncular relatives and it is "wrong" to cut jokes with one's mother's brother, whether younger or elder. The maternal uncle is not called upon to perform any special task for his nephews and nieces. The ego does not show any special or distincitve feature in his behaviour towards mother's sisters. Their visits to the ego's place are few and far between, unless and until, of course, they are married in the same village. Their attititude towards the ego may be summed up as being 'maternal' in all its facets.

Siblings and cousins

When children, brothers are playmates and coherdsmen ; there is a close and constant companionship between the two. When they grow up and get married, and build separate houses even, this relationship normally remains unaltered. Cases are reported of quarrels between brothers resulting in separation and division of lands and houses. The elder brother acts in place of father after the latter's death or when he is senile. The elder sister is respected by the younger brother; she carries the latter in infancy in a baggy sling on her back if the mother is busy doing household duties. The younger sister, on the other hand, bows down to touch the feet of her elder siblings on such occasions as her visit to or return from affines' place. Mutual understanding and affection mark relationship between sisters. The two sleep in the same *gitiora* (dormitory) and the elder sister takes pains to decorate and dress up her younger sister on the occasion of a

dance, for example. The latter learns many things by emulating and imitating the example of her elder sister.

Relationships with cousins—both parallel and cross—are similar to those with siblings. Marriage between cousins, cross as well as parallel, is unknown to the Asurs of Jobhipat, a fact which contrasts sharply with the very wide prevalence of cross cousin marriage among the neighbouring tribes of the region.

Spouses

The male of the mates enjoys a higher status among these patrilineal and patrilocal people. However, an analysis of behaviour patterns and attitudes characterizing spouse relationship puts to relief most of the relations as being of near equality. Each partner has equally important duties to fulfil in accordance with the traditional division of labour. No piece of property is the exclusive possession of either, and divorce is legally sanctioned to neither. The freedom with which a woman talks to a third person in her husband's presence is remarkable.

Parents-in-law and Children-in-law

Relationship between parents-in-law and children-in-law is of the same general order as between parents and children. The son-in-law treats his father-in-law as his own father, this is all the more so where a son-in-law is a *ghardamad*. Mother-in-law and son-in-law avoidance is unknown. They sit and chat together, drink *jhara* (rice beer) in each other's company, share food in the same *thali*. Similar is the case with the daughter-in-law who is usually observed chatting most informally with her father-in-law as a daughter would chat with her father. I have seen them giving suckle to their babies without being in the least conscious of their father-in-law's presence or in fact, even talking to him at the same time.

Siblings-in-law

A relationship of mutual joking obtains between a man and his wife's younger brother, although the extent of privileged familiarity is somewhat attenuated on the side of the younger relative. Wife's younger brother's wife is treated as one's own younger sister. Wife's elder brother is respected although the nature of the respect shown is more like that due to a senior comrade. The behaviour with wife's elder brother's wife is similar to that towards one's own elder sister. With his wife's younger sister or *sari* a man enjoys privileged familiarity, and the jokes which range from vocal to physical ones may verge

on vulgarity. A man treats his wife's elder sister as he does his own elder sister. His relations with the husbands of both are marked by parity and comradeship.

Ideally, a woman should avoid her husband's elder brother. The pattern of reciprocal avoidance between these relatives finds manifestation in the non-acceptance of food hand to hand and in the non-utterance of each other's name. Only at the time of a person's younger brother's marriage and on one of the two *juars* (evenings) of marriage these restrictions are relaxed, and a woman is even asked to sit in the lap of her husband's elder brother. Husband's younger brother, on the other hand, stands in a relationship of patterned joking with a woman. He is also a potential spouse whom she may marry after her husband's death. Genealogical data show the presence of one widow in the village, but she has not married her husband's younger brother. No cases of junior levirate came to notice. The wives of husband's elder and younger brothers are treated very much like own sisters. Relations with husband's elder and younger sisters are those of respect and comradeship respectively.

Asur Kinship Terminology

The Asur kinship terminology like that of the neighbouring Munda, Oraon and Kharia, is characterized by a preponderence of classificatory terms, each formed by ignoring one or more of the six major and three minor criteria for making fundamental distinctions between relatives as enunciated by Kroeber.[8] We shall here see which of the principal relatives among the Asurs are denoted by a denotative term each and which of them are addressed and designated by a classificatory term. The kinsmen among the Asurs have been grouped into the following categories for such an analysis:

1. Paternal and Maternal kin (elders and equals).
2. Paternal kin younger to the ego.
3. Relatives in husband's father's household.
4. Relatives in wife's father's household.

(See Appendix one)

Relationship between Terminology and System

The existence of denotative terms (*baba* and *aya*) for the father and the mother respectively is congruous with more or less exclusive patterns of behaviour with the two relatives in order. The role of the father is unique in the capacity of an instructor, protector and well-

[8] Kroeber, A. L., 'Classificatory Systems of Relationship' (1909) Nature of Culture, 1951, p. 176.

wisher of a person. The form of address for father's brother is *pitya* which is derived from the term *pita* meaning 'father'. This reflects a fairly close resemblance between the social role of one's father and his brothers and in fact, father's brothers are the relatives with whom a person more often than with any other relative comes into contact in similar contexts as with one's father. Like *baba*, *aya* as a term of reference is also applied to one's own mother alone and this is understandable considering her unique role in the life and learning of the children. Coming to parent's siblings we are confronted with the classificatory terms *bara*, *bari*, *kaka*, *kaki*, *mama* and *mami*. Marriage by exchange whereby two persons exchange one another's sisters or cousins as wives can very will result in the type of classificatory nomenclature under examination. It is indeed a prevailing form of marriage among some of the Chotanagpur tribes such as the Ho where marriage by exchange appears as a part solution of the difficulties posed by exhorbitant bride price. Marriage by exchange does not obtain among the Asurs of Jobhipat. The classificatory terms *bara*, *bari*, *kaka* and *kaki* could also be explained if marriage customs among Asurs prescribed that several brothers in a family would marry respectively, sisters in another family. This also is not the case in Jobhipat. The explanation of this terminology by discerning common patterns in ego's behaviour towards relatives included under one term, for example, towards mother's brother and father's sister's husbands or towards father's younger brother and mother's younger sister's husbands is also not possible. As we have earlier noted, there are no specific differences in ego's behaviour towards or conversely the role which the siblings of father and mother play in his life. The only important difference is that the paternal male siblings are more proximate geographically than either the agnatic or maternal kin. It could then as well be expected that the father's brother and mother's brother will be classified under one term, and father's sister and mother's sister under another.

The terms *aja* and *aji* are applied commonly to the ego's second ascending paternal and maternal generations. All grand fathers are referred to and addressed as *aja* while *aji* is the term for all grandmothers. It is important to note in this connection that these terms are applied to persons of this generation alone—neither to the parental nor to the great-grand-parental. Terminologically, then, the grandparents constitute an exclusive category of kinsmen, and this terminological categorization corresponds to their social categorization of these relatives. The latter is reflected in the pattern of behaviour which is characterized as that of 'privileged familiarity' and about which we spoke earlier. The informants were unanimous in their opinion that this relationship of privileged familiarity is confined to the alternate generations alone. In actual practice, however,

because of the lesser frequency of contacts with the maternal grand-parents, joking relationship obtains in its true form between paternal grand-parents and grand-children alone.

Relations with great grand parents all of whom are designated by the terms *bara* and *bari* do not imply privileged familiarity. Rather respect for the great grand-parents characterizes this relationship. *Bara* is a term for father's elder brother and also designates mother's elder sister's husbands. Relations with these relatives also possess components of respect and obedience. What is not explained is the self reciprocal nature of the terms *bara* and *bari*. The behaviour of those who use these terms reciprocally is asymmetrical and not symmetrical. Here once more no congruence is found between kinship terminology and patterns of behaviour.

In the same generation, relationship between husband and wife is linguistically characterised by the absence of any terms of address for each other. The terms of reference are *gumkēin* for wife and *gumkē* for husband. The form of address between the spouses is therefore indirect. They cannot call each other by personal names too. After the birth of a child it is possible, on necessity, to address one's wife or husband, as so and so's mother or so and so's father respectively as the case may be. Teknonymy again, is thus one type of receiprocal form of address. Reciprocity is thus a characteristic of terminological usage when spouses address each other or refer to one another (the term of reference are *gumkē* and *gumkēin*—reciprocal ones thus). Reciprocity, we have earlier seen, also marks the behaviour patterns and interpersonal relationship between the spouses. Here again, terminology and behaviour patterns show a high degree of conformity.

A correspondence is found again between the terminological and social classification of siblings in Asur social organization. The younger brother is treated as one's own son, especially after the father's death. If all the brothers live in adjacent houses, as they usually do, it is the elder brother who attends the panchayat on behalf of the younger brothers also, and it is he who orders division of labour in the field. The social distinction between the elder and the younger brothers is recognised in the relationship terms which are different for the two and in the use of the term *babu* by which a person addresses his younger brother as well as his own son. One's younger sister also is addressed by the term for daughter, i.e. *mai* and her behaviour towards the elder brother is also characterized by respect similar to that shown to one's father. By ignoring the criteria of collaterality and bifurcation we find that sibling terms are extended horizontally and bilaterally to designate all cousins cross as well as parallel. There is, as we have already seen, a similarity between a person's behaviour towards his own siblings and the children of the siblings of either

parents. Both cross cousin and parallel cousin marriage are prohibited. The kinship terminology not only for siblings and cousins is the same but the spouses of the cousins are also designated by the same terms as used for the spouses of sbilings.

As we examine the terms used for ego's relatives in the first descending generation; we again find an agreement between the terminological and social classifications, for example, a man uses different terms for his own son (*babu* or *beta*) and his sister's son (*bhacha*) but *babu* or *beta* are used in addressing brothers' sons. The latter, indeed come into closer contacts and more frequently than the former. However, here too an exception is noted as when the terms of reference for the younger brother's son and elder brother's son are *bara* and *bhatij* respectively, although his behaviour towards the two is very much similar.

In ego's second descending generation *nati* and *natin* are the exact reciprocal terms of *aja* and *aji*. As we have already seen, this setting apart of grandparents and grandchildren is not only terminologically valid, but has a sociological validity too, and the two overlap. The terms for great grand children are *bara* and *bari*, applied according to whether the relative is a male or a female. The great grand children are thus differentiated from the grandchildren, as the ego's behaviour towards them is marked by affection and not privileged familiarity. However, the significance of the self reciprocal nature of the terms *bara* and *bari* remains obscure when examined from this angle too.

Considering a woman's relatives in her husband's father's household, we find the terms *sasur* and *sais* as referring to husband's father and mother respectively. However, in addressing these relatives she uses the terms *baba* and *aya* for father-in-law and mother-in-law respectively. This usage is quite in conformity with her behaviour towards these relatives, and she is in turn addressed to as *beti* although the term of reference for her is *bahuriya*. *Bahuriya* or *bhava* is again, the term by which a man addresses his younger brother's wife. This agrees with the kinship system because the younger brother stands, in somewhat the same relationship as one's own son Nevertheless there is certain difference between a woman's relationship with her father-in-law and with her husband's elder brother. While with the former she behaves in a manner as a daughter would behave towards her father, with the latter she observes mild avoidance. This nuance in the relationship pattern is manifest in kinship terminology in so much as the younger brother's wife is more often termed *bhava* and husband's elder brother is not classified with *sasur* but is called *bhasur* or *jethsasur*. Husband's elder brother's wife is referred to as *gotani* which is a self reciprocal term, and therefore, refers to husband's younger brother's wife too. This self reciprocal term is

matched congruously with the reciprocal relations between these two relatives who are constant companions for the most time when two brothers live in adjoining huts. Similarly, the application of the term *jethsais* for husband's elder sister and *nanad* for his younger sister, and use of a denotative term *devar* for husband's younger brothers all show terminological distinction with correlated distinctions in behaviour patterns also.

The most important relatives of a man in his wife's household are her parents, her siblings and their spouses. The terms of reference, as in the case of a woman's husband's parents, are *sasur* and *sais* but again, in addressing these relatives *baba* and *aya* are uniformly used. Distinctions of age and sex are made throughout in the terminology for the kin in wife's father's household who are of the same generation. The terminological distinctions between wife's elder and younger siblings are followed by distinctions in behaviour patterns also. The attitude towards *jethsasur* and *jethsais* deriving from that of *sasur* and *sais* but oriented to analogous kin of one's own generation is similar to that towards one's own elder brother and elder sister respectively and hence the terms of address for these relatives too are *dada* and *didi*. With wife's younger siblings the ego has a joking relationship and these are thus terminologically distinguished from the older ones by the terms *sara* and *sari* for wife's younger brother and younger sister respectively. The terms for the affinal relatives of the affinal relatives of a man, i.e. for the spouses of his wife's siblings again show correspondence with particular forms of behaviour.

The foregoing analysis of the relationship between kinship terminology and behaviour patterns shows that while there is no absolute correspondence between the two among the Asurs of Jobhipat, there is a general tendency in that direction. The hypothesis which we sought to examine cannot be modified in the light of the data presented here. By way of a conclusion, however, it might be said that while the hypothesis is generally supported by our data several exceptions are to be countered.

These, to sum up once again, are :

1. The classification of the siblings of parents.
2. 'Self-reciprocal' nature of the terms *bara* and *bari*, extending downwards to include younger brother's son and daughter without accompanying 'symmetry' in behaviour of the relatives.
3. Terminological distinction between younger and elder brother's children without distinction in behaviour towards the two.

A list of the important kinship terms which have been used in the text :

A. Paternal and Maternal Kin (elders and equals)

Father—*Baba;* Father's brother (elder)—*Bara;* Father's brother (younger)—*Kaka;* Father's el. brother's wife—*Bari;* Father's you. brother's wife—*Kaki;* Father's sister (elder and younger)—*Mami;* Father's sister's husband—*Mama;* Father's father—*Aja;* Father's mother—*Aji;* Father's father's brother—*Aja;* Father's father's sister —*Aji;* Father's mother's brother—*Aja;* Father's mother's sister—*Aji;* Father's father's father—*Bara;* Father's father's mother—*Bari;* Father's mother's father—*Bara;* Father's mother's mother—*Bari;*

Mother—*Aya;* Mother's sister (elder)—*Bari;* Mother's sister (younger)—*Kaki;* Mother's el. sister's husband—*Bara;* Brother's you. sister's husband—*Kaka;* Mother's brother (elder and younger) *Mama;* Mother's brother's wife—*Mami;* Mother's father—*Aja;* Mother's mother—*Aji;* Mother's father's brother—*Aja;* Mother's father's sister—*Aji;* Mother's father's father—*Bara;* Mother's father's mother—*Bari;* Mother's mother's father—*Bara;* Mother's mother's mother—*Bari;*

Brother (elder)—*Dada;* El. Brother's wife—*Bhouji;* Sister (el.)—*Didi;* El. Sister's husband—*Bhatu.*
(The same terms are extended to include cousius—parallel and cross —and their spouses of the same category).

B. Paternal Kin younger to the ego.

Brother (younger)—*Bhai;* You. Brother's wife—*Bhava* or *Bahuriya;* Sister (younger)—*Bahin* or *Mai;* You. Sister's husband—*Bahin* or *damad;* Son—*Beta* or *Babu;* Son's wife—*Bahuriya;* Daughter—*Beti* or *Mai;* Daughter's husband—*Damad;* El. Brother's son—*Bhatij* or *Bhatij beta;* El. Brother's daughter—*Bhatijin;* El. Sister's son—*Bhagina* or *Bhacha;* El. Sister's daughter—*Bhagini* or *Bhachi:* You. Brother's son—*Bara;* You. brother's daughter—*Bari;* You. Sister's son—*Bhagina* or *Bhacha;* Yo. Sister's daughter—*Bhagini* or *Bhachi;* Son's son—*Nati;* Son's daughter—*Natin;* Daughter's son—*Nati;* Daughter's daughter—*Natin;* Son's Son's son—*Bara;* Son's son's daughter—*Bari;* Son's daughter's Son—*Bara;* Son's daughter's daughter—*Bari.*

C. Relatives in husband's father's household.

Husband—*Gumkē* ; Husband's father—*Sasur*—(*Baba*); Husband's mother—*Sais* (*Aya*); Husband's father's el. brothers—*Sasur* (*Bara*); Husband's wife—*Sais* (*Bari*); Husband's father's yo. brother—*Sasur* (*Kaka*) Husband's father's el. brother's and father's yo. brother's wife—*Sais* (*Kaki*); Husband's father's sister— (elder and younger)—*sais* (*Mami*); Husband's father's Sister's husband—*Susur* (**Mama**);

Husband's elder brother—*Bhasur* or *Jethsasur;* Husband's el. brother's wife—*Gotani;* Husband's el. sister—*Jethsais;* Husband's el. sister's husband—*Dada;* Husband's younger brother—*Devar;* Husband's you. brother's wife—*Gotani;* Husband's younger Sister—*Nanad;* Husband's younger sister's husband—*Damad;*

D. Relatives in wife's father's household.

Wife—*Gumkēin;* Wife's father—*Sasur* (*baba*); Wife's mother—*Sais* (*Aya*); Wife's elder brother—*Jethsar* or *Jethiasasur;* Wife's el. brother's wife—*Didi;* Wife's elder sister—*Jethsais;* Wife's el. sister's husband—*Sarhu;* Wife's younger brother—*Sara;* Wife's yo. brother's wife—*Bahuriya;* Wife's younger sister—*Sari;* Wife's yo. sister's husband—*Sarhu.*

CASTE AND OCCUPATION IN A MALWA VILLAGE

K.S. MATHUR

In this paper, I present a picture of the occupational structure of a Malwa village community. The aim of this analysis is to examine the relationship between caste and the pursuit of occupations for the sake of making a living.

Patal[1] is a village in Central Malwa. It is a predominantly Hindu village; out of a total population of 1,062 (in 1955), 1,037 are Hindus, 2 Jains and 23 Muslims. The Hindu section of population is composed of 28 caste-groups. In Table 1, I give a list of these caste-groups, arranged in order of their numerical strength in the village community. Opposite the name of each caste-group (within brackets), I have shown the traditional-calling of the caste, and its size in the village community. The table also shows the broad category of ritual status to which each caste belongs.

Each caste is usually associated with a traditional-calling. Quite often this is expressed in the caste names. Take, for example, such cases as *Kumhar* (potter), *Darji* (tailor), *Lohar* (blacksmith), *Sutar* or *Barhai* (carpenter), *Nai* (barber), *Chamar* (skinner and tanner), *Teli* (oil-presser), *Gujar* (cowherd), *Gadariya* (shepherd), and so on. These names are commonly found all over India, though in different regions, castes usually add the name of the region as a first part of the caste-name, such as *Gujerati-Chamar*, *Malwi-Chamar* and *Desha-Chamar*, Gujerat, Malwa and Desha being the names of the regions from which the three castes hailed.

