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HANDICRAFTS SURVEY MONOGRAPH
ON
LAC ORNAMENTS

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FOREWORD

One of the first steps to be taken in the First Five Year Plan was the establishment of Six Boards for the promotion of handicrafts, village and small industries :

(1) The Khadi and Village Industries Board ;
(2) The All-India Handicrafts Board ;
(3) The All-India Handloom Board ;
(4) The Central Silk Board ;
(5) The Coir Board ; and
(6) The Small Industries Board.

The rapid expansion of the activities of these Boards which concentrated not only on production and techniques, but also on organisation, extension, credit, marketing, and export, consolidated and enlarged the position that the household industries sector had so long enjoyed in the nation's economic life. It was this fact that forced itself upon the preparations for the 1961 Census and demanded that household industry should be separately investigated for a proper accounting of the nation's manpower, resources and its specific contribution to the national income. The 1961 Census therefore asked a special series of questions on household industry, input of family and hired labour, and the periods over which household industry is conducted. It was felt, however, that an enumeration of the total number of establishments and their industrial classification would be incomplete without a proper description of what they produce and how they produce. It was important to make an assessment of the limits of rigidity within which traditional skill operates. This could be obtained by studying the caste, occupational, social and economic stratifications, the limitations of credit and marketing facilities, the dominance of custom over contract, the persistence of traditional tools and design forms, the physical limitations of transport, communication and mobility, the inability to adopt new lines or adopt to changing circumstances. It was important also to make an assessment of the limits of flexibility that traditional skill is capable of, because the transformation of traditional skills to modern skills is easier said than done and a thorough study may well reveal that it is perhaps cheaper from the social point of view to develop industrial skills from scratch than to try to graft traditional skill on alien soil. A rather tragic case of failure to make what would on the face of it seem a minor adjustment cast its heavy shadow on the nation when it was discovered that goldsmiths used to working on 22-carat gold

all their lives felt sadly helpless when asked to work on 14-carat, so narrow and unadaptable were the limits of their skill and proficiency and so rudimentary the tools and equipment with which they and their forefathers had worked. This fiscal accident revealed that tools are even more important than skills.

An early opportunity was therefore taken in February 1960 to suggest to State Census Superintendents, that the Census provided a unique opportunity for conducting and documenting a survey of this kind. As such a survey was quite outside the usual terms of reference of Census work it was thought prudent cautiously to feel one's way with the thin end of the wedge of what would, it was hoped, prove to be an exciting pursuit. It was therefore considered the wiser course to wait until the State Census Offices felt so interested that they would no longer take the inquiry as an imposition but rather want to do it on their own and ask for the necessary staff and equipment. This office, too, in its turn, could make use of the interval to organise and elaborate the design of inquiry in order to feed the appetite that work in progress would serve to wheat. Because it was a labour of love, sought to be unobtrusively thrust on one's colleagues and because the inquiry itself was so vast that normally it would demand in any country as big a set up, if separately established as the Census Organisation itself and that over a much longer period, and because it was almost a pioneer venture, nothing like it having been undertaken since the 1880's, it was decided to move towards a build-up by stages, to let the inquiry unfold itself only as fast as my colleagues chose to ask for more.

Thus in the first circular of 18 February 1960, it was suggested that the inquiry might be conducted through the agency of the Development Department, the State Director of Industries, the Director of Tribal Welfare, the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, and other organisations concerned with the promotion of household industry. A draft questionnaire containing 30 questions in three parts was recommended for canvassing. It was suggested that information on this questionnaire, village by village and area by area, might either be obtained through the regular departmental channels of the State Government, or through the newly set up Census Organisation or through the hierarchy of the newly-created Panchayats. Stress was laid on the need of photographic documentation and illustration of designs, shapes and forms not only by photographs but with the help of line drawings or sketches together with a full description of the materials used.

Almost the whole of 1960 and the first half of 1961 were spent in organising and taking the Census count, although several States even during this period had not allowed the grass to grow under their feet but made exploratory studies and decided in their minds how the inquiry should be organised. A series of regional conferences held in Trivandrum, Darjeeling and Srinagar in May and June, 1961 revealed much enthusiasm among State Superintendents to proceed with the survey, but the need of separate staff and equipment was felt at the same time as the realization dawned that this was much too serious an inquiry to be treated casually and left to be achieved through the usual administrative channels and State Census Superintendents proceeded to augment their staff with qualified research and investigating officers, technical persons, photographers, artists, draughtsmen and other trained personnel.

