

CENSUS OF INDIA 1971

ETHNOGRAPHIC NOTES

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FOREWORD

The Constitution lays down that "the State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interest of the weaker sections of the people and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation".

To assist States in fulfilling their responsibility in this regard, the 1961 Census provided a series of special tabulations of the social and economic data on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

The lists of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are notified by the President under the Constitution and the Parliament is empowered to include in or exclude from the lists, any caste or tribe. During the Census Operations, the enumerators frequently face the problem of indentifying the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In the President's notification, though in some cases, the names of the sub-castes and sub-tribes and synonyms are given, there are many cases where such names have not been provided in the list. The Census enumerators, therefore, require guidance about the acceptance or rejection of claims that they come across during the operations of some communities to be treated as sub-castes or sub-tribes of the notified Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes. For this purpose, the Census organisation has thought it wise to undertake detailed ethnographic studies in respect of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of India. This is also in conformity with the past Census tradition of presenting authentic ethnographic account of Indian communities.

For conducting the ethnographic studies, a number of ancillary operations are undertaken by the Social Studies unit of the office of the Registrar General, India, as well as the staff of the Suprintendents of Census Operations in the various States. These ancillary operations include—

(i) compilation of available information on each Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe and preparation of bibliography in respect of them; (ii) preparation and interpretation of map showing distribution of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes over time and space ; and (iii) special studies on cultural, technological and economic changes taking place among the various tribal communities.

Dr. B. K. Roy Burman, Officer on Special Duty, Handicrafts and Social Studies Unit, assisted by Shri A. M. Kurup and N. G. Nag, Research Officers, is coordinating all these studies at the Central level. At the State level, the Superintendent of Census Operations and his staff are collaborating in conducting the field investigations and preparing the report. Shri D. D. Joshi, Deputy Director of Census Operations, Uttar Pradesh supervised the study at the State level and Shri R. S. Maurya, Investigator, carried out the field investigation of Dhanuk community and prepared the draft. The drafts on Bansphor, Barwar, Beldar, Dom and Kori were prepared by Shri Chandra Sen, Senior Technical Assistant, of the office of the Registrar General India. These notes were edited by Shri D. M. Sinha, Director of Census Operations, U. P. and Sarvashri D. D. Joshi, G. S. Chaudhri, S. S. Nigam, Om Prakash and R. N. Trivedi, Dy. Directors of Census Operations, Uttar Pradesh. I avail of this opportunity to extend my warm thanks to all my colleagues who have undertake various studies on different aspects of the She cduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of India.

A. CHANDRA SEKHAR
Registrar-General, India.

PREFACE

As an adjunct of 1961 Census, preparation of ethnographic monographs on a number of selected Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and ethnic-groups with special status and ethnographic glossaries on all Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have been taken up by the Census organisation.

In India the Census organisation has a long tradition of undertaking ethnographic studies. Besides, there are certain reasons why, for its own operational purposes, it is necessary for the Census organisation to take up such studies. During census operation, the Census organisation is required to make a complete enumeration of all the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the country. The ethnographic studies are required to establish the identity of the various communities including their segments. The social boundaries of various communities are not always rigid, they are in a state of flux. Ethnographic studies are required to keep track of these changes as well, otherwise comparison of consecutive census figures would give altogether wrong picture in respect of them. There is another aspect of study in respect of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in which the Census organisation as well as the welfare and planning agencies are interested—it is ethno-demography. In 1961 Census separate tables were prepared in respect of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes on the following items :—

(i) industrial classification of persons at work and non-workers by sex,
(ii) age and marital status,
(iii) education,
(iv) religion,
(v) persons at work classified by sex and type of activity for Seheduled Castes,
(vi) persons not at work classified by sex and type of activity for Scheduled Tribes, and
(vii) mother-tongue and bilingualism for Scheduled Tribes.

The data available in these tables are to be analysed in respect of each Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe, so that the historical and cultural factors responsible for the demographic pattern can be identified and the impact of the emergent demographic pattern on the social structure can be determined.

The insight gained by the Census organisation, through ethnographic studies of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, will be useful for interpretation of the demographic pattern for the country as a whole. Recent studies show that in India, even now, it is difficult to correctly appreciate the various social and economic processes without reference to caste. On the other hand, in the interest of ultimate national goal, caste is not being recorded in census except in case of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The insight gained through ethno-demographic studies of Scheduled Cates and Scheduled Tribes is, therefore, of invaluable help for census.

At the same time, such study is very much useful for planning of development activities among the castes or tribes concerned. For instance, if the census shows that great deal of diversification of occupation has taken place among the Parayans of Kerala, it is important for the planners to know whether, the community consists of a number of disconnected segments or whether it means that a great deal of individual mobility is taking place where the main focus of community is other than traditional occupation. Again, when among the Bauris of Orissa, it is found that a very high proportion of the population is engaged in agricultural labour and next to them a high proportion is found in cultivation and also that there is considerable diversification of occupation, the following questions of sociological and practical importance arise:—

(*a*) What is the historical relation between the agricultural labourers and the cultivators among the Bauris of Orissa ? The census data suggests one of the two possible developments, namely, (1) bulk of the Bauris were cultivators and by a process of degeneration of their economy have become agricultural labourers, (2) on the other hand, it is also possible that the bulk of them were agricultural labourers and through a process of improvement of their economic condition, many of them have become cultivators.

(*b*) The fact that a considerable diversification of occupation has taken place, suggests that the economy has not remained in a stagnant condition. Here, it is to be examined whether the diversification is the result of upward mobility or downward mobility, or even horizontal mobility, and what is the actual process by which the diversification has taken place.

(*c*) That social dimensions corresponding to the diversification in economic life have to be examined. It is also to be examined whether in spite of diversification of occupation, the ethos of a particular occupation, for instance agriculture, continues to be dominant. In that case, diversification might have created problems of a adjustment in values and attitudes.

Instances can be multiplied, but it is not necessary. What have been stated above, are enough to bring out the significance of ethno-demographic studies for planners.

The above dimensions of ethno-demographic studies have evolved through stages. In 1960, at the instance of Shri Mitra, Registrar General of India, a questionnaire for collection of ethnographic data was circulated among the Census Superintendents. In October, 1961 the Handicrafts and Social Studies Unit was set up in the office of the Registrar General of India, to coordinate the ethnographic studies and a few other ancillary studies, like village surveys, handicraft surveys, etc. In December, 1961 a Study Camp was organised in Delhi, where the personnel engaged in ethnographic studies and other social and handicrafts studies, and other special investigations in the offices of the Census Superintendents, participated. In the Study Camp, it was considered that the ethnographic notes would mainly aim at making an objective assessment of the state of development of the different Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the context of the changes taking place in technology, economic organisation and total cultural pattern of the country. It was further suggested that the primary focus of the study should not be on the exotic elements of the cultures of the different Castes and Tribes. It should be on the efforts of the communities concerned to adjust to the modern conditions of life. In the light of the above decision of the Study Camp, rapid ethnographic studies have been carried on by the staff of the Superintendents of Census Operations as well as by the Handicrafts and Social Studies Unit of the Office of the Registrar General of India, in different parts of the country. These rapid surveys have brought out a number of methodological and operational problems. In May and June, 1966, two ethnographic Study Camps were held at Kurseong and Hyderabad, where personnel from the office of the Registrar General of India as well as from the offices of the Census Superintendents participated. In the Study Camp held at Kurseong, the Secretary, Tribal Welfare, West Bengal, and Director Tribal Welfare, West Bengal, also participated. In these Study Camps, an integrated frame for preparation of ethnographic notes was discussed and adopted. A copy of the same may be seen at 'Annexure'. In addition to the studies in respect of each Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe separately, a number of subsidiary studies were undertaken by the Handicrafts and Social Studies Unit of the Office of the Registrar General of India, for gaining insight into a number of problems of general nature, which have bearing on the different aspects of the lives of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of the country. These subsidiary studies are as follows:—

(1) Shifting cultivation in Santal Parganas of Bihar and Garo Hills of Assam.

(2) Pattern of rehabilitation of displaced tribals of Rourkela.

(3) Socio-economic survey of the Scheduled area of Rajasthan,

(4) Socio-economic developments among the hillmen of North-East India.

(5) Social structure and cultural orientation of Christians converted from Scheduled Castes.

(6) Traditional rights of scavenging as claimed by scavengers in urban areas.

(7) Grouping of castes and tribes with reference to occupation and inter-group and intra-group, comparative study on the basis of the data available in earlier censuses.

(8) Social mobility movements among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

On the basis of each of the subsidiary study indicated above, a separate mono graphs is under preparation. It is also proposed to prepare separate monographs on a few Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and ethnic groups with special status in each State. Besides, ethnographic glossaries are proposed to be prepared in respect of all Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. For this purpose about one lakh references have been indexed.

This is series of ethnographic notes on Scheduled Castes of Uttar Pradesh. This volume contains the notes on Beldar, Barwar, Bansphor, Dom, Dhanuk and Kori, Scheduled Castes to be covered under State series. The field investigation on all these castes, excepting the Dhanuks, was undertaken by Shri Chandra Sen, Senior Technical Assistant of the office of the Registrar General, India The first drafts prepared by Shri Sen were technically scrutinised in Social Studies Division of Registrar General's office. Shri R. S. Maurya, the then Investigator, in the office of the Director of Census Operations, Uttar Pradesh, undertook the field study of Dhanuk and prepared the first draft under the guidance of Shri D. D. Joshi, Dy. Director of Census Operations, Uttar Pradesh. The first draft prepared by Shri Maurya was also scrutinised in the Social Studies Division of Registrar General's office. These notes were finally edited by Shri D. M. Sinha, Director of Census Operations, Uttar Pradesh and Sarvashri D. D. Joshi, G. S. Chaudhri, S. S. Nigam, Om Prakash, B. B. Pande and R. N. Trivedi, Dy. Directors of Census Operations, Uttar Pradesh.

The photographs included in these notes were taken by Sarvashri K. C. Kapoor and Amar Singh Photographers attached to Registrar General's Office.

I take this opportunity to express my thanks to all the colleagues who collaborated in this project.

Sri H. L. Harit, Investigator, who is looking after the compilation of information from published sources in respect of all Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and other special ethnic groups of India deserves mention.

Shri A. Mitra, Registrar General of India for 1961 Census, whose far-sighted initiative is responsible for social investigations in a large number of fields including ethnography, deserves thanks of all students of Indology. I have been benefited not only by his inspiration, but also by his valuable suggestions in connection with the ethnographic studies as well as the other studies conducted by the Handicrafts and Social Studies Unit.

The tradition built by Shri Mitra has been continued by Shri A. Chandra Sekhar, the present Registrar General of India. Under his guidance the scope of Social Studies by Census Organisation has been further expanded. In spite of his other pre-occupations, he has gone through the final drafts of the ethnographic notes and given a number of valuable suggestions. I avail of this opportunity to express my gratefulness to him.

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BANSPHOR

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Name and Origin

The Bansphors have been included in the list of scheduled castes in Uttar Pradesh. The word 'Bansphor' means breaker of bamboo and hence the Bansphor is an occupational caste of Bamboo workers.

According to Blunt[1], "the Balahar Bansphor and Basor are all branches of the Dom tribe that have settled down to regular occupation and have risen to social scale, though a very little". Crooke[2] has also expressed the same opinion about this caste.

In the districts of Gorakhpur and Allahabad the informants of this caste revealed that they were one of the branches of Dom caste and they traced their origin from Supach Bhagat,the *guru* of Doms. According to the informants in Gorakhpur district, the Doms are divided into eight branches, namely, Tank, Dharkar, Dhanuk, Doman, Dom (Supach Dom), Rawat, Hariya (Uttariya) and Dom Katar, many of which are now separate scheduled castes in the State of Uttar Pradesh.

In Gorakhpur city they call themselves "Gharbari" or settled Dom, in contradistinction to the Maghaya, a vagrant branch of the tribe.

Distribution and Population Trend

The population of Bansphors in Uttar Pradesh, according to 1961 Census, is 14,853—7,732 males and 7,121 females. A statement showing their distribution with sex and rural-urban break up has been given in the Appendix.

From the table given in the Appendix it is evident that the Bansphors are found in large numbers, 1,000 or more, only in six districts, *viz.* Bara Banki (3,365), Bahraich (2,339), Deoria (2,108), Ballia (1,159), Azamgarh (1,102) and Gorakhpur (1,071).

In the seven districts of Bareilly, Shahjahanpur, Allahabad, Jhansi, Banda, Varanasi and Mirzapur the strength of Bansphors is less than hundred each, whereas in other six districts of Naini Tal, Bijnor, Farrukhabad, Hamirpur, Faizabad and Jaunpur their number is insignificant, ranging between 1 and 11. In the remaining ten districts their population varies between 100 and 1,000. As many as 89.15 per cent Bansphors live in rural areas of the State and the remaining 10.85 per cent in the urban areas.

The sex-ratio of Bansphors is 936 females per 1,000 males in rural areas whereas it is 807 in the urban areas. It is more than the State average of 924 in the rural area, but less than that of the urban area (812). The lesser number of females in urban area suggests that the Bansphor males emigrate to urban centres for earning livelihood leaving behind their females in the rural areas.

If the sex-ratio at district level is seen, there it presents a different picture from the position stated above. In some districts either male or female members of the caste are found, *e.g.*, in Naini Tal only one male, in Farrukhabad only one female, in Jhansi only 81 females and in Hamirpur only two males were reported. In district of Jalaun, Basti, Azamgarh, Ballia, Varanasi and Mirzapur the females outnumber males. This may be due to emigration of males to other places for earning livelihood.

In the 1901 Census the population of Bansphors was recorded at 11,826 in U. P. It almost trebled during the following decade, absolute population figures in 1911 Census being 34,561. The population, however, declined heavily in the 1961 Census (14,853). The figures for the years 1921, 1931, 1941, 1951 are not available. As such the particular period when the decline and the cause thereof in population occurred cannot be determined.

Family

Family is a group consisting of the husband, wife and their un-married children, but cases of married children living with the parents are also quite common.

The eldest member of the family is usually regarded as the head. The status of the other members generally depends on their respective ages.

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1. Blunt, E. A. H.: *The Caste System of Northern India*, London, 1931, p. 237.
2. Crooke, W.: *The Tribes and Castes of North West Provinces and Oudh*, Calcutta, 1896, Volume I, p. 167.

In case mother is the eldest member in the family, she may also be described as the head, although the effective authority is exercised by the eldest male member.

Family among Bansphors is partrilocal with patronymic designation. After marriage the woman goes to stay with the husband. According to the information gathered they have mostly nucleous type of family, but in actual practice, it has been notice that mostly couples stay in separate houses or have separate establishment in joint houses. In some cases couple stays with either of the surviving parents. They will not mention their eldest son by name, to do so is regarded as a sin.

Dwellings

In the villages, the houses of Bansphor community are generally found a little away from the main inhabited village. They live in small mud houses or in thatched huts. Generally, their houses are huts or single-room apartments with a small verandah covered with thatched roof. The houses of Bansphors are constructed in haphazard manner and hence their settlement give an unplanned look. There is no proper ventilation in the houses.

Dress

The dress of Bansphors is more or less akin to that of the people of the other castes of the region. The males generally wear shirts, *kurtas* and *dhotis*. The *pyjamas* are seldom worn by them. One of the informants told that some of the young boys, who have been to cities have started using urban dresses like trousers, bush-shirts, etc. but the common dress of males of the community has not changed much.

The *dhoti* measuring 2½ yards in length, is worn on the lower part of the body and shirt or *kurta* of coarse cloth on the upper part of the body. The children usually are seen wearing tattered clothes like underwear, shirt, or undershirt.

The females usually wear *saluka* (loose blouse) or *kurti* or *jumper* with *orhni* (head gear) to cover the head and shoulders. Some young ladies are seen using under garments also. They have separate dress for work, consisting of old blouse and *Lehnga*, some young girls are seen wearing *Salwar, Kurta*, long shirt and *dupatta*, the head dress. In village the old women still put on *lehnga* — skirt though it has become out of fashion now-a-days. The bridal dress still consists of *lehnga* — skirt, *kurta* — loose shirt and *orhni*, the head dress, and *jumper* and blouse.

In rural areas, generally in the villages, men are barefooted, but in cities they wear shoes and *chappals*. Women today also use *chappals*.

Ornaments

The males do not wear ornaments except a silver ring in the finger or sometimes *bali* (ring) in the ear.

Among the females, ornaments made of silver or alloy are worn on different parts of the body. Gold ornaments are reported to be very rare among them. A list of ornaments worn by the females of the Bansphor community is given below :

Part of body	Local name	English equivalent	Metal used
Neck	*Hansli*	Neck-ring	Silver or Alloy
	Hamel	Necklace of coins	Silver
Arm	*Tandia*	Armlet	Alloy or Silver
Ear	*Jhumka*, *Karan phool*, *Bali*	Earring or Pendant	Alloy or Silver
Nose	*Bulak*, *Phool*	Nose pendant, nose stud	Alloy or Silve
Wrist	*Kara*	Wrist band	Alloy
Finger	*Chhalla*	Ring	Iron or Alloy

In addition to the above items, women also use glass or lac bangles on the wrists.

Tattooing

Tattooing is quite popular among Bansphors. The males generally have tattoo marks on forearms whereas the females have such marks on the forehead, cheeks, chin, neck, arms and legs. They consider it an aid to beauty and some old members of the community believe that it is the only ornament which goes with the body even after death.

Among males tattoo designs include either the names of the persons concerned or the name or picture of some Hindu deity on the forearm. Among females, some designs of ornaments are tattooed on the chest, forehead and wrists. For the forearms, good geometrical designs or designs of flowers, peacocks etc. are favourite designs. Normally a girl while in age group 8–10 is tattooed.

Food Habits

The Bansphors are non-vegetarian by habit and choice. They eat flesh of all types of animals except beef. In village Gadia of Bara Banki district an informant told that some of his caste fellows have left taking flesh of animals because they have taken *dhaga* (thread) of Baba Jagjiwan Das. However, no such case was reported in Gorakhpur district.

The food of Bansphors consists of *chapatis* of coarse grains, like *bejhar* (a mixture of gram, barley and pea), rice of inferior quality and pulses. *Kodon* and *Sawan* — a variety of rice of some inferior quality are also eaten by them. Vegetables, which are available in the village are eaten occasionally. The green vegetables like *Bathua, Kammua* are used during the season when these are available free of cost.

They generally take two meals a day one in the noon, known as *dupharia,* and the other in the night. In the morning they take *basi*— the food prepared on previous night. In addition to meals they eat *chabena,* parched gram and *sattu,* flour of parched grains mixed with water and salt or with *gur* (jaggery). Occasionally on festive occasions, *puri* and *halwa* are prepared.

Smoking of bidi, hemp, etc. is very common among the Bansphors. Chewing of raw tobacco with lime is very popular both among males and females. Toddy and country liquor are also taken by some of them whenever they are in a position to have it.

Environmental, Sanitation and Hygienic Habits

Generally, the Bansphors do not pay much attention for the cleanliness and sanitation of the surroundings in which they live. The houses are usually constructed in haphazard manner without any consideration of drainage. Water, therefore, accumulates just near the houses and during rainy season, mud and dust around the settlements cause much insanitation. The cooking utensils are also cleaned infront of the houses, which also causes filth and dirt. The houses are not provided with latrines and hence people go in the open to answer nature's call. Children generally use the nearby lanes for this purpose.

As regards their personal hygiene, they informed that bath is not taken regularly. Clothes are washed with washing soap once in a fortnight or on some festive occasions. Generally, the members of the Bansphors community clean their teeth with twigs of *neem* or *babul* tree or simply with the ash or clay, just like other people in the locality.

Language and Literacy

The Bansphors in Uttar Pradesh, speak Hindi as their mother tongue. However, their dialect differ from region to region where they live. In eastern part, their common dialect is Bhojpuri, whereas in the Oudh, they speak Avadhi.

The literacy rate among them is quite low, which is 4.25 per cent according to 1961 Census. This rate of literacy is lower than that of the scheduled caste population of the State as a whole (7.14 per cent) and much less than the general literacy rate in the State (17.65 per cent).

A table giving the break-up of the population by educational standards is given below :

Educational standard	Rural		Urban		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Illiterate	6,405	6,377	746	694	14,222
Literate without educational standard	350	16	111	21	498
Primary or Junior Basic	83	7	27	5	122
Matriculation or Higher Secondary	2	1	8	..	11
Total ..	6,840	6,401	892	720	14,853

It may be pointed out that no person of the Bansphor community has attained the educational standard beyond Matriculation. However, 11 persons, 10 males and one female have passed High School. They informed that they are not in a position to afford higher education of their children due to poverty.

Economic Life

According to 1961 Census, out of 14,853 persons belonging to the Bansphor caste in Uttar Pradesh, 7,640 persons or 51.44 per cent are workers. 65.62 per cent of the male population and 36.03 per cent of the female population constitute the working force. In the rural and urban areas, the work participation rates of the male population of Bansphor comes to 67.82 per cent and 48.77 per cent and of the female population 36.37 per cent and 33.47 respectively. The corresponding figures for the scheduled caste population as a whole are 60.45 per cent and 54.60 per cent for the males and 28.67 per cent and 11.90 per cent for females. This shows that except among the male population of urban areas the Bansphor caste has more participation role in economic activities than all the scheduled castes combined.

Occupational details

The industrial classification of the workers of Bansphor caste according to 1961 Census is given below :

Industrial Catogory	Rural		Urban		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
1. As Cultivator	1,401	334	3	1	1,739
2. As Agriculture Labour	315	176	1	..	492
3. In mining, quarrying, livestock, fishing, hunting, orchard etc.	24	1	2	..	27
4. Household Industry	2,286	1,488	164	138	4,076
5. Manufacture other than household industry	151	37	39	3	230
6. Construction	5	1	5	..	11
7. Trade and Commerce	210	2	19	18	249
8. Transport, storage and communication	30	..	20	..	5
9. Other services	217	286	182	81	766
Total ..	4,639	2,325	435	241	7,640

It is evident from the above table that majority of Bansphors are engaged in household industry which accounts for 53.35 per cent of workers. Household industry like making of baskets ; winnowing of fans, mats, chiks-curtain prepared from bamboo sticks etc. is the traditional occupation of the caste. The next important industry of Bansphors is cultivation (22.76 per cent) followed by other services (10.03 per cent) and agricultural labour (6.44 per cent). In Gorakhpur district, they have taken up jobs of labourers or coolies railway and factories and in tahsil office.

The Bansphor informants told that in addition to their routine job they undertook the work of beating the drums on ceremonial occasions and some of them caught birds for selling. The Bansphor women also work as midwives in the villages.

Life Cycle

Birth

The birth of a child in the family is hailed as a happy event. However, the preference, nevertheless remains for a male child, specially in the first delivery. One of the Bansphor women informed that as they were the traditional midwives, they were adept in diagnosing the cases of pregnancy. The expectant mother is not put to any restriction during

the pregnancy period and she attends to her usual households duties. No pre-natal ceremony is observed.

The delivery takes place at the husband's place. A midwife of the same caste attends to the delivery. In Bara Banki district it was reported that usually the husband's father's sister or the husband's sister act as midwife. The period of pollution lasts for 15 days.

Chhathi Ceremony

Sixth day of the child-birth is celebrated when both the mother and the child are given bath in warm water and the relations are offered feast on the occasion. On the fifteenth day the ceremony of *Kuan Pujan* (worship of well) is performed, when the mother and the child after a bath go round the well thrice in wet clothes. After this ceremony, mother and child become ritually pure.

No christening ceremony is observed amongst the Bansphors. Some of them in Bara Banki district revealed that the child was named by the grand father in the fifth or the sixth month. They further asserted that they had started consulting Brahmans also for suggesting a name for the child on the basis of his *rashi* (constellation of planets).

No puberty rites for their sex are performed by them.

Marriage

Marriages take place usually in the infancy and in Mirzapur if a girl is not married by the time she attains puberty, her parents are put to out-caste.

The average ages of marriages for the boys and the girls are 10—12 years and 8—10 years respectively. At the 1961 Census, 259 males and 481 females were returned as married in the age-group 0—14 years. Further, 7 males and 16 females were returned as widow and 16 males and 7 females as divorced or separated in the same age-group. These figures are indication of the prevalence of early marriages in the Bansphor caste.

In Bhagalpur, according to Risley, they have a number of exogamous sections known as 'panghat', but other Bansphors on the Nepal frontier regulate their marriage by local sections. In Mirzapur, they enumerate eight exogamous sections, Mahanta, Chaukel, Gausel, Samudra, Nahar, Kalai, Magriha and Saraiha and they enforce the rule of section exogamy by prohibiting marriages with the daughter of the maternal uncle or their father's sister and of their own sister. They also do not inter-marry with a family in which one of these relations marries until one or two generations have passed.

Similarly in Hardoi, where they have sub-castes or sections, they are reported to prohibit marriage with first cousin on both the sides.

Monogamy is a rule, but there is no restriction against a man having as many wives as he can marry and support, but among the Bansphors usually monogamy is practised. During field investigation it was reported by the Bansphor informants that keeping more than one wife was beyond one's economic capacity.

The marriages are negotiated by the girl's maternal uncle or brother-in-law. After the settlement of marriage the girl's father performs the ceremony of *chhedna* in which he gives rupees five and liquor to the boy's side. After the settlement of marriage, the boy's father alongwith five to six persons goes to girl's father's house to perform the *lagan* ceremony. The boy's father presents one *dhoti* and *jhulwa* (a loose blouse) to the girl. The boy's party is entertained with feast of meat and liquor.

On the appointed day, the *barat* (the marriage party) goes to the house of the bride. The marriage party is entertained with sweets, *puris* and vegetable. In the night, the ceremony of *bhanwar,* going round the sacred fire for five times, takes place and parents of the girl perform *kanyadan.* Brahmin priests perform the marriage rites in Bara Banki district. However, in Gorakhpur district it was reported that the *bahnoi* — sister's husband or *phupha* — husband of father's sister — acted as priest. They also informed that custom of taking *barat* was of recent origin and even then sometime *paipuji* a form of marriage was performed in which the girl was taken to boy's house where marriage rites were gone through.

The *gauna* ceremony is performed after 3-4 years of marriage when the girl attains puberty.

Widow re-marriage is allowed in the caste. Junior levirate also prevails under the usual restrictions.

Death

Bansphors cremate their dead but in Lucknow district it was reported that they bury the dead. Hence, it follows that both the customs—cremation and burial—are prevalent among Bansphors, depending upon the economic condition of the family. In Bara Banki district, Bansphor informants told that they tried to cremate their dead but in most cases burial was still observed.

After the death of a person, the dead body is washsed and carrined on a bier to the burning or burial ground. A man of lonia caste digs the grave for which he is paid Rs.2 to Rs.2.50.

The deceased family undergoes pollution for ten days and on the tenth day, *daswan* ceremony is observed, when heads of the chief mourner, who is generally the eledest son and the near relatives are shaved off.

They do not observe *shradha* during the *pitra paksh* in commemoration of the deceased in the first fortnight of the Aswin month.

Religion

Bansphors are the followers of Hinduism. According to 1961 Census, all the Bansphors have returned under Hindu religion. They worship Hindu gods and goddesses, but more emphasis is given to female deities. In Mirzapur district, their chief deity is *Vindyavasni* Devi of Vindhyachal whom they worship on the ninth day of Chaitra by offering *puris* and *lapsi* (porridge). In Gorakhpur, they worship *Kalika* and *Samey Devi*. The former is worshiped at marriages, child birth etc. with an offering of a young pig and one and a quarter jar of liquor. They do not employ Brahmans in the domestic ceremonies, which are carried out by some old man of the family.

In Hardoi, their tribal deity is *Kala Deo*, whose image is painted on the wall of the house and is worshipped at all times.

In Bara Banki and Lucknow worship of *Shitla* and *Kali* is more popular. They have a great respect for village shrine.

Besides the above deities the village and regional deities are also worshipped. They have deep faith in spirits and heroes of local importance. The shrines of *pirs* and some Muslim saints also find a notable place in their religion where they offer *Sinni* and a piece of cloth on due occasions. Diseases and untoward happenings are attributed to evil spirits and its treatment is generally done by the *Ojha* — local witch doctor.

They observe Hindu festivals. In Bara Banki, they also participate in Muslim festivals like Muharram.

Inter-community Relationship

Bansphors are considered to occupy one of the lowest level in the caste hierarchy. No caste accepts food or water from them. The Bansphors, however, accept food from all higher castes including Kurmi and Ahirs, but they do not take food from Dhobi, Nai, Pasi, Chamar, Bhangi and Nat, etc.