The nominalistic association of castes with occupations is not the only link between caste and the pursuit of trades. Each caste—that is, endogamous social group—is traditionally associated with a certain occupation which is considered to be the traditional occupation of the caste. In a very large number of cases, as shown above, this association is reflected in the caste-name. Even if the caste-name does not express this link with its traditional-calling, it is universally known as established by tradition. For example, the caste-names *Srigaur-Brahmin*, *Rajput*, *Khati*, *Bhangi*, *Bhambi*, *Bagri*, *Bargunda* do not show any association with specific occupations: each of these castes, however, does possess and pursue a traditional-calling; the *Brahmin* are domestic-priests, the *Rajput* are warrior-cultivators, the *Khati* are farmers, the *Bhangi* are scavengers and keepers of the cremation-grounds, and so on.

As a matter of fact this link between caste and occupation is so important that one of the earliest writers on caste in India, viz., Nesfield, on the basis of his observations during the Census of India,

1881, built his classification of castes solely upon occupation. Mr. Nesfield wrote : "Function, and function only, as I think, was the foundation upon which the whole caste system of India was built up." (pp. 3-4)

TABLE 1

Ritual Purity Division	Caste-Name	Traditional calling	Numerical Strength
Cl.	1. Khati	(Cultivator)	420
Cl.	2. Rajput	(Warrior, land-owner)	100
Cl.	3. Mali	(Gardener-cultivator)	75
UCl.	4. Malwi-Balai	(Cloth-weaver, field-labourer, village-watchman)	64
UCl.	5. Nath-Jogi	(Mendicant)	44
UCl.	6. Bhambi	(Cloth-weaver)	41
UCl.	7. Bagri	(Mat-weaver)	38
Unt.	8. Desha-Chamar	(Leather-worker)	34
UCl.	9. Bargunda	(Basket-maker, hunter)	25
Cl.	10. Purabi-Thakur	(Land-owner)	24
Unt.	11. Malwi-Chamar	(Skinner, tanner, leather-worker)	20
Cl.	12. Malwi-Kumhar	(Potter)	15
Cl.	13. Gujerati-Kumhar	(Potter)	15
Cl.	14. Gujerati-Lohar	(Black-smith)	14
UCl.	15. Gujerati-Balai	(Cloth-weaver, field-labourer)	14
Unt.	16. Gujerati-Chamar	(Skinner, tanner, leather-worker)	13
Cl.	17. Darji	(Tailor)	13
Cl.	18. Nai	(Barber, messenger)	12
Cl.	19. Brahmin	(Priest, astrologer, teacher)	11
Cl.	20. Vairagi-Vaisnava	(Mendicant, temple-priest)	11
UCl.	21. Dhobi	(Washerman)	8
Cl.	22. Malwi-Lohar	(Black-smith)	6
UCl.	23. Dholi	(Drummer)	5
Cl.	24. Gosain	(Mendicant, temple-priest)	4
Cl.	25. (Khati)-Bhaat	(Genealogist to the Khati caste)	4
UCl.	26. Teli	(Oil-presser)	3
Cl.	27. Palliwal-Bania	(Trader, shop-keeper)	2
Unt.	28. Bhangi	(Scavenger)	1

Legend : Cl. 'ritually-clean' cates;
UCl. 'ritually-unclean' castes;
Unt. 'ritually-untouchable' castes.

Most of the recent writers on caste in India have recognised this caste-occupation link. Prof. Majumdar regards it as "one of the main planks on which the social stratification is obviously based". (1947, 115) Authors on village communities in India have shown that caste and the pursuit of occupations are closely linked. (Srinivas, 1955, pp. 1-2 ; Dube, 1955, pp. 36-37 ; Mayer, 1956, pp. 127-130)

In order to decide whether or not members of a caste pursue their traditional-calling and if they do, whether they do it exclusively,

primarily, or subsidiarily, I have taken recourse to simple statistics. This was done by ascertaining the source of livelihood of each household in the village. Since normally only adult men are bread-winners in this village—and in most Indian villages—this was relatively easy. It was enquired whether for making a living a given adult man followed his caste-trade and that alone, or if he pursued another calling as well but the traditional-calling took precedence in time and income, or if some other occupation took precedence over the traditional-calling in time and income.

In Table 2, I give the total number of adult men from each caste-group, those who are engaged in the pursuit of the traditional-calling of the caste, exclusively, primarily and subsidiarily, and those who have

TABLE 2

Caste Name	Traditional calling	Number of Adult Men				
		total	Following traditional-callings			Not following traditional-callings at all
			Exclusively	Primarily	Subsidiarily	
Khati	Cultivator	122	113	—	—	9
Rajput	Warrior-Cultivator	32	26	—	—	6
Mali	Cultivator-Gardener	19	19	—	—	—
Malwi-Balai	Weaver	18	—	—	—	18
Bhambi	Weaver	11	—	—	—	11
Desha-Chamar	Leather-worker	7	1	3	1	2
Purabi-Thakur	Warrior-Cultivator	5	4	—	—	1
Malwi-Chamar	Skinner-Tanner	3	2	1	—	—
Malwi-Kumhar	Potter	4	2	1	—	1
Guj.-Kumhar	Potter	3	2	1	—	—
Guj.-Lohar	Blacksmith	4	—	4	—	—
Guj.-Balai	Weaver	4	—	—	—	4
Darji	Tailor	2	—	2	—	—
Guj.-Chamar	Skinner-Tanner	1	1	—	—	—
Nai	Barber	5	2	3	—	—
Srigaur-Brahmin	Priest-Astrologer	3	—	3	—	—
Dholi	Drummer	1	1	—	—	—
(Khati)-Bhaat	Bard-Genealogist to Khati caste	1	—	—	1	—
Teli	Oil-presser	1	—	—	—	1
Palliwal-Bania	Shop-keeper	1	—	—	—	1
Bhangi	Scavenger	1	—	1	—	—
Gosain	Mendicant-Temple-priest	1	—	1	—	—
Vairagi-Vaisnava	Temple-priest-Mendicant	3	—	3	—	—
Nath-Jogi	Beggar	13	—	6	7	—
Bargunda	Basket-maker	6	—	6	—	—
Bagri	Mat-maker	9	—	4	3	—
		283	173	40	14	56

altogether given it up for some other occupation. Later, I propose to discuss the cases of non-conformity to traditional-callings and the causes that have brought about such a situation.

On the basis of this data, we can say that most of the caste-groups in Patal village still continue to pursue their respective traditional-callings. The caste-groups that have given up their traditional-callings altogether are: *Malwi-Balai*, *Bhambi*, *Gujerati-Balai*, *Dhobi*, *Teli*, and *Palliwal-Bania*. The (*Khati*)-*Bhaat* follows his occupation only subsidiarily. The caste-groups from which only a few adult men have taken to alternate callings are *Rajput*, *Khati*, *Purabi-Thakur*, *Desha-Chamar*, and *Malwi-Kumhar*.

It will become clear that only those castes have given up their traditional-callings the members of which do not find the latter any more profitable. Such is the case with the *Balai*, *Bhambi*, and *Teli*, and to a certain extent with the *Bhaat* castes.

The demand for the genealogist and bard is on the decline. "He is a costly luxury of ages past", said Ram Chandra Khati. "He charges you for everything: for visiting your house, attending ceremonies, registering births and marriages in his register; and what do do you get in exchange! Nothing but stories about your ancestors to satisfy your desire for vanity; he charges you heavily, sometimes as much as fifty rupees for a single visit!" Again his occupation as bard and herald is beginning to be one of the past. in an age when many people can read and write.

The *Balai* and *Bhambi* weavers and *Teli* oilpressers lost their traditional occupation due to the economic and industrial developments in the rural areas. I was told that the weavers used to buy cotton from local cultivators, weave coarse cloth on their hand-looms, and sell it back to the villagers. Similarly with the *Teli*; he bought oil-seeds and sold oil which he had pressed in his wooden mill worked by a pair of oxen. In the twenties of the present century, cotton-textile and oil-pressing industries were established in neighbouring cities (Indore and Ujjain), and cheap mill-made cloth and cleanly and cheaply-pressed oil began to be available in the village markets. As a result, the traditional weavers and oil-pressers found it uneconomical to carry on their traditional-callings and gradually had to give them up altogether. The story of the weavers and oil-pressers serves to bring out some interesting aspects of the effects of industrialization on caste-occupation relationship.

The cases of the *Dhobi* and *Palliwal-Bania* have different explanations. Both these castes are represented in this village by single families, and it would be wrong to make any generalizations on the basis of their behaviour. The *Dhobi* family immigrated and settled in this village about 40 years ago (in or about the year 1915). After a year or so of service as washermen, they found the pursuit of their

traditional-occupation uneconomical. In villages, people wash their garments themselves, and only a few can afford to pay regularly for the services of the washerman. So the *Dhobi* decided to give up laundering clothes, and took up work as a farm-labourer; after a few years, he took some land on lease and cultivated it; during the war-years (1939-45) when the costs of farm-produce became very high, the family accumulated wealth, and in 1946, bought the land they had until then cultivated on lease, thus becoming permanent land-owning cultivators.

The *Palliwal-Bania*, on the other hand, is a poor man who found it difficult to amass sufficient capital for a shop, and then, he told me, there already existed two shops in the village, financed by well-to-do merchants from a neighbouring village. He did not find himself in a position to start a new shop, and preferred to live as a simple cultivator. He is middle-aged, a widower without children, and without any ambitions, and these contribute, I think, to his lack of interest in trade or shopkeeping.

Ideally, members of a caste are expected to stick to their traditional-calling. That, according to Hindu traditions, is the only correct and right way for them to make their living. In practice, however, such factors as the economic unsuitability of the occupation or personal choice of certain individuals result in deviations.

The occupational structure, again, is not so rigid as to disallow any such non-conformities or deviations in respect of traditional-callings. As I hope to show, there are certain "open" occupations, the pursuit of which is permitted to all castes—from the highest Brahmins to the lowest 'untouchables'. Secondly, the traditional rules governing caste-occupation relationship are prohibitive rather than prescriptive, that is, they prohibit a caste from taking to certain callings rather than restrict it to a single trade or occupation. These, I believe, are responsible for the limited occupational mobility of certain caste-groups or some members from other caste-groups in Patal village to take to occupations other than their traditional ones.

In Table 3, I have indicated the occupations actually taken up and followed by those who have abandoned their traditional-callings.

It is necessary for me to point out at this stage—what I regard as a fundamental to any understanding of the occupational role of castes—the fact that the practice of agriculture is largely considered to be 'caste-free'. There are, no doubt, 'cultivator-castes'—*Khati*, *Mali*, *Kulmi*, *Anjana* (the last two are not found in Patal, but are living in neighbouring villages), but agriculture is in no sense a caste-monopoly, and all castes, down to the very lowest untouchables[2] may practise cultivation. That most of them did so even during the days of fuedal authority in Malwa is evidenced in the service-tenure requirements of the various artisans and servant castes. A majority

TABLE 3

PART I

Caste Name	Total number of adult men not following traditional-callings	Occupations taken to			
		Cultivation	Farm labouring	General labouring	Shop-keeping
Khati	9	—	—	6	3
Rajput	6	—	6	—	—
Malwi-Balai	18	—	17	1	—
Bhambi	11	—	7	4	—
Purabi-Thakur	1	—	1	—	—
Desha-Chamar	2	—	2	—	—
Malwi-Kumhar	1	1	—	—	—
Gujerati-Balai	4	—	4	—	—
Dhobi	2	2	—	—	—
Teli	1	—	—	1	—
Palliwal-Bania	1	1	—	—	—
	56	4	37	12	3

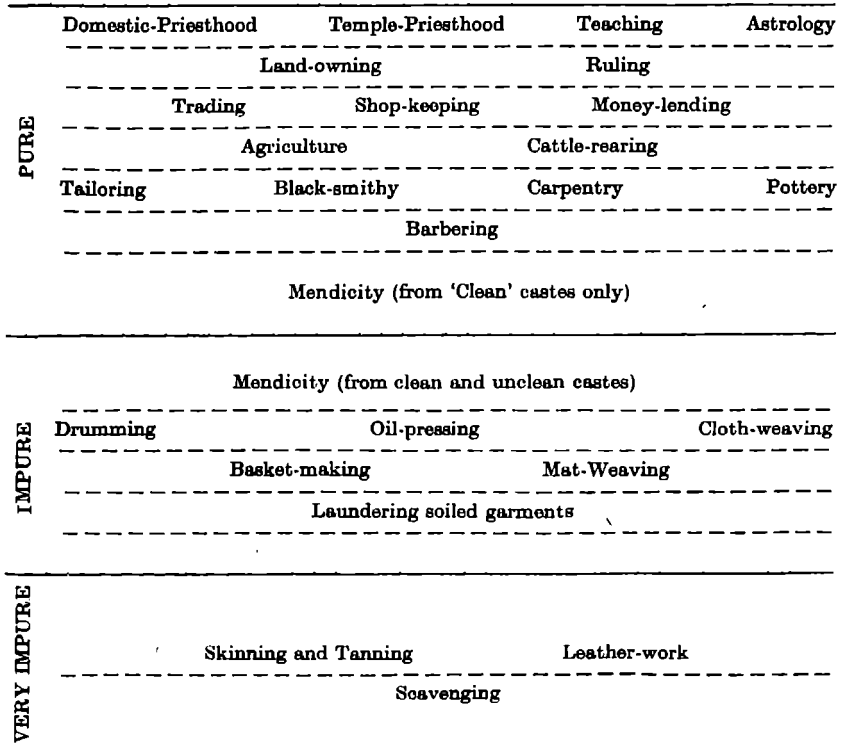
PART II

Caste Name	Total number of adult men following their traditional-calling only subsidiarily	Occupations now primarily followed			
		Cultivation	Farm labouring	General labouring	Shop-keeping
Desha-Chamar	1	—	1	—	—
(Khati)-Bhaat	1	—	—	1	—
Nath-Jogi	7	—	7	—	—
Bagri	5	—	—	5	—
	14	—	8	6	—

of these non-cultivator-castes—such as priests, artisans, community-servants—practised their caste-vocation in conjunction with agriculture. Usually, land was granted rent-free to them in exchange for specific services they were required to render to the feudal lord. Agriculture may thus be regarded as an 'open' occupation which could be and was pursued by any caste irrespective of its ritual status and position in the caste-hierarchy.

Like the 'formal' caste-hierarchy or hierarchy of castes in respect of commensality, give and take of food and drinks, etc., there is also a hierarchy of occupations.

The following chart shows such a hierarchy of occupations. Only those occupations have been included in this chart that are pursued or professed (as traditional-callings) by the people of Patal village.



At the top of this hierarchy of occupations come what may be called 'white collar' occupations, the type of callings prescribed for the *Brahmin* by the *Varna*-theory. A *Brahmin* should be a domestic-priest or temple-priest or an astrologer, or a teacher and scholar well-versed in religious and cultural lore. All these callings are considered to be the purest, and not involving any occupational-pollution. These are known as *satvik* or ritually-pure-callings (*Satvik* is from the skr. root *sat* meaning 'good, pure').

The second sub-category of occupations are those considered to be suitable for the castes of the middle ranks in the ritual purity scale; these do not involve any definite and voluntary pollution, but also they are not so pure as the *satvik* callings. Administration, justice-giving, and fighting come at the top of this category of occupa-

tions. All of these involve killing, injuring or harming some living beings even though the administrator, judge and warrior are expected to be righteous in their deliberations and stand for a just and humanitarian cause. Even the Brahmin, however, regard these as noble professions, since their purpose is to protect the good and righteous against the sinful and unrighteous.

Trade and shop-keeping come next on the hierarchy of occupations. Both these involve immoral if not positively impure habits and activities. "A *Bania* must necessarily lie, if he wants to prosper" is an oft-quoted proverb. "A shop-keeper", said Ratan Lal Jain, himself a petty shop-keeper, "is usually dirty, having to deal with such things as grains, spices, salt, sugar, jaggery, and oils. Besides, in his business, he has to deal with customers belonging to all castes and ranks and to accept money touched by them."

The next sub-category of occupations consists of the crafts and cultivation, in the economic sense, the 'actual producers of real wealth'. Tailoring, black-smithy, carpentry, and pottery—all these crafts are considered to be lowly though ritually pure callings. The black-smith uses the bellows made of animal-hide and the carpenter and potter kill the insects in the wood and clay they respectively work with. Cultivation of land is considered, by the orthodox, to be un-worthy since the plough or harrow injures the earth (which is treated as Mother; she is popularly referred to as *Dharati-mata*, i.e. mother earth) and the living organism in her bosom.[3]

The barber's occupation comes next. It is considered to be more lowly than the crafts or land cultivation. The former is concerned with human hair which are a form of bodily substance (though not strictly emissions, and hence not polluting); he also massages the limbs of his patrons; so his calling is regarded as lowly though not unclean.[4] To maintain his ritual purity the barber serves only the 'ritually-clean' castes.

Begging is not highly regarded but there is nothing impure about it, but only so long as a person begs from ritually 'clean' persons alone and accepts only 'ritually-clean' things. Hindu religious tradition permits Brahmins and ascetics to beg for living, even if the latter lead a family life and work as cultivators or labourers. But on no account must they accept alms from 'ritually-unclean' castes, and they must not accept impure things as alms. This vitally effects the ritual status of the mendicant or beggar. In Patal village, the *Brahmin*, *Gosain*, and *Vairagi-Vaisnava* beg for alms from 'clean' castes only and accept gifts of grain, uncooked food-stuffs, new cloth or money, and for this reason are considered to be pure and ritually 'clean' themselves. On the other hand, the ascetic *Nath-Jogi* beg for alms from clean' and 'unclean' castes (they put the limit at 'untouchable' 'astes), and are, for this reason, treated as 'ritually unclean'. The

Bhangi also begs, but he not only accepts alms from all 'clean' and 'unclean' castes, he also accepts cooked food (including flesh-food) and even leavings from the plates; for this reason (in combination with others), he is assigned a very low place on the hierarchy of occupations. (The *Maha-Brahmin* who accepts funerary gifts is also considered as of low ritual status, because of his acceptance of gifts that have been in association with death).

The drummer's occupation is 'ritually-impure', for it involves him into coming in contact with animal skin (which covers the large drum, called *dhol*); the drummer also works for and begs from all 'clean' and 'unclean' castes.

The oil-presser crushes seeds to extract oil for his living, thus destroying intentionally and directly the life-principle in the oil seeds. The life-principle is regarded as sacred, and for this reason the Teli's occupation is considered to be 'ritually-impure'.[5]

Cloth-weaving is an 'impure' occupation, because the weaver has to use the bow with its string made of animal-tissues.

Much more 'impure' is the work of the washerman who has to handle soiled garments, including clothes worn by people during periods of ritual pollution, such as menstruation, child-birth and death. The washerman, though, does not serve the 'unclean' and 'untouchable' castes.

Basket-weaving and mat-making are 'impure' trades because they involve handling of leaves and stalks of the palm which is believed to be intrinsically impure.

Skinning dead animals and tanning their hides is a 'very impure' calling because it brings the skinner-tanner into direct physical contact with death and decay. The leather-worker is slightly less impure since he does not skin dead-animals or tan the hides but deals in only tanned leather.

Similarly the scavenger's work is 'very impure' since he has to remove night soil in additon to handling animal-carcases, castrating calves (thus killing the life-germs of an animal belonging to the extremely sacred cow family), accepting alms and plate-leavings from even 'unclean' castes, and accepting part of a dead person's shroud.