This was followed by rapid progress in coordination between the Central and State Census Offices in the matter of exchange and processing of information, documentation and investigation, of assisting each other with trained investigators and in editing and finalizing drafts, layouts, presentations.

Mention has been made of a questionnaire in three parts and thirty questions. The idea was to make a beginning with empirical, analytical studies based on a structured questionnaire which would replace general descriptive accounts that had obtained so far. The primary aim was to obtain a picture as much of the artisan himself as of his craft, to obtain a perspective of the artisan and his craft in his social and economic setting, the extent to which tradition bound him and the winds of change ruffled him, the extent of his mobility and immobility, the conditions of market, credit, new contacts and designs in which he operated, the frame of new as well as traditional producer-customer relationships in which he still worked, and how far he was ready to pierce his own caste-tribe socio-economic cocoon and make a break through to new opportunities promised by the Five Year Plans. The aim was to hold up the mirror to hereditary skills struggling with the dialectics of tradition and change.

Thus the first part of the questionnaire, purporting to be a village schedule, sought to take account of the size and population of the village, its remoteness from or proximity to centres of trade and commerce, in short, the degree of isolation in which the artisan worked, and the relative strengths of various communities in the village which would afford clues to social interdependence and the prevalence of the 'jajmani' system. The second part was devoted to artisan communities in the village : the several castes of artisans, the number of families in each, the total number of workers, males and females, the extent of co-operative activity among them, the extent of dependence upon employers and of wage or contract labour. There were questions on the raw materials used, the means of their procurement, the possible extent of dependence on others for raw materials, the extent of the material that artisans can handle within the limits of their skill. There were other questions on the exchange and flow of designs, the use of colours, the ancientness of the craft and legends associated, the colonization of the craftsman, on patrons and customers and on social and economic contact with the world inside and outside the village. There were specific questions on the workshop itself and particularly the tools and the source of supply of these tools, because it was felt that tools decide everything and are the surest index of inertness or flexibility. Separate blocks of questions were designed to bring out the ramifications of artisan castes throughout the country and the ways they sustained themselves, the type of clientele they catered for, the extent to which they operated on money or barter or service, how specialized their craft was, how wide the market, how dependent they were on their socially preordained clientele and how restricted the latter was by the seemingly unalterable laws of social custom ; the extent to which they could operate in the open market, the range of their wares and the sizes to which these were ordinarily restricted either by the limits of their own skill or the length of their customers' pursestrings. Inquiries were to be made about the operation of middlemen and of co-operative societies, the people who gave new designs and demanded new products. Finally the several stages of production of the articles themselves were to be fully described including final and finishing

stage and a list of very skilled craftsmen of each community was to be furnished. The third part was devoted specially to tribal communities and designed to find out how self-sufficient or dependent they were on the production and supply of manufactured goods, the extent to which they produced themselves or depended on others, their contacts with other communities and the specific forms of production and commerce through which these contacts were maintained.

Particular emphasis was laid on the need of obtaining as full an account as possible of unique regional design differentiations as they reflect not only the very culture pattern of the country but the persistent inventive faculties of the craftsmen. The importance was emphasised of giving full attention to articles of domestic use as it is in their shapes, designs and forms that the culture patterns and traditional skills persist most tenaciously.

Simultaneously with the investigation of specific crafts, State Superintendents proceeded to compile a comprehensive list of all types of handicrafts obtaining in their State. As for the specific crafts to be investigated several tables were devised from the structured questionnaire in order to guide investigators towards pointed observation and analysis to enable them to write, not just general descriptions, but with their eye on the object and on facts.

Investigations conducted between September 1961 and May 1962, including study group of all States and Social Studies Division in December 1961 at Delhi, stimulated many of the States into going in for a much enlarged schedule. The revised village schedule itself, the counterpart of the first part of the February 1960 schedule, contained 19 large sections containing elaborate and probing questions. The Family Schedule for practising artisan families similarly contained 19 main questions each subdivided into many questions. The Family Schedule for non-practising artisan families contained 21 questions. There were schedules for the study of co-operative societies, of production-*cum*-training centres, and of consumer's preference. This enlarged schedule of investigation, in the formulation of which the States themselves actively assisted, was greatly welcomed. The surveys that will appear in this series will therefore consist of two main types :

(a) those based on the original short schedule and

(b) those based on the much enlarged schedule.

In some cases Census Superintendents felt enthused enough to scrap the work based on the original short schedule and do it over again on the enlarged schedule. In the meantime much experience was gained on the analysis of facts and figures to clothe each observation with plenty of authentic information so that the reader could make his own judgement instead of being expected to see all the time through another pair of eyes.