Excepting the commensal relations they come into contact with people of all castes to whom they supply articles of bamboo made by them. During the Zamindari days they were having *jajmani* relationship with the agricultural communities and they used to supply *bari*—a type of big bamboo basket for lifting water from the tanks for irrigation—but now it is reported that they sell their products. The Bansphor women also act as midwives and thereby they still maintain relations with the client families.

Bansphor informants reported that in the cities they were free to use public places but in rural areas they did not have free access to temples and to the villages wells of drinking water. They can draw water from the well only after the persons belonging to higher communities have already drawn water.

Structure of Social Control

The caste council under a hereditary president is a very powerful and influential body, the members of which are however only a sort of assessors to the president, who after consultation with them give any order that he pleases.

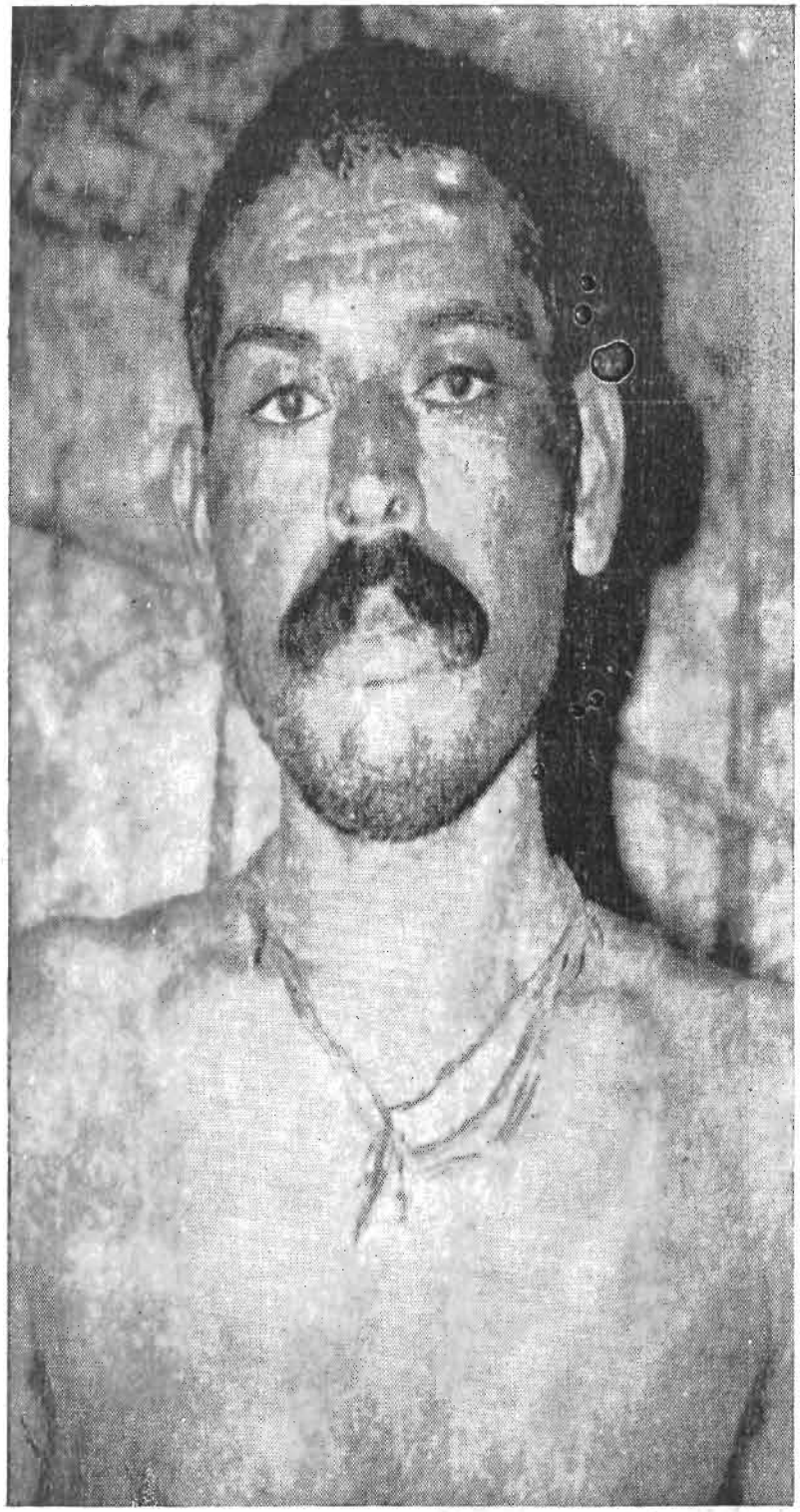
The Bansphors have their *Biradari* (caste *panchayats*) which deals with matters relating to caste, irregular unions, family quarrels, etc. The *panchayat* has a hereditary Chowdhry who presides over the *panchayat* meetings. During the field investigation, however, the Bansphors informed that they had not

been able to form any caste association which could take steps for the eradication of social evils or undertake reform measures. The members of the community generally live in small numbers in villages alongwith other castes and their inter-caste matters are dealt with by prominent persons of the villages concerned. Now the *Gram Sabha* generally deals with such matters and only the family matters or those which involve violation of commensal or marital rules of the caste area dealt by the *Biradari panchayat.*

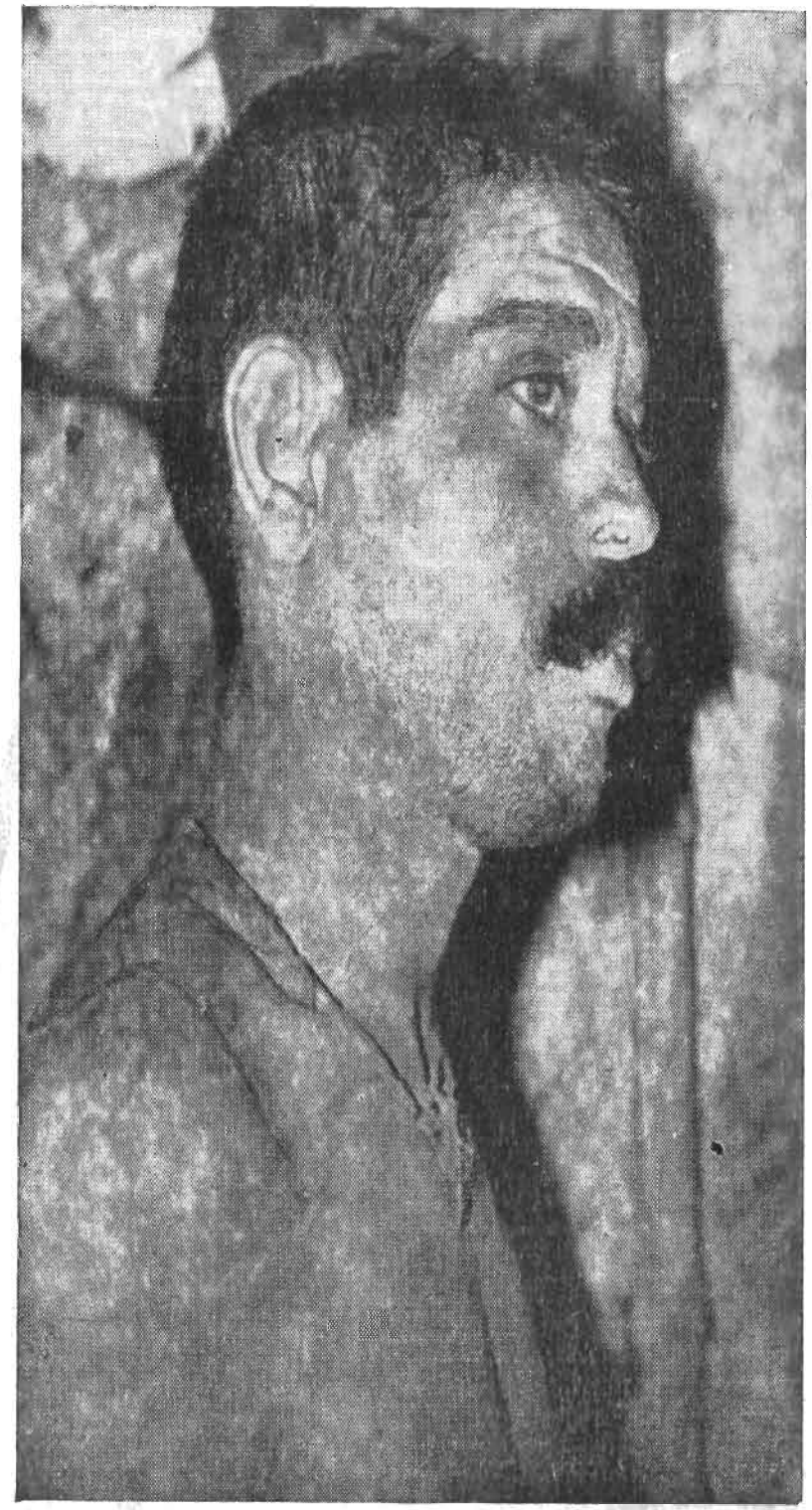
APPENDIX

Distribution of Bansphors in the Districts of Uttar Pradesh by sex and Rural-Urban Break-up

Serial no.	District	Rural		Urban		Total		
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Person
1	Naini Tal	..	..	1	..	1	..	1
2	Bijnor	1	1	..	..	1	1	2
3	Bareilly	..	..	29	25	29	25	54
4	Pilibhit	95	81	100	94	195	175	370
5	Shahjahanpur	12	7	..	..	12	7	19
6	Dehra Dun	136	100	..	..	136	100	236
7	Farrukhabad	..	..	..	1	..	1	1
8	Allahabad	9	7	..	..	9	7	16
9	Jhansi	..	81	..	..	..	81	81
10	Jalaun	24	232	..	..	24	32	256
11	Hamirpur	..	..	2	..	2	..	2
12	Banda	16	13	..	—	16	13	29
13	Kheri	88	47	—	..	88	47	135
14	Sitapur	264	207	6	3	270	210	480
15	Lucknow	283	264	42	30	325	294	619
16	Bahraich	1,221	954	100	64	1,321	1,018	2,339
17	Gonda	228	207	58	21	286	228	514
18	Bara Banki	1,805	1,560	..	—	1,805	1,560	3,365
19	Faizabad	..	..	5	1	5	1	6
20	Sultanpur	53	49	—	..	53	49	102
21	Basti	51	66	2	—	53	66	119
22	Gorakhpur	416	369	179	107	595	476	1,071
23	Deoria	988	954	69	97	1,057	1,051	2,108
24	Azamgarh	357	458	155	132	512	590	1,102
25	Jaunpur	..	3	1	7	1	10	11
26	Ballia	467	459	111	122	578	581	1,159
27	Ghazipur	308	213	17	12	325	225	550
28	Varanasi	9	53	15	4	24	57	81
29	Mirzapur	9	16	..	..	9	16	25
	Total	6,840	6,401	892	720	7,732	7,121	14,853



Front view of a Bansphor



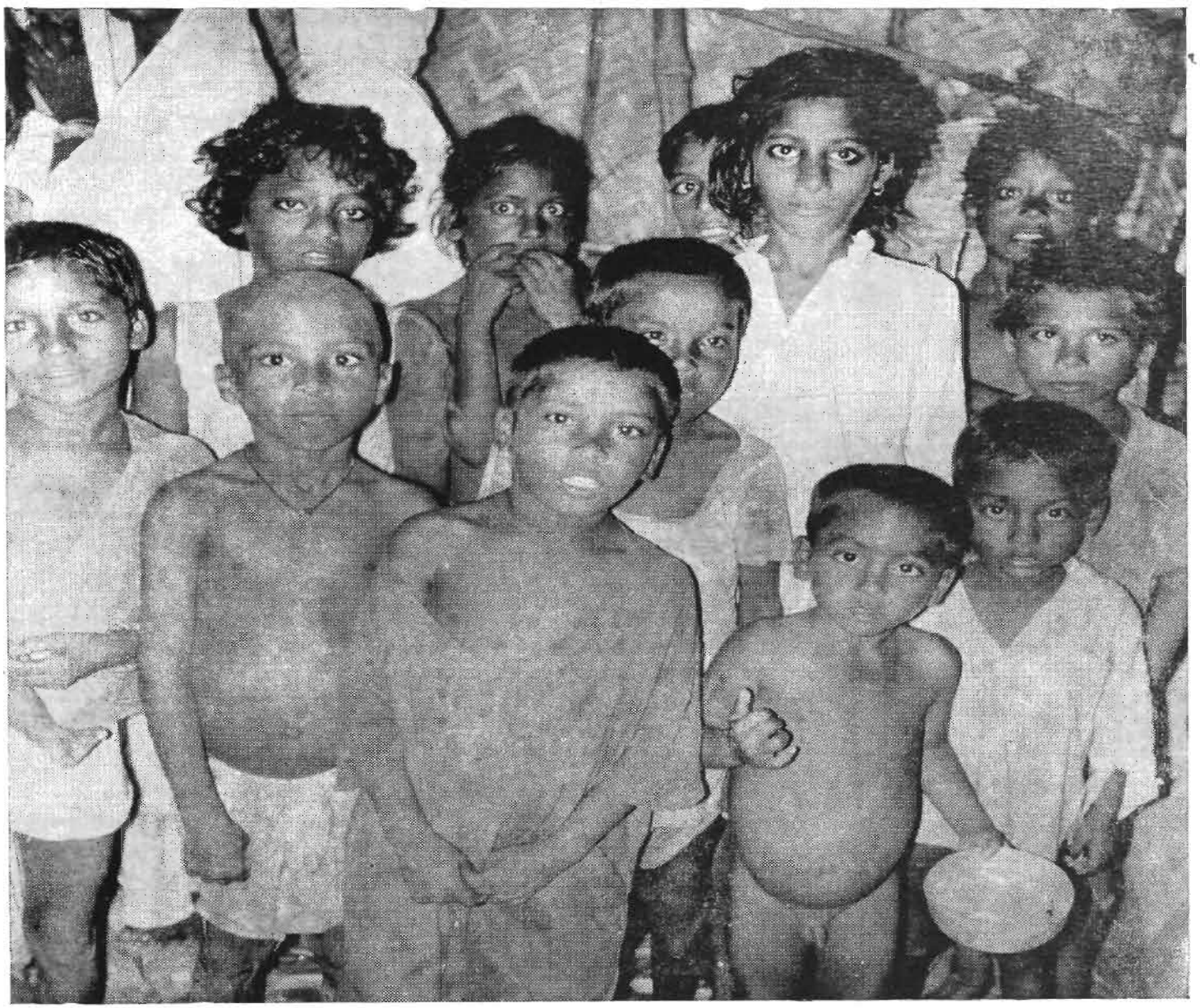
Profile of a Bansphor



Tatto Mark on the forearm of a young Bansphor woman



A group of Bansphor women



A group of Bansphor children

BARWAR

BARWAR

Name and Origin

Barwars belong to scheduled castes in U. P. In the districts of Gonda, Hardoi, Sultanpur and Bareilly they were notified as a Criminal Tribe[1] vide the Criminal Tribes Act, 1872.

The word Barwar means 'a bearer of burden'. According to Crooke[2] (1896) they are a branch of the Kurmi caste separated from the main stock because of their bad character. A story of their origin, current among the Barwars of Gonda, is as follows :

Some members of this caste were living in some estate of the Basti District. They called themselves Kurmis. One day a youngman was ploughing his field when, incidentally, he raised his head and noticed that a crow was carrying away a precious necklace. He chased the crow and recovered the necklace with a little effort. He sold the necklace for a substantial amount and it dawned on him that he could not have earned so much money even after years of cultivation. He began to think of ways to become rich by easy means. With this idea he adopted the profession of thieves. He also found four or five like-minded followers. They soon gained notoriety in the area on account of their activities of stealing and the Ruler of that estate exiled them. They came to a place west of Basti and established their homes there. They dug wells and cleaned the forests. All their property was raised by the money collected through stealing. Their past life was soon found out by the local population and they drove them away. They then moved to Gonda where they established themselves. This place came to be known as Dhanepur named after Dhanai Barwar, leader of that gang.

Barwars associate their caste with Raja Devi Bux Singh of Gonda and attribute their degeneration into criminals to their close association with the Raja. It is stated that when the said Raja came to know of these people, he invited and appointed them on important posts in his estate. In the mutiny of 1857 when the Raja fought against the Britishers, the Barwars helped the Raja and escorted him to a place of safety in Nepal after the downfall of the estate. Some of them settled down in Nepal. When the Britishers came to know that the Barwars were the Raja's accomplices, they branded them as criminals.

The Barwars are an endogamous lot. Till some time past, they were found in two sects, namely, Swangs and Ghulams. The Swangs were the real Barwars and the Ghulams their slaves adopted by them. In course of time the two have so intermixed that the distinction between them has vanished. Traditionally, Swangs do not inter-marry with Ghulams but it could not be ascertained by investigation to what extent this is obeyed as no Ghulam was available. The Barwar Navayuvaka Sangh reported that the Ghulams found in the past had been absorbed in the main community. Ghulams were admitted into the caste by adoption or by kidnapping of children.

Blunt[1] has mentioned 3 categories of Barwars (1) Swangs who were pure Barwars, (2) Ghulams, who were the kidnapped children of various castes and their descendants, and (3) Tilams who were the children kidnapped by Ghulams and their descendants. He has further stated that Swangs were endogamous whereas Ghulams and Tilams inter-married.

No Tilams were, however, reported by the Swang Barwars in the district of Gonda.

Distribution and Population Trend

According to 1961 Census, the population of Barwars is 6,303 of whom 3,162 are males and 3,141 females. The population of Barwars has been reported from 20 districts of the State. Their district-wise population has been shown in the Appendix. They are concentrated in district Gonda where alone 63.7 per cent of their State population lives. The only other districts having sizeable population of Barwars are Allahabad (757), Bareilly (509), Hardoi (288) and Rampur (252).

1. Ayyangar, A. : *Criminal Tribes Act Enquiry Committee Report*—1949-50. p. 12.
2. Crooke, W. : *The Tribes and Castes of the North Western Provinces and Oudh*, Vol. II, Cal. 1896.

Taking the population of Barwars as a whole, their sex-ratio comes to 993 females per 1,000 males. But in the districts of Almora, Farrukhabad, Allahabad, Banda, Hardoi, Gonda, Azamgarh and Varanasi the females outnumber the males.

81.8 per cent of Barwars are found in the rural areas and 18.2 per cent in the urban areas of the State.

Family

Family among Barwars is patrilocal with patronymic designation. After marriage the woman goes to stay with the husband. Normally, a family is a group consisting of husband, wife and their unmarried children, but among Barwars the cases of married children living with parents are quite common. Barwars have a peculiar rule of inheritance, by which the property is divided, half going to the children of the regular married wife and the other half to the children of concubine, provided they belong to Barwar caste. The off-springs of a woman of another caste have no right to inheritance. If a widow re-marries an outsider, she loses the right of guardianship over the children of the first marriage and has no right of succession to the estate of her first husband.

Dwellings

Barwar informants in Gonda reported that in the past they used to lead nomadic lives but now most of them had settled down in the rural areas. In villages their houses are found in the vicinity of high caste Hindus. At some places, however, they are somewhat segregated from the main habitation. In rural areas, they live in small single-storeyed *kachcha* houses. The roof of the house is generally covered with tiles and in some cases with thatch also. Mostly the walls are *kachcha* ; here and there, they are made of unbaked-bricks. Average dimensions of a house are 35′×25′. It consists of one long room, 15′×18′, with verandah. The rooms have only one door each, without any ventilator or window. There are no bath rooms or privies inside the houses. Their women generally take bath at the village tank or well. In most houses, the kitchens are in the verandahs.

In the city, a few Barwars have constructed *pucca* structures. In the locality of Patel Nagar in Gonda, a former M.L.A. belonging to the Barwar caste, has built a two-storeyed house.

Dress

The male attire consists of *dhoti* and *kurta* or shirt and *pyjamas*. Pants and bush-shirts are worn by the younger members of the community, specially those in service. In the villages a *sash* is usually kept on the shoulders by men. Women generally wear coarse *dhoti* with broad borders and *jumper* (a loose blouse) while infants are scantly dressed. Very few among them now use *lehnga* and *orhni*. Female children wear frocks, shirts and underwears.

Ornaments

The ornaments worn by the women are mostly made of bronze or nickel. Silver and gold ornaments are also used by those who can afford them. The ornaments generally worn by the females are *Hansuli, Kara, Sutiya, Bunda, Jhumka, Chhara, Anguthi* etc. Women also wear glass bangles on the wrist.

Males do not wear ornaments. A few of them can, however, be seen wearing finger rings and armlets on their arms or neck.

Tattooing

Tattooing is not very common, but some women got their wrists tattooed with floral or small geometrical designs at local fairs simply for decoration. No sanctity is attached to tattooing. On the contrary, some males who had some kind of tattoo marks on their wrists or below it testified that it helped identification of persons indulging in criminal activities. Such markings are, however, not very common now.

Food

Barwars are non-vegetarian by habit and preference. They eat the flesh of sheep, goat, pig, hare, birds and fish but abstain from taking beef. Their staple food is rice, *kodon* (inferior variety of rice) *sawan* and pulses. Seasonal vegetables like potato, onion, pumpkin and gourd and leafy vegetables are taken when easily available in the village. *Mahua* flowers and *mahua* fruits are dried during summer months and stored to meet their requirement in the lean period as substitute for cereals. Their food generally consists of coarse grains like *bejhar,*

jwar, bajra, and barley. Wheat is eaten on special occasions only like marriages and festivals.

Toddy and country liquor of *mahua* are also taken. The use of *charas* and *ganja* (hemp) is very common because these intoxicants are readily available.

Household Articles

In Matheypur village, in Tarabganj tahsil of Gonda district, it was observed that Barwars generally had cheap bamboo cots woven with *moonj* string, household utensils of aluminium and brass and earthen pitchers for storing water. But people who live in towns and are in service, possess furniture, cots of better quality, sofa-sets, tables and chairs. A few well-to-do also have radio sets, floor carpets and door curtains.

Environmental Sanitation

The dwellings of the Barwars are constructed haphazardly. Often they are huddled together which makes for a great deal of congestion. The open drains flow into the streets. During the rainy season the water accumulates in the ditches outside their houses and over-runs the lanes. Arrangements for scavenging or cleaning do not exist and the stagnant water breeds mosquitoes and flies. The dirt and refuge is generally deposited just outside the house which makes the environment unhygienic.

The Barwars from Gonda district claimed that they were particular about personal hygiene. They clean their teeth with *neem* or *mahua* twigs but they are not accustomed to taking bath regularly. Their clothes are often dirty. They explain this by saying that they have to work in the fields where naturally their clothes are soiled. Moreover, they have very few clothes.

Disease and Treatment

The common diseases reported by people are fever, cough and cold, dysentery, stomach ailments, etc. Generally, locally available treatment is resorted to in such cases. But when this fails, help of *Ojhas* is also sought. Abortion, premature death, hysteria, etc. are all considered to be due to the wrath of the evil spirits and unless they are duly propitiated, there is no escape from these. With the opening of Hospitals and Dispensaries, the services of compounders and doctors are also now utilised.

Language and Literacy

Barwars claim to have a language of their own and call it Barwari. In fact it is not a language. Only Hindi words are twisted in some peculiar way so that the meaning is understood by them alone. This type of code language had to be contrived by them perhaps on account of their criminal ways. But this language is not much in use now because things have changed. In Gonda district, they speak the Awadhi dialect of Hindi.

Literacy among the Barwars is low. According to 1961 Census it is only 11 per cent as against general literacy rate of 17.65 per cent in the State. Among male Barwars about 20.3 per cent are literate while among females the literacy rate is only 1.6 per cent which is exceedingly low in comparison with the State figure (7.02 per cent). According to the Census of 1961 there are 454 males and 48 females who are literate without any educational standard. 171 males and 4 females have passed the Junior Basic and only 17 males are matriculate. But from the field investigation it was gathered that there were a few graduates also in this community.

According to Barwar informants in Gonda, the attitude of people of other castes towards them also stood in their way in pursuing studies. One such case was reported during the field study of a student of class X. J. P., aged 18 years, comes of a poor family. His father, a peon in tahsil, died when he was eight years old. His mother had to look after him and his younger sister. The family owned two *kachcha* bighas of land. He was married at the age of six and his sister at five. His mother was getting some twelve rupees per month as pension. She worked for feeding herself and her children. After many hurdles, this boy passed VIIIth class from the Majhgaon Junior High School and proceeded to Gonda to join IXth class in an Intermediate college there. He approached an M. L. A. for help who promised to give it. The boy went to the concerned office for a seat in the Harijan hostel and scholarship. He faced much difficulty in getting admitted to the hostel and the matter received attention only when the then M. L. A. intervened.

The Barwar students in the primary classes are also not treated properly. They are forced by some unscrupulous teachers to indulge in anti-social activities like picking of articles, theft, etc. It was

reported by a student J, of class IV that a few months ago he was punished by his class teacher for beating a fellow student, who was teasing him by saying that his father was a thief. The same teacher after sometime demanded an umbrella from him. On his expressing his inability to supply one, the teacher asked him to pick it up from the railway station for him. He complied and presented umbrella to his teacher. The matter did not end here. When the news reached the other teachers, they also wanted to have umbrellas likewise.

One teacher of a local primary school, who was contacted, had different views about the Barwar children. He informed that since the Barwar students were getting scholarships for study, they outnumbered the students belonging to other castes. But their family background made them disobedient, crafty and light-fingered. They saw their elders indulging in theft and pick-pocketing and took to their ways.

The Barwar Navyuwak Sangh realised the necessity of proper education of Barwar children. For this the contacts of the child in the formative stage with elders had to be kept at the lowest minimum. The association approached the Government to start an Ashram-type of school for the Barwar children to achieve this. In December, 1966 an institution by the name of Rajkiya Ashram Pranali School was opened near the collectorate at Gonda. It has been provided with facilities of boarding and lodging for the inmates. There are five classes. At the time of survey, there were 99 students on roll, reading in different classes.

The caste-wise break-up of the students in different classes, is furnished below :

Class	Number of Students	Students belonging to Caste			
		Barwar	Pasi	Khatik	Mallah
I	50	36	8	6	..
II	14	10	3	..	1
III	12	7	3	1	1
IV	15	13	2	..	..
V	8	6	2	..	..
Total. ..	99	72	18	7	2

The school is housed in an old but spacious building. The students are provided with wooden cots, beddings and meals. A resident Superintendent looks after the arrangements and the inmates. A nurse is also appointed for giving first aid facilities to the students. The present staff of the school includes four teachers, one Superintendent, one Assistant Superintendent, one Clerk, one Store-keeper and a Psychologist. Among the teachers, one belongs to the Brahmin caste and one each to the Barwar, Pasi and Dhobi castes. There is a lady music teacher also. The school proposes to start teaching agriculture to students. A plot of eight acres has been allotted to this institution to start farming. The teachers informed that among the students, the Barwar children were the most unruly in the beginning. They used to slip out at night by jumping over the boundary wall, but with the passage of time they improved and became amenable to discipline

Economic Life

In district Gonda where Barwars are concentrated, agriculture is the mainstay of the people. But the Barwars did not possess much land. They were given small pieces of land for cultivation, when they were rehabilitated in villages.

The figures of 1961 Census show that out of a total population of 6,303, 2,458 or 38.9 per cent are workers and 3,845 or 61.1 per cent are non-workers. From the classification of workers among the Barwars, it is seen that 1,819 or 74 per cent are cultivators and 176 or 7.1 per cent agricultural labourers. The next important group is service which accounts for 220 persons followed by Trade and Commerce (75 persons) Transport and communication (61 persons) household industry and manufacturing other than household industry (46 persons each). Only 14 persons are found to be engaged in construction and one person is in the livestock industry. It is quite clear that Barwars are mostly agriculturists and from the field inquiry it was also confirmed that they have been provided land under rehabilitation schemes.

The Barwars are today working in schools, Government departments, factories and mills. Some of them have gone to Kanpur to work as labourers in the mills there.

The Barwar informants in Gonda said that some Barwars earned their livelihood by criminal

methods, like petty theft, shop-lifting and pick-pocketing. A gang of pick-pockets is organised to operate at railway or bus stations and shops. It normally consists of 5–7 persons. It moves out of the district to some fairs, festivals or marriages where the rush is great and the crooks can lose themselves in the crowds.