A question we might pose here is : what is the criterion for this grading of occupations? Is it based on the skill involved in the trade, or the economic gain that accrues from its pursuit, or some such secular criteria as power and wealth which the follower of the trade acquires, or do we have to look elsewhere for finding the basis for such a widely-known and accepted hierarchy? The clue to this, I believe, lies in the terms used by the village people of Patal to distinguish the occupations higher up in the hierarchy from those that are at lower levels. For instance, 'domestic priesthood' or 'teaching'

are not referred to as 'more skilful' occupations, nor as occupations that yield wealth to him who pursues them, but rather as 'purer' occupations than the rest. Similarly, occupations on the lower scales of the hierarchy are called 'impure' occupations. The purity or impurity of occupations is determined in terms of the notions about pollution and purity, which, I hope to show elsewhere, govern the conduct and behaviour of common village Hindus in their individual and social life and that of groups in the inter-group behaviour.

There was a general consensus of opinion among my informants from all castes that all work is either pure or impure; the determining factor here is whether the things handled during the course of a job are pure or impure. Human emissions and dead things are considered to be impure all over India, and hence all those jobs that involve handling or contact with these impure things are considered to be impure. Casual or accidental contact with impure things results in temporary pollution such as a person accompanying a dead body to the cremation-ground or a woman in her periods suffer from. Should, however, the contact with impure things become regular and occupational, the occupation itself becomes an impure one, and it imparts its impurity to all those persons who pursue it regularly.

Similarly, there are pure occupations which involve regular professional contact with or handling of pure objects. Priesthood—domestic and temple, or teaching or astrology are considered to be extremely pure callings; land-owning, shop-keeping, tailoring, carpentry and smithy, cattle-rearing, pottery are all pure callings, but some are purer than others. The pursuit of pure callings does not entail any regular and occupotional contact with impure things.

Some of the intrinsically impure occupations, I was told, are considered to be very impure. An old Brahmin, Ramanand, gave the distinction between 'impure' and 'very impure' callings in the following words: "There is a very large number of occupations which involve professional and regular contact with dirt and impurities, and which, for this reason, are treated as 'impure', that is, their pursuit pollutes a person; there are, however, some, where there is greater and more direct handling of impure and polluting objects; the occupations of both the drummer and the skinner-tanner involve contact with and handling of dead animals' skin; the *Dholi* beats the tom-tom which is covered with animal-skin, and the *Chamar* skins the dead animal and tans the hide; both are impure; since, however, the *Chamar* is called upon to touch the dead animal, skin it, and cure the skin, his occupation is more impure than that of the *Dholi* who merely beats the tom-tom; similarly, the *Dhobi* washes soiled garments including clothes worn by women during their periods and parturition, but the *Bhangi* actually removes by hand human excreta; the latter's occupation is more impure than that of the former."

In this way, all occupations are thought of by the village-people as arranged in a hierarchy, a definite place being assigned to each. And since this placement is made in terms of the notions of ritual purity and pollution, each occupation may be said to possess a specific 'ritual position'.

I have already shown that each occupation is linked up with one or more castes who pursue it, or profess to pursue it, as their traditional-calling. I have also shown that the position of a caste on the caste-hierarchy is determined by and is indicative of its ritual-status. It may then be said that the ritual-position of an occupation must approximate to the ritual-status of the caste or castes who pursue it as a traditional-calling.

It is but a corollary of the above-said rule that the pursuit of 'pure' occupations is limited to *dwija* or 'clean' castes; these ritually clean castes alone are entitled, broadly speaking, to follow the pure trades as their regular occupations. Simiarly, only the *antyaja* or 'unclean' castes may follow the 'impure' trades as their traditional-callings. For the same reason, the 'very impure' trades and jobs are assigned to castes which are considered to be 'ritually-untouchable' or *avarna*.

Restated so as to appear as a ritual prohibition, this rule would mean that 'ritually clean' castes are prohibited from taking to 'impure' or 'very impure' callings; 'ritually-unclean' castes are forbidden to follow both the 'pure' and the 'very impure' callings; and castes that are considered to be 'ritually untouchable' must not pursue callings or trades which are 'pure' or 'impure'.

There appear to be two different aspects of this 'impurity' or 'purity' of occupations. The first I have stated above. This can be viewed at a glance in the following chart :

INTRINSIC WORTH OF OCCUPATIONS	'RITUAL PURITY DIVISION' OF CASTES WHO CAN FOLLOW THESE AS TRADITIONAL-CALLINGS
'Pure'	'Ritually Clean', i.e. *Dwija* castes
'Impure'	'Ritually Unclean', i.e. *Shudra* castes
'Very Impure'	'Ritually Untouchable', i.e. *Avarna* or *Chandala* castes

The important exceptions to this general rule are in respect of land-cultivation and cattle-rearing. No doubt there are castes whose

traditional-callings are cultivation or cattle-rearing (such as Khati, and Mali castes). Both these, however, are considered to be unspecialised and 'open' callings, and all castes, irrespective of the nature of their traditional-callings, can own land and cattle, or take land on lease or rent, or cultivate land and rear cattle. (see Ghurye, 1950, p. 16; Srinivas, 1955, p. 3)

Secondly, occupations are relatively 'normal', 'too pure' or 'too impure' for different castes, and this aspect is applicable on a much narrower level than the above mentioned concept of intrinsic ritual worth of occupations does. We have seen that most of the occupations are caste-linked, that is, they are suitable or 'normal' for particular castes, and unsuitable or 'not-normal' for all others. For some castes, thus, the same occupation is 'normal', that is, the ritual status of the caste approximates to the ritual worth of occupation, for some others, it would be 'abnormal' or 'too pure'; for still others, the same occupation might be 'sub-normal' or 'too impure'.

I shall demonstrate this by taking a single occupation and examining its ritual value for the different castes. For this purpose I shall take a 'craft' occupation—pure, though not very pure in its nature. Blacksmithy as an occupation is 'normal' or suitable for the *Lohar* or 'blacksmith' caste; it is this caste's traditional-calling, and all members of the *Lohar* caste are required to be black-smiths. But this occupation is also 'normal' or suitable for other castes whose ritual-status and traditional-callings are of the same ritual-order, such as *Sutar* (carpenter), *Darji* (tailor) or *Kumhar* (potter). Thus, no harm (from the ritual view-point) will come to a *Sutar*-blacksmith, *Darji*-blacksmith, or *Kumhar*-blacksmith, and such a person would continue to enjoy his normal-ritual-status and all the privileges and obligations connected with that. There are, however, other castes for whom blacksmithy would be an unsuitable, that is, ritually 'not normal', calling. Such, for instance, would be the case with the *Brahmin* and other non-artisan castes, such as *Rajput*, *Khati* or *Vairagi-Vaisnava*, all of the 'ritually-clean' category of castes. From their point of view, black-smithy, though intrinsically 'pure', is a relatively 'impure' calling, the pursuit of which would lower their ritual status and mean the loss of caste. For the *Nai* (whose occupation itself is intrinsically pure), however, black-smithy is a relatively 'purer' calling which he cannot take to, again without fear of loss of ritual-status and caste.

With castes whose traditional-callings are intrinsically 'impure' the inter-occupational mobility is still more restricted. In this category, each caste regards its traditional-calling as superior to the traditional-callings of other castes of the same category. The *Teli*, for example, thinks that his traditional-calling of oil-pressing is relatively purer than those of the *Bhambi*, *Dholi*, *Dhobi*, *Bagri* or *Bargunda*; the *Bhambi* thinks his is the purest of all 'impure' callings, and so on.

Decidedly all castes of this category regard their traditional-callings as intrinsically 'purer' than those of the castes of the 'ritually-untouchable' division whose traditional-callings are intrinsically 'very impure' (so impure as to render the castes that pursue them ritually 'untouchable'). This is taken to be so by all the castes of the village.

Within their own class, however (i.e., castes belonging to the 'too impure' occupation-category), each caste considers its calling as relatively 'purer' compared to that of the others of this class. Thus, for instance, a *Bhangi* would not change his traditional-calling with that of the *Chamar* for all material gains. In his own turn, the *Chamar* would treat scavenging as a relatively-impure calling which he would not take up for anything.

The ideal pattern of inter-occupational mobility of castes as conceived by the people of Patal village is shown in the chart on the following page.

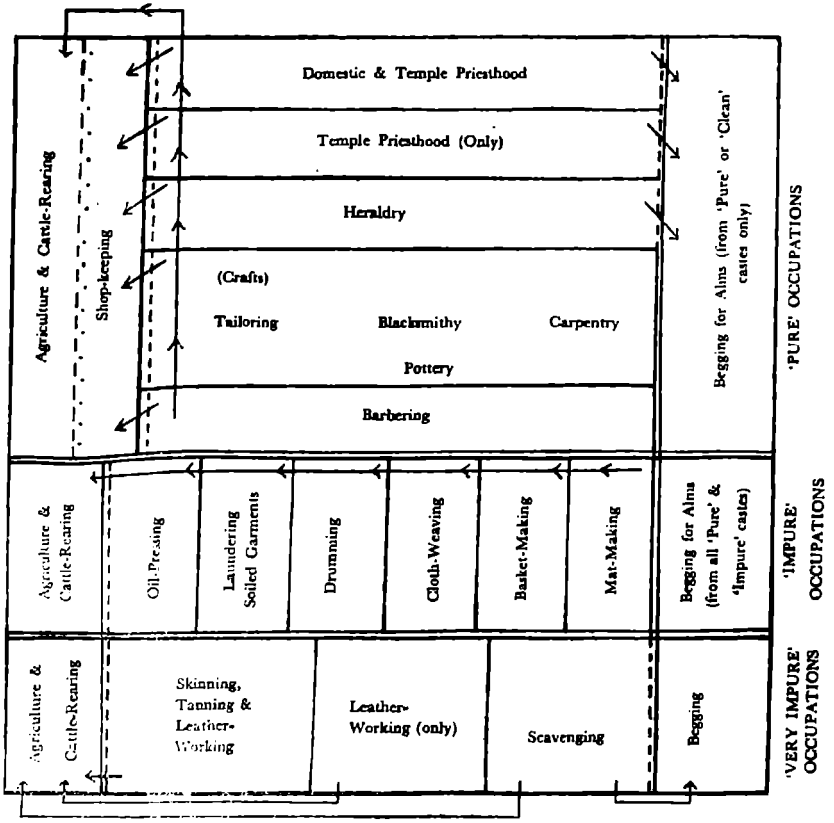
In an orthodox community like Patal village, castes are normally expected to follow their respective traditional-callings, or, in exceptional cases, the alternate occupations approved in their ritual idiom. *Dharma* (that is, rules for righteous conduct and living) requires members of a caste to stick to their caste's traditional or hereditary calling or callings. To abandon this in pursuit of another, though the latter might be more lucrative and materially gainful, is thought to be un-right and not proper. Even if, however, people do give up their traditional-callings and take up others as their means of living, this has to be strictly within the ritual purity framework which has already been elaborated.

This paper is based on field-research carried on by the author in a village in Malwa (Madhya Pradesh, India) in 1955-56. It was made possible by a Research Scholarship of the Australian National Universitiy, Canberra, and the author wishes to acknowledge the facilities made available to him by the University authorities.

1. 'Patal' is a pseudonym.
2. There is traditional and scriptural sanction for such practice. See *Sukraniti*, quoted by Ghurye (1950), p. 102.
3. For this reason, every orthodox Brahmin does not cultivate land. If he owns land, he either gives it on lease to tenant-farmers, or he employs servants to till the land, thus shifting the sin which is believed to fall on the tiller of the soil.
4. In some parts of India, the barber's calling is considered to be impure and his touch polluting (e.g., Srinivas, 1952) and a person is required to bathe after a shave or hair-cut. Not all castes do even that. (Srinivas, 1955, p. 22) But the very

fact that everywhere the barber is allowed to shave or massage even the highest caste-men indicates that though lowly, his calling is not considered to be 'ritually-unclean'.

CHART SHOWING THE IDEAL PATTERN OF INTER-OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY



Legend :

No Mobility possible

Only One-way Mobility possible (indicated by arrow in the Chart)

Both-ways Mobility possible

5. A very interesting, and I think important variation in respect of the Teli has been reported by Dr. A. C. Mayer who worked in the same region at about the same time as I did. Mayer writes : "Oil-pressing is regarded as a somewhat demeaning work, being messy though not actively polluting ; its exponents would be placed roughly equal to barber and potter". (1956, p. 128) Is the variation merely local? I think not.
I put this to some of my informants at a group-interview, and from the discussion that ensued, I could analyse that the variation might be due to the fact that both the oil-presser and the oil-seller are designated by the same Hindi term, viz., *Teli*. Now, oil-selling is considered to be ritually somewhat different from oil-pressing. The oil-seller does not kill the life-principle in the seeds which the oil-presser does. Thus, whereas oil-pressing is considered to be a 'ritually-impure' calling and the oil-pressing *Teli* an 'unclean' caste, the oil-selling *Teli* is treated as a 'clean' caste, even though lowly and dirty.

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POLITICAL CHANGE IN THE KONDMALS

F. G. Bailey

Introduction

The Kondmals is a sub-division of Phulbani District, which lies in the hills of western Orissa, to the south of the Mahanadi River. At the present time within the whole field of political activity in the Kondmals at least three distinct structures can be perceived. One of these 'belongs' to the Konds, an aboriginal tribe: a second is the caste system: and the third is the system provided by the bureaucratic administration. I am concerned mostly with these three structures, but I take notice also of a fourth, the representative democracy, although I have less material about this than about the other three structures. In this article I discuss the notion of several structures within a single field, and I ask how far it contributes to our understanding of political change.

In the latter part of this essay I shall describe some of the political changes which have been taking place in the Kondmals, but I shall do so only in outline. All the evidence which led me to make general statements about political activity—in particular case material—will not be included, and I intend to publish it later in another place. Here I discuss the theoretical outline in which the evidence is organized, and I suggest that it may be useful in describing change in other parts of India and elsewhere. But I would make it clear at the outset that this outline was developed in relation to the particular material provided by the political history of the Kondmals, and I emphatically do not claim a general validity for it.

The dynamic analysis of structure

Statements about social change are usually presented, explicitly or implicitly, in structural terms. Professor Redfield writes: 'These events . . . lead to a union of people from different castes in what we recognize as classes—people conscious of common cause in the struggle to improve life chances.'[1] Dr. Leach writes: 'If, for example, it can be shown that in a particular locality, over a period of time, a political system composed of equalitarian lineage segments is replaced by a ranked hierarchy of feudal type, we can speak of a

[1] McKim Marriott (ed.), *Village India*, Chicago, 1955, p. xi.

change in the formal social structure.'[1] Professor Barnes writes: 'The Ngoni Sovereign State has become more and more like a rural district council in a backward area .....'[2] In these three examples there are presented three pairs of structures, if I may put it that way, and it is said that in each of them the first structure is giving way, or could give way, or has given way to the second structure. When later I outline the changes that have taken place in political activity in the Kondmals, I write in just the same way, for it is impossible to describe change, or indeed movement of any kind, without putting up at least two fixed points which serve to indicate the direction of movement. A change, in other words, must be plotted by fixed points if it is to be intelligible. One of the purposes of this article is to examine the 'fixed points' and to see how they can be fitted into an analysis of change.

Words like 'fixed', 'static', 'timeless', and especially 'equilibrium' have become bricks which are thrown at structural analysis. It is said that while the analysis is static or timeless, the society which is analysed is not. But in fact, when a structural analysis is made, the presentation of a static chart of social relationships is only a first stage, and it is followed by deeper analysis which takes account of time and what loosely may be called movement. I shall discuss this 'dynamic' analysis further, since an understanding of it is indispensable to a study of social change.

The basic material of such an analysis is regularized or institutionalized behaviour between *individuals*. These are generalized as statements about relationships between *persons*. The level of structural understanding is reached when generalizations are made about the systematic interconnection of these relationships. We generalize, for instance, about the connection between a political system and a ritual system, or a kinship system and an economic system, and we say that one could not exist in the form that it does without the other. These statements may be made about 'ideal' behaviour, or about 'typical' behaviour: more colloquially, about the 'ought' or about the 'usually do'.

Social relationships are between persons, but in them there is a third element, thier content, which is the thing or person about which the two persons are interacting—for instance, about land. Land is itself a variable: it may change by natural accident or in other ways so that the relationship in existence before the change becomes impractical after the change, and an adjustment of some kind becomes necessary. In presenting a static chart of relationships it is assumed that the content of the relationship is held steady and

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1 *Political Systems of Highland Burma*, London, 1954, p. 5.
2 *Politics in a Changing Society*, Oxford University Press, Cape Town, 1954, p. 172.

does not vary. There are many other simple examples of this kind of assumption. For instance, in many statements about persons we hold steady the fact that the individuals who in general statements become persons, are born, grow up, grow senile, and eventually die : the *person*, in other words, is ageless and timeless.

No one who has made a structural analysis of any society has been content, to my knowledge, to leave the matter at that point. They do not simply state the norm : the major part of their analysis is taken up with a demonstration of how the structure 'copes with' variations in what I have called the third element. Institutions of succession and inheritance are obvious examples. Another class of institutions within this category are those which deal with deviations and which help to maintain the norm. At this stage the analysis has ceased to be static : it has become dynamic and it deals with movement—not only with 'structural form'[1] but also with 'social circulation'[2].

The structural form can be conceived of, in this way, as a kind of centre-line, across which is drawn a pattern of oscillation to represent the deviations from the norm, and the return to normality. The fact that there is such a return is the reason for the use of the word 'equilibrium'. In one sense an analysis of this kind involves time, but in another sense the analysis is timeless, in that time is not progressive, so much as cyclical. There is an oscillating pattern of norm, followed by deviation, followed by corrective mechanism, followed in its turn by the norm again.

The oscillations or deviations are caused ultimately by what I have called the 'third element' or, to use a more convenient term, by 'outside' factors. The accepted norm, for instance, in the relationship of persons concerning land, may be upset by the fact that there is too little land to go round, or, conversely, because a particular population dies out and their vacant land is taken by others. This is, of course, only one example, and the reader may think of many more. Some of these appear as conflicts in the behaviour enjoined on the same individual in so far as he is several persons. If a man is both a father and a mother's brother, and is in both roles enjoined to be generous, he may find that in fact he has not sufficient wealth to fulfil both these obligations. Conflicts of this kind often appear to be 'built in' to the structure. A familiar example in India is the conflict of loyalties involved in being both a husband and the member of a joint family.[3] A dynamical structural

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[1] A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and function in primitive society*, London, Cohen and West, 1952, p. 192.
[2] G. and M. Wilson, *Analysis of social change*, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1945, p. 58.
[3] S. C. Dube, *Indian village*, London, Routledge Kegan Paul, 1955, p. 152.

analysis, once past the preliminary stage of structural form, is concerned with showing that although there are deviations from the norm, such behaviour is deviant (that is, abnormal) and usually is controlled and brought back to the standards of normality by some kind of counter-action. The writer must demonstrate either that deviance and conflict are only apparent, or that, when they do in fact cause a break in the normal relations, there are ways of sealing off the conflict and preventing it from causing anarchy, or of glossing it over so that an ordered social life can continue. In the two examples I have given the corrective mechanism might in India be the *panchayat*—either caste or village—which meets to hear complaints and endeavours to close the breach between the parties. The aim, in short, of a structural analysis is to show that in spite of the potential disruption of social relations which is offered by conflict and deviation, a balance is in the end achieved. There is, in Professor Gluckman's terms, a repetitive equilibrium.