This programme of survey of handicrafts and household industries has been fortified by several ancillary surveys, each one of which would deserve major attention. Along with the survey a compilation has been made of all handicraft centres in each State and an inventory prepared of skilled craftsmen. Photographic and other documentation has been built up to constitute what may now be regarded as the most considerable repository in the country. Elaborate and

accurate maps of craft centres in taluks, tehsils and districts are either ready or under preparation. A full census of all fairs and festivals, weekly hats and markets, throughout India, has been taken and is being published for the first time. Andhra Pradesh has embarked upon a project of chronicling the social and religious antiquity and uniqueness of every fair and festival. A separate volume will be devoted to each district which promises to be of the utmost value to sociologists and orientalists. A full and complete inventory, replete with sketches and measurements of every object, has been prepared of exhibits in museums of tribal crafts in India. There has been a fairly satisfactory survey of houses and buildings, indigenous architectural designs and use of local building material of the whole country. All this has been entirely a labour of love, patiently organised and executed under great strain and in disregard of health and comfort, for which I take this opportunity of expressing my appreciation and grateful thanks to my colleagues.

New Delhi,
July 30, 1964

ASOK MITRA
Registrar General, India

A Prologue in Muse

"Time loves thee ! at his call the Seasons twine
Luxuriant wreaths around thy forehead hoar ;
And, though past pomp no changes can restore,
A soothing recompense, his gift, is thine !"

"Will this enquiry change our lot ? Will there be a new demand for products afresh ?", asked an old craftsman of Jhalda with a sardonic smile during the enquiry. Silence was the only answer, for one could bring the artisans nothing but "a heart that watches and receives". It might soothe them in their afflictions but will not keep off their hunger. Probably they need customers. But how could they get them, when the hitherto unsophisticated tribals and country people of Chotanagpur plateau who adorned the hands of their women with lac bangles in the past are now turning to synthetic wares ? How could one hold back the current of time ? Even if so, one goes there to enquire and one does so, not to misshape "the beauteous forms of things", but to know and evaluate the things of beauty. Enquiry over, one feels sorry for the handful of craftsmen, whose number has now dwindled to seven only. Some of these artificers of beauty, who according to a legend were ushered in by the strangest coincidence in the age of the *Mahabharata*, still follow their traditional occupation in the face of many odds. Most of their brethren have taken leave of the craft long ago and the craft's death is clearly written on the wall, so clearly that none can misread it. Even a robust optimist will not dare presage the craft's survival beyond generation. One feels disappointed in the end–disappointed at the thought that with all abundant good wishes lavished on the craftsmen and sincerest prayers offered for the craft's prosperity they will be of little consequence. Nevertheless, the craftsmen "bear up and steer right onward", even though the end is near. Can the end be averted or deferred till an indefinite future ? Perhaps not. The sorrowful tale and the pitiable plight of the craft and its followers do not warrant so.

If one fails to forestall a tragedy, an impending death of a simple craft, far beyond the public gaze of the urban connoisseurs of arts and crafts, one does not thereby lose one's ground to analyse the causes of death and identify the deadly forces of change throttling the humblest of the humble

crafts. One does not require any clairvoyance to sense the changes, though the analysis becomes ante-mortem in nature. The startling inventions in the realm of knowledge have often shaken the time-old systems to their roots, latest instance being the invention of polymers which revolutionised the world by bringing in synthetics in their wake. Synthetics bestrode the world in all its parts and the innumerable uses of synthetics have shattered the isolation of places, shaped the material ways of life and infused a new sense of values into the human world. Utilitarianism gave way to tradition. Perhaps, one of the most effective and palpable changes that the synthetics brought in is in the world of fashion itself by their adroit appeal to feminine sense of beauty, utility and economy. When the synthetics were confined to the manufacture of articles required outside the jurisdiction of homes, women did not tread the alien domain. But, after synthetics imported themselves into their homes with manifested usefulness in articles of necessity, their permanent stay-order was issued.

Ornaments are not, of course, a necessity in the same sense as a household article ; rather they are a luxury to many. But the term luxury is economic in its import and connotation. A synthetic ornament cheaper than the ornament of the cheapest material is not a luxury to the tribals and has a motivating power to induce a householder to purchase it as an article of necessity, instead of being treated as an item of luxury. Now, turning to lac ornaments one finds that social usages and customary practices connected with connubial ceremonies had made their use obligatory for many.