Life cycle

Birth

Among the Barwars no ceremony is observed during the period of pregnancy. The first child is usually born at the husband's house. The expectant mother is not put to any restrictions except that she is not allowed to visit haunted places or go out after dusk. The delivery takes place in a small room on the ground kept apart for the purpose. A Kori woman is called in at least for the first delivery. Otherwise, elderly women of the caste perform the duty of midwives themselves. The umblical cord is cut by a sickle (*hansua*) and is buried in the nearly field. The *dai* attends on the mother for six days. After her first bath the *Nain* (Barber woman), starts massaging the mother and the child. On the twelth day, the mother and child are given purificatory bath in warm water. The mother is then considered pure. On this day some families give a feast to the brotherhood but generally only *gur* is distributed.

The new born child is given a name after a month or so but no ceremony is performed for this. The child is usually named by the grandfather or some other elderly member of the family. Of late, the Barwars have also started going to Brahmin priests to find out the auspicious hour (*sait*) and the *rashi* name.

Marriage

Barwars are usually monogamous but cases of polygamy are also found. Previously, child marriage was the rule but now adult marriages are preferred. The case history of two students, one reading in class X and the other in class V shows that they were married at the age of six. An instance of adult marriage was that of a clerk in the courts who was married at the age of 19 years. The general consensus of the people regarding age of marriage continues to be in favour of early marriage *i.e.* 10–14 years for boys and 8–12 years for girls.

The junior levirate is permitted but not enforced. Cases of sororate are also found. Widow marriage is permissible.

Marriage is settled through negotiations. The girl's side approaches the boy's father and if every thing goes well, the former gives Rs.1.25 to the latter as a token of acceptance of the proposal. Since marriage is settled at an early age, wishes of the boy or the girl are not ascertained. After sometime, the dates of marriage and connected ceremonies are finalised in consultation with the Brahmin priest and the first ceremony of *Barchhekai* is performed by the girl's side. In this ceremony, an amount of Rs.5 is given to the boy's side symbolising that the marriage is settled. It is followed by another ceremony known as *Tilak* in which the girl's side sends whatever cash and clothes it can afford.

The actual marriage is performed at the girl's house. The marriage party along with the bridegroom reaches the girl's house on the appointed day. The boy and the girl go round the fire seven times and perform the *Bhanwar* ceremony which is the binding part of the marriage. The marriage party stays on at the bride's place for a couple of days and returns thereafter leaving the bride with her parents. The *Gauna* ceremony is performed when the boy and the girl come of age or whenever the parents of the boy feel the necessity of the daughter-in-law's presence in their house. In some cases the *Gauna* is performed after 7-8 years of marriage. But with the increase in the age of marriage the *Gauna* ceremony is now peformed within a year or two of the marriage.

In the past, marriage negotiations were carried on by the females because the males were indefinitely out on their criminal missions. The women even used to go in the *barat* (marriage party). The informants thought that the custom was all right in view of the circumstances that existed in their society then. But now the members of the community were leading settled agricultural life. Their *panchayat* had, therefore, stopped this practice and the women do not have an upper hand in negotiating marriages any more.

Divorce is permissible but through caste *panchayat*, though the divorced woman is not allowed to remarry.

Death

The Barwars cremate their dead. But those who die of burning, drowning, small-pox, or cholera are buried or immersed in the river. Children are also buried. The dead body is carried on a bamboo bier known as *Tikhti* on their shoulders by the mourners. The chief mourner first holds the bier along with other close male relatives. Generally, death rites are performed by the eldest son, or, in his absence, by the younger son or brother. In case of married females, the husband should perform the rites. Pyre is lighted by the chief mourner under the direction of some elderly man. After the cremation is over, the man who lights the pyre pours water on it for nine days and gets his head and moustache shoven on the tenth day. He cooks his meals separately in earthen pots and does not prepare bread on the *tawa* (pan). On the tenth day the Maha Brahmin is invited and gifts are given to him in the name of the departed soul.

They also observe the first death anniversary of the departed but do not follow the *pitra-paksh*, a fortnight meant for making offerings to the dead ancestors in the month of Asvina.

Religion

Barwars are followers of the Hindu religion. They worship all gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon and observe the festivals connected with them. However, they have more faith in the regional goddesses (*devi*) like *Phoolmati, Korhim, Samey,* etc. They say they also visit tombs of Muslim *pirs* and offer pieces of cloth and milk pudding to them for their blessings.

During the *Navratri* period of *Chaitra* and *Kuar* months they worship the goddesses *Durga* and *Kali*. The village deity *Bhooian Devi* and *Samey Devi* are propitiated with great pomp and show. All the families of the caste contribute for their yearly *puja*.

Barwars have strong belief in ghosts and spirits and are highly superstitious. Diseases and untoward incidents of daily life are attributed to evil spirits. The *Ojhas* are consulted and their prescriptions followed which normally include sacrifice of goat or burning of incense.

Tuesday, Friday and Sunday are considered auspicious days. The appearance of an oilman (*teli*), a widow, and a one-eyed person is considered as a bad omen.

Structure of Social Control

Barwars in Gonda district have traditional caste *panchayat*. Before dealing with the caste *panchayat*, it would be better to throw some light on their past position and way of life.

Barwar is a denotified tribe. In 1872, the British Government brought a few communities, like Barwar, Khatik, Pasi etc. under the Criminal Tribes Act because of their criminal propensities. The legend of their origin also lends support to the belief that they had such tendencies. In the Gonda district where this caste is largely found, Barwars were subject to police surveillance. In 1924, four police posts were established at the following places:

1. Pura Pawar in Wazirganj Police Station.
2. Mainkapur in Adliari Police Station.
3. Shivanagar in Dhanepur Police Station.
4. Durhapur in Dhanepur Police Station.

Till 1939 these police outposts functioned and the Barwars were kept under strict police surveillance. At village level, the village headman used to take attendance of the Barwars. On account of all these restrictions the Barwars were put to great harassment and shame. They were left to the mercy of the functionaries supposed to keep a watchful eye on them for earning their livelihood. In the absence of other means of occupation they indulged in criminal activities all the more with the connivance of the *Mukhia* or the police. These persons used to get lion's share of the money and articles stolen by the Barwars. A department of rehabilitation was opened in 1939 which was responsible for rehabilitating the criminals of the district. Some years ago rehabilitation of the Barwars was done in a place known as Gandhigram on Manikapur road where 60 families were allotted 4 bighas of land each for cultivation. But the Brahmins and Thakurs forced them to abandon cultivation and the land has since been grabbed by them.

In Gonda district, some of the Barwars were reported to be criminals and alleged to be indulging in petty thefts, pick-pocketing, shop lifting, picking articles of unwary passengers at railway stations, etc. They also admit that they indulge in such criminal activities but vehemently refute the charge that they also commit burglary and robbery. According to them, no Barwar would commit theft by right. Now

they are leading settled life depending on agriculture, labour, service in government offices or mills and factories for their livelihood.

At the village level the caste *panchayat* functions to decide matters relating to the community, *e.g.* extra-marital relations, family disputes division of property, irregular unions and other things which may bring a bad name to the community. If the number of families in a particular village is too small, 2-3 villages form a *biradari panchayat* jointly. The post of Chowdhry *i.e.* head of the *panchayat,* was originally hereditary but of late some hereditary Chowdhries have been replaced by new ones on the basis of merit.

The Barwars reported that in Gonda district there are three regional traditional *panchayats* which have jurisdiction over a number of villages. These three *panchayats* have headquarters at Gaura, Bhitaura and Uttaraha and the number of villages which come under their jurisdiction are 16, 25 and 40 respectively. These *panchayats* (locally called *Jawar panchayats* do not meet frequently. The informant remembered only two meetings of the *jawar panchayat* which was set five years ago to take decisions regarding some social reforms proposed to be introduced.

In 1950 a *panchayat* of the Barwars at district level was formed in Gonda. It had four Chowdhries, namely, Sri Ram, Kashi Ram, Ramsaran and Ram Sunder and 60 *pracharaks* (workers) to visit villages and educate the members of the Barwar community to uproot social evils prevalent amongst them. Most of the above workers and office bearers of the *panchayat* were working in the mills at Kanpur. They found it difficult to visit Gonda frequently. The Barwar Navyuvak Sangh was also founded with almost similar aims and objectives about the same time. This led to some differences with the *panchayat.* Thus, the *panchayat* remained active hardly for a year and became ineffective and for all practical purposes extinct thereafter.

One Sri G. P. who was a *mazdoor* in the Kanpur Swadeshi Mills took initiative to reform the community in 1930-31. He was a man of revolutionary character and advocated the cause of his brotheren who were maltreated at the hands of the mill authorities in Kanpur. He consolidated the community, led processions and organized meetings and strikes. He was imprisoned 10 times for his activities. After independence of the country, he succeeded in establishing an organisation, the Barwar Navyuvak Sangh, in Gonda at the District level.

The Zila Barwar Navyuvak Sangh was established with the following aims and objectives :

(*a*) To seek abrogation of the Criminal Tribes Act applied to the community from time to time.

(*b*) To curb the criminal tendencies of the members of the community.

(*c*) To bring about social reforms and to introduce good and respectable customs.

(*d*) To find out avenues for the economic betterment of the community and to persuade caste-fellows to adopt respectable means of livelihood.

(*e*) To popularise education in the community.

The present set-up of the organisation consists of one President, one Vice-President, one Secretary, one Assistant Secretary and a Treasurer. There is also an executive committee consisting of 13 members. There are 350 members of this association who pay a membership fee of one rupee each annually. The members of the association belong to the Swang subcaste and are mostly literate and enlightened.

The meetings of the Barwar Navyuvak Sangh are held once a month. The annual meetings are organised at different places in the district. The Deputy Commissioner of Gonda is also invited to the annual meeting and a memorandum of their demands and grievances is then submitted to him. The following resolutions were passed at the last annual meeting and submitted to the Deputy Commissioner :

(1) Starting of an *ashram* type school in Gonda for the education of the children of the Barwar and other denotified tribes and enforcement of compulsory education for them.

(2) Filling up class IV posts, like peons in the Government departments from the literate Barwar persons.

(3) Protecting them from the police and their agents who frequently implicate them under section 109 Cr. P. C. though the Barwars never commit burglaries.

(4) Increasing the scholarship meant for the education of the Barwar caste to Rs.10,000.

(5) Giving of licences of Government shops to Barwars.

(6) Vesting ownership of the land of the Barwars in the Collector of the district, as in the pre-zamindari abolition days, so that the fear of forcible ejectment from land may cease to exist.

Resolutions and memorandum of similar type were submitted to the Government for the redress of the sufferings of the members of the Barwar caste, perpetuated by the stronger sections of the society.

The Barwar Navyuvak Sangh also took steps to eradicate social evils found within the community. The earliest step in this direction was taken in 1938 though there was no organization in existence at that time. It was for stopping women from going with marriage parties, as the high caste Hindu did not follow any such custom. Though the move was initially opposed by some members of the caste, they ultimately accepted it. The origin of this custom has already been discussed under marriage.

Another important step towards social reform was taken in 1956 when the caste organisation decided to persuade its members to desist from taking cash payment in settling marriages and at the *tilak* ceremony. This was accepted by the caste without much opposition.

In 1960 the proposal for stopping use of liquor in marriages came up. But it was not easy to enforce it because the liquor was to be offered by the bride's side to the marriage party.

On account of the changing times and rise in prices another important decision was taken in 1966 regarding number of days for the stay of a marriage party. The usual practice was for the marriage party to stay at the bride's house for two or three days which meant heavy financial burden on the bride's parents. So it was unanimously decided to restrict the stay of *barat* (marriage party) to one day. This decision was hailed by all excepting the very orthodox section of the community.

The organisation, besides making efforts in the interest of the Barwar caste, also approached the State Government for a fair deal to all Harijans. With the opening of Development Blocks, the Block Development Officers were required to distribute subsidy and grants to the Harijans. It was, however, found that the major portion of the sanctioned amounts was not being distributed among the Harijans by the Block authorities. The organisation, therefore, approached the Government and had the set-up changed. The money is now distributed through the Harijan Welfare Department.

APPENDIX

District-wise Distribution of Barwar Population in Uttar Pradesh

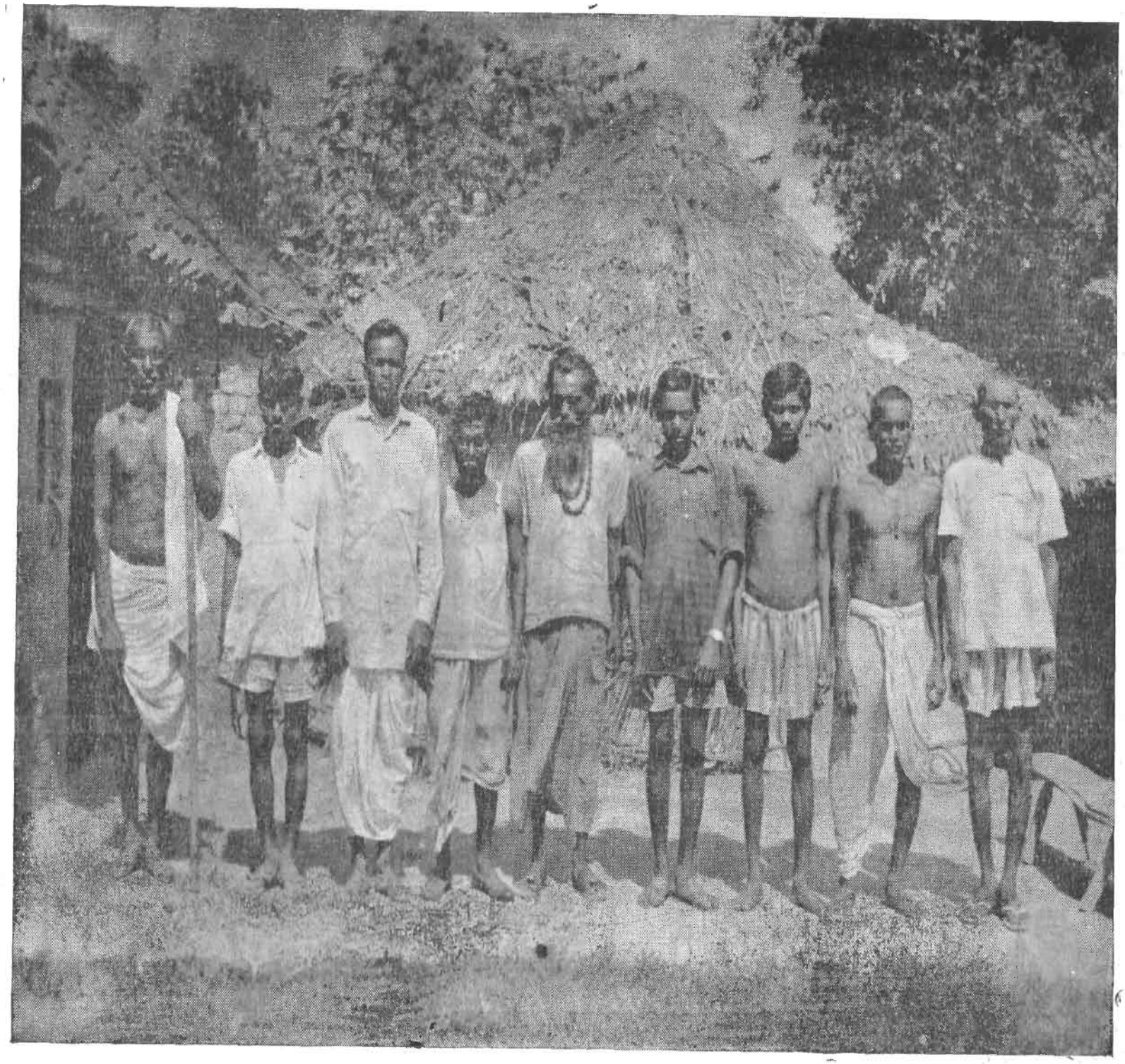
Sl. no.	District	Total Population			Rural		Urban	
		Persons	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
1	Almora	3	1	2	..	..	1	2
2	Rampur	252	184	68	1	..	183	68
3	Bareilly	509	266	243	..	..	266	243
4	Shahjahanpur	53	35	18	..	..	35	18
5	Meerut	147	84	63	..	..	84	63
6	Mathura	4	3	1	..	..	3	1
7	Farrukhabad	62	27	35	27	35	..	..
8	Etawah	3	3	..	..	..	3	..
9	Kanpur	4	4	..	4	..	..	..
10	Allahabad	757	336	421	336	421	..	..
11	Banda	6	2	4	2	4	..	..
12	Hardoi	288	110	178	109	178	1	..
13	Lucknow	5	3	2	..	..	3	2
14	Bahraich	1	1	..	1	..	..	..
15	Gonda	4,014	2,002	2,012	2,002	2,012	..	..
16	Faizabad	156	83	73	..	..	83	73
17	Deoria	5	3	2	..	..	3	2
18	Azamgarh	19	4	15	4	15	..	..
19	Varanasi	7	3	4	..	..	3	4
20	Mirzapur	8	8	..	..	..	8	..
	Total ..	6,303	3,162	3,141	2,486	2,665	676	476



A Barwar couple



Front view of a Barwar woman



A group of Barwar males



A Barwar house



A Barwar priest

BELDAR

BELDAR

Name and Origin

Beldar derives its name from Bel or mattock and the persons engaged in digging earth with mattock are called Beldars. Beldar is thus an occupational name. In Gorakhpur district of Uttar Pradesh, where Beldars were studied it was reported that though the name is occupational, they were people belonging to the Beldar caste. According to them, other castes like Kurmi, Ahir, Pasi, etc. who were engaged in earth work were also referred to as Beldars and not by their respective castes by the contractors and the supervisory staff, like overseers, engineers, etc. All Beldars, by occupation other than those who are not Beldars by caste, call themselves by their castes. Elliot[1] (1869) has mentioned that "the Beldars now met with, are composed mostly of different inferior tribes Kachhis, Kurmis, Chamars and others who follow the occupation of digging." Risley[2] (1891) has also mentioned that "the term Beldar has yielded much confusion because it means mattock bearer. Besides denoting a distinct endogamous group it is a generic name for the common low caste Hindus employed in earth work".

The present description is about persons who are Beldars by caste and not to others engaged in the occupation of earth digging but who belong to other castes.

The origin of Beldars is obscure. Rose[3] (1911) says "they claim descent from one Bhagirat who vowed never to drink twice out of the same well and so dug a fresh one every day. They are said to claim Rajput or Kshatriya origin and to come from Marwar." Though the informants in Gorakhpur were not aware of their origin, they claim to be Rajputs and consider themselves degraded on account of their occupation of earth digging. Elliot[1] (1869) has referred to the Puranas in which their origin has been discussed thus :—'It is said that they descended from a Tayar boatman and a woman of the Ahir tribe".

Distribution and Population Trend

The Beldars are included in the list of scheduled castes in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and West Bengal. In Uttar Pradesh, their population, according to 1961 Census, is 59,247 distributed in 37 districts. The districtwise population showing urban and rural distribution is given in the Appendix. Their concentration has been reported from five districts, *viz.*, Pilibhit, Unnao, Gonda, Basti and Gorakhpur, the combined population of which accounts for 83.6 per cent of their total population in the State. In Gorakhpur district alone the population of Beldars is 26,698 and majority of them live in Gorakhpur tahsil itself.

Out of 59,247 Beldars of the State, 56,201 (94.9 per cent) are found in rural areas and 3,046 (5.1 per cent) in urban areas. The following table shows age and sex-wise distribution of Beldars :

Age-group	Persons	Males	Females
All ages	59,247	30,185	29,062
0—14	24,378	12,801	11,577
15—44	24,518	12,084	12,434
45 and above	10,323	5,289	5,034
Age not stated	28	11	17

Among the Beldar's population of the State, 30,185 are males and 29,062 females. Their sex-ratio comes to 963 female for every 1000 males, which is higher in comparison to that of the total population of the State (909).

Family

Family is a group of persons, who live under the same roof and are connected by nuclear and kinship ties and conciousness of kind on the basis of locality, interest and mutuality of obligations.

The family among the Beldar is patrilocal with patronymic designations. After marriage woman goes to live with her husband.

On the death of his father, his property is divided among the sons. The recent legislation granting right to daughters in the ancestrol property has no effect on the Beldars, although they are aware of it.

1. Elliot, H. M.; *The Races of the North-Western Provinces of India*, London, 1869, Vol. I, p. 16.
2. Risley, H. H. A.; *The Tribes and Castes of West Bengal*, Calcutta, 1891, Vol. I, pp. 86-87.
3. Rose, H. A.; *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North-West Frontier Province*, Lahore, 1911, Vol. III, pp. 175-176.

Dwellings

They live in villages having mixed population that is, inhabited by people of all castes. In village Son Barsa of Gorakhpur district, 20 houses of Beldars are found quite close to the houses of high caste Hindus. In this village the pattern of settlement is rather haphazard and houses are huddled together in semi-circular style. A well for drinking water is in the centre of these houses from which people of other castes, like, Kurmis, Ahirs and Banias also draw water.

The houses of Beldars in village Son Barsa are mostly *kachcha*, built of mud walls. Only 5 houses out of a total of 20 houses were found to be made partly unbaked and partly baked-bricks. Three residential structures are only huts made of bamboo poles with thatched low roof. These thatched huts are small single apartments of average size, 10′×12′, with no cooking place inside. The other houses are built on a bigger area *e.g.*, 30′×25′. These houses consist of one big long room of the size 20′×8′ and one small room 14′×8′, with only one door in each. In the *dalan*, a portion of the boundary wall is covered with tiled roof to serve as a kitchen. There is no privy or bath room. Women take their bath near the outlet for dirty water.

The houses are single-storeyed structures with tiled roofs over the rooms. The inner smaller room is used as a store room for household goods and the outer big room for sleeping. In a corner of this room, one or two big earthen containers (*dahr*) for storing grains are kept. In another corner, grain is also stored in the harvesting season. The interior is dark for want of proper ventilation. In some houses small windows are also seen. Some have bathing platforms and stands for pot of water. This is the result of efforts on the part of the workers of development block. The floor of the rooms, courtyard, etc. is *kachcha*. It is plastered occassionally with cow-dung and clay mixture. The houses of the Sabhapati and a Block employee have assumed distinction, due to the construction of pitios in them covered by corrugated iron tin-sheet with a *takhat* (dais) under it. The economic position of the owners of these houses is comparatively better. The Sabhapati is running a toddy shop on contract ; the block employee is a peon. The walls of these houses are made of baked-bricks on the outer side and of unbaked-bricks on the inner.

Informants said the pattern of houses in other villages was similar to this village. Beldars mostly live in *kachcha* houses in the main village side by side with people of other castes.

Dress

The normal dress for the male consists of coarse *dhoti* and *kurta* or shirt. Males are generally dressed scantly particularly during the hot months of the year when a *dhoti* reaching up to the knees is all that they wear, the upper part of the body being left bare. Sash (*Angochha*) is usually carried on the shoulders which is often tied round the head to protect it from the unkind sun. The children are dressed in an undershirt (baniyan) or shirt and an underwear or just a piece of cloth round the waist. The most convenient dress for males was said to be the *phatui* (a sort of half sleeved undershirt with two front pockets and an inner long pocket made of markin as upper garment).

The usual dress for women consists of coarse *dhoti* with floral or plain borders and *jumper* or short shirt. Some women were found to wear *lehnga*, a short skirt or blouse along with *orhni* as head cover. The young girls use underwears and shirts or frocks.

A little change in the matter of dress is noticeable. Some young males who go to school and those employed in offices have started using trousers, bush-shirts and *pyjamas*. Women prefer *saris* and blouses and the old *lehnga* is getting out of vogue. But on the occasion of marriage or certain rituals, married women still wear *lehnga*.

Mostly men wear country-made shoes but modern boots and *chappals* (*Hawai*) are also in use.

Food

The Beldars eat mutton, fish, eggs, pork but abstain from beef. Field rats are relished and dug out of the field after harvesting. Now and then, the flesh of rabbits, hedgehogs and fowls is also used.

Their daily food consists of coarse rice, pulses and bread of flour made from *bejhar*, barley, millet, etc. Generally when they go out to work-site, they carry parched grains, *sattu* (flour of parched barley and gram) and powdered salt and *gur*. These are for their mid-day meal. Occasionally vegetables are also

taken, particularly when these are grown in their own fields. Onion when green is used as vegetable and is very much relished.

Drinking of liquor and toddy is very common. Other intoxicants like hemp and *ganja* are frequently taken as these are easily available locally. Liquor is brewed from barley and dried *mahua* flowers at home and stored for consumption on festive occasions and marriages.

Ornaments and Other Material Objects

Ornaments are usually worn by females only. They are made of silver, brass and alloys. Males use none.

The women folk wear ornaments on different parts of the body *e.g.* head, nose, ears, neck, waist, arms, wrists, legs, toes etc. All the ornaments are not worn daily nor are all type of ornaments possessed by all. In daily life, the women wear nose ring, bangles on the wrists, *bunda* as ear rings, *bichia* on the toes, and *hansuli* on the neck. There are different types of necklaces, chains, beads and strings for the neck. The more common among them are known locally as *hansuli, kanthi, mala, guluband, hamel, haar, taunk* etc. The ornament worn round the waist is known as *kardhani* or *zanzir* or *tagri*. There are different type of ornaments worn on the wrist called *chhara, pachhela*. The ornaments tied round the arm is known as *bajuband*. The women wear ornaments on the ankles, made of alloy or brass and known as *pazeb, kara, lachcha, payal,* etc.

Tattooing is very popular. It was stated by an elderly woman of the Beldar caste that tattooing is essential for a woman because without it she cannot cook food in the kitchen after marriage. Various designs of tatoo marks are met with on the different parts of body. The most popular are floral designs on the wrist, picture of Hanuman or name of some god or goddess on the forearm. Some old women were tattooed on the chest and neck also.

Among the males tattooing is not so common but some of them were found to have tottoo marks on the wrist bearing their own names, or some small geometrical designs.

Environmental Sanitation

The dwelling structures of Beldars as also of other castes in the village are without proper planning. The houses are generally huddled together with little space in the front or back of the house. The residents no doubt clean their houses, but the sanitation of the lanes and by-lanes is nobody's concern. This results in the accumulation of garbage and dirt everywhere. Similarly drains from homes open into cesspools just outside. During the rainy season, these foul smelling cesspools overflow and submerge the lanes and by-lanes. All this leads to very insanitary conditions in the village. However, as has been already stated, the people of this caste do keep their houses clean by regularly sweeping the floor and plastering it with cowdung and clay on festive occasions.

Hygienic Habits Diseases and Treatment

Beldars take bath regularly though they do not use soaps or any other cleaning agent. They cannot, however, afford to wash their clothes daily as they have to work in fields or dig earth. Their women also take bath daily except during their periods when they do not cook. They clean their teeth with *neem* or *babul* twigs early morning and do not eat anything without washing their mouth. This rule is not applied strictly to children. The males get their heads shaven or their hair cut at intervals.

Women do not wash or clean hair regularly. They are not particular in dressing their hair. They wash hair with clay and after drying, use mustard oil and comb. Women killing lices on each other's heads during leisure hours of the day is a common sight.

The common diseases found among Beldars are fever, cold, stomach disorder, dysentery, goitre and skin troubles. In the past they used to resort to indigenous treatment alone for any type of ailment but now with the opening of Development Blocks, modern medical facilities are also available to them. But even then the disease is first treated with indigenous medicines and with the help of *ojhas* or sorcerers supposed to have magical power to cure. Doctors are consulted only as a last resort. For bodily injuries, cuts, wounds and boils, local medicines are frequently used. They are easily available and often more effective. In case of small cuts a paste of smooth clay is applied and *alsi* (linseed) paste is used for boils. During the hot season, an onion is hung round the neck to ward off effects of *loo*. The

syrup of raw mangoes is also administered in case of heat-stroke.

In case of small-pox known as *Mata* people do not take any medicine. This is supposed to be the result of the wrath of *Shitla Mai* and efforts are made to propitiate her with offerings. Every morning the female of the house offers water in pot, after it has been waived over the patient seven times, to the *neem* tree in wet clothes. On recovery of the patient, seven virgins are fed in the name of the goddess.

Now-a-days homeopathic system of treatment is also availed of by them, because in many places, including the village Son Barsa, some persons who keep homeopathic medicines give them free to the people for minor ailments.