Conflicts of this kind are to be distinguished by the fact that they are resolved or glossed over without any change taking place in the structural form. But in analysing political activity in the Kondmals I found many conflicts which were not of this kind. There is a potential conflict between the role of husband and the role of joint family member, but this conflict is solved or contained by other institutions, for instance, by caste *panchayats*. But in another type of institutional conflict—for which the best term is *contradiction*—there are no other institutions, which deal with the conflict except by modifying the structural form. The Konds have a rule that anyone who owns land in a particular village must reside there and take on various social obligations which I will describe later. The Administration, on the other hand, rules that proprietary right is obtained by purchase or inheritance or in various other ways and maintained by the payment of land taxes. Their rule does not take into account obligations to the local community. But in this case there is no third institution which is neutral between these two rules, as the *panchayat* is neutral between the parental family and the joint family, if I may put it that way. If the conflict over land rights is taken to a higher court, this court is in fact part of the Administration, and their judgement can only be to insist on their own rule. An appeal to a Government court is not an appeal to a neutral body, but to a sanction regularly maintaining one rule *at the expense of the other*. In other words, *conflict* takes place between institutions within one structure when the conflicting institutions belong to different structures then this situation is *contradiction*.

In the third part of this article I go on to describe the political structure of the Konds, in so far as it concerned control over land, and I make a dynamic analysis, showing how variations in the land-

population ratio could be adjusted without a change in the structural form. These variations gave rise to conflicts, but not to contradictions.

The Kond Structure

The Kond communities with which I am concerned live in the Kondmals. In their dealings with one another, before the coming of the Administration (and ignoring, for the moment, the presence of alien Oriya colonists in their midst) the Konds were divided into localized agnatic clans. Each clan had its own territory, and residence in that territory involved assuming the obligations of an agnatic kinsman towards the rest of the people living there. Speaking more strictly these units are *composite* clans. They are made up of lineages which frankly acknowledged that they are of different descent, but which treat one another as agnatic brothers and take on the rights and obligations which are thought to inhere in this type of kinship link. It is for this reason that I continue to call them 'clans', although there is not even the fiction of a common genealogical descent between all the lineages of any of the clans known to me.

The relationships between the different clans in the eastern Kondmals, the area which I know best, are institutionalized either in friendliness or hostility. Those clans who are friends are linked by agnation or fictions of agnation (blood-bortherhood or adoption) and they do not inter-marry. Conversely the enemies are also the people to whom one's sisters go in marriage and from amongst whom one finds brides. This does not, of course,—mean that there were never fights within clans or between clans in alliance. There were : this is one of the causes which set the system in motion. But it does mean that it was right to fight people from 'in-law' territory, and wrong to fight people who lived on one's own territory and who were agnates, or who lived on territories agnatically related.

The boundaries of each clan-territory were fixed and known, and clan-solidarity was re-inforced by various ritual means connected with the Earth deity as the protector of the clan-territory. This, in its turn, was connected with agnation, since breaches of the rule of exogamy brought about a situation of mystical danger and jeopardized both human and natural fertility. I have not the space to describe the ritual activities of the clan here.

One of the factors making possible the existence of a structural form of this kind is an appropriate ratio between population and land in each clan-territory. In outlining the structural form of the society so far I have assumed that this was always appropriate. But it is clear in fact that this was not always the case, and that sometimes the population of one territory grew too large to be supported on

the land available, and in other territories the population shrank beneath the number which could exploit the territory they owned, and which could protect it from outsiders, who belonged to hostile clans. It is necessary, therefore, to go beyond a 'structural form' analysis, and to discuss the means by which surplus population could be moved from one clan-territory to another, without giving rise to new *types* of social relationships (although, of course, it did, as will be seen shortly, give rise to actural social relations which had not exised before) and without altering the structural form of the total society. I now outline some of these processes, although I, by no means, exhaust the possibilities.

I describe three types of re-adjustment. In the first the clan with a surplus population attacked their neighbours and took their land. In the second the surplus population (or if the movement arose out of internal disputes, the seceding faction) moved off and occupied virgin land, forming a new clan territory, on the model of the one which they had just left. In the third adjustment sections of the population in a crowded clan-territory moved away and allied themselves to other clans which had or could conquer extra land to support the larger population. I could document all three processes.

In the second process the new clan was internally, with the passage of time, of the same structural form as the clan of which it was an offshoot. Externally it fitted into the total structure by retaining agnatic ties with the parent clan. There could be no marriages between these clans, and it would be wrong for them to fight against one another. The return to equilibrium in the total structure is here easily comprehended.

In the first process—that of conquering new territory—the fate of those who were defeated is the crucial point in the maintenance of structural form. Conquest can lead to permanent subordination and institutionalized dependence. But there is no room for this kind of relationship in the structural form of the Kond clans. There seem to have been two possibilities. Firstly, the conquered populations were exterminated, being either killed or driven out. Secondly, they could remain on their old territory and form a new lineage in the composite clan of their conquerors. Both these processes seem to have taken place.

The third alternative—that of the migration of a section of the population of one clan and its union with another clan—is similar in its essentials to the one just discussed. The migrating segment became a part of the composite clan which owned the territory on which the newcomers were settling.

In the second and third processes I have described the *internal* adjustment which preserved the structural form of clans. But the crucial point is their *external* relationship, especially when sections

migrated and joined a clan which was the 'in-law' and, therefore, the enemy of the parent clan. There is clear evidence that in this case the agnatic links which the migrating section retained with its parent were not allowed to have political significance, at least not in the long run. The migrating segment still could not marry into its true parent clan, nor could it marry into the composite clan which it joined. As far as exogamy was concerned the migrating section now had double ties. But the political obligations which were expressed in terms of agnation lay entirely with the clan which the migrants joined, and on whose territory they were living. I have no doubt that for a generation or two there was some modification in the pattern of institutionalized hostility between a migrant section and the parent clan which it had left, but this was not allowed to blur the political boundaries. In spite of these cross-linkages of agnatic kinship, the main political cleavage remained between territorial groups which expressed their unity in terms of agnatic kinship.

I have here presented the structural form of the Kond political system in outline, and I have described one of the processes (one among many) which must be taken into account in a dynamic analysis. An 'outside' factor—the land-population ratio—may make it impossible to preserve existing relationships. These are changed, but through various institutions—in the cases considered through various fictitious forms of agnation—the original form of the society is preserved and equilibrium is reached once again. In the structure so far presented there are conflicts, which can be solved without changing the structural form, but there are no contradictions.

The Oriya Structure

I have presented the Kond political structure, as if Konds were the only people present in the Kondmals, and as if they had political relationships with no one else. But in fact this is not the case to-day, and it appears not to have been the case (if we can trust the annals of the neighbouring Oriya State of Boad) for at least one thousand years. I deal in this section with the political organization of the Oriyas who lived in the Kond hills. Here I describe the Oriya system, as I did the Kond system, in abstraction from other systems of political relationships. In a following section I shall consider Kond-Oriya relations. Again I would add that this is an outline description. I have in part described this system elsewhere,[1] and I intend to give a fuller account in another publication.

[1] F. G. Bailey, *Caste and the Economic Frontier*, Manchester Univ. Press, 1957

The Oriyas founded a number of fortified villages in the Kond hills and each village controlled a limited area around its own settlement. The population of these villages was divided into castes, the main categories being a dominant caste of WARRIORS[1] in control of the village, a category of village servants (BARBER, HERDSMAN, BRAHMIN, and so forth), and thirdly, a category of agricultural labourers, the majority of whom were PAN untouchables. The WARRIORS controlled the land, farmed it with the help of their untouchable retainers, and were the main body of fighting men who protected the village both from the Konds and from other Oriya settlements.

The main political cleavage in this society was *not* between castes in a village, but between villages as corporate groups led by the WARRIORS. Oriya villages seem to have been hostile to one another, and although they occasionally combined under the leadership of the Boad King, for the most part the maximal unit of political activity was the village.

The appropriate ratio in numbers of masters to servants was kept in balance by migration. The migrants assumed in their new location the same *kind* of relationships which they had in their old location. In the dominant caste there is some evidence for the accretion of migrant groups through fictitious agnation to the dominant caste of the villages which they joined, but also they seem frequently to have founded new settlements by driving the Konds from the better cultivating sites.

Konds and Oriyas

It is possible to build up a fairly coherent outline of the interaction of Konds and Oriyas before the coming of the Administration, although with the distance in time and the absence of documents there is a lack of corroborative detail and many questions remain unanswered. Secondly, the generalizations I make cover a period of at least a thousand years and may well be inaccurate, because we have in that period practically no evidence of development and change in political relationships.

It is first of all clear that the Konds were attached to the King of Boad State and to the Oriya chiefs in the Kondmals by the loosest of 'feudal' ties. They have been termed the 'subordinate allies' of the ruling groups among the Oriyas. There are traditions among the Konds of having taken part in military expeditions led by the Boad King and in smaller battles under the leadership of the Oriya chiefs resident in the Kond hills. Furthermore many Kond families

1. The names of most castes are put into English and written in capital letters.

in the eastern Kondmals bear as their lineage names titles of service under the Boad King. Those whose names indicate kingly service claim that their ancestors served the King of Boad. Those who bear other names say that such people are bastard lineages sprung from the union of a Kond woman and an Oriya of that name.

However the control exercised by Oriya leaders, whether the Boad King or the chief of a fortified village in the Kondmals, was slight. It was maintained by finesse, and by charismatic qualities, and the Oriyas never had sufficient force at their command to undertake a systematic conquest of the Kond country. A further and important reason for the relative strength of the 'subordinate ally' was the segmentary nature of Oriya society in the Kond hills and of the feudal kingdoms from which they came. In all these kingdoms there seem to have been periodical rebellions : the king had very little control over the chiefs in the Kond hills and they did not look to him for support : finally, as I have already said, in the Kond hills the Oriya villages were maximal units of political activity. So far from combining with one another in a concerted effort to bring the Konds to heel, they fought against one another and enlisted the support of the Konds in this fight. In these circumstances it seems to have been easy for Kond groups to play off one Oriya chief against another, and to transfer their allegiance from a chief who had offended them to his enemy. There is documentary evidence of an event of this kind just before the British came to the Kond hills.

I have now enlarged my description of the field of political activity in the Kond hills. There are first the Kond institutions and the Kond political society in which the main cleavage lay between localized composite clans, using the idiom of agnation. Secondly, there are Oriya settlements, internally organized on the basis of caste, and externally forming an egalitarian segmentary system like that of the Konds, the key category being the dominant WARRIOR group. In both these cases it is possible to describe a structure proper—that is to say, to postulate connections between whole fields of regularities, between, say, the political system and the ritual system—between, for example, the political structure and caste rituals in an Oriya village, or between kinship and politics and ritual in the Kond system. But beyond these two there is a third field of political activity between Konds and Oriyas of the kind I have outlined in the first part of this section, and here I do not think it is possible to find a structural form of the same kind as in the two constituent fields. Rather this situation is to be described as two structures in contradiction with one another.

For many centuries there seems to have been a stalemate. The Konds were not strong enough to exterminate the Oriya colonies. The dominant group among the Oriyas, in their turn, were not strong enough or sufficiently united to undertake a systematic conquest of

the Konds. The contradiction between their political systems remained potential rather than actual and only came to the surface when the British arrived and gave to the Oriyas sufficient power to begin to impose their system upon the Konds.

Pacification and political change

I have outlined elsewhere the story of the Meriah wars and the coming of the British to the Kond hills[1]. These events took place between 1832 and 1850. In 1855 a regular civilian administration was established. The resources of the administrators were very slight and they were forced to govern through existing institutions. The existing Kond clan territories, which had already fairly clearly demarcated boundaries and were named, were taken over and used as units for administration. The Tahsildar, who himself was an Oriya, governed through Oriya-speaking men. Some of these, in the eastern plateau of the Kondmals, were Konds. Elsewhere they were the Oriya chieftains whose role I discussed in the last section. The reasons for this policy were firstly the obvious one that the Tahsildar and his staff knew Oriya but did not know the Kond language: secondly, they liked to have key person to whom they could delegate responsibility. Thirdly, from their experience elsewhere they were used to dealing with headmen and with villages, and were entirely unfamiliar with the egalitarian segmentary type of political organization of the Konds, which I described in the first part of this article. They were also, of course, relatively familiar with a caste organization. In short, the first effect of the coming of the Administration was to put power into the hands of the Oriyas, and to upset the balance which—from the evidence available—we concluded had existed for a thousand or more years in the Kond hills between Kond and Oriya.

In a previous section I described the processes by which within the Kond system a balance was maintained between land and population, and how there could be re-adjustments in this without upsetting the structural form of Kond society. This adjustment was effected by the rule that those who came to a territory must take on ties of fictitious agnation with the owners of that territory. There were certain changes effected in this process by the presence of the Administration. Firstly, it was no longer possible for a clan to expand its territory by conquest, since warfare was put down. Secondly, the presence of the Administration resulted in an ending of the process of external recruitment and the taking on of ties of fictitious agnation, at the level of the clans. I shall discuss this in greater detail.

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1 F. G. Bailey, *op. cit.*

There are today in every clan-territory which I examined two categories of villages : those which live on their 'own earth' and those which live on 'bought earth'. Those who live on 'bought earth' acknowledge that they are living within the boundaries of a clan to which they do not belong and they marry with these people and have no fiction of agnation whatsoever with them. Those who live on their 'own earth', in spite of the composite nature of the clan, consider themselves to be one clan. That is to say, they acknowledge that they came from another place, but by living on the same territory they have come to act as brothers. In every case those who lived on 'bought earth' had come to their present location after the time that the Administration came to the area : those who had taken on the rights and obligations of agnates had come to their present location in the distant past before the Administration arrived in the area.

Before the coming of the Administration a man's rights to land were protected by his membership of the clan which owned the territory on which he lived. The other members of the clan protected him and their joint territory against outsiders, and he was expected to play his part in making the caln an effective political unit. After the Administration came to the area a right to land was no longer validated by membership of a clan and land could no longer be protected or gained by warlike action. The source of power lay with the Administration and it was they who protected property. In other words, the status now relevant to the holding and protecting of property was no longer membership of a composite clan, but—putting it a little ambitiously for that time—citizenship of India.

For many years this citizenship was mediated—and to some extent it still is—through the Oriya or Kond *sirdar* who was in charge of the clan-territory. Access to the Government and an exercise of the rights which the Government guaranteed could best be got by a dependent relationship on the *sirdar*. Consequently the contradiction can be phrased as between the Kond political system and the Oriya system of lord and retainer, although, of course, the factor operative is the presence of the Administration.

Before the coming of the Administration readjustments of population to land did not alter the structural form of Kond society. After the Administration arrived, although a certain stability was achieved by the ending of warfare, differential population growth continued to upset the land population ratio. Indeed, the 'land-grabbers' who followed in the wake of the Administration contributed to instability by taking land from Konds. In other words, movement between territories of surplus or displaced population continued. But now the readjustment began to alter the structural form of Kond society. Migrants to a new territory no longer found it necessary or advantageous to join the clans on whose territory they settled. They bought

the land and then secured their status by getting the backing of the *sirdar* and through him of the Government. The old clans continued in existence, and have done so up to the present day, but they are now maintained by internal recruitment alone. Some have dwindled away until they now consist only of a few families. Others still occupy the bulk of the territory which bears their name. But every migration, every readjustment of population to land, represented a 'running down of stocks' in the old Kond political structure, and an increase in the number of people who did not belong to any territorial clan, but who, as political persons, belonged to a group made up of a chief and his dependents. As a result of this the *political* activities of the clan have dwindled almost to nothing.

Konds and the caste system

By fixing the boundaries between the clan territories and by putting an end to warfare, the Administration weakened the tribal political system. Before the coming of the Administration a Kond group could play off one Oriya chief against another and transfer their allegiance when it suited them to do so. Afterwards this was no longer possible, for a change of this kind would have to be ratified by Administrative recognition of new boundaries, and, so far as I know, this did not happen. Further, as I have explained in the last section, every migration decreased the number of persons who belonged to a territorial clan and increased the number of those whose citizenship was achieved by a relationship with the Government mediated through the Oriya chief.

In addition to this there were various economic processes at work tending to bring individual Konds into relationships of dependence, typical of the caste system and not differing in any essential from the relationships which the men of low caste held at that time towards the dominant WARRIORS. By establishing secure conditions and by making residence and travel safe within the Kond hills for outsiders, the Administration made it possible for a large number of Oriyas of the mercantile class to come into the Kond hills and to set up various kinds of business there. From then on the aboriginals began to lose hand to mercantile outsiders. This is a familiar process and I have myself described it at length elsewhere.[1]

Those Konds who lost their land either through mercantile processes or through manipulation of the rules of the Administration by the Oriyas who were advantageously placed, had to find some other means of making a living. Some of these migrated, as individual families or in small groups, to the marginal areas in the remoter

[1] F. G. Bailey, *op. cit.*

valleys and there brought new land under cultivation. At some periods it was possible for them to migrate as labourers to the Tea Gardens of Assam. A very few of them found jobs with the Administration or in the world of commerce. But many of them, sooner or later, drifted into the larger Oriya villages and made their living either as plough servants or as casual labourers under the patronage of an Oriya, who was sometimes a WARRIOR and sometimes a member of the recently arrived mercantile castes, prominent among whom were the DISTILLERS.[1] These persons were, in most respects, in the same position economically as, for instance, the untouchable labourers and other dependent castes. The Konds who stayed in their own villages, whether these villages were still part of a territorial clan, or whether they were immigrants and dependents upon a *sirdar*, owned land and had direct access to its produce through their own labour. But those who came to Oriya villages achieved their share in the produce of the land by a dependent relationship as individuals upon their WARRIOR or DISTILLER masters. Konds in their own villages were still members of corporate groups—in some cases a village and a clan and in some cases only a village—with at least vestigial political functions. The Konds who came to Oriya villages were not full citizens in any corporate political groups. They were individuals dependent on upper caste masters, just as were untouchables and other dependent castes, and as such they were 'second-class' citizens.

However, even taking together the original Oriya colonists and those who had come in the wake of the Administration, the total number of Oriyas was small in relation to the total number of Konds. This was due to several factors, prominent among which was the evil reputation of the climate of the Kondmals. Again, the Administration looked with disfavour upon the alienation of Kond land, and took various measures to prevent it. These measures were not entirely successful, but they did prevent any considerable elimination of the Konds as landowners and as 'first-class' citizens. These developments I consider in the following section :

The developments outlined in this and last section can be seen as a contest between the Konds and the Oriyas, and, metaphorically, as a contest between their respective political structures. Up to now I have described the process by which Konds were brought to behave in the Oriya model and were to some degree integrated into the Oriya system. The Konds, as persons in a tribal structure, have never had any effective answer to this. But within the framework of the Administration, which has moved from ambivalence to dislike of the caste system, the Konds began to hold their own. Most

[1] F. G. Bailey, *op. cit.*, Chapters IX and X.

recently, in the period of parliamentary democracy, they are beginning to hold the upper hand.