The custom of wearing ornaments during marriage is very old and extant in tribal and non-tribal life alike in Bengal, nay in India. Ancient Indian texts provide profuse citations on the use of ornaments. The practice to present ornaments to a daughter during marriage is evidenced by *Manusmrti* (III. 27 and III. 28) which states :

Acchadya carcayitva ca srutisilavate svayam
Ahrya danam kanyaya brahmo dharmah prakirtitah
Yajne tu vitate samyagrtvije karma kurvate
Alamkrtya sutadanam daivam dharmam pracajnate

The gift of a daughter, after decking her (with costly garments) and honouring (her by presents of jewels), to a man learned in the Vedas and of good conduct, whom (the father) himself invites, is called the *Brahma* rite. The gift of a daughter who has been decked with ornaments to a priest who duly officiates at a sacrifice, during the course of its performance, they called the *Daiva* rite. *(Sacred Book of the East—Max Muller, Vol. XXV, Page 80).*

Even though one accepts without demur the system of presenting gifts to a marriageable daughter during her marriage (a *Daiva* or a *Brahma* type), the inevitable question arises, "Why so ?" Hindu *Pundits* in the ancient period were also excellent law-givers. They forethought that in a patriarchal society a woman should have some legalised share in the property of the family and with this end in view they laid down that the share of the wife consisted of her ornaments, and the wealth (which she may have received from her relatives) *(Sacred Book of the East, Vol. II, P. 134)*

Alankaro bharyaya jnatidhanam cetyeke—Apastamba Dharmasutra —II. VI. XIV. 9

But, these prescriptions obviously do not hold good for the tribals. One is perplexed to place cheap lac ornaments, used by the Laheris (cf. *Laksakara* in the classical texts) who claim to be *Ksatriyas*, on the same footing as the ornaments of gold and silver.

It should be remembered that even in Hindu society the nature of presents varies with the position of the communities in the social hierarchy and also with their economic pliabilities. As is observed among the economically backward and socially depressed classes, the bridegrooms are sometimes required to pay in cash or in kind to the bride's father as consideration for marriage, no matter in what form the marriage takes place.

From ancient treatises, however, references may be copiously cited to establish that ornaments of cheap materials were equally in use and demand by men and women alike. Therefore, from the issue of customs one transports oneself to the points of aesthetics and decoration, though religion and magic might have had a contribution to the shaping of one's sense of beauty and value. While a Hindu woman will not "dare to hold up her head unless well provided with eight kinds of ornaments—nose-rings, ear-rings, necklaces, bracelets, armlets, finger-rings, anklets, and toe-rings," "the tribals are fond of the necklace-method, using shells, seeds, and beads threaded on strings". Adornment of the body is thus one of the functions of ornaments (if not the principal one) which are often *de rigueur*. One is thus lost in the labyrinth of hypotheses of the sociologists like Westermarck who contends that ornaments are the best means of sexual attraction or of Frazer and Karsten who categorise ornaments in the decorative arts. Hence, one has to cancel the question of *Stridhana* to be all based on magic and witchcraft.

If western scholars differ on this issue, Hindu views are no less varied and opposite. *Vatsayana* in *Kamasutram—IV. V. 26-27* states that the gains of other courtesans, whose livelihood depends upon their physical charms, would be spent in bedecking themselves with ornaments, jewels and all manner of fineries ; in decorating and furnishing the house, equipping it with all costly vessels and maintaining a number of servants. (This refers to the *Rupajiva* type of courtesan).

Sarvvangikohalankarayoga grhasyadarasya karanam maharhairbhandaih paricarakaisca grhaparicchadasyojjvalateti rupajivanam labhatisayah.

Nityam suklamacchadanamapaksudhamannapanam nityam saugandhikena tambulena ca yogah sa-hiranyabhagamalankaranamiti kumbhadasinam labhatisayah.

Vatsayana does not exhaust all his recipe on the women of easy virtues, but advises even the ladies of virtues to make themselves attractive. He mentions :

Mayurasyaksi taraksirvva suvarnenavalipya daksinahasthena dharayediti subhagankaranam—VII. I. 10.

Badaramanim sankhamaninca tathaiva tesu catharvvanan yogan gamayet —VIII. I. 11.

Karnapatrabhangah gandhayuktih bhusanayojanam—I. III. 17-24.

If sex is emphasised by one text, in another one finds belief in the supernatural powers of ornaments forcefully supported. What else can otherwise be the conclusion, when one reads in *Kiskindhyakandam* of the *Ramayanam* the following ?

Imam ca malamadhatsa divyam Sugriva kancanim
Udara Sri sthita hyasyam samprajahyat mrte mayi.