Language and Literature

The Beldars of Gorakhpur as well as of other places speak Hindi, the only difference in their speech being the local variation of the prevalent dialects. Inside their homes and with people of their own caste or village, Bhojpuri, the local dialect is used, while speaking to outsiders, they converse in Khari Boli. They have no dialect of their own.

According to 1961 Census, literacy among Beldars is quite low. Only 2,133 out of 59,247 persons (*i.e.* 4.7 per cent) were returned as literate. In the rural areas the percentage of literacy is still lower, 3.36.

In urban areas, the percentage of their literacy comes to 7.9. However, this slightly higher rate of literacy in urban areas does not mean much as the urban population of Beldars is only 3,046. Beldars living in urban areas do send their children to schools in greater numbers than their bretheren in villages. Females are also sent to school in urban areas. There, among the females, 44 are literate without educational standard, 20 are junior basic and four matric.

Among the males, considering total population of Beldars, 2,043 are literate without educational standard, 538 are junior basic, 61 matric, two having technical diploma, four having non-technical and ten having graduate degrees. The males holding diplomas and degrees hail from urban areas only. No female has gone beyond matriculation.

Economic Life

According to 1961 Census, out of 59,247 persons, 28.514 are workers. This comes to 46.43 per cent. Sex-wise breakup of the working force shows that 18.379 out of 30,185 males and 9,135 out of 29,062 females are workers. It means that 60.8 per cent of the male population and 31.4 per cent of the female population constitute the working force. Female participation in economic activities is thus quite adequate.

Industrial classification of Beldars in U. P. as per 1961 Census is shown below :

Sl. no.	Occupation	Persons	Males	Females
1	Cultivation	18,305	12,759	5,546
2	*Agricultural Labour*	*6,382*	*3,248*	*3,134*
3	In Mining, Quarrying, Livestock etc.	..	..	..
4	Household Industry	330	204	126
5	Manufacture other than household Industry	876	844	32
6	Construction	192	152	40
7	Trade and Commerce	315	276	39
8	Transport, Storage and Communication	93	92	1
9	Other Services	947	734	213

It is evident from the above table that majority of the workers are engaged in cultivation, their percentage being 66.53. The next largest occupation followed by them is agricultural labour which accounts for 23.19 per cent. Though people of this community did not report any household industry carried on by them, the above table shows that 330 local persons are engaged in it. These persons may have been engaged in some sort of household industry, in other districts of U. P. but in Gorakhpur district only a few families are reported to have been engaged in producing vegetables. The next category of manufacture other than household industry accounts for 876 persons. These persons work in mills and factories in one capacity or the other. The number of persons engaged in construction is quite low *i.e.,* 192 persons. Beldars are mostly engaged in construction work of canals, bridges, bunds and dams. Such a small number of people engaged in this category suggests that this is not

their primary work. They seem to take up the work of construction only when they are free from agricultural operations. It was, however, gathered from village Son Barsa that about 50 per cent of the males, sometimes also accompanied by females, go out and earn wages in construction work. In trade and commerce 315 persons were engaged. They open small grocery shops or take petty contracts for supply of wood, bamboo, etc. One person of this community had a licence for a toddy shop in the village. He has employed two other caste fellow in his shop. Beldars have now started taking up service in Government offices, tahsils, development blocks, as well as in homes to work as domestic servants. This accounts for the 947 persons returned as engaged in other services.

Life Cycle

Birth

No ceremony is observed during pregnancy. The expectant mother is not put to any restrictions except during the first three months when chances of miscarriage are greater and the woman is not allowed to do heavy work or frequent haunted places like groves and abandoned wells after sunset. During pregnancy a woman carries out all her household duties. Only in the advanced stage, she is allowed to do light work. Miscarriage and abortion are attributed to evil spirits. A woman who has once miscarried is asked to wear a black charmed thread round her waist during her subsequent pregnancy.

Customs require that the first child be born at the home of the husband. Delivery takes place on the cot and a local *dai* of Chamar or Dom caste is called in for this. After delivery, she cuts the unbilical cord which is buried in a nearby field. She attends to the mother for 5-6 days. She massages her with mustard oil. After the purification bath, the barber woman (*nain*) takes over and attends to the woman for another week or so.

Males are not allowed to enter the delivery room for six days and a fire is kept burning at the entrance.

No ceremony is held for giving a name to the child.

Mundan or first hair cutting ceremony is observed both for boys and girls. It is held in the odd years, *e.g.* 1st, 3rd, 5th or 7th. Generally the hair cutting is done at some sacred place or on the banks of a river, or near a temple or the village *Devasthan*.

Marriage

Beldars are endogamous group. Child marriage is common among them. A boy of 6 to 8 years and a girl of 5 to 7 years are married. From the 1961 Census figures on age and marital status, it is found that in the age-group 0—14 there were 12,801 males and 11,577 females. Out of these 1,813 males and 2,365 females were married. This suggests that early marriages are quite frequent in this community.

Monogamy is the rule among the Beldars but a man may take second wife during the life-time of his first spouse if she bears no child.

The Beldars reported that they adhere to territorial exogamy and also avoid blood relations, mother's side for 3 generations and father's side 4 generations, in contracting marriages. The informants asserted that they do not marry within the same '*gotra*' but on enquiry it was found that they do not have any *gotra* at all. They have borrowed the *kashyap gotra* from higher castes but very few of them are aware of this. The exact position regarding *gotra* could not, however, be investigated in the field.

Marriage is settled by the parents of the boy and the girl. The proposal for marriage comes from the girl's side. The consent of the boy or girl is not taken as marriages generally take place early. After the marriage negotiation are over, the ceremony of betrothal is performed which is called ***Bar Rekhi***. In this ceremony the father or the brother of the girl along with the barber (*nai*) visits the boy's side and offer Rs.5 and a pair of clothes. The next ceremony is *phaldan* or *tilak* in which the girl's side sends metal utensils, clothes and turmeric coated rice along with cash to the boy's family. Some Brahmin priest is consulted to find out an auspicious date for the marriage. Generally dark fortnight of the month and *pitra-paksha* in the month of Asvina are avoided for marriage. Marriage usually takes place in the month of May and June when they are comparatively free from agricultural operations and have enough stock of cereals after the *Rabi* harvesting to feed relations and friends. On the appointed day the *barat* (marriage party) reaches the girl's place where they

are stationed in a grove or *panchayat ghar* and entertained with food and drink. The *barat* stays in the girl's village for 2 days. At the marriage, along with other ceremonies, *phera* or *bhanwar* takes place round the *Haris* (plough share). The groom and the bride go round it seven times. Where the girl is a minor, the ceremony of *gauna* takes place after a few years and she does not accompany her husband. In many cases when the girl's side is poor and is not in a position to feed and entertain the *barat, 'paipuja'* takes the place of *barat*. In this, the girl and two other relations go to the boy's house where the ceremonies are gone through. *'Paipuja'* is quite common among Beldars.

Widow marriage is permissible in the caste and such marriages take place without much ado. The intending suitor goes to the woman with pair of bangles and applies vermilion on the parting of her hair. This is followed by a feast to their *biradari*. Junior levirate is also practised but not enforced.

Divorce or *chhut* can be obtained with the permission of the *biradari panchayat* on grounds of infidelity, adultery or refusal of wife to stay with her husband. But cases of divorce are not frequent. In most cases members of the community bring about amicable settlement between husband and wife.

Death

The Beldars cremate their dead. But those who die of small-pox, cholera or snake-bite are buried or immersed in the flowing waters of a river. Children up to 8 years are also generally buried.

After death the body is taken out of the house and laid on the ground. It is washed and wrapped in coffin of unbleached cloth. A bier made of bamboo sticks and padded with grass is made on which the dead body is carried to the cremation ground. The news of death is sent to relations and friends in nearby villages and they come to give *matti* and accompany the dead to the cremation ground. The pyre is lit by the chief mourner, generally a son, or in his absence by some close relative. After the burning of the body, all persons return chewing *neem* leaves. They take bath before entering their houses. The mourner cooks his meals himself and sleeps on the floor. On the 10th day a Maha Brahmin is invited to officiate at the ceremony and given the deceased's belonging along with some gift in the shape of clothes, and utensils in the name of deceased.

The last rites of a married female are performed by the husband. The death of an aged person is welcome and his body is carried to the accompaniment of musical instruments. Beldars believe that after death the soul goes either to hell or heaven according to one's deeds. They also believe in re-birth.

Religion

The Beldars in U. P. are followers of the Hindu religion. In 1961 Census, all the Beldars returned under Hindu religion. They worship all the gods of the Hindu pantheon, the more important among them being *Shiva, Rama, Krishna* and goddesses like *Kali, Shitla, Durga*. In addition to these, they also pay homage to Muslim saints and *pirs*. They frequently visit their tombs and offer sheets of cloth at them.

The village *devasthans* are very much revered and worshipped on due occasions. The most important deity of the Beldars is *Bhooian* which is worshipped once in a year in the month of Asvina on a large scale. A *devasthan* is indicated by a raised platform under a *neem, peepal* or banyan tree. Stones or clay incons are placed on this platforms. *Devasthans* are dedicated to *Shitla, Bhagwati, Phoolmati* etc.

In Gorakhpur the temple of Gorakhnath is visited by Beldars.

They are superstitious and have a deep-rooted faith in ghosts and malignant spirits. Accidental deaths, epidemics or any other untoward happening in life is ascribed to the wrath of the evil spirits. Local witch-doctors are consulted to find out the reason for any misfortune and the remedy thereof.

The Beldars celebrate all the Hindu festivals, the more important being Holi, Divali, Dussehra and Guria. They also visit places of pilgrimage like Varanasi, Allahabad, Ayodhya and Mathura.

Inter-community Relationship

As stated earlier, Beldars do not suffer from, the stigma of untouchability. Further they consider themselves of Rajput origin but degraded by their occupation of earth digging.

Beldars live mostly in villages where inter-caste relations play a dominant role in day to day dealings. Functional castes like a Barhai, Lohar, Dhobi, Chamar and Mali serve them and in return they receive grains or cash. However, the commensal relations are restricted within the caste as among the lower castes, the social distances are observed more strictly in this matter. Chamars, Pasis, Doms and other lower castes do not accept food (*kachcha* or *pakka*) from them and *vice versa*. Beldars accept food and water from higher castes like Rajputs, Brahmins and Vaishyas. They accept only *pakka* food from Kurmis, Ahirs and Kachhis.

In the matter of social status they are ranked above Chamar, Pasis, Doms, Bansphors, Dharkars, all scheduled castes found in Gorakhpur district.

Organisation of Social Control, Prestige and Leadership

The Beldars have their own traditional *panchayat* but its role is becoming less effective than what it was in the past. In village Son Barsa, in Gorakhpur district, it was reported that they had no caste or *Biradari Panchayat* though there were 20 households belonging to them. Matters relating to caste are discussed and settled by the Pradhan of the Gram Sabha who is incidentally a Beldar. Whenever any such occasion arises, the elders call a meeting and the Pradhan is requested to preside. But this is not the normal practice. Traditional *panchayats* have the Chowdhris as their head. The office of Chowdhry is hereditary. Normally traditional *panchayats* were reported at three levels, *viz.* village, *Jawar* (area) and region. The breach of caste rules, family quarrels, irregular sex-unions, extra marital relations, adultery etc. are decided at the village level *panchayats*. But when the parties involved belong to different villages or things of greater interest like reforms, etc. have to be discussed, the meeting of *Jawar* or area *panchayats* takes place. According to them a *Jawar panchayat* covering 22 villages is called a *Baisi* and a *panchayat* covering 52 villages is called a *Bawani*.

During the field investigations at Gorakhpur, informants could not furnish details of any recent meeting of any *Jawar panchayat*.

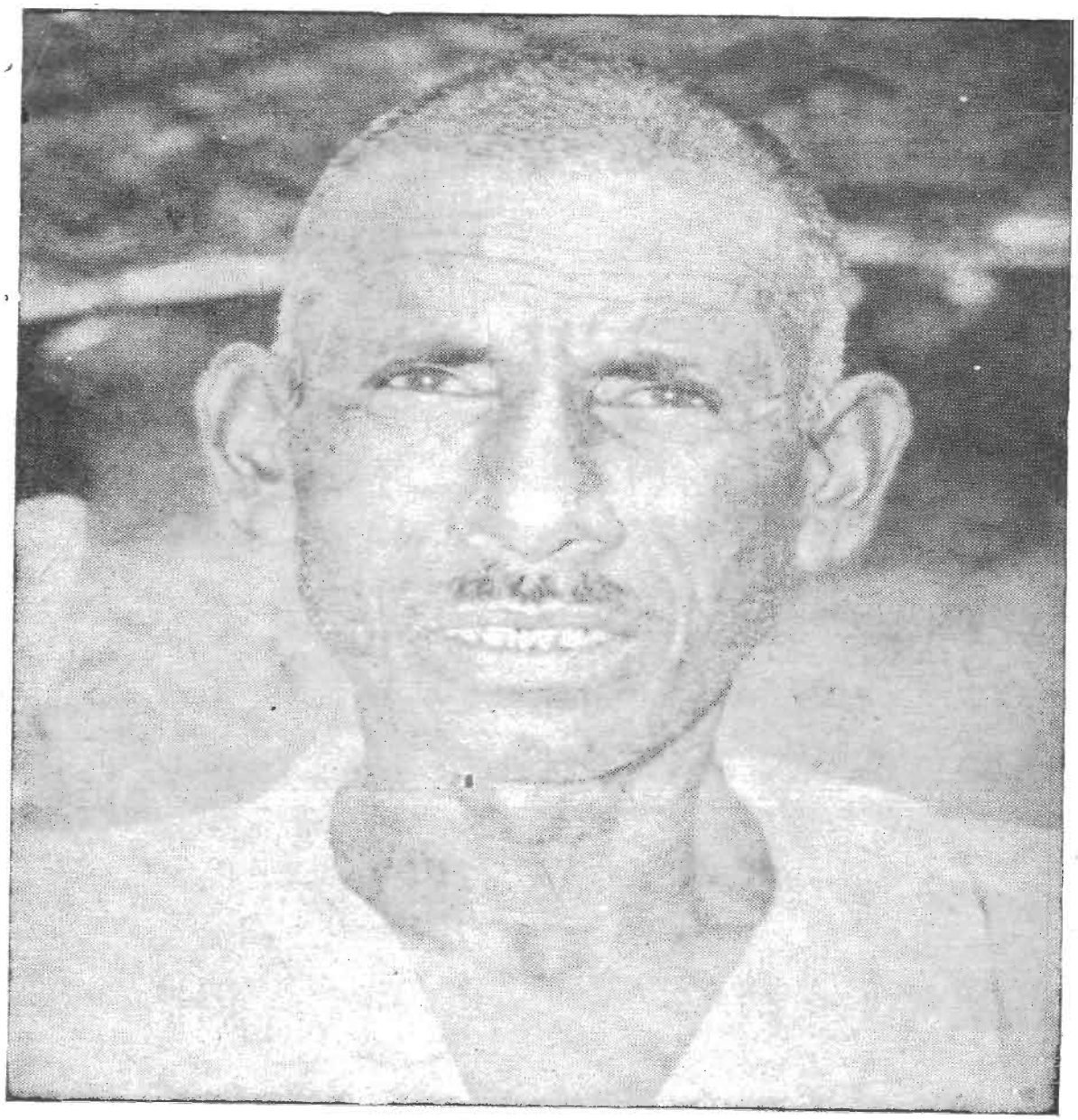
Social Reforms and Welfare

Among the Beldars no organised attempt has been made to form any Sabha or Sangh which could deal with the removal of social and economic evils. Educated individuals of the community have endeavoured to eradicate social evils like drinking at marriages and deaths. They have also tried to reduce the stay of *barat* from 3 days to 2 days and to economise on the *biradar* feast. But such attempts were not made at the caste level in Gorakhpur district where the population of Beldars is the largest.

APPENDIX

District-wise Distribution of Beldar Population in Uttar Pradesh

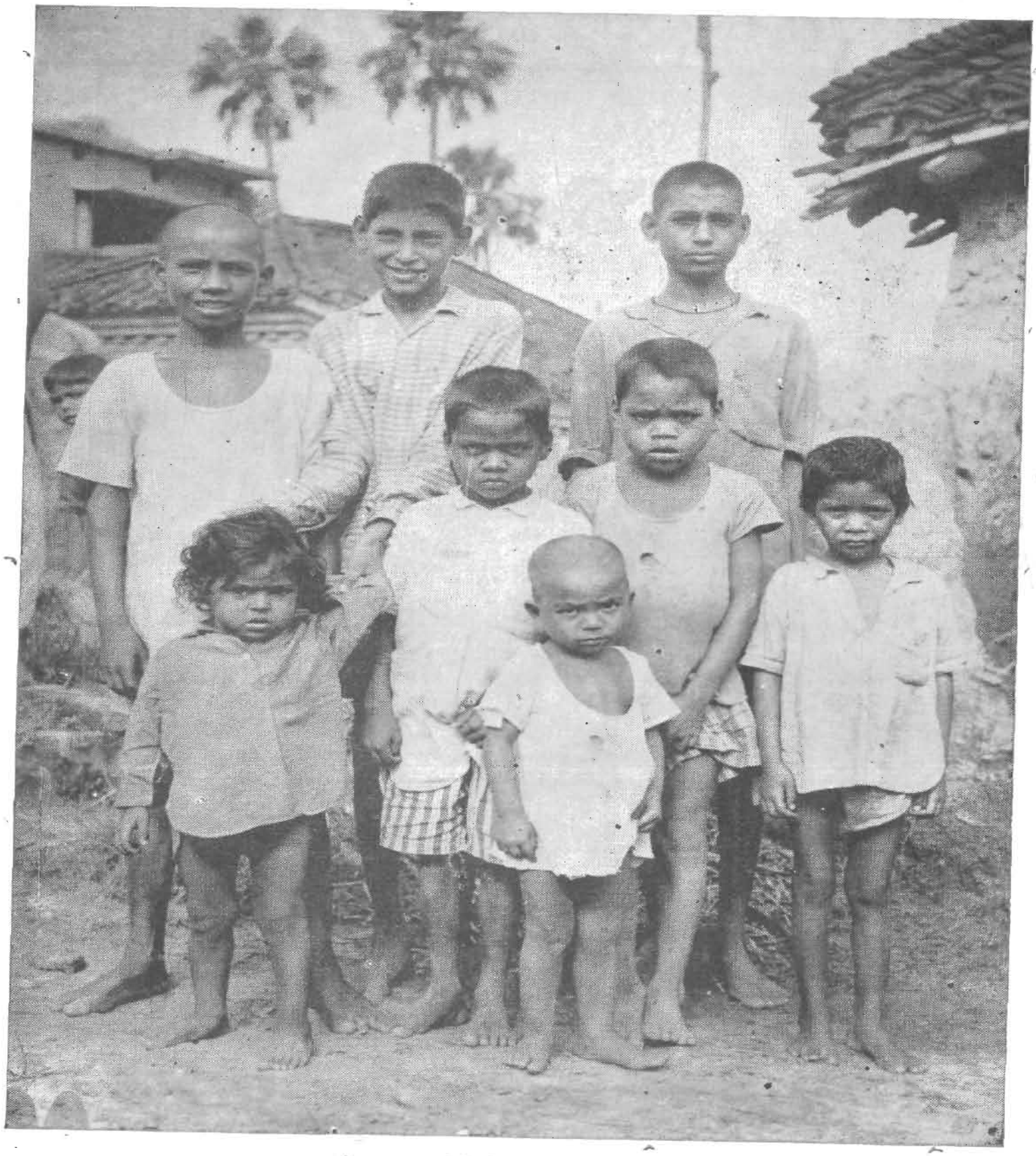
Sl. no.	State/District	Rural	Urban	Total
1	Naini Tal	3	..	3
2	Moradabad	..	11	11
3	Budaun	..	164	164
4	Rampur	22	1	23
5	Bareilly	3,533	5	3,538
6	Pilibhit	883	28	911
7	Shahjahanpur	307	35	342
8	Dehra Dun	..	21	21
9	Meerut	..	14	14
10	Etah	3	..	3
11	Farrukhabad	89	124	213
12	Etawah	43	66	109
13	Kanpur	305	769	1,074
14	Fatehpur	13	159	172
15	Allahabad	283	..	283
16	Jhansi	187	48	235
17	Jalaun	384	481	865
18	Hamirpur	102	26	128
19	Banda	..	8	8
20	Kheri	765	145	910
21	Sitapur	687	74	761
22	Hardoi	343	166	509
23	Unnao	2,046	..	2,046
24	Lucknow	441	136	577
25	Rae Bareli	122	..	122
26	Bahraich	229	59	288
27	Gonda	1,930	158	2,088
28	Bara Banki	999	..	999
29	Faizabad	..	96	96
30	Sultanpur	..	1	1
31	Pratapgarh	31	1	32
32	Basti	15,009	..	15,009
33	Gorakhpur	26,698	158	26,856
34	Deoria	318	2	320
35	Azamgarh	2	16	18
36	Ballia	2	20	22
37	Varanasi	374	52	426
38	Mirzapur	48	2	50
	Total ..	56,201	3,046	59,247



Front view of a Beldar



Beldar houses



A group of Beldar children

DHANUK

Name, Origin and History

The Dhanuks are a scheduled caste in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab and Delhi. The term 'Dhanuk' has been derived from Sanskrit word 'Dhanuska' meaning thereby an archer According to Crooke,[1] Dhanuk is a low tribe but the study of Dhanuks reveals that they do not possess any tribal characteristics and form a separate caste due to their social customs and beliefs. They work as watchmen and musicians at weddings and their women as midwives. According to Buchanan they are a pure 'agricultural tribe' who from their name (implying archers) were, probably, in former times the militia of the country and are not perhaps different from Kurmi ; for any Jaiswar Kurmi, who from poverty sells himself or his children is admitted among Dhanuks. According to him all the Dhanuks were at one time probably slaves and may have been recruited to fill up the military ranks a method of recruitment that has long been prevalent in Asia. The armies of Parthians having been composed almost entirely of slaves the custom, I believe, is still pretty general among the Turks.

According to Padam Purana quoted by Sir Henry Elliot, Dhanuks are descendants from a Chamar and a female Chandal. Another equally mythical pedigree makes the mother, a Chamar and the father, an outcast Ahir. Sri H. Risley's[2] remarks in commenting on this genealogy serve to indicate in a general way the social rank held by the Dhanuks, at the time it was first thought necessary to enrol them among the mixed class. Nothing precisely is known about the origin of Dhanuks and they are also unable to throw any light regarding the origin of their caste. However, it may be mentioned that some elderly Dhanuks are of the opinion that the word 'Dhanuk' is derived from 'Dhanush'. They are called Dhanuks by the other communities as well as by their own community.

Distribution and Population Trend

According to 1961 Census the total population of Dhanuks is 2,24,055, consisting of 1,18,411 males and 1,05,644 females. They constitute 1.45 per cent of the total scheduled caste population of the State and their sex-ratio is 892 females per 1,000 males.

The Dhanuks are found all over the State, but the areas of their main concentrations are Allahabad, Agra, Lucknow and Rohilkhand divisions. Their population is insignificant in Uttarakhand and Kumaon divisions. The following is the sex-wise distribution of Dhanuks by divisions and rural and urban areas of the State :

Sl. no.	Name of Divisions	Total		Rural		Urban	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1	Uttara khand	20	13	20	13	..	.
2	Kumaon	22	10	22	10	..	..
3	Rohilkhand	12,847	11,044	12,509	10,711	338	333
4	Meerut	1,598	1,525	1,258	1,219	340	307
5	Agra	24,147	23,832	22,753	22,424	1,394	1,408
6	Allahabad	53,909	47,228	47,537	44,194	6,372	3,034
7	Jhansi	2,482	2,201	2,251	2,069	231	132
8	Lucknow	23,058	19,405	19,049	16,414	4,009	2,991
9	Faizabad	99	63	70	52	29	11
10	Gorakhpur	180	170	178	170	2	.
11	Varanasi	49	152	8	13	41	139
	Total ..	118,411	105,644	105,655	97,289	12,756	8,355

1. Crooke, W. : *"The Tribes and Castes of the North Western Provinces and Oudh"*, Vol. II, Calcutta (1896.)
2. Risley, H. H. A. : *The Tribes and Castes of West Bengal*, Vol. I, Calcutta (1891).

The above figures show that Allahabad division ranks first in order of population. Next to Allahabad are Agra, Lucknow and Rohilkhand divisions. Out of the total population of 2,24,055 persons, as many as 2,02,944 persons (1,05,655 males and 97,289 females) were reported from rural areas and 21,111 (12,756 males and 8,355 females) from urban areas. The percentage of rural and urban population is 91 and 9 per cent respectively. The highest number of persons belonging to rural as well as urban areas were reported from Allahabad and the lowest from Kumaon division. Only 2 males were found living in urban areas in Gorakhpur division.

In the census of 1961 the population of Dhanuks was returned from 42 districts of the State. No Dhanuk was reported from 12 districts, namely, Uttar Kashi, Chamoli, Tehri-Garhwal, Garhwal, Almora, Banda, Gonda, Pratapgarh, Gorakhpur, Azamgarh, Ballia and Ghazipur. Kanpur ranks first in the State in regard to the size of population of Dhanuks. The first five districts in order of population are Kanpur (34,914), Mainpuri (33,854), Etawah (34,658), Farrukhabad (31,491) and Hardoi (14,870). The distribution of Dhanuk population by district and sex is given in the Appendix at the end.

The table given below shows the distribution of Dhanuks in the State by age-groups and sex :

Age-group (Years)	Persons	Males	Females
0—14	90,396	46,809	43,587
15—44	93,643	51,060	42,583
45 and above	39,589	20,274	19,315
Age not stated	427	268	159
Total ..	2,24,055	1,18,411	1,05,644

Thus 90,336 persons or 40.3 per cent of the total population belong to age-group 0—14, 93,643 persons or 41.8 per cent belong to age-group 15—44, 39,589 persons or 17.7 per cent comes under the age-group 45 and over. For 427 persons, their age has not been reported and they constitute 0.2 per cent of the total population.

At the time of census of 1891 the population of Dhanuks was 1,46,189. They were found in Agra division in particular and all over the State except Gorakhpur, Varanasi and Faizabad divisions in general.

The trend of population is as follows :

Year	Population	Males	Females
1901	1,27,581	67,874	59,707
1911	1,29,314	69,092	60,222
1921	1,22,733	65,181	57,552
1961	2,24,055	1,18,411	1,05,644

Population figures of 1931, 1941 and 1951 are not available. It is evident from the above figures that the population of Dhanuks has gone up by 75 per cent during the past 60 years.

Family

Family may be either patrilocal or matrilocal. The family among the Dhanuks is patrilocal and derives its name from that of a male parent or male ancestor. After the solemnisation of marriage, the woman goes to stay with the husband and generally resides in the house of the husband's father. According to the number of members and their marital status a family may be simple, intermediate or joint. The simple family consists of a married couple and their unmarried children. The intermediate family consists of married couple and unmarried brothers and sisters or one of the two parents. The joint family consists of a married couple living with married children or married brothers. There are also some families which do not fall in any of the above categories.

In village Daulatpur Hira, Tahsil Bisalpur in Pilibhit district , where socio-economic survey was conducted, out of 8 families of Dhanuks, 4 were simple, 2 joint and 2 did not fall under any of the above groups. In village Rampura-Nathoo of the same tahsil and district, out of 6 families, the number of simple, joint and intermediate families was two each.

Various factors are responsible for distintegration of families. When the differences between the earning members of the family cannot be resolved, there is no other alternative but to separate.

After marriage, a woman acquires her husband's *got* (Sanskrit-*gotra*). All sons get equal shares in their father's property. An adopted son gets equal share and the widow of the co-partner inherits the share of her deceased husband if he dies issueless. She is not

entitled to a share, if she voluntarily marries outside the family. The property inheritance and reckoning of descent are along the male lines.