The Administration, the economy, and Kond 'nationalism'

The use which the Administration made of the resident Oriya population, particularly the chiefs, and the implicit support which they seemed to give both to these men and to the immigrant mercantile castes, must have intensified the cleavage between Kond and Oriya. Initially at least, it must have seemed to the Konds that the Administration was all on the side of the Oriyas.

The way in which the economy has developed has done nothing to bridge this cleavage or to blur the sharp division between the two peoples. As I have described, for a long time the Konds were the exploited and the Oriyas were the exploiters. As the trading economy has developed further the Konds and the Oriyas have also become something like two separate and opposed classes, not overtly divided by exploitation, as in the process of 'land-grabbing', but on the lines of specialization. The Konds have become the producers of a cash-crop, turmeric. The Oriyas are the middlemen who buy the turmeric and transfer it to the larger wholesalers. In this field the Oriyas have a stereotype of the Konds as a hard-working but foolish person, good enough to go through the toil of growing turmeric, but not clever enough to handle its marketing. The Kond stereotype of the typical Oriya is the reverse of this : a cunning trader, evading the labour of growing turmeric, but profiting in trade from his wits and lack of scruple. This, of course, is not an uncommon attitude among both producers and consumers towards middlemen and it contains the hint of exploitation. But at this stage I would rather emphasize the aspect of specialization, and the division of the two people into opposed economic classes, each class having at least a potential economic interest against the other—potential in that it can result in common action and a common programme within each group designed to further its own ends at the expense of the other.

This cleavage has been encouraged, perhaps inadvertently, by Government policy. The British Administrators, who followed the first Tahsildar, disliked the mercantile Oriyas, had a milder dislike for the anciently-settled Oriyas, and tended to favour the 'simple' Konds. The same was true of Missionaries who made more converts among the Adibasis and untouchables than among the Hindu population. Various measures were put into operation to protect the Konds and to prevent the Oriyas from profiting from a rigid administration. The area has always been administered as an Agency and

relatively great discretion was put into the hands of the Magistrate. Drink shops were closed and the profits of the DISTILLER castes came to an end to the benefit of the Konds. Restrictions were put upon the transfer of land between Kond and non-Kond. Kond lands were not subject to the ordinary land-tax, but Konds paid a 'voluntary' tax at a low rate, assessed on the ownership of ploughs, and the sum raised was doubled out of Government funds and used for building schools and roads in the Kondmals.

The Oriyas found ways and means of evading the restrictions on the transfer of land, but undoubtedly the intervention of the Administration has prevented the complete pauperization of the Konds. It has also served to give the Konds a wider sense of their own unity, and of their opposition to the Oriyas, transcending the division between the clans, and making the local cleavages between Oriya chiefs and the Kond clans into a wider cleavage between the Oriya community and the Kond community.

Since Independence this process has been quickened and the policy of giving protection and privilege to the Adibasis has been extended beyond a narrow and negative field. Konds are given preferential status in education and in employment by the Administration. They have not as yet profited to any great extent from these opportunities but at least they are firmly aware of their status as Adibasis, and very conscious of the privileges which it carries. The Oriyas who live in the Kond hills now see themselves as the victims of Government policy and feel that the dice has come to be heavily loaded against them. They say jokingly that they would like to be classed as Adibasis, or more realistically, that the privileges extended to Konds should be given to all the cultivating classes in the Kond hills.

Sanskritization

Both in India generally and in the Kondmals the policy of the Administration has wavered between the two extremes of protection (pejoratively called the 'Tribal Zoo'), and allowing unrestricted assimilation. At the present day the intention is to guide assimilation until the Aboriginals are able to hold their own with the more sophisticated populations of the plains. This conflict of opinion appeared from the first moment the British set foot in the Kond hills, and its history, broadly speaking, is a movement away from protection and conservation, as ends in themselves, towards eventual assimilation, even though the means of achieving this may mean a temporary intensification of protective measures. The policy, in other words, has come to be protective, but not conservative. I have not mentioned this conflict of policy in previous sections, because whatever

the end in view, and whatever the means employed, the effect was usually to make the Konds aware of the fact that they were different from the Oriyas and opposed to them.

It is at first sight a paradox that while the Konds are pleased to insist that they are Adibasis—for obvious reasons—and while they maintain a traditional hatred of Oriyas (although, of course, there are frequent friendly relations between individuals), they are, nevertheless progressively discarding their own customs and assuming what they consider Oriya customs. There is, of course, a variation between individuals, but even the most 'Oriya-ized' Kond—in the eastern Kondmals at least—is respected by other Konds for his behaviour, and it is not thought illogical to combine outspoken dislike of Oriyas, and outspoken defence of Kond value and custom, with implicit acceptance of Oriya values. The Konds, in other words, are being Sanskritized.

'Sanskritization' is an unpopular word (even with its author[1]), but it is a convenient label for a recognizable process, and I think that time spent in justifying a different verbal monstrosity (Brahmanization, Sanskarization, etc.) would be time wasted. It is the process, and not the name attached to it, which is of interest. Here I have no intention of making an extended analysis of the process, and I intend only to account for the apparent paradox in Kond behaviour. When they are vehemently in favour of their own culture (at least in words) and while they have everything to gain from emphasizing their difference from Oriyas, nevertheless, progressive Konds take on the manners and customs of Hindu gentleman, and are not spurned by their fellow-Konds for doing so.

'Sanskritic' culture is the culture of the nation and is an India-wide hallmark of respectability, particularly of political respectability. During the independence movement it was one of the symbols of anti-British feeling, and since Independence it has served to give a homespun covering to the predominantly British and western institutions through which the country is governed. I would risk a wide generalization that the politician who depends on popular support is suspected if he is too westernized, and if he is too uncouth he becomes the butt of his fellows. It is, for this reason, I think, that the Konds become more and more willing to take on the model of Hindu behaviour which they get from contacts with Oriyas. As they become more and more integrated into State politics they begin to accept standards of behaviour which are respectable in the State capital. This applies particularly to those few Konds who are active in State politics. But among the Konds, at least of the eastern Kondmals, there is a

1 M. N. Srinivas, 'A note on Sanskritization and Westernization' in *Far Eastern Quarterly*, Vol. XV, No. 4, p. 495.

general awareness derived partly from their own sophisticated people and partly from local Oriyas who loudly ridicule Kond custom, that although it may be a concrete advantage to be designated 'Adibasi', it is not a source of prestige.[1]

I would not claim that this is a general explanation of Sanskritization and the motives of those who practise it. Clearly all instances of Sanskritization are not connected only with the modern parliamentary system. Nor would I claim that this is a full account of Kond motives in adopting Oriya customs. For many these customs are respected as ends in themselves and accepted as mystical values. But whatever the motive, it is sufficient for my argument that Sanskritic behaviour furthers the aims of the Konds in the modern political system, and that some Konds know this.

Conclusions

It became clear quite early in my field-work in the Kondmals that I would not be able to fit all the complex political activity into the framework of one social structure. There were evident and glaring contradictions. For instance, the ritual attitudes, which the WARRIORS and most of the Untouchables in the Oriya village of Bisipara agreed, were appropriate, were in complete contradiction to their political relationship. In a structural analysis the various elements—political, ritual, economic, and so forth—have in the end to be consistent with one another and may no tend towards mutual destruction. But the ritual behaviour of the Untouchables could not be fitted with their political status into one coherent structure. The relationship between these two ways of behaving, whatever else it was, was not one of those 'elements of persistence and continuity'.[2]

A field of social behaviour of this kind could not be analysed without taking into account social change—not, at least, if any degree of completeness were to be achieved. To make an analysis as of 'one structure' would have meant discarding much of the primary data. Even a cursory glance at the history of the Kond hills—the Meriah Wars and the modern cataclysm of Independence—points at change.

It is not difficult to give a common-sense description of the changes and their direction. A tribal society became intermingled with people whose lives were ordered by the caste system, and both these, in their turn, have become involved in a 'modern' political system

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[1] Professor D. N. Majumdar informs me that in metropolitan Orissa, 'Kond' is an epithet equivalent to 'bumpkin' or even 'Boeotian'.

[2] R. Firth, 'Some Principles of Social Organization', in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. 85, 1955, p. 2.

(using that term as a convenient short reference to the bureaucratic administration and the parliamentary democracy). But even at this level qualifications need to be made. Although the direction of chage is from tribe to caste into a modern system, the Konds are not moving through all these stages. Their excursion into the caste system has been brief, since before they became completely involved that system was itself modified and changed by the Administration, and it now seems that the Konds will never become a dependent caste divided between small chieftaincies. They, with other Adibasis, are becoming a pressure group in State politics.

A more detailed description of this change is made by describing the three structures—tribe, caste, and the modern system, which may, with a touch of grandiloquence, be called the nation. For each of these structures we postulate several interconnected systems, as the Kond kinship system is connected with political control over land, and so forth. I have done this in some detail for the tribal system. For reasons of space I have given a very brief outline of the caste structure, and I have said little of the 'nation' as a structure, because I do not know enough about it.

The abstraction and isolation of a structure of this kind serves two purposes. Firstly, it enables the course of change to be 'plotted', as the direction of movement is plotted on a map. Secondly, it is a heuristic device for identifying contradictions, between what at first sight are assumed to be interconnected parts of one structure. It highlights the points of contradiction and diagnoses the processes through which change comes about. I would cite again the example of the Oriyas of dominant caste and the Untouchable Oriyas, whose ritual relationship contradicts their political relationship.

The ultimate aim in describing social change is two-fold : first, to plot the course of change : second, to describe the process through which individuals discard a relationship which belongs to one structure and take on a relationship which belongs to a different structure. I have considered in this article mainly relationships through which a man achieves control over land, and, to a lesser extent, relationships through which he achieves other economic ends. In the tribal structure the main political cleavages ran between the Kond clans, and the political 'arena' was filled with clans in competition with one another. After this, for some Konds it became more effective to give their allegiance to a chieftain, and they became divided from one another by the cleavages between these chieftaincies. There was also in this situation a cleavage between the chief and those Kond clans in his neighbourhood, who denied him allegiance or gave him only partial allegiance. Later, with the advent of the Administration and a mercantile economy, there were two developments : firstly, the cleavage between Kond clans ceased to

have political significance: secondly, the local cleavages between Konds and Oriyas became generalized in the framework of the Administration and State politics, as a cleavage between Konds undifferentiated by clan and Oriyas undifferentiated by chieftaincy. In short, in order to understand what has happened and is happening a progressively wider arena of competition must be envisaged.

The conflicts which exist within a structure seem to be a crucial guide to one of the processes of social change. Examining the structure as an abstraction, we see that there are various institutions which serve to contain or to gloss over these conflicts, and to conserve the structural form. But in a situation of change, these conflicts project people out of one structure into another, if I may reify in order to be brief. Conflicts which resulted in migration since the third or fourth decade of the nineteenth century have in effect eroded the territorial clans and have built up the 'chieftaincies'. Economic conflict between Konds and Oriyas brought about the intervention of the Administration, and this intervention has caused both parties to attempt to further their ends not only within local arenas but also to claim their rights as citizens in the wider arena of State politics. This process tends to erode loyalties both to the clan and to the chief.

But looking for conflict and contradiction is not the only guide to understanding social change.[1] In this article conflict has been my main guide, but there are others which would have to be employed in a more extensive analysis. It would be important to identify the roles which facilitate movement from one structure to another: examples at the present day are the sophisticated Konds who now operate on the margins of State politics; the agents of the political parties who work among the Konds; and the many people whose job it is to guide the Konds towards assimilation with the rest of the population of Orissa.

One line of investigation which is opening up in India and elsewhere is implicit throughout this article. It is an effort to widen the field of research and extend the horizons, both in time and space. I have tried to push my investigations outwards from the village to the region, and to consider not only the present but also the past and the future. To visualize activity within a general field and to see several structures impinging on one another within this field, may help in certain situations (but not, I repeat, in all) to describe social change, and to identify the process and roles through which it takes place. It may also make it possible, while yet using the traditional anthropological techniques developed in small-group research, to achieve some understanding not only of one small group, but also of the region, or country, or even civilization of which it forms a part.

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[1] I gladly acknowledge the stimulus of conversation on this topic with Professor Max Gluckman, and of his book *Custom and Conflict in Africa*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1955.

SHRAMDAN—AN ASPECT OF ACTION ANTHROPOLOGY

D. N. MAJUMDAR

125 miles long from North to South and about 40–45 miles broad, is Mirzapur, a district in Uttar Pradesh, which contains a pocket of tribal population of the proto-Australoid racial stock. Mirzapur is included in the Allahabad division. The northern portion of the district is alluvial, the central is a large plateau about 50 miles from north to south. The southern portion consists of the little known valley of the Son and the hilly area beyond, extending for about 50 miles, holding the Dudhi valley and the valley of the Rihand, now thrown into limelight by the Rihand Dam project. Dudhi is a Government estate. Before the New Constitution came Dudhi was a partially excluded area, which included the whole of Tehsil Dudhi, the whole Pargana Agori and 64 villages of Pargana Bijaigarh.

Dudhi is a backward area with various castes and tribes living side by side in the urban sector of Dudhi as well as in the neighbouring villages, but the interior of the estate is mainly aboriginal and tribal, though some of the important villages are inhabited by a mixed population. There are villages inhabited by particular tribes, but in many villages several tribes are found, though the scattered hamlets do not require the tribes to live dovetailed or in clusters. One house may belong to a Chero, the second one at a distance of several hundreds of yards, may belong to the Majhwar, a third may be inhabited by the Panika, but no two houses are built together, and sometimes a house may be at a *hakbhar* distance, which means that shouts and screams can be heard from one house to the other, though the actual distance between the two houses may be a couple of furlongs or even more.

Dudhi is an old town and is the headquarters of the Tehsil named after it. It has a population of about 3,000. It has a Tehsil office, a police station, a post office, a higher secodary school, a primary school for boys and another for girls.

(1)

The village Dhanura lies about a mile to the South west of Dudhi in Mirzapur District. There is a *kachcha* road from Dudhi to Dhanaura. The village comprises of three *tolas* besides the village proper. These *tolas* are *Piprahi*, *Maboria* and *Chutka-bahora*. Piprahi tola is about 2 miles to the South-East of Dhanaura beyond the hill, at the foot of which the village is situated. The way to Piprahi lies through

a strip of thick jungle. The Piprahi *tola* has been recently inhabited by the people migrating from Dudhi in search of more land for agriculture. Its history does not go beyond 15 years or so. Many of the inhabitants of this *tola* belong to the tribal stock. Maboria *tola* is about 4 furlongs to the west of Dhanaura. It is mostly inhabited by Panikas—a tribal people. Chutka-bahora lies further west, about 6 furlongs from the village. The Dudhi-Meorpur road passes through the heart of this *tola*. The part of the *tola* that is the eastern side of the road belongs to Dhanaura. The rest of the *tola* falling on the western side of the road comes under Dudhi. There is a tendency among the villagers to build their houses near their agricultural fields, the result being that the village has a large lay-out and many houses are situated far away from one another. It appears that this system of building the houses near the fields and not adjacent to one another has been adopted by the villagers from the tribal people, for the latter too build their houses quite far away from one another but close to their fields.

The first survey of this area was made in 1874, and in the official records the entire cultivated area of Dhanaura (which was much less then, than what it is today) is against the name of Nankoo Manjhi, who was the first Sapurdar of the village. The land at that time was mostly cultivated by aboriginals, the only non-tribal cultivators being a few of the tehsil and Estate employees. Sambhal Manjhi, a resident of Dhanaura, said that his ancestors were the first to till the land of this area. At that time the entire region was covered with jungle and most of the inhabitants were Panikas and Patharias who knew nothing of agriculture. The ancestors of Sambhal cleared the forests and cultivated the land. Gradually they increased the area of cultivated land to such an extent that they virtually became zemindars of the following villages :—Dudhi, Dhanaura, Khajuri, Maldeva, Baraidandh, Dumardh and Japla. According to Sambhal Manjhi the great-grandfather of his great-grandfather came to this area from Garhmandal (in Gondwana). It is not known why he migrated to this place. At that time Rani Durgawati, wife of Raja Dalpat Shah ruled Gondwana. In the end of the first half of the 18th century a Brahmin of Hirachak village ruled the Dudhi area, and as time went on the administrative responsibilities shifted from him to the Chandel King of Agori. Agori is in Tehsil Robertsganj. The king of Agori was subordinate to the king of Singrauli. Singrauli was a part of Rewa State. In 1792, Bariar Shah Gond of Maholi revolted and took over the administration of the Dudhi area from the Chandel king, and ruled the place till 1805. In 1805, Badal Shah, younger brother of Bariar Shah, assasinated his brother and became ruler of the village. But he was a weak ruler and could not control his subjects. The result was that the Chandels of Agori and the Thakurs of

Singrauli started looting the villagers. The kings of Agori and Singrauli, both demanded land-tax from the people of Dudhi area. The entire population was in distress, and there was utter confusion as to whom the tax should be given. This state of affairs prevailed for 27 years, during which time the kings of Agori and Singrauli fully exploited the tribal population of the area. In 1832, the British, who by this time had reached Bihar received information of the state of anarchy prevalent here. In 1842, Robertson was sent to study the situation. He met the kings of Singrauli and Agori, and decided that the area should be centrally governed. In this report submitted in 1848, he recommended that the area should be made a King's Estate, and be governed directly from England. In 1852, Mr. Home was sent as administrator of the place, but the mutiny broke out in 1857, and Mr. Home was killed. A few years later, that is in 1872, the problem of Dudhi again arrested the attention of the ruler, and thus the first survey was taken in 1874, and Nankoo Manjhi was made Sapurdar of those villages of which he was the zemindar before. It is said that a friend of Nankoo stole all the papers dealing with the zemindari rights. Therefore, when the British came, Nankoo could not produce any documentary evidence, and the result was that Nankoo was reduced from the position of zemindar to that of Sapurdar. After Nankoo, his elder son Gumani became the Sapurdar, On Gumani's death, his son Makhoo took over the charge. Makhoo died at an early age, leaving two sons, Jokhan and Sambhal, who were minors, so Roopan Misra became the Sapurdar, and held on to the office even after Jokhan became a major. But once when Windham the collector of the district, came to the village, he made a thorough investigation and made Jokhan the Sapurdar. After Jokhan, Asharfi Singh (a present inhabitant of the village) became the Sapurdar, and carried on the work till very recently, when Sapurdari was abolished.