During the census of 1891, the Dhanuks were recorded in the following sub-castes :—Dharkara, Dusadh, Kaithiya, Kathariya, Kori, and Rawat. According to Crooke, the complete list shows three hundred and twenty sections of the usual mixed types, some are the names of the well known tribes, others of local derivation. A list from Etawah names twenty sub-divisions Laungbarsa, (means raining cloves) Hazari, Kathariha, Lakariha, Bhuseli, Garuhiya, Hathichrighat, Garpetha, Atarcha, Pichauriha, Jashar, Jalelye Kachhoaha, Jugeli, Kuriha, Khairha, Taela, Dunhan and Bagheli. Sir H. M. Elliot gives the 7 sub-divisions as follows :—Laungbarsa (of Etawah district) ; Mathuriya, Katharrya, Jaiswar, Magahi, Dojwad, Chhilatiya. An effort was made during the field investigation regarding the sub-divisions among Dhanuks. It was opined in district Pilibhit as well as in Kanpur district that Dhanushvansi and Katheria are synonyms and in Pilibhit people called themselves belonging to Dhanusvanshi Katheria sub-caste. In the district of Kanpur, people reported themselves to belong to Laugbarsa sub-caste of Dhanuks. Most of the sub-divisions of Dhanuks mentioned by Risley and Elliot were not known to the people and they could not give any clear picture of sub-divisions. Some of the names of sub-divisions of Dhanuk caste seem territorial names used by many castes to denote sub-caste, who reside in or are supposed to have migrated from a particular tract of the country.

Kinship relations among Dhanuks play an important role during family ceremonies like child-birth, marriage and death. Kins of both, the mother's side and father's side, are invited to the ceremonies as and when necessary. The sister's husband and father's sister's husband are also called to participate in the marriage ceremonies and for their performance in the ceremony they are given gifts known as *neg* which varies according to the economic condition of the household concerned.

The relations amongst the family members are cordial. The elders are given due respect by the youngsters and their salutation is *Ram Ram* or *Jai Ram*. The youngers will not call their elders by their name. They will call them by their relationship, *i.e.* uncle, *bhai* (brother), *dada* etc. Similarly the husband will call his wife "so and so's mother" and if a female is unmarried she will be called by her name. Similarly a father-in-law and mother-in-law call their daughter-in-law as *bahu* and younger brother calls the elder brother's wife as *bhabhi*.

Dwellings

The design and structure of a house vary according to the land area available and the economic condition of the house owners. A house has a rectangular ground plan with flat roof and a courtyard inside. The house is constructed with a view to providing shelter to men and animals and also for storing agricultural products. Generally, Dhanuks live on the outskirt of the *abadi* forming a separate mohalla. The dwellings occupied by Dhanuks do not present any peculiar characteristic and are of the same shape and design as of others in general. In the rural area the houses are *kachcha* having mud walls with thatched roofs. In village Rampura-Nathoo in district Pilibhit where field study was undertaken. 5 houses out of 6 houses were *kachcha* and 1 *pucca*. Of 5 *kachcha* houses, 3 houses have tiled roof. In urban area of Bisalpur, a Municipal Board of Pilibhit district, out of 8 houses, 5 are *pucca* and 3 are partly *pucca* and partly *kachcha*.

Construction of a *kachcha* house is simple and the materials used in their construction are clay, bamboo and timber. Sometimes plinth is also made about 2 feet above the ground level. The floor is filled with earth and plastered with the layers of clay and cow-dung.

Generally there are no ventilators in the *kachcha* houses. Sometimes walls are decorated with paintings, designs or other human or animal figures Pictures of gods sometimes are hanged with pegs. Sometimes hand prints in red or black colours can also be seen on the walls, made at the time of ceremonial occasions.

Dress

The usual dress of a male is shirt or *kurta* and *dhoti* and that of a female *dhoti*, blouse, *lehnga* and *orhni* (head dress). The head gear for a male is cap, the use of which is not very common now and only aged people are seen wearing it on their head. There has been change in the dress of both males and females due to urban contact. In the

rural areas, school going children are sen wearing shirts, bush-shirts, half pants, *pyjamas* and sometimes even pants. *Baniyan* (under shirt) is also worn by males. The dress worn by villagers is of rough and coarse cloth. In winter some well-to-do wear woollen coats, sweater and caps and woollen blankets are also used by them. The women wear *lehnga*,, *kamiz* (shirt) and *orhni* but now *dhoti* is preferred to *lehnga* and *orhni*. Peticoat and blouse are also used now in well-to-do families. In winter women also wear *chaddar*. The use of shoes is not very common in the rural areas and generally people wear *desi* (made locally) shoes and *chappals*, purchased locally or in the village markets. While going to city or to relations, men would like to wear shoes. In urban areas men wear shoes with laces and also use socks. Women generally remain bare-footed but at the time of ceremonial occasions they wear *chappals*.

The dress of the bridegroom is *jhaga, dhoti, kamiz, pagri* (head gear), *maur* and new shoes. The bridal dress for a bride consists of *atlas* or *sari, choli*, blouse and *chunri*. The cost of bridal dress may vary according to the economic condition of the family.

Ornaments

Women wear different kinds of ornaments made of gold, silver and other allied metals. The women folk generally wear *bunda* or *kali* or *jhumka* in the ears and *nath* or *phool* in nose. The married women use *bindi* on forehead, *sutia, sitarami har, hamel* and *kanthshri* on the neck. Sometimes garlands of beads are also used by them. *Dastband, pahunchi* and *kangan* are worn on the wrist. *Tendia* and *bajuband* are the ornaments worn on the upper arm. *Kardhani*, an ornament of chains, is also worn on the waist. Gold is regarded as a noble metal and hence ornaments made of gold will not be worn by the womenfolk below the waist. *Angoothi* or *chhalla* made of silver or gold are also worn on the fingers. Various types of ornaments that are worn on the angles are *kara, lachcha, jhanj, and pazeb*. *Bichchua* or *chuthi* are worn on the foot. The above mentioned ornaments are not worn in day-to-day use. Ordinarily a married woman will not put off *bichchua* and bangles, which are token of *suhag* (state of married womanhood) during the life-time of her husband. Likewise un-married girls will not wear *bichchua*.

Ornaments normally used by the womenfolk are *kara or lachcha*, glass bangles, *sutia* or *har* and *bunda*. Ornaments are generally worn at the time of marriage ceremonies. Menfolk generally do not wear any kind of ornaments except *angoothi* (ring) on the fingers. A few of them also wear a *tabij* (armlet) round the neck and *murki* in the ear lobes.

Tattooing

Tattooing is just another way of ornamentation and considered to be a permanent bodily decoration. It is practised among the Dhanuks. It was considered a way of decoration in the past but now people are not in favour of tattooing. Various designs and shapes are tattooed on different parts of the body. Flowers, leaves, the image of Hindu gods — Rama and Hanuman etc., *Rambute, Silarasi* and the name of the husband are common designs tattooed on the arms. Men also get their hands tattooed, the common designs being the name of a friend or a flower.

Food Habits

The Dhanuks are traditionally non-vegetarian and take pork, mutton and fish freely. Beef is abjured. Some of them are perfectly vegetarian and they have objection regarding the preparation of meat or eggs in their kitchen. The medium of preparation of food is mustard oil and the use of milk and *ghee* is limited to those households who possess cattle. In the rural areas, the use of vegetable oil is negligible while in urban areas it is used by good number of people.

The staple diet consists of coarse grains like *bajra, bejhar* and *gojai* (mixture of wheat and barley). The use of rice is also common which is cooked daily. Pulses of *arhar* and *urd* are commonly used and sometimes vegetables are also taken. Generally *kachcha* food consisting of rice, *dal* and *roti* is taken. *Pucca* food consisting of *puri, kachauri* and vegetable is taken on the ceremonial or festive occasions. Fruits available locally are also eaten by the people. The common drink is country liquor which is taken on the happening of some event of happiness, *i.e.* birth of a child, marriage or festival. The smoking of *hukkah* (hubble-bubble) and *bidi* is very common and even youngones can be seen smoking *bidi*. The use of cigarette in rural area is

not common but in the urban areas smoking of cigarette is common among the younger generation. In the rural areas, *hukkah* (hubble-bubble) made of either brass or clay is quite common. Betal and betal-nuts are also taken by some persons.

The household equipments consists of utensils and other articles of utility. Almost every household possesses one or two *charpoys* according to the necessity of the household. They use utensils made of brass and other allied metals. Cheap utensils made of aluminium are also used by them. In rural areas, use of crockery is very limited while in urban areas, china-clay crockery is also used by the Dhanuk community.

Environmental Sanitation and Hygienic Habits

The Dhanuks generally live in *kachcha* houses in rural areas where environmental sanitation is not satisfactory. There is no provision of bath-rooms and privies in the houses. The young and old alike go to nearby fields to attend to the call of nature. While men take bath at the village well, women take their bath inside the houses. The house-drains flow out into the lanes and refuge is dumped near the houses. The lanes are full of garbage. The cow-dung is also stocked near the houses. The houses are uncomfortable and full of flies and mosquitoes. In the urban areas, their sanitary conditions are comparatively better than in the rural areas. Sweepers are employed by the local bodies to remove the garbage from the roads. Proper attention is not given to personal cleanliness. The use of washing soap is rare. Few persons use it for cleaning their clothes. The womenfolk wash their hairs with *multani mitti* (a type of detergent) and at times with soap. The use of soap and toilets depends upon the economic condition of the family. In the urban areas, people pay more attention to personal hygiene.

Language and Literacy

The Dhanuks do not have any separate language or literature of their own. Their mother-tongue is Hindi dialect prevalent in the locality where they live. They speak local dialect among themselves as well as with outsiders.

The figures returned in 1961 Census show that the standard of education among the Dhanuk is poor. Out of the total population of 2,24,055 persons, only 18,294 persons (8.1 per cent) were returned as literate and educated. Only 16,180 (13.6 per cent) out of 1,18,411 males were returned as literate and educated and the percentage of literacy among females was 2.09 per cent, *i.e.* only 2,214 out of a population of 1,05,644 females were returned literate.

The following table shows the distribution of literacy standard among Dhanuks by sex, rural and urban areas:

Serial no.	Educational Standard	Total		Rural		Urban	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1	Literate without educational standard	12,078	1,777	9,950	993	2,128	784
2	Primary or Junior Basic	3,566	400	2,803	162	763	238
3	Matric or Higher Secondary	507	28	337	7	170	21
4	Technical Diploma equal to a degree	15	3	..	..	15	3
5	Non-Technical Diploma not equal to a Degree	7	..	..	..	7	..
6	University Degree or Postgraduate Degree	7	6	..	..	7	6
	Total ..	16,180	2,214	13,090	1,162	3,090	1,052

The low economic condition may be regarded as *responsible for low percentage of higher education.* The school-going children render assistance to their parents in leisure time. People in general are, however, of the view that the education of females is neither important nor worthwhile. However, in urban areas people are in favour of education and want to get their sons educated and good number of children are sent to schools. In the rural areas, as well as in the urban areas, people now feel that without education one cannot fit in the rapidly changing society.

Workers and Non-workers

The table given below shows the number of workers and non-workers by sex, rural and urban areas of the State and division :

State/Division		Workers		Non-workers	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
Uttar Pradesh	T	69,205	8,700	40,206	96,944
	R	61,981	7,934	43,674	89,355
	U	7,224	766	5 532	7,589
Uttarakhand	R	17	11	3	2
	U	..	..	..	..
Kumaun	R	9	3	13	7
	U	..	..	..	..
Rohilkhand	R	7,741	688	4,768	10,023
	U	169	54	169	279
Meerut	R	662	153	596	1,066
	U	116	5	224	302
Agra	R	12,977	1,618	9,766	20,806
	U	745	109	649	1,299
Allahabad	R	27,991	3,005	19,646	41,189
	U	4,178	291	2,194	2,743
Jhansi	R	1,372	501	879	1,568
	U	61	77	170	55
Lucknow	R	11,149	1.923	7,900	14,491
	U	1,920	185	2,089	2,806
Faizabad	R	51	12	19	40
	U	20	4	9	7
Gorakhpur	R	95	20	83	150
	U	2	..	..	..
Varanasi	R	7		1	13
	U	13	41	28	98

It is evident from the above figures that only 77,905 persons (69,205 males and 8,700 females) out of 224,055 are workers. The number of non-workers is 146,150 persons consisting of 49,206 males and 96,944 females. The percentage of working and non-working population is 34.77 and 65.23 per cent respectively. Among the working population 88.83 per cent are males and only 11.17 per cent are females. Out of non-workers 66.33 per cent are females and 33.67 per cent are males. The number of workers and non-workers in the rural areas of the State is 69,915 (61,981 males and 7,934 females) and 133,029 (males 43,674 and 89,355 females) respectively. In urban areas, 9,990 persons (7,224 males and 766 females) were recorded as workers and 13.121 persons consisting of 5,532 males and 7,589 females as non-workers.

Industrial Classification of Persons

The following statement shows the occupational pattern of Dhanuks according to 1961 Census :

	Category	Persons	Males	Females
I.	Cultivators	37,806	35,491	2,315
II.	Agricultural labourer	11,096	10,331	765
III.	In Mining, Quarrying, Livestock, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Plantation, Orchard and Allied activities	103	95	8
IV.	In Household Industry	7,593	6,414	1,179
V.	In manufacturing other than Household Industry	3,703	3,673	30
VI.	In Construction	706	675	31
VII.	In Trade and Commerce	784	767	17
VIII.	In Transport, Storage and Communication	928	919	9
IX.	In other services	15,186	10,840	4,346
	Total ..	77,905	69,205	8,700

The table shows that majority of workers are engaged in cultivation. Out of 77,905 workers, 37,806 (males 3,549 and 2,315 females) persons, forming 48.53 per cent, work as cultivators. Next place in order of number of workers is taken by the persons doing other services followed by agricultural labourers. 7,593 (9.75 per cent) workers were returned under the IVth category of workers, i.e. household industry.

According to Crooke "Their main occupation is playing trumpets at weddings and other occasions of festivity. They act as servant, day labourer, village watchman and their women do midwifery, some hold land as tenants, and work as field labourers".

Midwifery is another traditional occupation of Dhanuks. Their women work as *dais* (midwives) and attend the expectant mothers in the locality where they live. Mostly they are untrained. In Bisalpur Municipal Boards in district Pilibhit, 7 women out of 8 households were reported to the working as *dais* (midwives). They will not attend the expectant mothers of Jatava, Kanjar and Bhangi castes. They also make *Khajoor* (leaves of palm tree) fans, bamboo basket, *pattals* and *donas* of *dhak* leaves Piggery is another important occupation.

During the field study, an effort was made to know the actual position regarding the traditional occupations of Dhanuks. Traditionally the Dhanuks are agriculturist. They work as cultivators as well as agricultural labourers. Also they work as village messengers. Rearing of pigs is also a traditional occupation but now people are not in favour of pig-rearing in spite of its economic importance.

In village Daulatpur—Hira, Tahsil Bisalpur, district Pilibhit, out of 8 households, 2 Dhanuk households own 19 pigs and in village Rampura, Nathoo of the same tahsil and district, out of 6 households only one house was found owning pigs. No Dhanuk was found to be weaver either in Pilibhit or in Kanpur district during the survey. It was also opined that in the past they were famous for their skill in archery and the name given to them resembles the fact. They took to pig rearing in order to save themselves from Muslim rule in the early days when Hindus were converted forcibly.

Life Cycle

Birth

The Dhanuks believe in the super powers of all the gods and goddesses of Hindu pantheon. Among them a male child is essential for the preservation of progeny and attainment of salvation of the departed soul. Also a male member helps in the earnings of the family. As such every married couple is keen to have at least a male issue within a reasonable time of the marriage. The birth of a male child at first delivery is a matter of happiness but the children of both sexes are given equal importance. Stoppage of mensturation is the usual symptom of pregnancy and if there is no mensturation in the second month the pregnancy is established. No special ceremony is performed to mark this occassion. Barrenness is considered to be a curse on the part of a woman and miscarriage during child birth and still birth are treated as the will of God. After the confirmation of conception and before the child birth, the expectant mother remains busy in household activities and then in her advanced stage of pregnancy, she is not allowed to lift heavy articles. She is not allowed to see the solar or lunar eclipse because of the belief that if she cuts any fruit or vegetable during eclipse, she would have a deformed child. She is not allowed to go alone in the dark. She is also protected from the evil spirits and ghosts. She does not take food consisting of more chillies or other condiments which generate excessive heat in her body. No special ceremony during pre-natal period is observed.

The birth generally, takes place in the husband's house, because it is an occasion of rejoicing for that family. But the expectant mother may be sent to her father's house for delivery if her first-born issue at the husband's house does not survive. The delivery takes place in one part of the house, known as *Saur* — the confinement room. The mother is attended by the local *dai* (midwife) belonging to the same caste. Elderly women are also present to render necessary help. The *dai* (midwife) cuts the umbilical cord with a sickle or a scissors and buries the placenta in the same room.

The mother and the infant are safeguarded against evil spirits. A sickle or knife is placed under the pillow. Fire is kept burning on the entrance of the confinement room till sixth day. Besides a skeleton of monkey's head is placed on the cot and sometimes a *tabij* (armlet) is tied round the infant's neck. The pollution period lasts until *chhati* (sixth day) ceremony is performed. The infant is given goat's milk for a day or two days and mother is given a special liquid preparation of gur (Jaggery) and spices known as *harira*. In order to recoup her health she is given other nourishing preparations also. The first ceremony connected with birth is *chhati* which is observed on the sixth day. The confinement room is cleaned on this day and the mother and the child are given a bath and they are dressed in new clothes. A feast is given to clansmen and songs befitting the occasions are also sung. The normal sucking period continues for about two years or until the next conception.

Initiation

The name-giving ceremony *annaprashan* (giving food for the first time) and *mundan* (hair cutting ceremony) are given little importance. Nevertheless, the existence of these ceremonies can be seen among the Dhanuks. The name is given to the baby sometimes, with the consultation of the priest, and sometimes by the elderly member of the household. The first feeding (*annaprashan*) to the child is done by the father's sister or some elderly member after 6 months. It is also known as "*Munhbor*" and is performed on the occasion of some festivity or performance of deity worship.

Mundan

The first hair-cutting ceremony is performed during the first, third or fifth year of the child. It is observed both for boys and girls. The child is taken sometimes to the shrine of goddess, or village deity where barber shaves the head of the child. The barber is given some money for this and sweets are distributed among those present.

Marriage

Marriage is an important feature of social life. It is a sacrament and arranged by the parents of the bride. The father of the bride searches for the bridegroom, through a middleman and makes the proposal to his father. The middleman plays an important role in the settlement of marriage and it is he who gives full information to both the parties. Marriage negotiations are common among the Dhanuks. Early marriage is prevalent among Dhanuks, though it is dying out now. The boy is married between the age of twelve to eighteen years and the girl between ten to sixteen years. In 1961 Census 1,955 males and 9,473 females were found married in the age-group 0—14. As reported by Dhanuks, a male cannot marry in his father's or mother's family and female cannot be married in the family where a male has been married. It was reported by the Dhanuks of Kanpur district that their sub-divisions are exogamous and marry each other. Katheria and Laungbarsa inter-marry.

Monogamy is the general rule and no man can have a second wife unless the first wife is declared barren. All efforts to remove barrenness in a female are made and when these efforts fail, a man may marry a second wife for the preservation of his progeny. Polyandry is not allowed. Selection of the spouse is made by the father of the girl with the help of a middleman. When both the parties have agreed to unite themselves in matrimonial alliance, the brother of the bride with the maternal uncle or uncle visits the house of the bridegroom for performing the ceremony known as *Barchhedi* or *Rokna* (settlement of the bridegroom). On this occasion some people are also invited by the father of the bridegroom. Some money is presented to the bridegroom's father which varies according to the economic condition of the parties. Sweets are distributed among those present on the occasion.

Lagan or *Tika* ceremony is also reported to be observed among the Dhanuks. It is performed a few days before the performance of the marriage ceremony. The time is fixed in consultation with Brahmin priests and the details of the marriage ceremony are intimated to both the parties. The relations from the girl's party visit the home of the bridegroom along with a barber. Some new clothes and sweets are also taken by them. The brother of the bride puts a *tika* mark on the forehead of the bridegroom. The details of *lagan* are read there. The ceremony ends with feast to some nearest relations. The women gathered on the accasion sing songs befitting the occasion.

After a few days of *lagan* ceremony, marriage party starts on an auspicious day. Before the marriage party starts for the house of bride, a number of ceremonies are performed in the house of the bridegroom and some ceremonies are also observed in the house of the bride. Preparation of *mandha* is done in both the houses. In a central pole, some mangoes and bamboo leaves, *kush* (a type of grass) and *haldi* (turmeric) are tied with the help of a string. The relations are invited on this occasion and they are given a feast. Family gods and deities are worshipped and worship of a well is also performed which is known as *kuan poojna*. The *barat* (marriage party) consisting of males only leaves the village for bride's house before or afternoon according to the distance of the place. The marriage party is received by the bride's party with warm welcome. The *baraties* (a marriage party) are made to stay either in a *chaupal* or a grove. The place where they stay is known as *Janwasa*. *Agwani* (reception of *barat*) is observed in which bride's brother or father puts a *tilak* mark on the groom's forehead and presents him Re.1. After this the groom's party sends ornaments etc. for the bride before the wedding ceremony actually takes place. The marriage party is then called for *Dwar-pooja* and the bridegroom is received at the main door. Some gods are worshipped and some money is given to the bridegroom. After this the marriage party is given dinner and it returns to *janwasa*.

The marriage ceremony generally takes place in the night. It was reported among the Dhanuks of Pilibhit district that the Brahmin priest presides in the marriage ceremony. Also *nai* (barber) serves on this occasion. The brahmin priest is paid rupees ten to fifteen for the services rendered by him on the occasion. Amount may differ according to economic status of the family. In village Rajpur, post office, police station and tahsil Bilhaur in Kanpur district it was reported that no Brahman priest had

attended the marriage ceremonies. It was also reported that the marriage had been presided over by the sister's husband or father's sister's husband, who are given some *neg*—in the form of money or ornament for this. The ceremony of Kanyadan (giving away of the girl) is also observed among the Dhanuks in which some money is given to the bride by her father, uncle, or some other relations. Those who perform *Kanyadan* ceremony keep fast till it is over. Sometimes people who have no daughter, also take part in the performance of *Kanyadan* ceremony *i.e.*, when the daughter of a near relation is being married. The last ceremony is *saptpadi* (going seven times round the sacred fire) which completes the marriage ceremonies.

The marriage party generally stays for two nights and departs on third day. On the next day of marriage, the party is served with *kachcha* food consisting of rice, cury and pulse. Following this the party is served with *Barhar*, consisting of *puri* vegetables and some sweet dishes. Next important ceremony is *bidai* (sending bride with groom). At this time the presents given as dowry or *dahej* are shown to the marriage party. If the bride has not attained the age, she is not sent with the marriage party and *gauna* or second marriage ceremony is performed after 1, 3 or 5 years of the marriage when the bride is sent to her husband's family. The *gauna* ceremony is performed only when the girl attains the age.

On the arrival of the marriage party at the husband's house it is received with great enthusiasm by the ladies of the household. After the performance of some rituals, the bride gets down from the vehicle or *Palki*. The *arti* of the couple is also performed and *nain*- barber's wife is given some cash. When the couple proceeds to enter into the room, their way is checked by the bridegroom's sister, who is given some money by the bridegroom. The couple is then made to sit in a room where they are served with some sweets like curd mixed with sugar. The husband's family or outside the family. The widow ped by the newly wedded couple. At this time they are accompanied by womenfolk. A feast is also arranged by the bridegroom's father.

The Dhanuks are served by functional castes like brahmin priest, barber, carpenter, gardener and washerman. The priest is consulted at the time of birth and marriage to fix the auspicious times for the performance of these rites. The barber cuts the hair and attends during marriage ceremonies. The carpenter supplies the wooden board to be utilised during the marriage rituals and gardener or *mali* brings the *maur* (head gear) to be used by the bridegroom.

Widow re-marriage

It was reported among Dhanuks that a widow can re-marry. She can marry within her deceased husband's family or outside the family. The widow marriage is known as *dola*. It is simpler form of marriage and no special ceremonies are performed. Junior levirate is allowed but one cannot marry one's younger brother's widow. In case of widow marriages with an outsider, she looses all rights to the property of her first husband and if she marries the younger brother of her deceased husband, she is entitled to a share in the ancestral property.

Divorce and Separation

According to 1961 Census 664 persons (480 males and 184 females) were returned as divorced or separated. Adultery on the part of the husband as well as on the part of wife, is the main ground for divorce. Either party may also demand a divorce if the other suffers from a venereal disease or leprosy. Impotency is also a ground on which a wife can divorce her husband. A divorce can be granted with the consent of the *gaon panchayat*.

The following table shows the details of unmarried, married and divorced or separated persons by sex and age-groups :

Age-group	Total Population		Never Married		Married		Widowed		Divorced or Separated		Unspecified status	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0—14	46,809	43,587	44,652	33,996	1,995	9,413	72	63	30	38	60	77
15—44	51,060	42,583	7,801	1,998	40,853	38,330	1,972	2,091	285	106	149	53
45 and above	20,274	19,315	1,421	207	15,056	14,760	3,569	4,220	161	39	67	89
age not stated	268	159	176	89	70	50	15	15	4	1	3	4
Total ..	118,411	105,644	54,050	36,290	57,974	62,553	5,628	6,389	480	184	279	228

The above figures indicate that 1,995 males and 9,413 females were returned as married in the age-group 0—14, pointing out the incidence of early marriage among the Dhanuks to some extent. In the age-group 15—44, males 40,853 and 38,330 females and in the age-group 45 and above, 15,056 males and 14,760 females were found as married. 70 males and 50 females were returned as married whose age was not stated, 5,628 males and 6,389 females were returned as widowed and highest number of such persons falls in the age-group 45 and above, their number being 3,567 males and 4,220 females respectively. The number of divorced and separated persons is 664 of which 391 persons, 285 males and 106 females were returned in the age-group 15—44 years.

Death

The dead bodies, as reported by the Dhanuk are generally cremated, but the children who die before attaining maturity and people dying of small-pox, cholera and snake-bite are buried. When a sick person is about to die, he or she is brought down on the earth. The place is besmeared with cow-dung, before he or she is laid on the earth. The water of holy Ganges and leaves of *Tulsi* are also put in his or her mouth and a lot of wailing and weeping starts as soon as death occurs. The member of the caste and neighbours assemble at the house. The relations who are not in the village are informed through a special messenger to participate in the death rites Corpse is carried to the cremation ground on a bamboo structure called *tikti* (bier). The corpse of a man is covered with white cloth and that of a female with a red cloth. The bier is lifted by four persons on shoulders. Other persons who follow the funeral procession also carry the corpse on their shoulders by turn, as it is believed to be an act of virtue. The funeral procession starts by recitation *Ram Nam Satya Hai, Satya Bolo Mukti Hai,* (the name of God is truth and therein lies salvation).

The corpse is placed with head towards the north and feet towards south. The corpse is placed on the pyre by the chief mourner and he is the first man to lit the pyre. The *Kapal Kriya* (skull breaking) is done by him. When the corpse is burnt in the fire, the party returns to the home of the chief mourner after taking a bath in a river or pond. If the corpse is to be buried, the chief mourner digs the pit.

The family is considered ritually impure and worship of deity, giving of alms etc. are prohibited. The family cannot take fried edibles. Chief mourner is not allowed to sleep on the cot. He cannot mix up with others. On the third day of the death *Tija* ceremony is observed. The near relations are given feast consisting of rice and *urd* pulse. The chief mourner collects the ashes. Latter on he goes to some river for *asthi-pravah* (immersion of bone and ashes in Ganga water). Those who can afford, go to Hardwar, Allahabad or Kanpur for the purpose. *Daswan* (tenth day) ceremony is also observed. On this day the house is cleaned and the near relations are invited to a feast in which curry and rice are served to them. The males in the family get their hairs and moustaches shaved by the barber. They also observe *Shradh,* during the *pittra paksha* in Asvina month every year.

Religion

Dhanuks follow Hindu religion and accept all the gods and goddesses of this religion. They have faith in benevolent deities and malevolent spirits. According to Crooke : "The Dhanuks are Hindu by religion and are classed as *Saktas* because they are worshippers of *Devi* but none of them was ever regularly initiated". They make pilgrimage to the tomb of Madar Saheb at Makhanpur in Kanpur district in the month of Magh, offer a sort of pudding (*Malida*) and money which are taken by *Khadims* in-charge of the shrine. They also worship the two *Miyan,* the great or *Bara Miyan* has his tomb at Jalesar, in Etah district and the little or *Chhota Miyan* at Amroha in Moradabad.

On an investigation it was reported by the Dhanuks of Bisalpur Municipal Board in Pilibhit district that they did not make any pilgrimage, to the places of the above saints and they were not aware about the existence of the tomb of *Chhota Miyan* in Amroha. However, it was reported by the Dhanuks of Kanpur that not only they attend the fair of Madar Saheb but a large number of other Hindus also go and offer a sort of worship. The reason for the participation is that it is an important fair where cattle, agricultural implements and other items of daily use are available in good number. However, it seems that the above deities, have an attraction for the Dhanuks of the areas concerned.

Dhanuks worship the Hindu gods and goddesses, They also worship *Bhawani, Kali Devi, Kshem Kali, Phulmati, Purvi Devi* and *Shitla Devi.*

In Kanpur district, *Syed Baba, Jhakhai* and *Miyan Saheb* are also worshipped by the Dhanuks. *Syed Baba* is offered a cock, some juice of hemp and *lohban.* Similarly a he-goat and sweet fried cakes are offered to *Jhakhai* and a ram, *gulgula* and *pua* (sweet cakes) are offered in the name of *Miyan Saheb.* Worship is made to these gods annually. *Karedeo* is believed to live on *neem* tree and *Bhumisen* on *pipal* tree. It was also reported that they worship Shiv, Ram, Krishna and Mahabir on the occasion of certain festivals. Fairs held in the areas are also attended by the Dhanuks. In Pilibhit district it was reported that they attend some fairs held in other neighbouring districts *i.e.* Kakora in Budaun, Chaubare in Bareilly and Punya-giri in Naini Tal. Sometimes they also make pilgrimage to Hardwar in Saharanpur, Allahabad and Kanpur for taking a holy dip in the Ganga.

Their day-to-day life is also governed by superstitions and beliefs. They have faith in ghosts and evil spirits and the remedy for them is sacrifice, magic or worship. Sometimes an *Ojha* (magician) is called to get rid off evil spirits. *Shitla Mata* is considered to be the goddess of small-pox. Similarly sneezing is considered to be an ill omen at the time when one is going or is just to start on a journey. On the other hand seeing of a cow, person with pitcher full of water are good omens to start journey.

The Dhanuks observe mostly all the Hindu festivals. The chief of them are *Ram Naumi, Jeth Dassehra, Asadhi, Nag Panchami, Rakshabandhan, Kanagat Karwa Chauth, Dewali, Maghi* and *Holi.* A brief account of these festivals is given below :

Ram Naumi is celebrated on the *Chaitra Sudi* 9 to mark the birthday of Lord Rama. The worship of Rama is done by elder people of the house.

Jeth Dassehra is a bathing festival and is celebrated on the 10th day of *Jaistha* in the bright fortnight.

Asadhi is observed on the full moon day in the month of *Asadh.* It marks the beginning of rainy season and some special preparations are made on this day.

Nag Panchami falls on *Sawan Sudi* 5. On this day worship of *Nag Devata* (Sarpent God) is performed by offering milk and small dolls prepared by the girls. Some special preparations are also made on this occasion.

Rakshabandhan is celebrated on the full-moon day of *Shravana.* On this day *Rakhis* are tied by sisters around the wrist of their brothers. It was reported that sometimes son-in-law is also called by his father-in-law on this occasion. The special preparation on this occasion is *Sewai* (vermicelli). It was reported that they also observe the *Kanagat* or *Pittra Paksha* and they perform *Shradha* in memory of dead ancestors of the family.

Karwa Chauth is celebrated on the 4th day of *Kartika,* for the longevity of the husbands by married women only. They keep fast till late in the night and break it after offering water to the moon.

Dewali is a festival of lights which falls on *Kartika Amavasya.* The houses are cleaned. It is celebrated to mark the return of Lord Rama from exile after his victory over demon king, Ravana. Worship of goddess Laxmi, the goddess of wealth, is performed by elderly women of the family. Earthen lamps are lighted and placed in every corner of the house.

Bhai Dooj, is also observed by the Dhanuks.

Maghi or *Khichri* falls on 14th January every year and on this day *Khichri* (mixture of rice and *urd* pulse) is cooked and also given in alms.

Holi is a special attraction to all. It falls on the full-moon day of Phalgun. Next day of Holi is known as Dhulendi, people throw coloured water at each other and rub *gulal.* It was reported that Dhanuks cannot throw coloured water upon other castes except their own. However they can rub gulal on other castes people as well.

Inter-community Relationship

The Dhanuks are served by Brahmin priests and traditional service castes like barber, washerman

1. Crooke, *The Castes and Tribes of North Western Provinces and Oudh,* Volume II, Calcutta (1896

etc. It was reported by the Dhanuks in Pilibhit district that the Brahmin priest is consulted by them to tell the auspicious time of child birth and *rashi* name of the newborn child. A Brahmin priest is consulted at the time of marriage to tell the date and time for various ceremonies connected with marriage. However, in Bilhaur, in Kanpur district, it was reported that no Brahmin priest had attended the marriage ceremonies of Dhanuks.

Dhanuks are also served by the barbers at the time of the birth, marriage and death ceremonies. Washermen too have no objection in rendering their traditional services to Dhanuks.

The potter supplies earthen pots and carpenter wooden pots and gardener a *maur* (head gear) during the marriage ceremonies. They are allowed to fetch water from the same well alongwith others. The only restriction is that an earthen pitcher should not be used for this purpose.

The womenfolk of Dhanuks serve other communities by way of midwifery. They attend nearly all castes in rural areas except the *mehtar* (sweeper) and *kanjar* (a nomadic tribe). In urban areas, the women of Dhanuks also attend cases of delivery but some people prefer to take help from maternity centres instead of calling an untrained *dai* (midwife).

In the district of Pilibhit Dhanuks claim to have had higher social status in the past and they are of the opinion that caste name given to them represents their skill in archery. It was also opined that pig rearing was followed by them in order to save themselves from Muslim rulers. Now-a-days their social status is not very high because some of them follow pig rearing which is considered a low occupation. Most of the Dhanuks are not in favour of pig rearing in urban areas and they would like to adopt other occupations.

Their relations with other castes remain cordial.

They have leisure but no recreation. During leisure they collect together, sit in a *chaupal*, smoke together and spend their time in gossip.

Structure of Social Control Prestige and Leadership

The Dhanuks have their traditional caste *Panchayats* which have been playing an effective role in enforcing moral code of conduct within the members of the community. They decide cases of social offences like kidnapping, rape and adultery and also disputes connected with marriage and divorce. It may be noted that with the change of time, the hold of these caste *panchayat* is growing weaker and some of the cases previously decided by these *panchayats* are being referred to *"Nyaya Panchayat"* for decision. However, the Dhanuks are not free from the yoke of caste *panchayat*. The meeting of the caste *panchayat* is presided over by the *Chowdhry* who is always an influential person of the community. The office of the *Chowdhry* is hereditary and on his death he is succeeded by his son. When a person is given the office of the *Chowdhry*, he is given a *pagri* (turban). He is garlanded and then made to sit on the chair of the Chowdhry in a caste *panchayat*. Other members of the caste *panchayat* are called *panches* (members).

Sometimes an effort is made to settle a dispute without any reference to caste *panchayat* by the relations of the parties. A caste *panchayat* has its jurisdiction covering several villages. If persons belonging to different jurisdictions are involved in any issue, a meeting of both the *panchayats* is convened.

The meeting of the caste *panchayat* is fixed in consulation with the *Chowdhry* and other members of the *panchayat*. Other caste-fellows are also informed of the meeting. The person who complains and the person against whom charge is made are advised to settle their dispute before the *panchayat*. The parties produce their witnesses in support of their charges. The witness will take an oath to speak the truth. After hearing the parties and their witnesses, the caste *panchayat* will discuss among themselves, and will try to come to an unanimous decision. Generally the *panchayat* will not disperse till the case is finally decided. Sometimes a fine is imposed on the accused, which goes to the caste *panchayat* and is spent for the benefit of the caste-fellows by purchasing articles of utility such as *durrie*, petromax etc. In addition to the fine, feast is also essential for the *biradari* (caste-fellow).

The feast or fine may vary according to the economic status and nature of offence by the accused. The decisions taken by the *panchayat* are always obeyed. If the person disobeys it, he is ex-communicated from the *biradari* and is not allowed to take food and even

water together with his caste-fellows. He cannot smoke with others. However, he may be re-admitted to the caste after giving a feast.

The caste *panchayats*, it was reported, are not so effective as they were in the past. Due to spread of education and change in the views of life, people are not so faithful towards these *panchayats*, though its effectiveness cannot be challenged.

Social Reform and Welfare

The changing pattern of life, development of trade, transport and communication, spread of education have to some extent changed the views of the younger generation among the Dhanuks. Sometimes there is a conflict between the young and the old. Some old beliefs are now not given the same importance by the youngers. On the other hand, it can also be asserted that they cannot ignore them. During the survey, the existence of any registered caste sabha or association was not reported to the Investigator.

Some Dhanuks claim to have been good swordsmen in the past and they do not favour pig rearing by their caste-fellows. However, they dine together with those who follow this occupation without any distinction. For acquiring higher status some have given up taking meat of animals and they are perfect vegetarians. They also try to improve the sanitation of their locality. The elders and literate understand the importance of education and send their children to schools, but as most of them are poor, they cannot afford higher education of their wards. Their children assist them in domestic work from very early age. Their poor economic condition is a handicap towards the growth of education among them. However, it was opined by the Dhanuks of Bisalpur, Municipal Board in Pilibhit district that sometimes it creates a problem when educated man does not get a job.

This factor also discourages others to go in for higher education.

The Dhanuks in the rural areas are mostly unaware of the various legislations. They do not bother for the same. They are keen for a change and anxious to go forward but no section of it has attempted to break completely the old faith. A lot has to be done for the uplift of this scheduled caste in Uttar Pradesh.

Distribution of Dhanuks in the Districts of Uttar Pradesh by Sex and Rural Urban Break-up

Sl. No.	District	Rural			Urban		
		Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
1	Uttar Kashi	..	..	..	..	..	..
2	Chamoli	..	..	..	..	..	..
3	Pithoragarh	33	20	13	..	..	..
4	Tehri-Garhwal	..	..	..	..	..	..
5	Garhwal	..	..	..	..	..	..
6	Almora	..	..	..	..	..	..
7	Naini Tal	32	22	10	..	..	..
8	Bijnor	14	5	9	..	..	..
9	Moradabad	48	13	35	..	..	..
10	Budaun	696	362	334	8	6	2
11	Rampur	..	..	..	8	8	..
12	Bareilly	2,509	1,388	1,121	189	103	86
13	Pilibhit	5,422	2,884	2,538	203	111	92
14	Shahjahanpur	14,531	7,857	6,674	263	110	153
15	Dehra Dun	3	2	1	..	..	..
16	Saharanpur	1	1	..	..	..	..
17	Muzaffarnagar	165	84	81	300	152	148
18	Meerut	1,495	822	673	59	37	22
19	Bulandshahr	813	349	464	288	151	137
20	Aligarh	849	423	426	151	67	84
21	Mathura	250	168	82	3	..	3
22	Agra	2,050	1,000	1,050	631	305	326
23	Etah	9,843	4,729	5,114	348	176	172
24	Mainpuri	32,185	16,433	15,752	1,669	846	823
25	Farrukhabad	29,931	14,856	15,075	1,560	936	624
26	Etawah	33,522	17,288	16,234	1,136	608	528
27	Kanpur	28,205	15,342	12,863	6,709	4,828	1,881
28	Fatehpur	68	50	18	..	..	..
29	Allahabad	5	1	4	1	..	1
30	Jhansi	133	44	89	342	210	132
31	Jalaun	4,142	2,171	1,971	21	21	..
32	Hamirpur	45	36	9	..	..	..
33	Banda	..	..	..	..	..	..
34	Kheri	3,339	1,769	1,570	142	86	56

Sl. No.	District	Rural			Urban		
		Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
35	Sitapur	3,617	1,932	1,685	222	143	79
36	Hardoi	14,533	7,949	6,584	337	202	135
37	Unnao	11,518	6,077	5,441	490	247	243
38	Lucknow	2,284	1,232	1,052	5,725	3,326	2,399
39	Rae Bareli	172	90	82	84	5	79
40	Bahraich	11	11	..	6	4	2
41	Gonda	..	..	..	..	..	..
42	Bara Banki	111	59	52	..	..	..
43	Faizabad	..	..	..	22	13	9
44	Sultanpur	..	..	..	12	12	..
45	Pratapgarh	..	..	..	..	..	..
46	Basti	..	..	..	2	2	
47	Gorakhpur	..	..	..	..	..	
48	Deoria	348	178	170	..	..	
49	Azamgarh	..	..	..	..	..	..
50	Jaunpur	..	..	..	16	11	5
51	Ballia	..	..	..	..	..	.
52	Ghazipur	..	..	..	..	..	.
53	Varanasi	15	8	7	73	30	43
54	Mirzapur	6	..	6	91	..	91
	Total ..	202,944	105,655	97,289	21,111	12,756	8,355

DOM

Name, Identity and History

The Doms are a Scheduled Caste found in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal.

Majumdar[1] (1944) has divided the Doms of Uttar Pradesh into two branches, one settled and the other vagrant. Those who live in cities or near them belong to the former section, while the nomadic Doms are found in the eastern districts of Uttar Pradesh. According to Crooke[2] (1896) "the Dom is a Dravidian menial caste found scattered throughout the province, regarding whose origin and enthnological affinities there has been much speculation". According to Dr. Caldwel as mentioned by Crooke (1896), "They are the surviving representatives of an older, ruder and blacker race who preceded the Dravidian in India". Sir H. M. Elliot[3] (1869) considers them to be "one of the aboriginal tribes of India. Tradition fixes their residence to the North of the Gogra (Ghaghra), touching the Bhars on the East in the vicinity of the Rohini. Several old forts testify to their former importance, and still retain the name of their founders; as, for instance, Domdiha and Domingarh (in the Gorakhpur district)." Risley[4] (1891) says "The Doms belong to one of the races whom for convenience of expression, we may call aborigines of India".

From the published work of earlier writers it is evident that Doms are a very old caste inhabiting many states of India. In Gorakhpur district, Magahiya or Katar Doms are found in good number. Magahiya Doms are notified as a criminal tribe in Bihar but they are not so treated in Uttar Pradesh.

Crooke has described the origin of the Dom as follows: "In the good old time all people were equally well-to-do and happy. The Brahmans had no property and built no houses for themselves. When Parameswar desired to appear in the world, he took the form of a Brahman. Then intending to divide men into castes, he went about begging as a Brahaman, wishing to ascertain what occupation each family followed. As he begged for alms no man gave him alms but silver and gold. At last he reached the house of a man who had killed a cow and was preparing to feed on the beef. He begged for alms and the cow-killer brought from his house a handful of gold coins. Parameswar refused the money and asked for a little barley. The Domin, or woman of the house, went inside and found a place in the courtyard which had been trampled into mud by the feet of the cow in her death struggle, and there a few ears of barley had suddenly sprouted up. The woman plucked the grain and offered it to Parameswar, who asked her where she had found it. She told him the whole story and confessed that her husband had killed a cow. Parameswar cursed her "Thou and thy posterity shall kill animals and remain beggars for ever".

Another legend current among the Doms is that Mahadeva and Parvati invited all castes to a feast. Their *guru,* Supach Bhagat, reached after the feast was over. Since he was feeling very hungry, he ate the food left by others. Ever since they have been treated as a low and degraded caste, eating food left by other people.

Yet another story is that the Doms were given priority of supplying fire at the cremation ground. It is believed that Rama blessed Supach Bhagat and said that anyone who would receive fire for cremation from him or from any of his decendants would go straight to heaven.

The Magahiya Doms of Gorakhpur district derive their name from the ancient Kingdom of Magadha. They also call themselves Katar Dom or those who keep *Katar* (Daggar) on their person. According to Mr. J. Kannedy as quoted by Crooke[2], "The Doms say that they formerly cultivated and owned land but when pressure came, Magahiyas were divided into two great sub-divisions — the Magahiyas and Bansphors. The Magahiyas took to larceny while the Bansphors were content to weave baskets and cultivate what land they could. These two sub-divisions do not intermarry".

1. Majumdar D. N. ; *The Fortunes of Primitive Tribes, Lucknow* (1944).
2. Crooke, W ; *The Tribes and Castes of N. W. Provinces and Oudh*, Vol. II, Calcutta (1896) pp. 312—342.
3. Elliot. H. M. ; *The Races of the N. W. Provinces of India*, Vol. I, London (1869) p. 84.
4. Risley, H.H. ; *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, Vol. I, Calcutta (1891), pp. 240—251.

Distribution and Population Trend

The population of the Doms in Uttar Pradesh according to 1961 Census is 41,388 of whom 21,297 are males and 20,091 females. Their sex-ratio comes to 943 females for every 1,000 males. They are preponderantly rural folks as out of 41,388 persons, 38,662 (93.41 per cent) live in the rural areas.

A statement showing the district-wise distribution of the Doms with rural and urban break-down has been furnished in the appendix. At the 1961 Census enumeration, the Doms were reported from 44 districts of Uttar Pradesh. The districts having 1,000 Doms or above each are Aligarh (8,967), Rae Bareli (4,667), Bara Banki (3,804), Deoria (2,385), Fatehpur (2,781), Farrukhabad (2,479), Varanasi (2,385), Lucknow (1,842), Ghazipur (1,350), Gonda (1,288) and Gorakhpur (1,860).

It may be added that in Uttarakhand and Kumaon divisions the Shilpkars too are known as Doms but at the 1961 Census they were enumerated separately.

Family

Family among the Doms is patrilocal with patronymic designation. After marriage the woman goes to stay with the husband. The Dom informants from Gonda and Gorakhpur reported that *Kutumb* or joint family is the ideal situation, but, in actual practice, it has been seen that in most cases couples stay in separate houses or have separate establishments in the joint houses. In some cases couples stay with either or both of the surviving parents.

Dwellings

In the villages, the dwellings of Doms are generally found a little away from the main habitation. Generally, they live in small *kachcha* houses or in thatched huts which bespeak their poor economic condition. The huts are usually one room structures with thatched slanting roofs. In fair weather, meals are cooked outside the hut and during rainy season a corner of the apartment is used for cooking. The *Kachcha* house too are small in size having one room each and some open space in front. In some house a thatched verandah is made in front of the room. The houses of Doms are generally clustered at one place and are often surrounded by other scheduled caste people.

In the city of Gorakhpur their settlement is located at Lal Diggi at the southern corner of the city. This is popularly called Harijan Basti. In the past the District Jail was located here. Their tenements, said to have been built by the Government, are in two single rows—one containing 40 and the other 25 tenements respectively. These are *pucca* structures. Each room measuring 12′×10′ has a window and a door. In front of the room there is an eight feet wide varandah which is utilised as kitchen. The other localities where the Doms live have miserable looking dwellings, low-roofed *kachcha* structures covered with pieces of old tin-sheets.

Dress

The ordinary dress of a male consists of a *'dhoti'* and *'phatui'* or shirt. Now-a-days youngmen wear pants and bush-shirts or *pyjamas* and *kurtas*. This difference in dress is noticeable more in the cities than in the villages. The young boys are often found in tattered clothes wearing under-shirts and underwears. The old men generally have on their shoulders a *gamchha* (scarf) which serves many purposes. They can keep food articles in it or wear it for a bath or wrap it round the head to protect it from the hot sun. In villages men are seen barefooted but in cities they wear shoes and *chappals*.

The women generally wear coarse bordered *'dhoti'* along with small shirt or *jumper*. Some young ladies use under garments also. They have a separate dress for work, consisting of an old blouse, *dhoti* or skirt (*lehnga*). Some young girls are also found wearing *shalwar, kurta* and *dupatta*. In the villages old women still put on skirt (*lehnga*) of dark brown colour reaching just below the knees. Though it is now out of fashion, the bridal dress still consists of *lehnga, dupatta* and *jumper*. Women also use *chappals*, locally made as well as rubber *Hawai chappals*.

Ornaments

Among Doms, males rarely use ornaments of any type excepting finger rings made of brass, lead or iron and sometimes ear-studs.

The ornaments used by females are made of gold, silver, brass, or alloy. Gold ornaments, being costly, are rare. Only "*laung*" or "*bulaka*" (nose ornaments of light weight) made of gold are used. There are ornaments for almost all parts of the body, *i.e.* forehead, ears, nose, neck, arms, wrist, fingers, ankles,

legs and toes but few possess all types of ornaments; nor are they meant for daily use. The common ornaments worn daily are the nose ring or stud ear ring or stud *hansuli,* or *hamel* round the neck, *tora* or bracelet on the wrist, *challa* or *payal* on the legs, *bichhua* on the toes and *kardhani* (waist band) on the waist.

A list of ornaments worn by females, with their local names and metal is furnished below:

Sl. no.	Part of Body	Local names of Ornaments	English Equivalent, if any	Metal
1	Forehead	1. *Jhumar*	..	Silver or Alloy
		2. *Bendi*	..	,,
2	Nose	1. *Laung*	Nose pin	Gold
		2. *Nathuni*	Nose pin	,,
3	Ear	1. *Jhumka*	Ear ring	,,
		2. *Bunda*	,,	,,
		3. *Bali*	,,	,,
		4. *Karan Phool*	,,	Silver or alloy
4	Neck	1. *Hamel*	Necklace of silver rupees tied in thread	Silver
		2. *Kantha*	Necklace	,,
		3. *Har*	,,	Alloy
		4. *Guluband*	,,	,,
		5. *Hansuli*	Neck ring	,,
5	Arms	1. *Bajuband*	Armlet	Alloy
6	Wrist	1. *Kara*	Bracelet	,,
		2. *Tora*	,,	,,
		3. *Choori*	Bangle	,,
		4. *Pachela*	,,	,,
7	Fingers	1. *Anguthi*	Ring	Gold or Silver or Alloy
8	Waist	1. *Kardhani*	Waist band	Silver or Alloy
9	Legs	1. *Kara*	..	Alloy
		2. *Pajeb*	..	,,
		3. *Payal*	..	Silver or Alloy
		4. *Bichua*	..	,,

Tattooing

Tattooing is quite common among Doms. They consider it an aid to beauty and some old members of the community held that it is the only ornament which goes with the body even after death. The tattoo mark was essential among the Magahiya Doms for identifying missing persons who indulged in anti-social and criminal activities.

Among males tattoo designs are generally made on the forearms which include either the name of the persons or name or picture of some Hindu deity. Among females however, chests, wrist, thighs and foreheads are also tattooed besides the forearms. On the chest, forehead, and wrist, designs signifying some ornament are made. On the forearms, good geometrical designs, flowers and peacocks are popular designs. Normally, a girl is tattooed while in the age-group 8–12.

Food and Drinks

The Doms are non-vegetarian by habit and choice. Their traditions and origin are indicative enough that they eat flesh of all animals, wild as well as domesticated. They eat pork, fowls, ducks, field rats, rabbits and flesh of dead animals. It is, however, asserted by them that they abjure from taking beef. Their daily food consists of coarse rice, *madua, kodon* or *sawan* and pulse. Vegetables like pumpkin, gourd and onion are also eaten occasionally. One of the Doms reported that though they claim to be non-vegetarian they can rarely afford to take mutton, fish or goat meat. Instead they usually purchase intestines, head or rejected pieces of meat and cook it.

The Doms are very fond of liquor which is generally prepared locally from *mahua* flower or barley. Toddy or fermented palm juice and spirit are also

frequently taken by them. Other intoxicants like hemp, *ganja* and *madak* are also used. Chewing of tobacco mixed with lime is common habit among them.

Household Articles

Utensils are generally made of clay, wood or aluminium. Brass or metal pots and enamel-ware are also used by some families for cooking, eating and drinking as also for storing of water. Other household articles consist of cots, *chakki,* big earthen pitchers and baskets.

Environmental Sanitation and Hygienic Habits

In the city of Gorakhpur, though the Doms live in *pucca* tenements, they pay scant attention to their environmental sanitation and deposit the garbage just near their quarters. Thus the surroundings, though open and spacious, are quite unhygienic. The local inhabitants informed that 5 or 6 years ago a sweeper was appointed by the Harijan Welfare Department for this place who used to keep the surroundings neat and clean but his services were terminated after sometime. It is paradoxical that though almost all the families living there were working as sweepers in the municipality or the railways, they do not care to keep their own surroundings clean. They have the satisfaction that they were better in this respect than their brotheren living in *kachcha* houses elsewhere without any drainage system. The condition of environmental sanitation is still worse in the rural areas.

As regards their personal cleanliness, the position of Doms of Lal Diggi in Gorakhpur city is slightly better in comparison to the Doms in rural areas. The Doms of the locality asserted that since they come into contact with all types of people, they try to remain clean. They take bath after returning from work and wear clean clothes. However, it was noticed that proper attention is not paid to the personal hygiene and cleanliness of children. The females were also seen taking edibles and tobacco with unclean hands while sweeping roads and streets. They wash clothes with washing soda, soap and other detergents like *reh.*

Education and Literacy

According to 1961 Census 2,235 persons — 2,051 male, 184 female were returned as literate and educated. They form 5.4 per cent of the total population of Doms. The rural and urban percentage of literates is 4.8 and 14.6 respectively. Thus the rate of literacy among Doms is quite low.

The table given below shows the number of literates by sex in rural and urban areas:

State		Illiterate		Literate without Educational standard		Primary or Junior Basic		Matriculation or Higher Secondary		Tech. Dip. not equal to Degree		Non-Tech. Dip. not equal to Degree		University Degree	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Uttar Pradesh	R	18,121	18,703	1,382	109	292	19	35	1	..	..	..	..	..	..
	U	1,125	1,204	236	48	61	6	21	..	14	..	3	..	7	1
	T	19,246	19,907	1,618	157	353	25	56	1	14	..	3	..	7	1

The percentage of literacy is higher in the urban areas, where 14 males have obtained technical diplomas, three males non-technical diplomas and seven males and one female have university degrees. In the rural areas, the highest educational standard is matriculation or higher secondary. Among males, the percentage of literates is 9.6 while among females it is 0.9 per cent.

Poor education among Doms may be due to two reasons: economic backwardness and absence of immediate return from investment made in education. From the field investigation at Gorakhpur and Gonda it was found that no Dom student was living in the hostels meant for scheduled caste students coming from rural areas.

In the Dom locality of Gorakhpur, the boys in the age-group 15–20 were found playing *Kauris* and cards. Inquiry about their education and qualification, revealed that most of them were Matric failed and could not get employment in the Municipal Board or Railways. So they did odd jobs, like carrying load and working on daily

wages in the grain or vegetable markets. The children in the age-group 9—14 stay back from school. The reason for not sending the children to school was reported to be the non-availability of any school in the vicinity, the primary school functioning in the locality having been closed three years ago. Their leaders were, however, trying to have the primary school reopened. But this reason was not convincing enough as another primary school was functioning at a distance of only half a mile from the locality. This is in fact due to their inherent apathy towards the education of their children.

Economic Life

According to 1961 Census, out of 41,288 persons, 19,971 were reported as workers. The working force of the male population and 32.9 per cent of the female population constitute the working force. This shows higher rate of female participation in active work. Among the females of the Scheduled Caste population as a whole in Uttar Pradesh, their participation rates in rural and urban areas are 28.67 per cent and 11.90 per cent respectively, whereas, among the Doms the corresponding figures are 30.8 per cent and 50.9 per cent respectively. These percentages show that females find fewer avenues of work in rural areas than in urban areas. In the towns they are mostly employed in scavenging and sweeping.

According to 1961 Census the industrial classification among the Doms of Uttar Pradesh is given below :

Sl. no.	Occupation	Rural		Urban		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	
1	As cultivator	2,574	983	3	9	3,569
2	Agricultural labourer	1,228	498	..	..	1,726
3	In Mining, Quarrying Livestock Forestory, Fishing, Hunting and orchards, etc.	28	5	2	..	35
4	Household Industry	4,331	2,089	41	148	6,609
5	Manufacture other than Household Industry	226	87	26	3	342
6	Construction	37	1	13	..	51
7	Trade and Commerce	85	27	9	3	124
8	Transport, Storage and Communication	238	4	212	6	461
9	In other services	2,778	3,451	519	306	7,054
	Total ..	11,525	7,145	826	475	19,971

It is evident from the above table that their largest concentration is in other services (35.2 per cent) followed by household Industry (33.09 per cent). Taking other services as a separate category, it is noticed that more than 50 per cent of persons are engaged in scavenging. In this profession females outnumber males in rural areas. Among the household industry, making of *soop* (winnowing fan, *dauri* (baskets) and *beri* (shallow baskets for lifting water for irrigation from tank) and fixing up of skin over constitutes 48.25 per cent of the total population. 12,351 out of 21,297 males and 7,720 out of 20,091 females are working. In other words 56.5 per cent the *dholak* (musical instrument) are common activities of Doms. In rural areas, 1 male and 102 females are engaged in tanning and currying of hides and skins.