Dhanaura is a multi-caste village containing 17 different caste-groups and tribal communities, with a total population of more than 800 and more than 150 families. According to a village census taken in January 1955, the distribution of population among the different communities is as follows :—

Groups	No. of Individuals	Percentage
(A) *Hindu Castes :*		
1. Brahmin	94	11.3
2. Kshatriya	85	10.2
3. Agrahari	27	3.3
4. Kalwar	165	19.9
5. Ahir	16	1.9
6. Kahar	6	0.7
7. Kewat	28	3.4
8. Lohar	11	1.3
9. Teli	11	1.3
10. Kumhar	7	0.8
11. Pasi	7	0.8
12. Chamar	185	22.3
Total	642	77.2
(B) *Tribal Groups :*		
13. Manjhi	116	14.0
14. Kharwar	3	0.4
15. Chero	22	2.7
16. Panika	20	2.4
17. Bhuiyan	27	3.3
	188	22.8
Hindu Castes	642	77.2
Tribal Groups	188	22.8
Total	830	100.0

The following table shows roughly the number of families belonging to the different caste and tribal groups :—

Groups		No. of families
(A) *Hindu Castes :*		
1. Brahmin		23
2. Kshatriya		14
3. Agrahari		4
4. Kalwar		27
5. Ahir		3
6. Kahar		1
7. Kewat		6
8. Lohar		2
9. Teli		3
10. Kumhar		2
11. Pasi		2
12. Chamar		36
	Total	123
(B) *Tribal Groups :*		
13. Manjhi (Gond)		28
14. Kharwar		1
15. Chero		4
16. Panika		3
17. Bhuiyan		5
	Total	41

The Manjhis are known to be the original settlers of Dhanaura, the father of the almost legendary Nankoo being thought to be the first settler. Bhagirathi Bhuiyan migrated from Dhangara-ghat, 2 miles east of Dhanaura, and all the present Bhuiyan families have sprung from him. When Nankoo was Sapurdar he had a Chamar employee, and he invited two of his nephews Dalai and Bhunai to live with him. The lineage of most of the Chamar families in Dhanaura today, can be traced from Nankoo's employee or from the two brothers Dalai and Bhunai. The Brahmins migrated from Rewa. Then came the Kshatriyas who monopolised most of the posts in the Tehsil —and the Estate. The Tehsil and Estate employees with the little learning they had, exploited the people and became rich. They started cultivating the land and gradually became the key-men of the village. Even today three very important and rich families of the village are those of Tehsil and Estate employees. The Banias came from Bihar, largely from Palamau District. Two of the present Banias are the richest men in the Tehsil. But Dhanaura really caught the fancy of outsiders when the Lakra dam was constructed. The construction was started in the year 1904 when Windham was collector, and when it was completed in 1908, the place became noted for paddy cultivation. Since then outsiders have come and settled here regularly. Now the construction of the Rihand Dam has attracted more outsiders, but Rihand is prettly far from Dhanaura.

Caste is a very important factor in the village. Social distances are ordered on caste considerations. Brahmins and Kshatriyas who are highest in the caste hierarchy are often the decision makers of the village. Quite naturally they resent other caste-groups taking leading part in any village activity. On the lowest rungs of the social ladder come the Pasis and Chamars. Though the Chamars are numerically the strongest (both in the number of families and in the number of individuals), they are socially the lowest and economically the worst off. The various artisan castes fall in between the highest and lowest communities. The tribal groups are lower than even the Chamars. Each caste and tribal community is an unit in itself, with its own judicial system, though often the Brahmins and Kshatriyas take on the role of the peacemakers of the village. Some of the traditional caste-professions are still carried on, though most of them have been given up.

(2)

Shramdan was, in a way, introduced into the village by C. D. P.,* but even before C. D. P. propagated it as a popular movement, and

*Community Development Project

launched out several utility projects based on voluntary labour in a planned and organised way, the idea of pooling labour and cooperative effort for public good and community welfare did exist in the village, originating in the traditional habits and cultural values of the tribals and non-tribals. Time and again, joint efforts were made for collective ends. This does not mean that efforts made in this direction were methodically planned or systematically organised, but pooling of both voluntary and involuntary labour did occur in the rural areas even in former days. A point to be borne in mind is that, in general, the villagers are busy all the year round with the various agricultural activities. With poverty not far from their doors, any leisure time they have is spent in some work which would earn them a few coins. Thus when any bit of work, either for public good or private use, requires the joint labour of several hands, very few come forward to give of their time and labour, with the result that labour is forced out of the poor people and the low castes by the rich and high caste people. In fact' begar' or forced labour was a means whereby the low caste and poor people earned their income.

Several public utility works were constructed in the village by pooled labour, before Shramdan was introduced by C. D. P. There are the various *Chabutras*—Nankoo Manjhi's Chabutra, two Chabutras of Shankerji, Raj Mohini's Chabutra and Dihwar's Chabutra. At these places of public worship *Keertan* sittings and *Bhajan Mandlis* are organised. The Chabutras serve secular purposes also, for they are the meeting places of the Gram Sabha and the Cooperative Society and are also the centres for community singing.

Then there are the *bunds*. 'Sampat Mahraj ka Bund' is used to irrigate the fields lying adjacent to it. This was constructed when Ram Deo Misra was *de jure* Sapurdar, and Sampat Mahraj the *de facto* one. It was constructed through 'begar' extracted from the Chamars and other poorer sections of the village community. Besides the above named *bund*, there are various small *bunds* owned by rich villagers. Lakra Bund, the chief source of irrigation, was constructed in 1908, the initiative having been taken by the late Mr. Windham, the then District Magistrate. Several wells too have been constructed by the joint efforts of the villagers.

Shramdan as Organised by C. D. P. and People's Attitude towards it

Shramdan is one of the many items of village welfare work taken up by C. D. P. It was hoped that through Shramdan not only would public utility works be constructed, but that it would also instil into the villagers a desire for cooperative labour and evolve local leadership too. The success of this plan, as of all plans, depended on the intensity of people's participation in it. The villagers have for long

realised the need and utility of cooperative effort, but several factors made Shramdan not a very popular movement in the village.

Firstly, the extreme poverty of the villagers often proved a hurdle to the success of Shramdan. Most of the poor villagers are daily paid workers. If they took part in a certain Shramdan activity for one day, it meant that they lost the wages for that day. The loss of even one day's wage affects the people very much. So the poorer population of the village do not favour Shramdan.

Secondly, when voluntary labour is not available, to make the plan a success, forced labour is resorted to, thus Shramdan deteriorates to *begar*. 'Begar' is now abolished and where it is extracted, is punishable by law. Chamars who were the main victims of 'begar', were greatly relieved at the abolition of 'begar', but now they see no difference between the abolished 'begar', and the newly introduced 'Shramdan', except that the latter has the support of the Government. Again, there was a redeeming feature in 'begar', in that the people were paid for the work, but Shramdan is 'honorary begar'. With poverty as the reason, many withheld from participating in the Shramdan activities, and so the people were asked to perform 'compulsive Shramdan'. In the official papers and Project records it is 'Shramdan', while in reality it is forced labour.

One of the aims of the Shramdan plan was to evolve leadership, but the village has a leadership pattern of its own based on caste-prestige or economic status. There is not one leader but several, and the intriguing complexities of the village factions crop up when least expected and stay a stumbling block to the progress of the plan. Cases illustrating this point are given later under the heading 'Constructions—complete and imcomplete—erected through cooperative labour'.

Another reason for the failure of constructions through cooperative effort, is that at times plans are motivated by selfish interests. Examples of these follow later. Also sometimes the villagers are prejudiced against the construction itself, as for instance, the Kalwars and tribals are strongly opposed to the construction of good roads for reasons that will be explained later under 'Roads'—in the next section. Then again the villagers feel that the Government is trying to dupe them through this Shramdan movement. They say that some constructions which are really the responsibility of the Government and should be made at Government's expense, are cunningly are shifted to the shoulders of the villagers under cover of the Shramdan ideal.

Constructions—Complete and Incomplete—Erected through Cooperative labour

1. *Culverts :* A culvert has been constructed on the Dhanaura-Khajuri road, and it has opened up another track from Dhanaura to

Dudhi. The culvert was constructed solely through the initiative of Nandan, a Brahmin leader of the opposition group and which on completion was regarded as a commendable piece of work by one and all. It was approved and subsidised by C. D. P. funds. Encouraged by this success, he took up the construction of another culvert. The villagers, however, thought that the construction of the second culvert was motivated only by personal interests as the culvert would form a connecting link between the Brahmin *tola* and his place of residence. So they refused to cooperate with him and the work remains incomplete to this day. A culvert, the construction of which is of real necessity is one over Lakra river that would make the *Nadi-paar* road passable upto Ugra Singh's house. Here again since only the interests of the Thakurs were involved, the work did not win village-wide cooperation. Further, Ugra Singh, the Sarpanch, was also lacking in enthusiasm so that the work could not be completed.

Roads : Ugra Singh, Sarpanch and Gram Sabhapati of the village has in recent years been taking less interest in the developmental and constructional programmes. His attention has of late been largely diverted to collecting earnings through petty contracts of P.W.D. and other works sponsored by the State. He has thus shown little concern in these activities. At times, he has played even a negative role in so far as he stood against Nandan, who desired to launch out a few ambitious schemes pertaining to road construction. In the year 1950–51, Nandan made positive efforts for the construction of the Dudhi-Dhanaura road. He had the backing of the State officials who were keen on the completion of the road. The proposal was put forward to get the approval of the villagers, but it was not tolerated by Ugra Singh, only because it was moved by his antagonist. Ugra Singh wanted to double-cross Nandan and ultimately he was successful in foiling the plan. Ugra Singh's principal objection was that Nandan would earn a great deal of fame and popularity if the project turned out to be successful. He made a fresh approach to the Tehsildar to counteract Nandan's proposals with the complaint that such a scheme meant the taking away of fields of poor cultivators. Nandan rose equal to the occasion and expressed his desire to make any sacrifice for the success of the scheme. He was willing to part with some of his own lands and to distribute them freely to those who would suffer loss of lands on account of the construction. Seeing the group-rivalries and factions in the village, much of the enthusiasm shown by the State officials in the beginning cooled down and they disposed off the matter with the remark that the village must first be united before any improvement measures could be undertaken. Thus, the proposal was altogether dropped. The failure of this proposal is regretted even to this day and many lay the whole blame on Ugra Singh. Had Ugra Singh been convinced

and tactfully handled, the village would have been enriched by the construction of the road. The proposal was good as acclaimed by one and all, but it was lost only becuse it was moved by Nandan, the leader of the weaker group. Many felt that Ram Singh would favour the construction, as his house, being centrally located, would spring into prominence and become directly connected with Dudhi through the motorable road. In spite of the fact that Ram Singh viewed the proposal with enthusiasm he did not actively support Nandan because Ram Singh is in the camp of Ugra Singh. Besides the active members of the two factions, there are those who belong to the neutral and marginal population of the village. They supported or opposed the issue almost blindly without understanding the full significance of it.

The Chamar community wanted good roads for peculiar reasons of their own. They say that when they come back from the liquor shop in the dark after having drunk fully, they need good roads to walk on so that they may not break their limbs by falling into ditches. Thus, the only utility of good roads to them is the guarantee of a safe home-coming while in drunken state. Sadan Chamar, one of the oldest and most respected members of his community, broke his leg by falling into a ditch while returning home in a drunken state one dark night in the rainy season. He suffered much and was bed-ridden for about a month. Probably for the first time in his life, the idea of having good roads in the village dawned upon his mind. He repeatedly told the people that bad roads were a curse and a blot on the fair name of the village. So when he was well and up from his bed he worked for sometime filling ditches and repairing roads. Other Chamars too learnt a lesson from Sadan Chamar's misfortune and worked hard to repair their *tola* road. However, most of them opined that it was the primary concern of the Government to provide them with good roads and that they should not be asked to render Shramdan for such constructions, becuase it deprives them of their day's labour and wage. It was another form of 'begar' or forced labour, and they being the poorer section of the village community had to be burdened with the actual manual work while the higher castes played only a supervisory role. Thus, the weakest shoulders had to bear the heaviest burden.

Strange to say that the Kalwars hold quite a different view. They are opposed to having good roads and opening up of the village because they may be exposed to fresh dangers—dangers of contacts with strangers, dangers of thefts and robbers, dangers of infiltration of outsiders and unnecessary interference and intervention of officials. They do not like the increased frequency of visits of Government officials as it means continuous check, control and supervision. Good roads are an open invitation to the ring of Government functionaries

for continuous inspection and interference in their day to day business.

The Manjhi, Bhuiya, Chero and Panika families too opposed the construction of direct and smooth links. Good roads put at stake the seclusion, aloofness, peace and tranquility of the village. They oppose the infiltration of all kinds in general, while Kalwars are particularly against the incoming of officials. They express their fears that in case Dudhi town and Tehsil headquarters are conveniently connected with Dhanaura by a motorable road, the villagers can never rest in peace, for they will be exposed to dangers from outsiders. So they want the ditches to remain, and no good roads to be constructed.

Case : A letter of warning was received from some dacoits by Dhanush Dhari Sah of the village during the rainy season of 1956 indicating an imminent commission of dacoity at his place. Probably it was the mischief of some miscreants. Getting panciky and awe-stricken the residents of the village fled to the jungles to hide themselves. The houses and belongings were abandoned. The situation was controlled and peace established through police force. Patrol guards were posted on the night specified in the warning letter. Nothing, however, came of it. Later on, people thanked themselves for not having built good roads which would have given the gang an easy accessibility to the village. Thus bad roads proved a blessings in disguise.

In spite of the various reasons put forward to oppose having good roads the village people have been keenly alive towards road construction and time and again Nandan is known to have played a leading role in the plan and progress of such schemes. Besides, the case already discussed in which he could not succeed, he has given ample proof of his interest and enthusiasm in the developmental programmes. As late as 1947–48, there were no good roads within the village itself. It goes to the credit of Nandan that the village people for the first time launched a concerted effort in preparing a road which was later on called the Brahmin *tola* road. The people say that it was a low lying area and a great deal of earth work had to be done for the construction. Today, its utility is being fully understood specially by Brahmins whose houses in the main, are situated by the side of it. The work was not possible within the means of a common man but since Nandan had been the President of the Tehsil Congress commanding a big sphere of influence he was successful in his efforts. This earned him a good name. Once Nandan's position declined and he lost to Ugra Singh who happens to control the reins of leadership now a days, the programme of road construction has suffered a relative set-back. Since the start of C.D.P. and Ugra Singh's election to the post of Sabhapati, the village was enriched with one more road, the so-called Nadipaar road. It was constructed during the Shramdan week in

January 1955. In this Shramdan activity as nowhere else was noticed a strong *tola* feeling among the residents of the village. The members of the western *tola* did not participate in the work. It was understood that the construction of such a road was going to give direct benefits to the leaders of eastern *tola*, namely, Panchoo Singh, Ugra Singh and Ram Singh, and so there was non-cooperation from the leaders of western *tola* which is predominantly inhabited by Kalwars and the leadership of which rests in the hands of Dhanushdhari Sah, Doman Sah and Sahdeo Sah. The west *tola* is not so strongly united nor is it so powerful as to oppose openly and unitedly anything that has been sponsored by the eastern *tola*. They try to avoid clashes because they feel themselves to be weak. In making this Shramdan activity a success very little contribution was given by the then V.L.W., who failed to bring the whole village on a common platform even for works which should have been a concern of the whole village, nor was he aware of the divided *tola* leadership so that he could have created a healthy competitive spirit by launching simultaneous community works in both the *tolas* and eventually getting both constructed successfully. However, since Thakurs are the most united and powerful caste in the village, they were able to construct the road.

Besides the construction of the above mentioned two roads, minor works like ditch filling and repairs of village roads have been undertaken. In the opening year of the C.D.P., while V.L.W were receiving job training, minor Shramdan activities were taken up during the apprenticeship of the field workers. Narain was the V.L.W apprentice in-charge of the village. He evinced a keen interest in Shramdan activities. He collected the youths of the western *tola* who came mainly from two castes, Chamars and Kalwars, arranged sports for them and made a successful drive for Shramdan work. The repair of the Kalwar *tola* road, ditch filling in Chamar *tola* and the construction of a Gandhi Chabutra in western *tola* are the works which were done in his days.

In the year 1956, Dudhi officials had a programme for the construction of Dudhi-Lakra road during the Shramdan week. Since the work had to be carried out in the village Dhanaura, much enthusiasm and cooperation were expected from the Dhanaura people, but surprisingly enough such an assistance was not forthcoming and village participation remained almost nil. Only those of Dhanaura residents who happen to be Tehsil employees namely, Ram Singh, Srihari Singh, Molu Singh and the village official and unofficial functionaries took part in it. The Chamars were unable to participate in it because they could ill afford to lose even one day's labour and wage. Kalwars remain mostly outside on their 'Ladni' business. Since the time Nandan's hold in the village matters weakened there is noticeable a general decline in the interest being taken by Brahmins in the develop-

mental activities. Moreover, the particular road was not going to be of any use to the Brahmins who live on the opposite side of the village. Excepting Prasad Misra, who is a State employee in the capacity of a teacher at Ranoo school, none of the Brahmins is a Government employee and so no direct influence through the officials could be exerted on them in matters of participation. Above all, the officials themselves were not very serious and their attendance was poor. If attendance can be regarded as any criterion in judging people's interest and their seriousness over the job, most of the officials performed it as a token activity or a playful joke and depended on their menials to do the main work. This was a bad example set before the village people and they failed to take the work seriously. Quite a few had collected on the first day but the number soon thinned down. Though the Shramdan had to last for a week, not a single individual reported for work after 3 or 4 days. In case of the other lower caste people and tribals the same reasons held good as aforementioned with reference to the Chamars. It was understood by most of them as taking of 'begar' or forced labour and so they tried to run away from it. Besides they were afraid to lose their day's wages. One can draw an appropriate conclusion that Shramdan cannot be a success amongst people who are extremely poor, so that the labour gift on their part for a single day deprives them of their food for that particular day.

No Shramdan took place in the village in 1957. Probably the failure of the Shramdan in 1956, had full impact on people's minds. They were convinced of the uselessness of such a programme. There were other reasons too. One of the most potent reasons as to why no Shramdan could be done was that Ugra Singh, the Sarpanch and Sabhapati of the village remained away during the period. The V.L.W. concentrated in organising Shramdan at Dudhi, the item being cleaning of the drain from Market Centre to Harijan Basti in which officials also participated. Nandan Pandey, the leader of the opposition group, did not take any initiative this time, considering it be the to duty of the Sarpanch who in his words was lacking in interest and enthusiasm. Also he was not approached by the V.L.W. or any other project official.

The Need for a Community Building and the Issue over the Construction of the Panchayat Ghar-cum-Community Centre

There are no public places which can be regarded as social-cum-recreational-cum-educational centres in the village. There is neither a school nor a temple where children could be given academic, religious or ethical instruction. The classes of both the Adult Night School and the Basic Primary School for girls, both of which were started by C.D.P. and ran short lives, were arranged in private houses,

as there is no community building in the village which could have been used for this purpose. The need for a community building has been an interesting topic for discussion during informal gatherings.

Proposals for the construction of a Panchayat Ghar-cum-Community Centre were afoot and it was the burning topic of the day in the village for 3 years, but the problems of site selection, individual and cooperative contribution, leadership and initiative of the villagers proved to be great bottlenecks in the materialisation of this utility project, with the result that the building was not constructed at all. It is an interesting tale in itself.