The third largest category (17.87 per cent) is that of cultivators. Out of 3,569 persons engaged in cultivation, 3,557 are in rural areas and only 12 in the urban areas. All the 1,726 persons (or 8.64 per cent) engaged as agricultural labourers are in the rural areas.

The other categories in order or precedence are Transport, Storage and Communication, Manufacture

other than Household Industry, Trade and Commerce, Construction, Mining, Quarrying, Live-stock, etc.

In regard to the economic activities of Doms, the observations made by Majumdar (1942)[1] are worth quoting. He says "The nomadic Dom has not shown his skill in any work, he roams in the jungle but has not learnt the ways of the fowler or the bird catcher, he is an indifferent fisherman and an ill-equipped hunter". In recent years the Doms have settled down as scavengers or in the manufacture of bamboo products like baskets, fans etc.

In Gorakhpur, the Doms have taken to scavenging as also service in Railway as porters. Prior to this a Dom was a menial worker in eight or ten families known as *Jajmans* and he used to be compensated by getting a part of the produce at the time of harvesting. This practice has, however, stopped and payment in cash is made for the services they render. Where the Doms have been confined to an area for purposes of reclamation they have turned out to be good cultivators but it appears that cultivation as such does not attract them very much.

In Unnao, Bara Banki and Faizabad districts it was reported that Dom females also work as *Dais* (midwives), which provides a subsidiary means of livelihood to them.

Life Cycle

Birth

Among Doms, the birth of a child is considered as a blessing. The male child is preferred to the female, specially at the first delivery. The mother is not put to any restriction after conception but she is not allowed to visit a grove or lonely places after sunset. There is no change in the routine of her life and she attends to her domestic work as usual. No pre-natal ceremony is observed. The woman's liking for any change in diet and preference for any particular article of food are catered to by the family members during pregnancy.

The delivery takes place at the husband's home. A midwife or *dai* of Dom or Chamar caste is called in at the time of delivery. The period of pollution lasts for 12 days after which the new born child and mother are given bath in luke-warm water. Some people throw a feast to friends and relations on this day. The mother is given nutritious food like '*harira*' a preparation of Turmeric, juggery, oil and other ingredients, as well as liquour to restore energy.

There is no naming ceremony among the Magahiya Doms of Gorakhpur. However, the Doms of Gonda district informed that the name is given to a child by the grandfather at the age of five months in case of a girl and six months in case of a boy. In rare cases, they have also started consulting Brahmins for the '*rashi*' name.

Mundan or first tonsorial ceremony is performed both for boys and girls within three years of the child's birth. In the majority of cases, it is performed in the same month in which the child was born. Generally, *mundan* of a child is done at a shrine or on the banks of a river. After shaving the head of the child, the hair is collected in a thick barley flour bread, made into a ball and immersed in the river.

Marriage

Among the Doms the average age of marriage for a boy is 14—16 and for a girl 12—14. In the past infant marriages were common but now the age of marriage has gone up considerably. At the time of 1961 Census, 7 per cent males and 11 per cent females were returned married in the age-group 0—14 which shows the extent to which child-marriage is still prevalent in this community.

Monogamy is the usual practice but cases of polygamy are not totally absent. Considering the population of Doms by marital status it is found that 10,071 males and 11,022 females were counted as married during the 1961 Census. This indicates the incidence of polygamy among them. The informants said that poverty was a hurdle in having more wives than one.

Marriages take place within the sub-caste. Marriages with close relations are taboo. Junior *levirate* is allowed but not strictly enforced.

Crooke has discussed the marriage rules of the Doms of Mirzapur as follows: "The endogamous sub-castes have exogamous sections some of which are territorial and some apparently totemistic. Thus rule of exogamy is reinforced by the prohibition of marriage in the family of the maternal uncle, the father's sister or their own sisters, as

1. Majumdar, D. N.; *The Blood groups of Dom*, published in '*Man of India*,' Vol. pp. 251—57.

long as there is any rememberance of relationship which is usually three or perhaps four generations". However, the Doms of Gonda and Gorakhpur districts did not report specifically for exogamous sections. They stated that marriage among kinsmen is prohibited and village exogamy is usually practised.

Crooke has mentioned prevalence of bride price among the Doms of Mirzapur which consists of five rupees, five seers of tumeric, a sheet, five lumps of tobacco and five packets of betel leaves. But the Doms in Gorakhpur claim that they have been paying dowry instead of accepting bride price. However, the case studies of a few families revealed that the custom of bride price, locally known as *Altaka,* (always fixed amount of Rs.15), is the usual practice.

The proposal of marriage is made by the boy's side and the father's sister's husband plays as important role in negotiations. After the settlement of marriage, the betrothal is done by inter-change of two leaf platters full of liquor. The boy's father puts a couple of rupees into them and passes them on to the girl's father.

On the appointed day, the marriage party goes to the girl's house. It camps at the *Janvasa* (a halting place) which is usually in a mango-grove or in a house at some distance from the girl's house. A grand feast of pork and liquor is given by the girl's father's sister's husband (*phupha*). The girl and the boy are seated on a leaf mat and water is sprinkled by the priest who is the girl's uncle (*phupha*). Then the garments of the bride and the groom are knotted together and they go round a *semal* tree, planted in the centre, five times. After this the bridegroom puts vermilion (*sindur*) on the parting of the bride's hair. Among the Magahiya Doms the *sindur* is applied with the help of a *katar* (dagger).

Death

Among the Doms of Gorakhpur district the dead are cremated. The dead body is carried on a bier of bamboo for burning the corpse. The last rites are performed by the eldest son, or, in his absence, by some near relative ; and in case of a married woman by her husband. After the cremation is over, the funeral party takes a dip in the river and assembles at the house of the deceased. Next day the charred bones, called *phool* are collected. These are later on immersed into some sacred river and sometimes carried to Varanasi or Allahabad for this purpose. The other ceremonies fall on the third day, called *Triratri,* thirteenth day, called *Terhi,* and finally on the sixteenth day, called *Solvi.*

Those who die of small-pox, cholera or of drowning are not cremated but are buried. Children are also buried.

In the published literature it has been reported that those who were poor used to bury their dead. But from the field investigation it is found that the position has since changed on account of social reform movement among them.

Religion and Inter-community Relation

The religious practices of the tribe vary with the social status of the sub-caste and there is no standard type of worship because they are not controlled by the Brahamins.

Mr. Kannedy writes "that the Maghaiya Doms have two specials divinities of their own, the chief is Gandak, whose grave is to be found at Karmaini Garhi, two days journey to the east of Motihari in Bengal. According to their tradition Gandak was hanged for theft a long time ago, and when dying he promised always to help the Maghaiya in trouble. He is worshipped by the whole tribe, but he is preeminently the patron god of thefts. A successful theft is always celebrated by the sacrifice in his honour.

Dom also worship *Samaiya,* a female divinity. She is without any special history, her function apparently relate chiefly to birth and illness. Maghaiya Doms sacrifice young pig and wine with sugar spices to these two deities. Maghaiya Doms have neither altars nor idols nor they erect any platform (*chabutra*) for worship. They also believe in ghosts and spirits. They have also reverence for trees and platforms consecrated by Hindus in passing, but pay no further homage. They acknowledge the village *Kali* and sometime offer sacrifice to her.

In Mirzapur, Dom of the better class worship *Bhawani,* to whom in the *Navratra* of *Chaitra* they make an offering of hog, cakes (*puris*), gruel (*lapsi*) and wreath of flower. The *Bhawani,* if appeased keeps off illness from her votaries. The

scavanger Doms, have a special female deity called "*Kukarmari*", the killer of dogs to whom a sacrifice of pig and some spirit is offered outside the village. Now they have faith in Hindu gods and goddesses.

On the last day of the first fortnight of *Kuar* they make ten lumps (*pind*) of flour and throw them into the river and when they come home they put some cakes and sweetened rice on a leaf platter, and lay it in the field to propitiate the dead. They also believe that trees are inhabited with evil spirits. The fields are in charge of *Mai Masan*, the deity, which haunts the cremation ground.

In Gorakhpur, according to Crooke, beside the worship described above they also worship their *Guru* (teacher) who is said to have had his headquarters at Bhojpur in Ballia district. To the goddess named *Juthaiya Bhawani*, of whose functions they can give no account, they offer young pig, some red lead with a lock of their hair. The Doms also believe that if a woman is not tattooed, in an attempt to enter the heaven, its gate keeper, pitches her down to the earth again.

They accept *kachcha* food and water from caste Hindus. Doms are considered to occupy one of the lowest level in the caste hierarchy. No caste accepts food or water from them.

Structure of Social Control, Prestige and Leadership

The Doms have traditional *panchayat* of their own which plays an important role in their daily life. They rall it the Dom *Biradari panchayat*.

The caste *panchayat* deals with the following matters:

1. Action prejudicial to the institution of marriage, *e.g.*:

(*a*) Infidelity of either spouse.

(*b*) Breach of contract to marry.

(*c*) Withholding of the married girl, after she has attained proper age, from her husband.

(*d*) Marrying a widow without the sanction of the *panchayat*.

(*e*) Negligence in maintaining the wife according to caste code.

2. Inter-caste illicit relation

3. Breach of caste code with regard to *huqqa pani* and standard of morality.

4. Cow-killing.

5. Breach of caste code in *biradari* feast.

6. Breach of established tabooed relations *e.g.* elder brother's illicit relations with younger brother's wife.

7. Abusing and mal-treatment of elders or parents.

8. Resort to beggary, prostitution and indulgence in actions unbecoming of the community.

9. Bankruptcy and committing violence.

10. Disregard of the *panchayat* and failure to obey its decisions.

The traditional caste *panchayat* of the Doms has been very active. The office bearers take keen interest in its functionary. The *panchayat* maintains a register of cases and judgments.

The procedure for convening a *panchayat* is simple. Any member of the community wanting to call the *panchayat*, approches the *Sarpanch* with an application stating the reasons and deposits a sum of Rs.1.25 with him. The *Sarpanch* thereupon asks the Secretary to call the meeting on some suitable date.

A few cases of *panchayat* meetings of the Magahiya Doms were collected from the records and are given below:

Case 1.—A meeting of the *panchayat* was held on April 5, 1960, in Nai Bazar under the presidentship of B. S. The matter was in connection with the refusal of a girl to go to her husband. An application to this effect was given by R. B. father of the girl. The statements of the husband and the wife were taken on oath. G. D. the husband, of U. stated that he had sent a registered letter to his father-in-

law, R. B., asking the latter to send his wife to him. He further stated that whatever wrong his wife had done, he had forgiven her and now she should come and stay with him. R. B. denied having received any such communication. G. D. countered that immediately after two months of her going over to her parents he went to look for her but came to know that she was remarried.

Shrimati U, the wife, stated that she had been living with her parents for the last two years but her husband never cared to enquire about her welfare.

The majority of the members of the *panchayat* passed a verdict against the girl for not staying with her husband but some members held that G. D. was equally to blame for neglecting her.

Before the *panchayat* members could arrive at some unanimous decision, U declared that she would never live with G. D. even if the *panchayat* decreed her to do so.

The *panchayat's* decision was that since U (wife) was not willing to live with G. D. (husband), either the wife or her father should return *Altaka* (bride price) besides other marriage expenses to G. D. The husband and wife would thereafter cease to have any relationship. G. D. received Rs.40 as marriage expense and Rs.15 as *Altaka* from R. B., father of U.

A condition was also attached to this decision that R. B. (father of U) should not marry her again to any Dom living or employed in the police line. (It was known that R. B. was intending to marry her to a sweeper of police line). In case this was done, he would be liable to pay a fine of Rs.500.

Case 2.—Another case relates to a family quarrel and moral turpitude. Meeting of the *panchayat* was held on April 3, 1966 at 4 p.m. under the presidentship of B. S.

The issue involved was beating of P by his wife with *chappals* as P indulged in gambling.

The statements of both the parties were taken on oath.

Shrimati D wife of P stated that she had beaten her husband with *chappals* eight months back. She was driven to this extreme when her husband criminally assaulted her younger sister K, a minor, and also insulted her parents. As for gambling, she explained that her husband used to give her money for gambling in which he also participated. Further, the immediate cause for the present *panchayat* arose only fifteen days ago. She did not beat P with *chappals* but just left for her parent's house in anger.

P admitted having had illicit connection with his sister-in-law but added that he did so with the willingness of K. He never gave any money to his wife for gambling. He did admit that he had contracted some bad habits since his employment in the air force. He reiterated that he was abused and beaten with *chappals* by his wife. He wanted that his wife should come back.

The *panchayat* gave 15 day's time to the parties to come to a compromise.

Case 3.—A meeting of the *panchayat* was held on August 20, 1963 at 5 p.m. under the presidentship of Sri B. S. to consider the application of Smt. K who wanted separation from her husband. P. S. told the *panchayat* that this wife left home one morning without knowledge of any person. When she did not return for three days, his parents went to her parent's house and persuaded the latter to send her to her husband but they did not agree. P. S.'s father corroborated this.

The father of K stated that nobody came to his house to take K.

Srimati K complained that her husband did not take proper care of her. Hence she sought separation.

The *panchayat* decided to give time to the parties for compromise.

The *panchayat* met again after 15 days, only to find that the situation had not improved but it decided to give one more chance for a compromise. When this too failed, it ordered the father of K to pay *altaka* (Rs.15) to P. S. and allowed separation.

Case 4.—Another case dealt with by the *panchayat* was in connection with the inter-dining of two women, one belonging to the Dom and the other to the Bansphor caste. The meeting of the *panchayat* was held on April 1, 1962, under the presidentship of Sri B. S.

Shrimati S took two seers of Toddy from Smt. K of Bansphor caste. After this both quarelled and abused each other under intoxication. S refused to pay for the *Tari* (Toddy). Shrimati K stated before

the *panchayat* that S shared the drinks daily with her. The *panchayat* took a lenient view as Bhansphors are considered a branch of Dom and hence inter-dining between the two was not a serious offence. However, the quarrel and non-payment of money was considered undesirable and S was directed to pay Re.1 to K as the cost of Toddy and was warned against quarelling and drinking in future.

From the cases described above, it is evident that the *panchayat* has a strong hold over the castes and its decisions are effective.

No organised effort has been made in the direction of social reform by the caste. The present President of the *panchayat* has taken steps to strengthen the caste organization. He claims to have propogated the idea of this community becoming a constituent body of the Zila Adi Hindu Depressed Classes Association, Gorakhpur. By doing so, the Doms could agitate for their demands jointly with other Scheduled Castes.

The proceedings of the Depressed Classes Association are discussed here to show the attempts made by it for social reforms among its constituents.

First convention of this association was convened on September 21, 1940 at 2 p.m. at Mansarovar *maidan* under the presidentship of Shri Karleshwar, vice-president of the association. This was inaugurated by the then District Information Officer of Gorakhpur. Following resolutions were adopted and passed by the association:

R. no. 1. Expressed sympathy for the people of Assam who had suffered heavily due to floods.

R. no. 2. Complained that Dr. Sita Ram, M.A., Ph.D. of the eastern districts had not been provided with a suitable job after his return from U. S. A.

R. no. 3. Desired that land lying fallow after the abolition of Zamindari should be distributed among the landless families.

R. no. 4. Noticed that S. L., a Supervisor of the Municipal Board, and N. C. of the District Board, had been jointly fomenting friction among the low castes and illiterate people and enjoined that they should be removed from the association.

R. no. 5. Desired that the Prohibition programme should be introduced in the district as it improves the economic condition of the depressed classes.

R. no. 6. Desired that Depressed Class people should be given financial assistance for setting up cottage industry and business.

R. no. 7. Required financial help for those depressed class people who had been affected by floods.

R. no. 8. Required facilities for light and water from the Municipal Board, for the Depressed Class localities.

R. no. 9. Asked the Harijan Welfare Department, to give subsidy to the Harijan National Club, Golghar, Gorakhpur.

R. no. 10. Asked for abolition of the Criminal Tribes Act, as it was a blot on the community concerned.

Another meeting of the association was held on December 25, 1956 to mourn the death of Dr. Ambedkar.

Similar meetings of the association were convened to celebrate the *Gandhi Jayanti* week and to put up demands for opening schools in Harijan Basti.

District-wise Distribution of Doms Population in Uttar Pradesh by Sex and Rural Urban Break-up

Sl. no.	District	Total population			Rural		Urban	
		Persons	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
1	Uttar Kashi	394	200	194	200	194	..	..
2	Tehri Garhwal	16	10	6	10	6	..	..
3	Garhwal	4	1	3	1	3	..	..
4	Niani Tal	69	58	11	58	11	..	..
5	Bijnor	68	38	30	38	30	..	..
6	Moradabad	20	1	19	1	19	..	..
7	Bareilly	95	60	35	60	35	..	..
8	Pilibhit	48	42	6	42	6	..	..
9	Shahjahanpur	109	61	48	61	48	..	..
10	Dehra Dun	308	110	198	85	56	25	142
11	Saharanpur	177	88	89	28	89	60	..
12	Muzaffarnagar	1	..	1	..	1	..	..
13	Meerut	65	31	34	30	34	1	..
14	Bulandshahr	62	14	48	14	48	..	..
15	Aligarh	8,967	4,053	4,914	4,053	4,914	..	..
16	Agra	10	6	4	6	4	..	..
17	Etah	296	258	38	258	38	..	..
18	Farrukhabad	2,479	1,423	1,056	1,364	1,051	59	5
19	Etawah	66	41	25	41	25	..	..
20	Kanpur	695	598	97	395	62	203	35
21	Fatehpur	2,781	1,309	1,472	1,309	1,472	..	..
22	Allahabad	266	144	122	144	122	..	..
23	Jhansi	4	4	..	4	..	..	..
24	Hamirpur	20	20	..	20	..	..	..
25	Banda	247	118	129	118	129	..	..
26	Sitapur	14	11	3	11	3	..	..
27	Hardoi	22	11	11	11	11	..	..
28	Unnao	1,083	871	212	871	212	..	..
29	Lucknow	1,842	979	863	932	837	47	36
30	Rae Bareli	4,667	2,404	2,263	2,399	2,263	5	..
31	Bahraich	997	578	419	578	419	..	..
32	Gonda	1,288	478	810	455	501	23	309
33	Bara Banki	3,804	1,703	2,101	1,703	2,101	..	..
34	Faizabad	123	68	55	68	55	..	..

Sl. no.	District	Total Population			Rural		Urban	
		Persons	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
35	Pratapgarh	8	5	3	5	3	..	..
36	Basti	27	15	12	15	12	..	..
37	Gorakhpur	1,060	555	505	555	505	..	..
38	Deoria	2,939	1,485	1,454	1,485	1,454	..	..
39	Azamgarh	958	647	311	571	264	76	47
40	Jaunpur	133	66	67	44	67	22	..
41	Ballia	646	309	337	309	337	..	..
42	Ghazipur	1,350	705	645	705	645	..	..
43	Varanasi	2,385	1,279	1,106	547	505	732	601
44	Mirzapur	775	440	335	226	241	214	94
	Total ..	41,388	21,297	20,091	19,830	18,832	1,467	1,259



An unmarried Dom boy



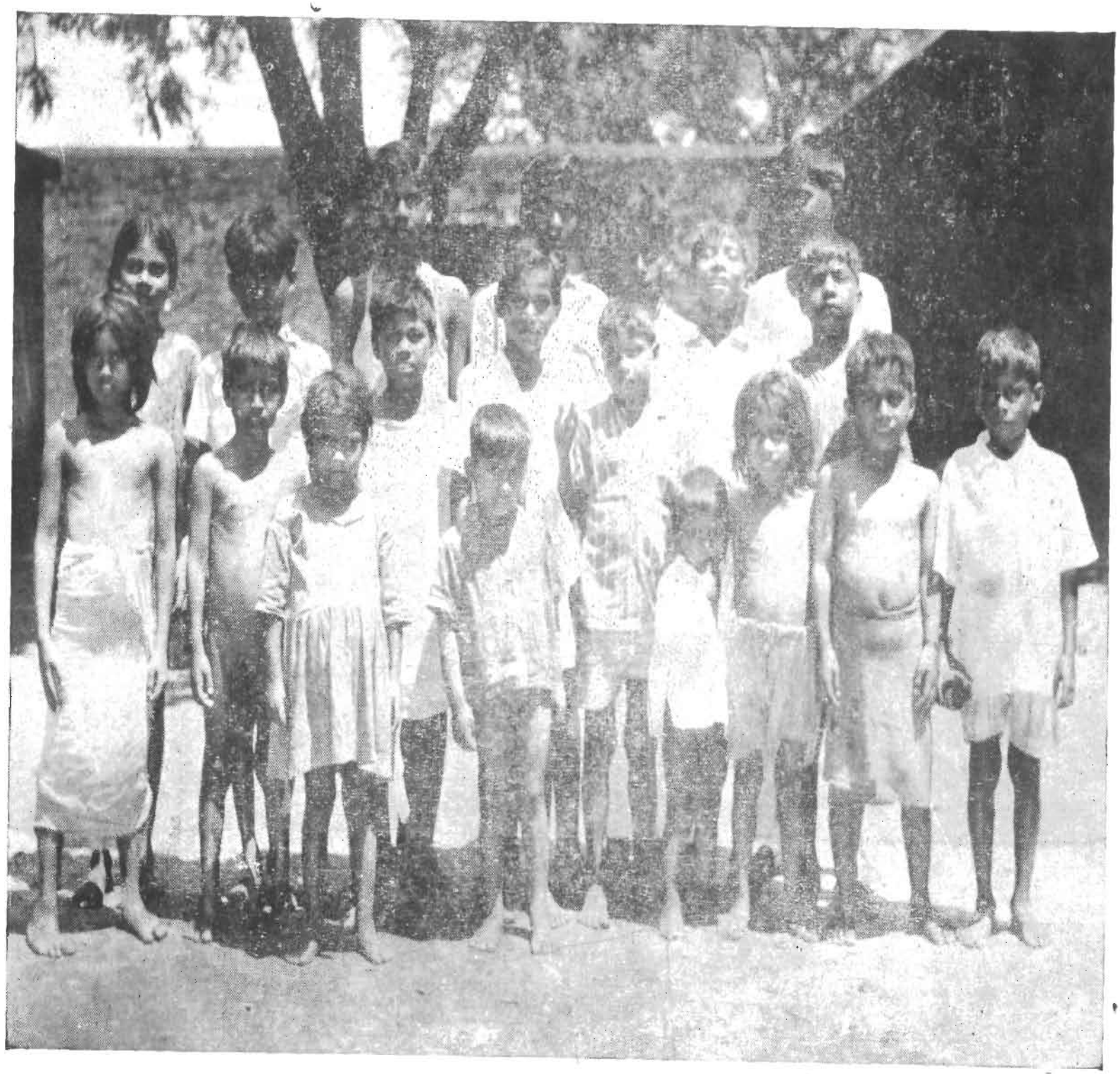
Close-up of a Dom women



Profile of a young Dom woman



A young Dom boy



A group of Dom children

KORI

Name and Origin

Koris have been included in the list of Scheduled Castes in Uttar Pradesh, except in Agra, Rohilkhand and Meerut divisions. They are also treated as Scheduled Castes in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab and Rajasthan.

According to Crooke[1], their name is derived from the Kol Caste, of which they are presumed to be an off-shoot.

Koris trace their origin from Sant Kabir. Crooke says "According to their own story Sant Kabir was one day going to bathe in the river Ganga and met a Brahmin girl who saluted him. He said in reply, "May God give you a son". She said that she was a virgin and un-married but he said that his words never fail. So she immediately got blister in her hand, out of which a boy was born. She was ashamed and left the new born child on the bank of the river, where a heifer, that had never calved, gave him milk. The child was adopted by a weaver, who taught him his trade. He got his name because he was born of a *Kauri*-virgin girl—or of a girl untouched by man *i.e.* "Kori."

However, during field investigation in the districts of Bara Banki and Gonda, the Kori informants, were found to be ignorant of the above story and they asserted that Sant Kabir was their progenitor.

The Koris are said to be traditionally Hindu. In the published literature, Koris have been referred to as Hindu weavers.

The traditional occupation of weaving is now no longer practised by Koris. On the contrary most of them, when reminded of their ancestral occupation, retorted that weavers belong to Muslim — *Julaha* caste. However, the elderly members of the caste, in Gonda district, accepted that in the past their forefathers pursued the weaving profession and explained that since this occupation is not paying, they have taken to other occupations.

Distribution And Population Trend

In Uttar Pradesh, the Koris are spread all over the State, excluding the districts of Agra, Meerut and Rohilkhand divisions, where they have not been treated as Scheduled Castes. The districts having no Kori population are Chamoli, Pithoragarh and Tehri-Garhwal.

A statement showing their population district-wise, with sex in rural and urban areas, has been given in Appendix at the end.

In the Census of 1961, the total population of Koris in the State was enumerated as 710,241 of which 357,267 are males and 352,974 females. Of the total population, 623,779 persons — 309,942 males and 313,837 females — live in rural areas and 86,462 persons — 47,325 males and 39,137 females in the urban areas of the State. Thus about 87.83 per cent Koris live in rural areas of the State.

The Sex ratio of the Koris is 988 females for every 1,000 males. It is more than the State average of 909 per 1,000 males. The corresponding figures for rural and urban areas are 1,012 and 827 respectively.

The distribution pattern of the Koris shows that they are mainly concentrated in the district of Gonda and Sultanpur, where their numerical strength exceeds 100,000. The other numerically important districts are Faizabad (78,051), Bahraich (47,213), Rae Bareli (36,039), Kanpur (34,571), Jhansi (25,618), Banda (25,192), Fatehpur (25,030), Bara Banki (23,313) and Allahabad (22,683). Their population is above 10,000 but below 20,000 in the districts of Kheri (18,983), Lucknow (18,696) and Pratapgarh (15,194). The population is below 500 in the districts of Gorakhpur (466), Unnao (453), Varanasi (269), Azamgarh (116) Deoria (53) Uttar Kashi (34), Jaunpur and Ghazipur (10 each), Ballia (5), Almora (4) and Garhwal (2).

The population of Koris varies between 1,308 (Naini Tal) and 9,181 (Sitapur) in the remaining districts of the State.

The population of Koris in the State in different censuses is given after taking the population of 17 districts, where they have been treated as Scheduled Castes.

1. Crooke, W.; *Castes and Tribes of North-West Province and Oudh—Calcutta*, 1916, Vol, III, p.316.

Census Year	Population	Variation
1901	669,370	
1911	634,775	(—) 34,595
1921	640,663	(+) 5,888
1931	727,576	(+)86,913
1941	N.A.	N.A.
1951	N.A.	N.A.
1961	710,241	(—)17,335 (1931—61)

From the above statement it is evident that the population of Koris registered a decline in the decade 1911, but in the decades ending with 1921 and 1931, it showed an upward trend. The population figures for the year 1941 and 1951 are not available. In 1961, the Koris registered a decline in population, as compared to 1931 Census.

Considering the population variations at district level, it is to be noted that except in the districts of Naini Tal, Fatehpur, Lucknow, Gonda, Basti, Faizabad and Sultanpur, the remaining districts, in which Koris have been treated as Scheduled Castes, showed decline when figures of 1931 and 1961 are compared, but the districts of Gonda and Sultanpur showed an increase over the population of 1931. The increase was 76,466 and 31,089 respectively. It suggested that there was a migration from other districts to these districts from 1931 to 1961.

The decline in population of Koris in other districts may be due to two reasons (*a*) out-migration of Koris from these districts to others and (*b*) return under some other Scheduled Castes, knowing that Koris have been excluded from the list of Scheduled Castes in some divisions.

The table given below indicates considerable decrease in the population of Koris since 1931 :

Sl. no.	District	Population 1951	Population 1961	Decrease or increase (—) or (+)
1	Farrukhabad	16,395	2,287	(—) 14,108
2	Etawah	21,939	3,67	(—) 18,265
3	Jaunpur	3,008	5,779	(—) 17,229
4	Sitapur	19,284	9,181	(—) 10.103
5	Unnao	18,299	453	(—) 17,846
6	Deoria	572	53	(—) 499
7	Ballia	413	5	(—) 408
8	Ghazipur	1,021	10	(—) 1,011
9	Varanasi	4,366	269	(—) 4,097

FAMILY

A family has been defined by Majumdar[1], as, "a group of persons who live under the same roof and are connected by nuclear and kinship ties and conciousness of kind on basis of locality, interest and mutuality of obligations". There exists eloquent example of sanctity of domestic life, as such abiding relationship between father and son, between brother and brother, relationship not merely of consanguinity of kinship, territorial, but duration and intimate in value and responses."

Normally, a family is a group consisting of the husband, wife and their un-married childrens, but in villages, cases of married children living with parents is quite common. Joint families, *i.e.* married brothers living together are also found within the villages. Uncles and aunts are also respected in the same manner as parents.

On the death of the father, his property is divided between sons. The recent legislation conferring rights on daughters in the ancestral property has no effect in the villages, although Koris are aware of it.

The family among the Koris is patriarchal with patronymic designation. After marriage the woman goes to live with her husband.

Dwellings

In Uttar Pradesh most villages are inhabited by multi-caste people. The houses of one caste are generally found to be located at one place, thus forming clusters, which is often referred to after the name of the predominent caste. In Bara Banki district the Scheduled Castes population is found inhabiting the periphery of the village, but in Gonda district, in village Kheria, Koris are living side by side with Rajputs.

The dwellings occupied by Koris do not present any peculiar characteristics and are generally of the same shape and design as houses in general. In addition to regional variations in the structure of dwellings, economic factor is also one of the causes of variation. The poor ones own small *kachcha* houses or huts with thatched roof, while economically better off people have *kachcha* as well as *pucca* houses, with tiled-roofs.

In the district of Bara Banki and Lucknow, the roofs of the Kori houses are found generally of thatch or straw, while in Gonda district these are made of

1. Mujumdar, D. N. : *Races and Culture of India*, 1958, p. 165.

tiles. In village Kheria, Koris own both huts with thatched roof and houses with mud walls and tiles.

The houses are generally built over an area of 20′×30′. The entrance of the house generally faces east or west but never south. The main door opens in a long room, usually 16′×18′, one corner of which is used as store and other as a bed-room. The outer room opens in the courtyard. There is one small room of 8′×8′ on one side of the courtyard. This portion is used by the women folk of the house. There is no separate kitchen and generally a corner of the courtyard is used for the purpose. Houses are without windows.

Dress

The Koris have no dress, distinctive of their community. The ordinary male-dress consists of a *dhoti, phatui* or jacket, shirt or *kurta. Pyjamas*, and trousers are seldom worn. Persons who have been to urban centres sometimes use bush-shirts and trousers. *Dhoti* of coarse cloth is worn to cover the lower portion of the body. The same generally reaches up to the knees. *Phatui*—a small jacket with inside pockets, is put on as upper garment. An *angochha*—a sash of coloured cloth is used to protect the head from the sun. During winter, cotton sheet is wrapped round the body.

Female dress consists of a bordered coarse *dhoti* or *sari* and a blouse. It was reported that *lehnga* and *orhni* (head gear), a popular dress of the female in the past, is being replaced by the *sari*.

Ornaments

Usually men do not wear ornaments, but sometimes they are seen wearing rings (*anguthi*) made of alloy or silver.

The ornaments worn by women are many and similar to those of women of other castes. The only difference found is in the kind of metal used.

Among the Scheduled Castes, ornaments are generally made of alloy or silver and use of gold is rare. This is because of the poor economic condition of the people.

The list of common ornament, used by the females is as follows:

Part of Body	Indian Name	English Equivalent
Ear	1. *Bunda*	Ear ring or
	2. *Tarki*	Ear stud
Nose	1. *Phool*	Nose stud.
	2. *Keel*	
Neck	1. *Hansuli*	Type of
	2. *Hamel*	Necklace.
Wrist	1. *Kara*	Bracelet.
	2. *Pahunchi*	
Arm	1. *Bajuband*	Armlet.
Waist	1. *Kardhani*	..
Leg	1. *Kara*	..
	2. *Lachcha*	
Toe	1. *Bichhua*	..

Tattooing

Tattooing is popular among the Koris, specially females for whom it is a must. Russell and Hira Lal[1] have mentioned that the womenfolk are tattooed on the right arm before marriage and on the left after arrival at their husband's house. However, during the field investigation among Koris in the districts of Gonda and Bara Banki, no evidence was available in support of the above statement. Tattooing is said to be done with two purposes, firstly as an aid to beauty, secondly as a mark of Hinduism. Women without it are not allowed to cook meals. The designs of tattoo marks are simple. These are generally made on the fore-arm, forehand, chin and leg.

Men are not fond of tattooing, but some of them are found with letter "OM" or their own name inscribed on their forearms.

Food and Drinks

Koris are non-vegetarian by habit. They like mutton, fowl, fish and wild pig but beef is abjured. Those who are *Bhagat* (taken *Kanthi* from some *guru i.e.* teacher) abstain from taking the non-vegetarian diet. Their daily food consits of rice and pulses. The bread of wheat and other coarse grains like maize, millet and barley is also eaten. Parched grains and *Sattu*-flour of parched grains—are also taken regularly. Vegetables like spinach and pump-

1. Russell R.V. and Hira Lal; *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India*; London-1916, Vol. III-p. 545.

kin are also taken. In rainy season, they eat *Karmnua*—a type of leafy vegetable which is freely available in the villages during this season.

They are fond of liquor and are addicted to intoxicants. It was reported during field investigation that distillation of country liquor was done at home for personal use and sales. Toddy—fermented juice of palm tree—is also taken by Koris.

Smoking of *bidi, chilum* and *hukka* (hubble-bubble) is also popular among the people of this caste.

Environments, Sanitation and Hygienic Condition

In the rural areas, houses are constructed in haphazard manner and the drains open out on the public lanes. During rains, the rainy water accumulates in the pits causing insanitation in the surroundings. Cow-dung heaped near homes breeds foul odour during rainy season. Cattle are tethered in front of a house or even inside it. This also leads to insanitary conditions in the villages. They do not bother about their environmental insenitation, but in urban areas their sanitary conditions are slightly better.

The people go to nearby fields for defecation, but children are seen doing so along the roads all over the place.

As regards personal hygiene, it was said that they take bath occassionally. Clothes are seldom washed with soap or other detergents like soda and *reh*.

The house-wives take due care of the houses. The floor is well washed with cow-dung. The inner walls are also washed with clay on festive occasions.

Language and Literacy

Koris, generally speak Hindi dialect. In *Awadh*, they speak *Awadhi* and in Varanasi and its adjoining areas they speak *Bhojpuri*. Those who are slightly sophisticated speak *Khari Boli* with outsiders.

According to 1961 Census, about 6.5 per cent of their population was literate as against 2.0 per cent at the Census of 1931. The rate of literacy has increased, but this does not compare favourably with the literacy rate of 7.1 per cent for all the Scheduled Castes.

A table showing the break-up of population by educational standard is as follows :

Sl. no.	Educational Standard	Rural		Urban	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
1	Illiterate	285,267	311,935	31,233	35,662
2	Literate, without Educational Standard	18,569	1,800	11,214	2,140
3	Primary or Junior Basic	5,548	100	4,024	854
4	Matriculation or Higher Secondary	558	2	709	413
5	Technical Diploma not equal to degree	..	..	66	..
6	Non-technical diploma not equal to degree	..	..	39	..
7	University degree or Post-graduate other than Technical qualification	..	..	31	64
8	Technical qualification or diploma equal to degree or Post-graduate degree	..	..	9	4
	Total ..	309,942	313,837	47,325	39,137

It is evident from the above table that among Koris, about 11.4 per cent of males and 1.49 per cent of females are literate as against 12.8 and 1.1 per cent respectively for the total Scheduled Castes population of the State. This depicts that the rate of literacy among females of Kori Caste is slightly higher than the State average for females among Scheduled Caste population in Uttar Pradesh.

Taking the educational standards separately, 5,548 males and 100 females in rural areas and 4,024 males and 854 females in urban areas are Junior Basic passed. Five hundred and fifty-eight males and two females are matriculate in rural areas of the State. The corresponding figures for urban areas are 709 males and 413 females respectively. It is evident from the chart given above that females

(64) outnumber males (31) in case of higher education. No female has been returned in the category of technical and non-technical diploma, not equivalent to degree. But again under technical degree or diploma, equal to degree or post-graduate degree, 9 males and 4 females have been returned in the Census of 1961.

Economic Life

The traditional occupation of the Koris is weaving, but now only a few of them follow it.

According to 1961 Census, out of 710,241 persons, 368,810 are workers. The working force constitutes 51.93 per cent of the total population. Considering the sex-wise break-up of the working force 229,359 out of 357,267 males and 138,951 out of 352,974 females are workers, which works out to 62.9 per cent for males and 39.3 per cent for females.

When compared to the percentage of the total working population of the Scheduled Castes in the State, male workers of Koris are only 3.2 per cent. It is found that male participation, both in the rural and urban areas among the Koris is above the State average of 60.45 per cent and 54.6 per cent respectively. The percentage of female workers is also above the State average of 28.67 per cent rural areas, but it is below the State average of 11.9 per cent in urban areas.

The following table gives the Industrial classification of Koris by sex according to 1961 Census :

Sl. no.	Workers	Rural		Urban		Total	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1	As cultivators	103,882	54,990	513	158	104,395	55,148
2	As Agricultural Labour	81,089	72,908	461	174	81,550	73,082
3	In Mining Quarrying Livestock' Forestry, etc.	368	109	239	22	607	131
4	At househol Industry	4,517	2,063	2,061	1,135	6,578	3,198
5	In manufacturing other than Household Industry	1,198	189	8,196	505	9,394	694
6	In construction	996	43	2,960	128	3,956	171
7	In Trade and Commerce	991	145	1,707	233	2,698	378
8	In Transport, Storage and Communication	691	8	3,493	31	4,184	39
9	In Other Services	9,412	4,964	7,085	1,146	16,497	6,110
	Total ..	203,144	135,419	26,715	3,532	229,859	138,951

It is thus clear from the above table that the largest concentration is in cultivation and agricultural labour, in which 43.26 per cent and 41.94 per cent of total workers respectively are engaged. The next category in order of importance is "Other Services" which constitutes 2.65 per cent of workers.

The household industry, which forms only 2.4 per cent, suggests that the traditional occupation of weaving is on the decline. In the field of other services, Koris are found to be working in mills and government offices as peons and clerks.

Life Cycle

Birth

No special ceremony is reported to be observed during pregnancy. The expectant mother does the routine work and no restrictions are put on her, except that she is not allowed to move out after sun-set for fear of malevolent spirits who may cause miscarriage and abortions. Barrenness is considered to be inauspicious. At advanced stage her movements, outside the house are restricted and she is asked to avoid seeing the eclipsed moon or sun, with which is associated the belief that it will deform the foetus in the womb. The *enceinte* is given hot milk which is further emulsified with the addition of "*ghee*" to help deliver the child comparatively with reduced labour pains. Efforts are, however, made to overcome barrenness, with the help of local *Ojha* (magicman) and witch-doctor.

The birth of the child is usually arrange at the husband's place. The delivery of the child takes place in a dark corner of a room on the floor. A woman of the caste, who is called for at time of the delivery, acts as *dai* (midwife). The birth of the child is announced by beating the *thali*—a brass or alloy utensil

The umbilical cord is cut with a knife or sickle and is buried in the field The mother is served with *harira* a preparation of *gur* (Jaggery), mustard oil, dry-ginger and other spices for 10–12 days.

On the sixth day of child birth, the ceremony of *Chhathi* is performed. The mother and the child are bathed on the occasion and relations invited. *Gur* (Jaggery) is distributed to them. On the twelfth day the mother and the child are again given purificatory bath. The old earthen pitchers are also replaced by new ones.

The child is given a name by the father or the grandfather However, no naming ceremony as such is reported to be observed. The informants stated that Brahmin priests are consulted to find out the effect of various planets on the newly born-child.

Regarding the name giving ceremony of the child, Russell and Hira Lal[1] have mentioned that the child is named on the tenth day after birth by some women of the caste. No such practice was found prevailing among the Koris of Bara Banki and Gonda districts.

Marriage

Among the Koris early marriages of the boys and girls are common. At 1961 Census, 2,363 males and 3,727 females were returned as married in the age-group 0–14. The usual age of marriage for a boy is 10–12 years and girls 8–10 years. The incidence of widowed (105 per 1,000) and divorced or separated (45 per 1,000) is explained as due to practice of early marriages among the Koris.

Monogamy is generally observed. Marriages are always settled by negotiations in which boy's side approaches girl's side. In most cases, marriages are arranged by the boy's brother-in-law (Sister's husband), who also officiates as priest on the occasion.

Two forms of marriages are practised by the Koris. The most popular being the *paipuji*, in which the bride is carried to the boy's house, where marital rites are gone through. The other form is that of *barat* (marriage procession), in which the marriage party goes to the bride's house and all the ceremonies connected with marriage are performed there. The latter form of marriage is prevalent among economically better off families, who can bear the expenses of entertaining the *barat* (marriage-party).

Widow re-marriage is reported to be allowed and custom of levirate is found to exist among them. The marriage within close relations is prohibited and marriage with cousins is avoided.

Divorce is permissible among Koris and a divorced woman can re-marry.

Death

The Koris generally cremate their dead persons, but those who die of cholera, small pox, snake-bite and leprosy are buried. The children up to the age of 6–10 are also buried. When the end is thought to be near he is taken down from the cot and laid on the bare ground. A bier, *i.e. tikti* is got ready. It is made of two long poles about $2\frac{1}{2}$ metres in length and five small ones, about a metre long. When ready *tikti* (bier) resembles an ordinary ladder with four or five rungs. It is covered with hay and spread over with a white sheet of cloth. The dead body is laid over it, its head facing the north, and after covering the whole body with a shroud it is tied firmly to the frame with jute string.

The deceased's son or in his absence near relatives are the first to lift the *tikti* (bier) to their shoulders. After sometime others take their places and thus the funeral procession reaches the cremation or burial ground. A pyre is soon made by stacking logs of wood already arranged for, and the bier with the body is placed on it. The jute strings are untied and the bier material, *i.e.* bamboo, shroud, etc., is handed over to the crematorium sweeper. When the pyre is ready, the sons or the near-relatives put fire to it After the body is half burnt the son performs the *Kapal Kriya*– the breaking of head with a bamboo pole. After waiting for sometime, that is, when those present are satisfied that the body is reduced to ashes, the people bathe and return home and are entertained with country liquor.

It was reported that the chief mourner does not cut his hair or shave beard till the tenth day. On the tenth day *daswan* is performed After it the chief mourner is considered purified.

Death Anniversary

The first death anniversary is reported to be observed by them. However, they do not perform *Sharadha*, during *Pitra Paksha* – the first fifteen days of the *Ashvin*.

1. Russell R. V, and Hira Lal. *The tribes and Caste of Central Provinces of India* London, 1916 Vol. III, p. 545.

Religion

Koris are followers of Hinduism. Rusell and Hira Lal have mentioned that in Faizabad, they are said to follow Raidasi or Sivanarayani sect. In Gonda district, it was reported by them that they mostly belong to Kabirpanthi, the sect founded by Sant Kabir, but some of them follow the Satnami sect, founded by Shri Jagjiwan Dass.

On the basis of sect-following, groups have been formed among the Koris. The allegiance to some saint or *guru* has divided the Koris into two main groups. *Bhagat*, the follower of some sect and *Sakla*, who are not follower of any sect. The divisions are purely religious and not social, because inter-marriages between these group is permissible The followers of one sect are known as *Bhagat* having taken a vow not to take meat and liquor. They also spend some time in prayers. To the names of such persons, generally the term *Saheb* is appended as a mark of respect.

They worship important Hindu gods and goddesses, but the chief deities are *Phulmati, Korihima* and *Kali*. They also observe *navaratra* in the month of Chaitra and Ashvina. They worship goddess *Samey* (*Kali*) once in three years in the month of *Jyestha*. This is collective worship, in which Kori offer fried cake of flour and clay elephant to the deity. It was reported at the time of survey that they also visit the tomb of Muslim saints and offer *chaddar* and *batasha* — a kind of sweet made from sugar.

Koris are superstitious and have faith in spirits, both evil and good. Epidemics like cholera, smallpox are attributed to the wrath of the presiding deity concerned.

Koris observe Hindu festivals and do not have any festival peculiar to their own community.

Inter-Community Relationships

Koris do not accept food and water from other Scheduled Castes , *i.e.* Pasi, Chamar, Balmiki and Dhobi, whom they consider lower to them in social status. They accept *kachcha* food and water from caste Hindus.

Some Kori women are stated to have taken up the profession of midwifery and in that capacity they have clientele among all castes.

Structure of Social Control, Prestige and Leadership

Koris have their own caste *panchayats* which effectively enforce the moral code of conduct within the community.

The caste *panchayat* is known as *"Kori Biradari Panchayat"*. This *panchayat* generally deals with matters relating to family quarrels, extra-marital sex relations, adultery, disputes relating to marriages and divorces and inter-dining with persons belonging to lower castes.

The Head of the *panchayat* is known as *"Chowdhry"*. He presides over its meetings : This office is hereditary, but in Gonda district, the present *Chowdh* was elected. The reason for deviation from the normal practice was that the sons of the outgoing *Chowdhry* were insane, thus incapable of holding the post The decisions of the *panchayat* are respected by the Caste.

There is a tendency to restrict the area and number of households under the jurisdiction of one *panchayat* Big *panchayats* are unable to manage the units while the smaller ones are manageable. This facilitates realisation of fines imposed by the *Panchayat*. The money so realised is usually utilised for giving feast to caste fellows. In village Bishnoipur, originally, there were about 150 households of Koris, which were managed by one *panchayat*. These have now been allocated to three *panchayats*, each covering 50 households.

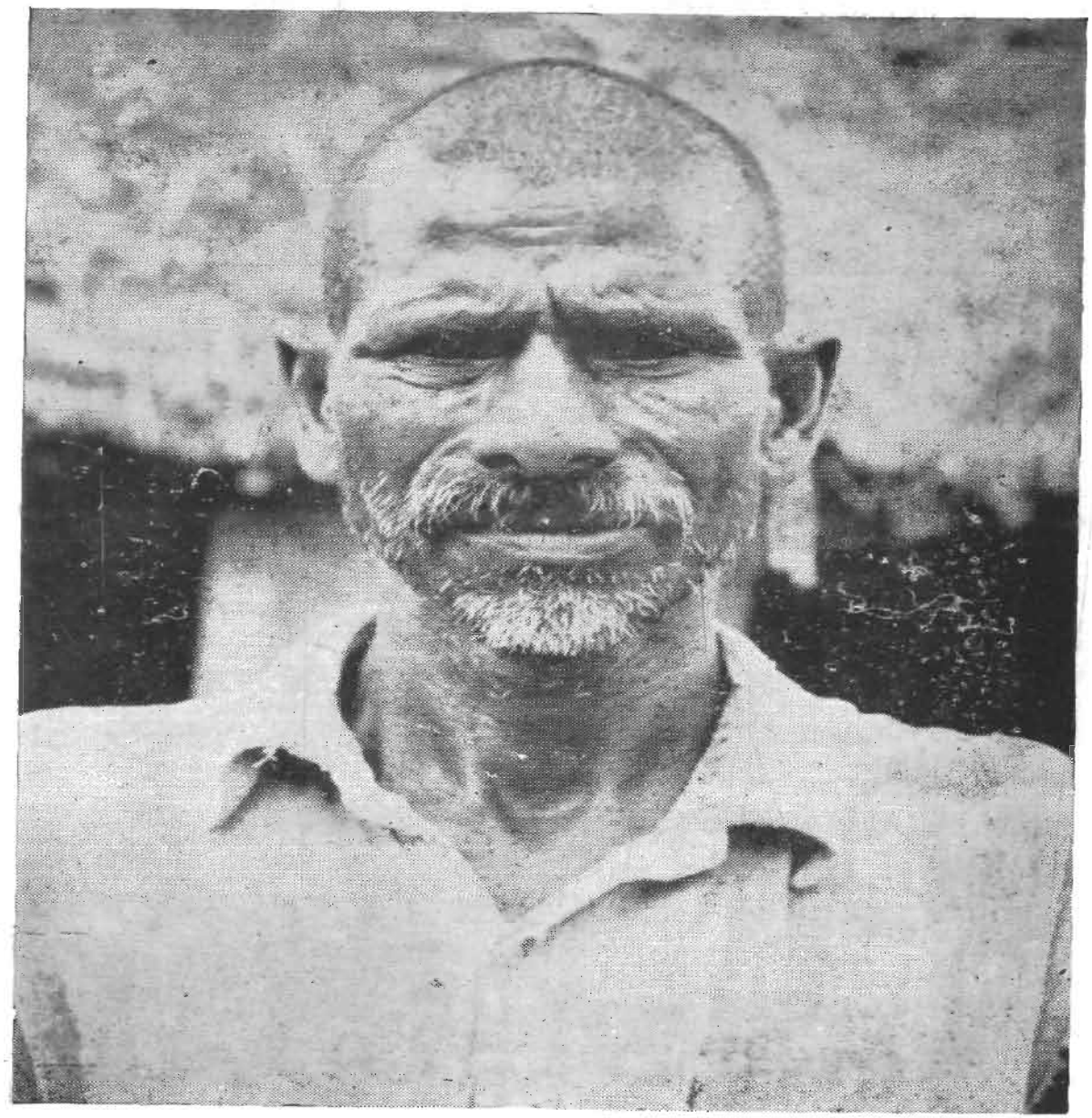
No special efforts have been made by the traditional *panchayats* in the field of social reforms among the castes. The *panchayat* and such other institutions, wherever found, are popular and effective means of mobilising villagers. Their word is law even where they are not invested with any statutory powers.

A few years ago the *gaon panchayat* desired that children should be sent to schools for education. This step was hailed by all and now many young boys are found to have read up to primary level.

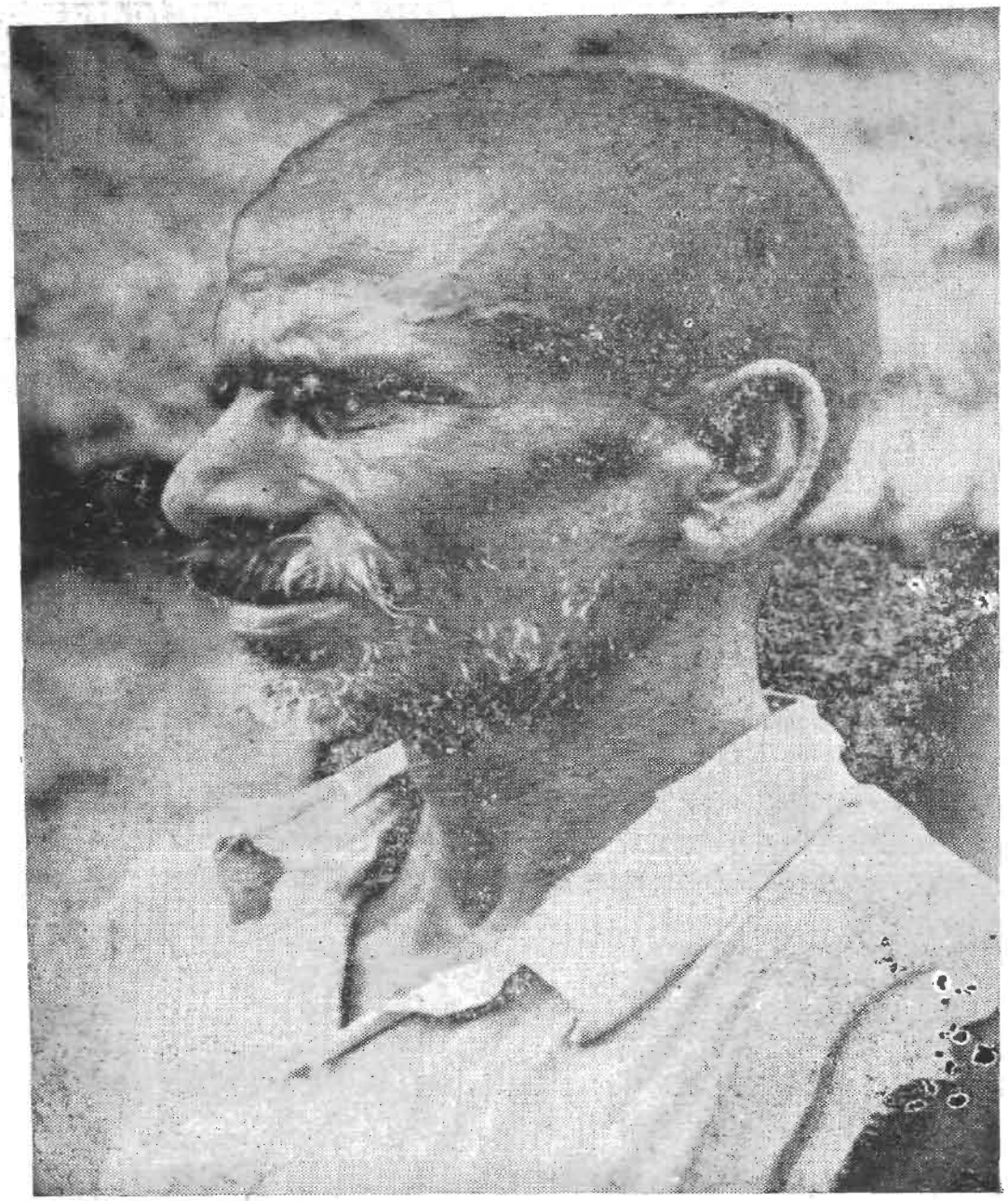
A few intelligent and sensible residents of the same *panchayat* having realised the disadvantages and ill effects of child marriage took a decision to raise the age of marriage for boys and girls though the same was not put in practice. It shows that villagers have realised, barring few exception, the ill effects of child marriage, but they are not in a position to break away from the age-old traditions.

Distribution of Koris in the District of Uttar Pradesh by Sex and Rural Urban break-up

Sl. no.	District	Total Population			Rural		Urban	
		Person	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1	Uttarkashi	..	..	34	10	24	10	24
2	Garhwal	..	..	2	2	..	2	..
3	Almora	..	..	4	4	..	1	..
4	Naini Tal	..	..	1,308	750	558	285	175
5	Farrukhabad	..	..	2,287	1,258	1,029	..	..
6	Etawah	..	..	3,674	1,945	1,729	..	..
7	Kanpur	..	..	34,571	19,635	14,936	4,986	4,323
8	Fatehpur	..	..	25,030	12,801	12,229	12,285	11,734
9	Allahabad	..	..	22,683	11,615	11,068	7,189	7,425
10	Jhansi	..	..	25,618	13,109	15,509	5,077	5,253
11	Jalaun	..	..	5,779	2,969	2,810	..	..
12	Hamirpur	..	..	2,709	1,394	1,315	..	..
13	Banda	..	..	25,192	13,010	12,182	12,681	11,869
14	Kheri	..	..	18,983	10,096	8,887	9,714	8,532
15	Sitapur	..	..	9,181	4,797	4,384	4,276	3,940
16	Hardoi	..	..	6,112	3,325	2,787	3,069	2,528
17	Unnao	..	..	453	261	192	..	..
18	Lucknow	..	..	19,696	10,649	9,047	5,769	5,296
19	Rai Bareli	..	..	36,039	16,950	19,089	16,696	18,827
20	Bahraich	..	..	47,213	23,790	23,423	23,494	23,174
21	Gonda	..	..	175,299	88,533	86,766	87,069	85,397
22	Bara Banki	..	..	23,313	11,729	11,584	11,720	11,584
23	Faizabad	..	..	78,051	37,562	40,489	35,743	38,977
24	Sultanpur	..	..	114,678	55,089	59,589	54,452	59,013
25	Pratapgarh	..	..	14,841	7,107	7,734	7,023	7,621
26	Basti	..	..	15,194	7,583	7,611	7,582	7,578
27	Gorakhpur	..	..	466	299	167	209	59
28	Deoria	..	..	53	12	41	11	33
29	Azamgarh	..	..	113	71	42	43	..
30	Jaunpur	..	..	10	..	10	..	..
31	Ballia	..	..	5	3	2	..	2
32	Ghazipur	..	..	10	5	5	..	..
33	Varanasi	..	..	269	181	88	18	9
34	Mirzapur	..	..	1,371	723	648	538	464
		Total	..	710,241	357,267	352,974	309,942	313,837
								47,325 39,137



Front view of a Kori male



Profile of a Kori man



Pattern on walls of a Kori house