Dhanaura Gram Sabha consists of 3 villages, viz,. Dhanaura, Khajuri, and Japla. Dhanaura being one of the leading villages of the Tehsil and the central seat of the Gram Sabha, had engaged the attention of C.D.P. officials for initiating some bold programmes. With regard to the scheme for the construction of the Panchayat Ghar-cum-Community Centre, Dhanaura was given a preference over others and it was hoped that Dhanaura would give a good lead. A great deal was expected in the matter of people's participation and contribution. But all hopes were belied. The V.L.W. in-charge of Dhanaura probably had no insight into the village factions and pattern of leadership, and he, therefore, failed to handle the situation tactfully. He could not solve the issues connected with site selection, raising of people's contribution, role of initiative takers and decision makers. For about a year or so, site selection remained a controversial issue. Besides that it was linked up with the elements of *tola* leadership and group leadership. At one time Prasad Misra, school teacher at Ranoo, agreed to make the voluntary contribution of his land which being centrally located almost balanced the situation of *tola* leadership, but his neighbours played rather a negative role in dissuading him from making such an offer in so far as a public structure raised in the midst of their houses would be an encroachment on the privacy of their homes and restrict the liberty of their women to move about freely. They could not tolerate the idea that outsiders might come to settle in their midst and so they made suggestions that Nankoo Baba's mango grove which lies away from the heart of the village would be the best site. Finally, this orchard site was commonly agreed upon. Then Badhra Singh, a contractor, was approached to prepare an estimate of the building. He submitted an estimate worth Rs. 2,200/- while C.D.P. at the maximum could have subsidised to the extent of Rs. 1,000/-. Now it was a question of taking initiative in the matter of investment and to meet the supplimentary finances for which no one came forward. Everyone looked up to Ugra Singh to take the initiative. He promised that he would collect the material in terms of wood, bricks and labour, but was not in a position to invest money. Nandan Pandey, the

rival group leader, told the people that he could carry it out successfully provided Ugra Singh acknowledged his defeat and gave it in writing that it was beyond his means, power and ability to complete such a project. Obviously, Ugra Singh could not think of stooping so low and the issue remained in a state of deadlock for another year or so. Since the work could not be taken up for about two years and meanwhile the V.L.W. who was entrusted with the task went away on promotion to some other block, the allocations formerly put in favour of Dhanaura were given away as an inducement to some other Gram Sabha.

Conclusion : So Shramdan as devised and implemented by C.D.P. like any other programme or institution has had both its strong as well as its weak points. More important than judging the efficacy of Shramdan as a method for development work on the physical plane is to judge the effects good or bad of Shramdan as an institution or movement, on the people on the human plane. If on the positive side it has evolved to some extent voluntary local leadership and contributed to the growth of community consciousness and community effort ; on the negative side the bad effects that have followed as a sequel of such programmes are forced labour and regimentation, general apathy as well as hostility among the rival groups.

If the reasons for non-participation in Shramdan, are analysed, they are :— the Chamar and tribal communities and the poorer section of the people cannot work without wages and as such look at it as 'forced work without wages'. The Kalwar community of the village see 'no personal advantage' in it. The Thakurs and Brahmins hesitate because of 'political opposition and group rivalries'. Many other wage earners have 'no time to spare'. Then 'lack of proper understanding' constitutes another big reason for non-participation. The poor cultivators fear it as it involves 'encroachment of their lands'. There were respondents, many of them, who made either no reply or made irrelevant remarks and some of them attributed the reasons of illiteracy, poverty and selfishness to be the reasons for non-participation. There were no respondents who said that they did not participate, because of 'pride and false prestige' or 'higher socio-economic status' as is seen in urbanised villages of the plains.

The C.D.P. officials were of the opinion that so long as there was not introduced any element of coercion, the Shramdan programme cannot be successful in that area. In elaborating the nature of coercion, they counted pressure of Government officials and village officials, threat of fines, compulsion, forcible participation, etc.

The material for this paper has been extracted from the Dudhi Evaluation Project File.

THE SECULAR STATUS OF CASTES

JYOTIRMOYEE SARMA

This paper is the outcome of a joint enterprise. The study of four villages in the Burdwan district of West Bengal (India) was undertaken in 1953–1954 by the Burdwan Village Study Project. It was organized by Henry C. Hart of the University of Wisconsin, and at that time a Fellow of the Ford Foundation. The programme of work was drawn out by a board of social scientists in Calcutta[1] of which the writer was a member. The field work was done by Lalit Sen, a young sociologist from the Calcutta University under the supervision of the writer. About two months were spent by him in each of the villages for the field investigation, while the writer spent two to three weeks in each village during the progress of the work. The original tabulation of the field data was done by the Statistical Officer of the Damodar Valley Corporation.

The particular villages were selected with the object of studying the effect of the introduction of the Damodar Valley irrigation and flood control schemes. The villages lie in different sections of Burdwan district. Punyagram is in the irrigation zone, and at the time of the study, the canals were expected to be cut through the village lands. Bigra lies in the Community Development Project area, and although it would receive planned change in many aspects, it would not gain direct benefits from the new irrigation system. The residents of Bigra were, however, aware of the DVC plans, since canals were being dug only five miles from this village. The village Hijalna lies on the other side of the Burdwan town directly across the river Damodar, and gets annual floods. This village was expected to be affected by the flood control scheme. Mudafar-Falahari was selected as a control village. It is in the northern section of the Burdwan district, bordering Nuddea, and receives no benefits from any direct source of organized change.

It was intended by members of the project to study the socio-economic conditions of these villages before the work of the DVC was completed, and to make a repeated study after the irrigation and flood control schemes were introduced, so as to observe the changes that ensued. The repeated study has not yet been made. It was our intention to interview every head of household in each of the villages. We tried to interview as many families as reported by the 1951 census. But some discrepancies were due to the fact that a

[1]Sri T. C. Das, Sri. N. K. Bose, Sri A. K. Mitra, Sri S. Sen and Sm. J. Sarma

few families had moved since the 1951 census investigation was made, or because they were temporarily absent from the village at the time of our fieldwork. Also sometimes we received resistance to the questions regarding land rights. This was especially due to the fact that a new bill concerning land tenancy was being passed by the West Bengal Legislature at the time of our field work. All efforts were made to overcome such resistance, and in none of the villages did our number of interviews of families fall below eighty percent of the figures recorded by the 1951 census.

For our investigations we used the schedules perpared by the Community Project Organization for taking counts of the members of families, occupations, and the data on land and agricultural enterprise. We made separate lists of questions regarding caste, migrations of members of households, frequency of contact outside of the village, and the attitudes of the villagers regarding social change, self-confidence, cooperativeness, and their conceptions of the effects of the new irrigation and flood control schemes.

We see then that the data on which this paper is based were collected with objectives different from the study of caste relations. However, since the repeated study has not yet been made, a comparison of before and the after effects of the DVC schemes is not possible. On the other hand, there are ample data for an objective study of the socio-economic conditions of village communities, and since the selected villages come from different parts of one district in West Bengal they may be said to be representatives of that district, if not of the whole State. Many studies have appeared lately on the integration of caste relations within the village social structure, and on inter-relations of castes. This paper, however, presents statistical data on the relations of caste ranks with secular status symbols such as occupations, income, education, and family types. Although many have presented their observations on the relations of caste with other social conditions, very few, if any statistical studies have been made. This paper is, therefore, original in presenting statistical data in order to test certain fundamental notions on caste societies.

The number and variety of castes vary in each of the villages under enquiry. In Bigra there are 12 castes and the Santals (a tribe). In Punyagram the castes are 10 in number besides the Santals and a large Muslim population. 40% of the families in this village are of the Muslim group. In Hijalna there are 15 castes with only one Santal family. In Mudafar-Falahari the castes are 14 in number and it has no Santal population. The actual numbers of families investigated in each of the villages are 188 in Bigra, 205 in Punyagram, 112 in Hijalna, and 158 in Mudafar-Falahari. Although Punyagram has more families, the caste population is about the same as in Bigra and Hijalna, because of its large number of Muslims.

The castes which prevail in all the four villages are the Bagdi, the Brahman, the Kayastha, and the Goala. The Bauri, Muchi, Napit, and the Santals are found in three of the four villages. Castes found in only one or two of the villages are not necesarily localized castes. The Namasudra and the Tanti, for example, although found only in Punyagram, are common in many parts of West Bengal. On the other hand, the Ugra-Kshhatriya is a caste peculiar to the Burdwan district, but is found only in Bigra and Hijalna. The number of families of every caste in each of the villages is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1

BIGRA		HIJALNA	
Caste	No. of families	Caste	No. of families
Bagdi	29	Bagdi	27
Bauri	1	Bagdi-Brahman	3
Bostom	2	Brahman	12
Brahman	9	Bauri	20
Chutor	1	Dom	1
Dom	1	Dom-Brahman	4
Ghatwal	1	Dule	6
Goala	24	Gandhabanik	3
Kayastha	9	Goala	4
Muchi	7	Hari	2
Tambuli	5	Kaibarta	3
Ugra-kshatriya	14	Kayestha	4
		Muchi	11
		Napit	1
		Sadgope	4
		Ugrakshatriya	6
Santal	14	Santal	1
Total	118	Total	112
MUDAFAR-FALAHARI		PUNYAGRAM	
Bagdi	40	Bagdi	18
Bagdi-Brahman	6	Bauri	47
Bostom	3	Brahman	5
Brahman	7	Ghatwal	1
Ganrwal	1	Goala	6
Goala	9	Kayastha	10
Hari	7	Muchi	3
Jugi	12	Namasudra	8
Kaloo	4	Napit	1
Karmakar	2	Tanti	12
Kayastha	9		
Moira	1		
Napit	4		
Sadgope	53		
		Santal	11
		Muslim	83
Total	158	Total	205

In each village there is a general understanding of the relative rank of the castes resident within. This understanding is based on

the village traditions as well as the general mode of conduct of the members of the given castes. For example, in Bigra the Goala caste ranks very low. It is thought to be lower than the Bagdi caste, which is traditionally a low caste. The Goalas in the other villages have a fairly high status, as they have a clean occupation and are a moneyed people. In Bigra the Goalas inhabit an area at a distance of two miles from the village proper, and have little chance of social contacts with its residents of other castes. But traditionally the Goala neighbourhood is a part of Bigra proper, and the Goalas are under obligation to donate certain milk products during ceremonial functions in Bigra, such as during the *Kartik Puja*. Yet the Goala caste in this village has developed the stigma of having very low morals, and mainly for this reason it is looked down upon by members of other castes.

The common understanding in all the villages is the highest rank of the Brahmans, and the low rank occupied by certain well-known castes such as the Bagdi, Bauri, Dom, Muchi, Kaivarta, etc. The highest rank of the Brahmans is still due to the sacred supremacy denoted to this caste in the villages. Sometimes the sacred superiority is coordinated with certain high secular values, such as wealth and education. A caste which ranks high in secular status in most parts of Bengal is the Kayastha, and in two of the four villages we studied, this caste is ranked as high as the Brahman. In Bigra the position of the Kayasthas has fallen due to mishaps in the particular families, and they do not claim any social importance. In Hijalna, the members of the Kayastha caste are too few to make any impression on the village community, and the Brahmans here are very strong in maintaining their high social status. In between the high and the low castes lie all the other castes. These are clean castes mainly with craft types of caste occupations.

For the purpose of presenting our data in a simplified manner we have classified the castes into three broad groups of A, B, and C, or high, middle, and low ranks. It ought to be clearly understood that these are very broad groupings, and we do not assume an exact equality of status between all the castes in one group. For example, the Gandhabanik and the Jugi castes are thought to be not quite clean, and traditionally members of the high and the middle castes would not take water from them. However, these castes rank as high as the others of the B group in their secular status, and there is no reason to make a separate category for them only for their ritual impurity. It is a common notion among many that the Bagdi-Brahmans and the Dom-Brahmans are of the same rank as the castes for whom the latter are the priests. We found, however, that these Brahmans are much higher in their social values than the Bagdis and the Doms, and profess the same type of conduct as the high ranking

Brahmans in these villages. They also command much respect from other non-Brahman castes. However, the fact that the Brahmans do not consider them to be as high in social status as themselves, we have placed them in group B.

In the low status group, the Bagdis rank higher than the Bauri or the Muchi castes. The Ganrhwals in Mudafar-Falahari, although many of them own land, are thought to be lower than the Bagdis by the villagers. The Ganrhwals are said to be of a section of the Kolu or oil-pressers, and to our enquiry most of them have returned themselves as Kolu with the hope of losing the low status associated with the Ganrhwals. The Namasudras in Punyagram rank high in sicoal esteem in being clean and respectable people, and in this village they are ranked higher than the Bagdis. In placing such people together in one group, therefore, we are overlooking many social discrepancies. These large groupings are feasible for research purposes, however, since we want to study other social economic conditions in their relations to the broad differences in caste rank, rather than the interrelation of the castes among themselves. The division of the castes according to three broad rank groups is presented below.

"*A*" *or High*
1. Brahman
2. Kayastha (for Punyagram and Madafar-Falahari only)

"*B*" or *Middle*
1. Bagdi-Brahman
2. Bostom
3. Chutor
4. Dom-Brahman
5. Gandhabanik
6. Goala
7. Jugi
8. Karmakar
9. Kayastha (for Bigra and Hijalna only)
10. Moira
11. Napit
12. Sadgope
13. Tambuli
14. Tanti
15. Ugra-Kshatriya

"*C*" *or Low*
1. Bagdi
2. Bauri
3. Dom
4. Dule
5. Ganrhwal
6. Ghatwal
7. Goala (for Bigra only)
8. Hari
9. Kaivarta
10. Kalu
11. Muchi
12. Namasudra

"S" for Santals
"M" for Mulsims

A numerical distribution of the familes of these five groups in the four villages is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2

DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILIES OF THE FOUR VILLAGES ACCORDING TO STATUS GROUPS

	BIGRA		HIJALNA		MUDAFAR-FALAHARI		PUNYAGRAM		TOTAL	
Status Group	Fre-quency	Percent-age	Fre-quency	Percent-age	Fre-quency	Percent-age	Fre-quency	Percent-age	Fre-quency	Percent-age
A	9	7.6	12	10.7	16	10.1	15	7.3	52	8.8
B	31	26.3	29	25.9	90	57.0	19	9.3	169	28.5
C	64	54.2	70	62.5	52	32.9	77	37.6	263	44.3
S	14	11.9	1	0.9	—	—	11	5.4	26	4.4
M	—	—	—	—	—	—	83	40.4	83	14.0
Total	118	100.00	112	100.00	158	100.00	205	100.00	593	100.00

The notable feature in the caste composition of the population in these villages is the comparative absence of castes with high social status such as Brahmans and Kayasthas. The villages of Bigra and Hijalna have got the maximum number of families of low social status. The village of Mudafar-Falahari, on the other hand, is mainly inhabited by castes like Moira, Karmakar, Tanti, Sadgope, etc., who have been ascribed a middle rank.

We shall first examine the primary occupations practised by the members of the various castes in the four villages. Caste has long acquired notice as being the crystallization of an occupational group, and many of the early students of the caste system sought to explain the origins of caste in the hereditary practice of given occupations. We find that 74% of the families of the four villages have agricultural occupations as their primary means of livelihood, and if we divide the followers of the agricultural occupations into four categories of non-cultivating owner, owner-cultivator, share-cropper, and agricultural labourer, there is a tendency for members of each status group to be associated with each of these occupations. The frequencies and percentages of the agricultual occupations, according to the large status groups, are presented in Table 3.

The members of the A group of castes are mostly non-cultivating owners, and a large number of them follow non-agricultural pursuits. In none of the villages are they found in the position of share-croppers or agricultural labourers. In the B group of castes there are more

TABLE 3

STATUS GROUPS AND PRIMARY OCCUPATIONS IN EACH VILLAGE

Status Groups	Non-cultivating owner	Owner cultivator	Share-cropper	Agricultural labouror	Others	Total
		1. BIGRA				
A	4 44.44 (25.00)	1 11.11 (4.00)	—	—	4 44.44	9
B	11 35.48 (68.75)	6 19.35 (24.00)	1 3.23 (3.85)	1 3.23 (3.70)	12 38.71	31
C	1 1.56 (6.25)	16 25.00 (64.00)	15 23.44 (57.69)	24 37.50 (88.89)	8 12.50	64
S	—	2 14.29 (8.00)	10 71.43 (38.46)	2 14.29 (7.41)	—	14
Total						118
		2. RIJALNA				
A	7 58.33 (50.00)	—	—	—	5 41.67	12
B	7 24.14 (50.00)	11 37.93 (57.89)	2 6.90 (7.41)	—	9 31.03	29
C	0	8 11.43 (42.11)	24 34.28 (88.89)	24 34.28 (100.00)	14 20.00	70
S	—	—	1 100.00 (3.70)	—	—	1
Total						112
		3. MUDAFAR-FALAHARI				
A	5 31.25 (45.45)	2 12.50 (6.25)	—	—	9 56.25	16
B	3 3.33 (27.27)	27 30.00 (84.38)	22 24.44 (70.97)	4 4.44 (16.00)	34 37.78	90
C	3 5.77 (27.27)	3 5.77 (9.37)	9 17.31 (29.03)	21 40.38 84.00)	16 30.77	52
Total						158

Status Groups	Non-cultivating owner	Owner cultivator	Share-cropper	Agricultural labourer	Others	Total
			4. PUNYAGRAM			
A	3 20.00 (25.00)	3 20.00 (8.57)	0	0	9 60.00	15
B	1 5.26 (8.33)	6 31.58 (17.15)	0	0	12 63.16	19
C	0	3 3.89 (8.57)	33 42.86 (51.56)	33 42.86 (66.00)	8 10.39	77
S	0	0	8 72.73 (12.50)	3 27.27 (6.00)	0	11
M	8 9.64	23 27.71	23 27.71	14 16.87	15 18.07	83
Total	(66.66)	(65.71)	(35.94)	(28.00)		205

Note : The percentages without brackets are percentages of the status group totals. The percentages within brackets are percentages of the occupational group totals.

owner-cultivators than non-agricultural owners, except in Bigra where the reverse is the case. Many members of this group also follow non-agricultural occupations. The majority of the village craftsmen belong to this group. In Mudafar-Falahari where the members of the B group are numerically greater than the members of the C group of castes, the majority of the share-croppers come from the B group, and 16% of the agricultural labourers. In Hijalna, on the other hand, only one share-cropper of B status group is found, one share-cropper and one agricultural labourer in Bigra, and none in Punyagram.

In the C caste group only four persons are non-cultivating owners, three in Mudafar-Falahari, and one in Bigra. In Hijalna 42.11% of the owner-cultivators come from this low status group, and 64% in Bigra, whereas in the other two villages, they constitute very small percentages of the owner cultivators. Share-cropping and daily labour are the main occupations of the C group, as very large per cent of its members follow these pursuits in all the four villages. It should also be noted here that the number of persons of the C group following non-agricultural occupations is comparatively small.

The non-agricultural occupations are many and various and it is difficult to present them in neat categories. However, attempts

have been made to do so, and a table containing the frequencies and percentages of the status groups in eight types of occupations are presented below, consolidating the figures for all the four villages. (Table 4)

TABLE 4

NON-AGRICULTURAL OCCUPATIONS FOLLOWED BY THE STATUS GROUPS IN THE FOUR VILLAGES

Status groups	Caste occup.	Crafts	Service	Trade & Business	Medical Practice	Paddy husking	Charity	Others	Total
A	2 7.14	5 17.86	9 32.14	5 17.86	3 10.71	0	2 7.14	2 7.14	28
B	28 45.90	7 11.48	10 16.39	2 3.28	1 1.64	9 14.75	3 4.92	1 1.64	61
C	5 10.00	0	9 18.00	4 8.00	0	20 40.00	6 12.00	6 12.00	50
M	0	4 26.67	2 13.33	3 20.00	0	3 20.00	3 20.00	0	15

Note : The percentages are of the status group totals.

In Table 4 it is to be noted primarily that followers of caste occupations for primary means of livelihood are very few, and of the 593 families in the four villages they consist of only 5.90% of the heads of households. It is significant that the adherents of caste occupations are mostly of the B status group and of the 61 families of this group 45.90% follow caste occupations. In classifying the occupations in Table 4, sometimes the caste occupations also fit the other occupational headings, and in such circumstances they have been preferably listed as caste occupations. Thus one Tambuli and one Gandhabanik who are grocers have been listed as followers of caste occupations rather than of trade and business. In Table 5 a numerical distribution of the caste occupations is presented.

It is obvious that caste occupations are practised only when they are remunerative as primary occupations. Thus weaving is a remunerative craft and adhered to by all the Tantis in Punyagram. Not only is it followed by the members of this caste, but also by 2 Brahmans, 2 Kayasthas, and 2 Muslims who find it a profitable occupation. We observed that most of the Goalas follow the caste occupation of tending cows, but none of them returned this as their primary occupation. As a result, all of them have been counted as agriculturists.

Among crafts which are not caste occupations have been included *biri*-making by 6 families, mat-making by 1 family, masonry by 1

family, weaving by 4 families, mechanic by 1 family. None of the C group of castes practise craft occupations. In the Service column fall the literate services of the upper castes, whereas among the lower castes they denote the services of servants and chowkidars. The column of Trade and Business overlaps with many of the caste occupations. The weavers, blacksmiths, the confectioner, as well as the three grocers, could all fall into this group. We may say that it lists those in trade or business who do not practise it as caste occupation. Among medical practitioners have been included homeopaths and compounders as well as licensed physicians as the former are also village doctors. Paddy-husking is done by women folk only, and mostly by the women of the C status group. None of the upper caste women are found to do this work. Charity includes charity from kin group or friends as well as begging. In the "Other" category fall many odd jobs which could not be classified in the above categories.

TABLE 5

FOLLOWERS OF CASTE OCCUPATIONS IN THE FOUR VILLAGES

Occupations	Castes	Heads of households
Priests	Brahman	2
	Bagdi-Brahman	5
	Dom-Brahman	3
	Jugi	1
Weaving	Tanti	12
Fishing	Kaivarta	2
	Bagdi (Duley)	1
Carpentry	Chutor	1
Cobbler	Muchi	1
Confectionery	Moira	1
Ironwork	Kamar	2
Grocer	Gandhabanik	1
	Tambuli	2
Boatman	Bagdi (Majhi)	1

We shall now consider the income level of each of the status groups. The agricultural income was estimated from the values of the produced commodities and their by-products. In order to fix the prices of different crops, help was taken of the District Price

Bulletin for the years 1951 and 1952. The average prices of the commodities for different months from December 1951 to November 1952 were calculated. The medium value of the average prices of different months was taken as the average for the year. The following prices were calculated for different commodities :

Paddy	Rs. 11/10/0	per	Maund
Gur	14/ 4/0	,,	,,
Potato	13/ 5/0	,,	,,
Pulses	17/ 7/0	,,	,,
Hay	1/15/0	,,	,,
Milk	25/ 0/0	,,	,,
Onion	9/ 0/0	,,	,,
Jute	27/0 /0	,,	,,
Oil-cake	8/ 3/0	,,	,,
Mustard seeds	24/ 4/0	,,	,,
Other vegetables	6/ 0/0	,,	,,
Sugarcane	1/12/0	,,	,,
Wheat	18/ 8/0	,,	,,
Salt manure	17/ 0/0	,,	,,
Sun Hemp	30/ 0/0	,,	,,
Eggs	11/ 3/0	per	100

For calculating the non-agricultural income, the wage rates used for the different types of labourers are

Day labourer	Re. 1/- per day
Roof repairer	1/- per day
Paddy dehusker	one seer of rice per day

Persons in other occupations were asked of their monetary income. The average number of earning members per family in the four villages comes to 1.42. There is usually more than one earning member in the joint families, and among the lower castes both the husband and the wife work in many of the families.

In studying the income distribution of the status groups, we observe that all the people in these villages are very poor, and the annual income of the great majority of the villagers falls far below Rs. 280/- per capita, the average annual income for all India. Very few of the families fall into a moderately high income group, and it was not found to be expedient to make categories higher than Rs. 250/- and over per annum. The following income classes have been made: Rs. 0-149, Rs. 150-249, and Rs. 250/- and over. The data for the individual villages do not seem to show any significant relations between the income levels and social status of the caste groups. In

Bigra, for instance, 55.56% of group A, 48.38% of group B, and 56.25% of group C fall in the Rs. 0-149 income level. In Hijalna 70% of A group, 53.57% of B group, and 81.16% of C group fall into the same income level. In Mudafar-Falahari the percentages of the A and B status groups in the very low income level are about the same in being 43.75, and 43.33 respectively, whereas the percentage of group C is 76.92. Only in Punyagram is there a gradation in the percentages, being 33.33, 47.37, and 67.54 for the A, B, and C groups respectively.

In the income level of Rs. 250/- and over in Bigra the A group is 11.11 percent, C group 12.50%, as against 32.27% of the B group. In Hijalna and Punyagram, however, there are gradations in the percentages of this income level, in Hijalna there being 30.00%, 10.71% and 4.35% respectively of the A, B, and C groups, and in Punyagram 33.33 of the A group, 26.32 of the B group, and 9.09% of the C group.

TABLE 6

STATUS GROUPS AND INCOME DISTRIBUTION OF THE FOUR VILLAGES

Status groups	Rs. 0-149	Rs. 150-249	Rs. 250 & over	Total
A	24 48.00	15 30.00	11 22.00	50
B	78 46.43	57 33.93	33 19.64	168
C	184 70.24	58 22.13	20 7.63	262
S	15 57.69	8 30.77	3 11.54	26
M	29 35.80	32 39.51	20 24.69	81

Although in the individual villages we do not necessarily find any order in the income levels according to the status groups, cumulated data of the four villages in Table 6 show that the income level of the two higher status groups are about similar, whereas the members of the C group are poorer in having a larger percentage in the Rs. 0-149 level, and smaller percentages in the other two levels. The difference, however, is not great, there being 48.00% of the A group, 46.43% of the B group, and 70.24% of the C group in the Rs. 0-149 income level. In reverse, in the Rs. 250/- and over income level, the percentages are 22.00 of A group, 19.64 of B group, and 7.63 of C group. Such differences are not as great as the contrasting ranks of the higher

and lower caste groups, or the social distance between the land owners and the labourers in the village community. A Brahman may be very poor, but he has status higher than any of the richer men of lower castes. Social status is maintained in his choice of occupations. That he may have an income somewhat higher than the persons in the lowest social status is due more to the distribution of inherited wealth than to his ambition to be richer. Or if he becomes employed in a non-agricultural occupation he may command a higher income because of his privilege of education which is again associated with his high social status. High income without the support of other status symbols does not give a man a high social position in the village community.

In contrast, when we consider literacy in relation to social status we find that the acquirement of certain amount of formal education is an aspect of upper caste behaviour. There is a higher percentage of literate members in the families of the A status group than in those of the other groups. A literate person is defined to be anyone who can read and write. For the class of literates, all persons with school education below the matriculation level have been grouped together with literate person without school education. Occasional persons with college education were found, and these have been grouped with the few who had passed the matriculation examination.

One lower primary school exists in each of the villages. Usually the formal education of girls is restricted to the lower primary level. Upper primary schools exist in the bigger villages, and boys desirous of continuing their education either stay near these schools, or walk a considerable distance every day from their homes. For the completion of their high school education the boys go to the schools in the nearby town, and for their college education they go either to Burdwan or to Calcutta.

In the original tables, entry was made for all persons in each family, the children below school age falling thereby into the illiterate group. As the original documents are not with the writer it has not been possible to make a recount, and separate the number of pre-school age children for each of the caste groups. However, since the age groups of each village are available, proportionate subtractions of children in the ages 0–4 have been made from the number of illiterates in each status group to derive the present figures. In Bigra the percentage of children from 0–4 is 8.5%, in Hijalna 19.33%, in Punyagram 20.00%, and in Mudafar-Falahari 20.9% of the illiterate population.

The percentage of illiterate persons in Bigra is found to be 34.8% for the A group, 53.3% for the B group, and 94.2% for the C group. In Hijalna illiteracy among the A group is greater in being 46.9%, 52.00% for the B group, and 89.7% for the C group. Similarly in

TABLE 7

STATUS GROUPS AND LITERACY IN EACH VILLAGE

Status groups	Illiterate	Literate	Matric & above	Total
		1. BIGRA		
A	23 (34.8)	39 (59.1)	4 (6.1)	66
B	88 (53.3)	73 (44.2)	4 (2.5)	165
C	264 (94.2)	16 (5.8)	0	280
S	66 (98.5)	1 (1.5)	0	67
		2. HIJALNA		
A	23 (46.9)	24 (49.0)	2 (4.1)	49
B	79 (52.0)	69 (45.4)	4 (2.6)	152
C	210 (89.7)	24 (10.3)	0	234
S	5 (100.00)	0	0	5
		3. MUDAFAR-FALAHARI		
A	28 (31.8)	57 (64.8)	3 (3.4)	88
B	243 (59.5)	163 (40.0)	2 (0.5)	408
C	142 (79.8)	36 (20.2)	0	178
		4. PUNYAGRAM		
A	34 (45.4)	31 (41.3)	10 (13.3)	75
B	54 (55.7)	42 (43.3)	1 (1.0)	97
C	260 (91.9)	23 (8.1)	0	283
S	25 (100.0)	0	0	25
M	221 (64.1)	121 (35.1)	3 (0.8)	345

Note : The percentages are of the status group totals.

Punyagram the percentages of illiteracy are 45.4%, 55.7%, and 91.9% for the A, B, and C groups respectively. In Mudafar-Falahari the percentage of illiteracy is lower than in the other villages among the A and the C status groups, being 31.8% for the A group, 59.5% for the B group, and 79.8% for the C group. The percentage of illiteracy is surely greater among the women of each group. However, even counting the males and the females together we see an inverse relationship between higher caste status and lower percentage of illiteracy. The Santals are 100% illiterate. Among the Muslims in Punyagram the percentage of illiteracy is 64.1.

The relationship between high caste status and formal education is again brought out when we consider the proportion of children of school-going age of the different status groups who attend schools. The school-going age is considered to be 5 to 14 years. Only the families with children have been counted.

In each village the percentage of families who do not send any children to school is highest in the C group, and lowest in the A group. The reverse may be said of the families which send all their children to school, the highest percentage being among the A group and the lowest among the C group except in Hijalna where the families of the B group have the highest percentage in sending all their children to school. We need to consider that among the higher castes the very young children are made to study at home rather than in school and that in some families the children are not sent to school before they are seven or eight years of age. However, the facts we have on hand are enough to show that the acquiring of formal education is an aspect of upper-caste behaviour. Although the A and the B groups are similar in their income levels, there is much difference in the literacy rates of the two status groups, and the two groups together stand much higher than the C group in literacy, thereby giving support to the social distance which is found to prevail between them by common observation.

With the consideration of family types and their relation to the status groups we shall come to the end of this paper. The family types in rural areas offer subjects of much interest to the research students. In general sentiments the joint family system is still the preferred type of family organization. There is a common belief that it is due to the exigencies of urban society that the joint family system is undergoing disruption, and that affectionate sentiments for parents and brothers are steadily decreasing. It is also believed that joint families denote higher status and are more prevalent among the upper castes. An examination of the family types and their prevalence among the several status groups throw some light on these ideas.

We have differentiated between four types of familes. The

TABLE 8

PROPORTION OF CHILDREN OF SCHOOL-GOING AGE IN EACH STATUS GROUP

Status group	0	1/5	1/4	1/3	2/5	1/2	2/3	3/4	1	Total
				1. BIGRA						
A	1 11.11					1	1		6 66.67	9
B	10 43.43	2				1	2		8 34.78	23
C	29 78.38		1	2			1		4 10.81	37
S	9 100.00									9
				2. HIJALNA						
A	1 11.11		1		1				6 66.67	9
B	2 11.76					2			13 76.47	17
C	22 59.46			1	1	3			10 27.03	37
D	1 100.00									1
				3. MUDAFAR-PALAHARI						
A	0							1	10 90.91	11
B	2 4.08	2	1	2	1	8	4		29 59.39	49
C	20 66.67				1	2			7 23.33	30
				4. PUNYAGRAM						
A	2 25.00					3			3 37.5	8
B	4 36.36				1	2			4 36.36	11
C	32 84.21	1	1	1					3 7.89	38
S	2 100.00									2
M	22 51.16	1		1			4		15 34.95	43

Note : The percentages are of the status group totals.

TABLE 9

STATUS GROUPS AND FAMILY TYPES IN EACH VILLAGE

Status groups	Nuclear	Joint with brothers	Joint with parents	Joint with others	Total
		1. BIGRA			
A	4 44.44	1 11.11	3 33.33	1 11.11	9
B	18 58.07	6 19.35	6 19.35	1 3.22	31
C	41 64.06	6 9.37	14 21.88	3 4.69	64
S	12 85.71	1 7.14	1 7.14	—	14
		2. HIJALNA			
A	8 66.66	2 16.67	2 16.67	—	12
B	13 44.83	3 10.34	12 41.38	1 3.45	29
C	41 58.58	5 7.14	20 28.57	4 5.71	70
S	—	1 100.00	—	—	1
		3. MUDAFAR-FALAHARI			
A	7 43.75	5 31.25	4 25.00	0	16
B	41 45.56	14 15.56	25 27.77	10 11.11	90
C	37 71.15	2 3.85	13 25.00	0	52
		4. PUNYAGRAM			
A	8 53.33	3 20.00	3 20.00	1 6.67	15
B	10 52.63	3 15.79	4 21.05	2 10.53	19
C	40 51.95	7 9.09	22 28.57	8 10.39	77
S	8 72.73	0	1 9.09	2 18.18	11
M	45 54.22	6 7.23	28 33.73	4 4.82	83

Note : The percentages are of the status group totals.

nuclear family consists only of parents and children. Minor brothers or sisters living with a married brother have been included in the nuclear family. "Joint familes with parents" indicate families with one married son or more living with one or both the parents. "Joint families with brothers" indicate families consiting of several brothers with their respective wives and children. "Joint families with others" denote families with other kin members who are not usually found in the patrilineal types of joint families. All persons living in the same household have been considered to be of the same family. In a disrupted joint family still living in the same house, one family unit or a household is differentiated from another by its possession of a separate kitchen.

The average family size is 5.22 in Bigra, 4.75 in Punyagram, 4.51 in Hijalna, and 4.98 in Mudafar-Falahari. The percentage of nuclear families is 51.92% for the A, and 49.11% for the B group, and 60.05% for the C group in the four villages, and 76.92% for the Santals in two villages. In Hijalna, however, the A group has the highest percentage of nuclear familes, and the B group the lowest percentage. It is to be noted that the C group has the lowest percentage of "joint families with brothers", the highest percentage being among the A group in all the villages. However, these figures are very low in themselves. In Mudafar-Falahari the percentage of families with brothers among the A group is 31.25, in Punyagram 20.00, in Hijalna 16.67, and in Bigra 11.11. "Joint families with parents" vary between 17.00% and 33.00% among all the caste groups, except in Hijalna where among the B group this type of family is found to be 41.38%. Thus although the higher status groups do have higer percentages of joint families than the C status group, the difference is very small, and 50.00% of families of higher status are of the nuclear type.

TABLE 10

FAMILY TYPES AND OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS IN FOUR VILLAGES

Family Types	Owner-cultivator	Share-cropper	Non-culti-vating owner	Agricul-tural labour	Others	Total
Nuclear	39 35.14	63 42.57	32 58.49	95 75.40	104 67.74	333
Joint with Brothers	17 15.31	19 12.84	5 9.43	4 3.17	13 8.39	58
Joint with Parents	43 38.74	53 35.81	16 30.19	22 17.46	32 20.75	166
Joint with others	12 10.81	13 8.78	1 1.89	5 3.97	5 3.22	36
Total	111	148	53	126	155	593

Note : Tho percentages are of the occupational group totals.

If we classify the family types according to the agricultural occupational groups, we find a definite order of relationship between occupations and family structure. In Table 10 we see that the owner-cultivator class has the lowest percentage of nuclear families—35.14%, and the highest percentage of joint families, with brothers—15.31%, with parents—38.74%, and with others—10.81%. Next come the share-croppers with a higher percentage of nuclear families and lower percentages of joint families of all types. Next in order are the non-cultivating owners with 59.26% of nuclear families, and with percentages of joint families of all types lower than those of the share-croppers. Last of all are the day labourers with 75.40% of nuclear families, and the lowest percentages of joint families with brothers, 3.17, and with parents, 17.46.

It is apparent, therefore, that the family types are very much influenced by occupational status. It seems that the non-cultivating owners are more desirous of having nuclear families than the owner-cultivators and the share-croppers. Perhaps, the latter groups find it convenient to have the family members stay together for the common purpose of working together on land, whereas the non-cultivating owners are more interested in dividing the family property and establishing separate families. Since the non-cultivating owners mostly consist of the A and the B group of castes, it would seem that they would have the highest percentage of joint families with brothers, but the opposite is the case.

We may say that caste status is sacred in being hereditary and in having support of the sacred ideologies of the Hindu society. Every caste has a sacred myth of origin which is made to justify its position, whether high or low. A man of low caste is proud of his caste status, and he may claim a little higher position for his caste than is ascribed by the village society, but he never denies his caste, especially within the village. Many of the castes have hereditary occupations, but a change of occupation does not necessarily bring with it a change of caste status. In the four villages we have studied a very small percentage of the families is found to be engaged in its caste occupation. Caste occupation is usually supported by the myth of origin of the caste, and since the feeling or ritual cleanliness or uncleanliness is attached to it, it may be said to reflect on the sacred status of the caste. A change of occupation does not change caste status immediately, but it may bring such a change after several generations, particularly if it is associated with other changes in the ritual and secular patterns of living.

A caste, therefore, has two types of status, sacred and secular. One is based on traditions and regulates the ceremonial relationships between castes, and the other is the status acquired under modern conditions of living, and is mainly dependent on present occupation,

source of income, and education. Ranking of the caste groups, in this paper, into three status groups is based on the common understanding of the villagers, and although both the sacred and the secular positions are taken into account, in cases of great discrepancies preference is given to the secular positions. The common observations seem to be tenable since our analyses of the occupational distribution, income, education, and family types affirm the differences between the groups. In some aspects the differences are great as in regard to occupation and education, and small in regard to income and family types.

In cities the importance of secular values in the evaluation of a person's status is greater, and one may even deny or change his caste status, taking advantage of the anonymity of urban life. But even in villages we see that secular status is extremely significant, and how the sacred and the secular positions of caste are combined in the regulation of individual conduct, and in the behaviour between persons of different castes should be further studied. Since the data for this paper were gathered for purposes different from the study of social status, it is not possible to go further into this problem at present.