(Oh Sugriva, do thou put on this celestial golden garland—herein dwelleth the bounteous Sree who shall renounce me after my death.)

Hindu beliefs in astrology and other occult sciences are no less fascinating than the western concept of ornaments emanating from magic. The *Sastras* lay down which star will be auspicious for which ornament.

cf. *Syadbhusaghatanam tripuskaracaraksipradhruve.....Naksatraprakaranam, —Muhurtacintamani* (p. 64)

The moot point for consideration here in the case of lac ornaments relating to their use in the marriage ceremonies thus boils down to the question if these means of adornments, apart from being an aesthetic method of body ornamentation, have sexual or social motifs behind their use. To understand this point one may have to fall upon the beliefs of the Laheris in earlier days, here or elsewhere, about lac ornaments, their colour and about their designs. In this respect Hiralal's contention that "Lac is regarded with a certain degree of superstitious repugnance by the Hindus because of its red colour, resembling blood. Lac bangles are also still used by the Hindus, generally on ceremonial occasions, as at a marriage when they are presented to and worn by the bride..... The wearing of lac bangles on that occasion would therefore be explained accoring to the common usage of adhering on religious and ceremonial occasions to the more ancient methods and accessories, which are sanctified by association and custom" should be reckoned with. Hiralal and Russel further contend that lac represents blood. Though blood is abhorred by the Hindus, red is a lucky colour, being worn at weddings and generally preferred. Vermilion (*Sendur*), lucky *trousseau* (*Sohag*), red powder (*Kunku*) red balls of cotton wool (*Mahawar*) and spangle (*Tikli*) are required in marriage ceremonies of Hindu girls of higher castes in different parts of India. The mixing of blood at marriage was an ancient custom marking the entry of the wife into her husband's kin, but gradually blood was substituted by vermilion and other materials of red colour.

The fundamental belief underlying the use of lac bangles in marriage is evidently based on magico-religious concepts. But, the custom is in its death-throes, as current fashion has given a valedictory message to the custom. Economically and aesthetically synthetic bangles are not a short-lived innovation in the society of the tribal and non-tribal users. If the users feel the itch to break away from a custom, it is at least partly due to

the inherent qualities of the synthetics which score over the lac ornaments. Crude shape, breakable nature and the difficult manipulations involved at the time of wearing the lac bangles have weaned many a user away from the articles without, however, a formal declaration of open revolt against the ornaments of customary usage.

Jhalda town, a large commercial centre on a busy highway, relegated the isolation of the village tribals into background and also became a parade-ground of urban fashions and ways because of its polyglot nature. After the merger of this part of the district of Manbhum in West Bengal in 1956, the social intercourse between Bengali culture and tribal culture bore fruits outwardly in the material traits. A great majority of people did not remain for long insensitive to the fashion of urban Bengali women and allowed themselves to escape from the trammels of too old a practice. Synthetic bangles have in addition to all the qualities of lac bangles some decisive advantages also. They are durable and cheap, their colours are fast, and last but not the least, it is easy for women to put them on their wrists. Superficially the comparative advantages of synthetics guided the users, though there might have been some other unconscious symbolisms attached to forms, colours and other expressive elements which lent their weight in favour of the synthetics. And lac ornaments are no longer in conformity with the fashion of the day. It they are passing out of currency, the artisans cannot remain altogether unaffected by the gradual passage of their wares into the world of outmoded customs. It is time for them to halt and think of the usefulness of competing with the factories, producing cheap synthetic articles at the sight of which women's heart dances in joy. The message that the craft has outlived its life is brought home to all. So, only seven artisans are pursuing the craft, not out of any passionate love for it but out of helpless attachment to an occupation, a livelihood to keep the hungry few contented with the little earnings from a disappearing craft. And if reality is so hard on them, it is because there is no other choice, no better means of struggle to remain otherwise alive. So, they struggle and stay, though their craft will not.

Nevertheless, the ways of fashion and style of women are so unpredictable that at any moment the women, who are now repelled by these crude bangles, may revive their fancy for these very ornaments. In such a bright eventuality of the future the dying industry of today may have another spell of good days. Indian ladies of late have turned their sophisticated eyes on many olden things which were on the verge of extinction. This diegesis, the only consolation to the living craftsmen, redeems their lost hopes in moments of their gloomy sadness.

I I

The present Monograph is the second in the series of the Handicrafts Survey Monographs as part of Census Programme of 1961, the scheme having been enunciated in details by Sri Asok Mitra, I.C.S., Registrar General, India, in his Foreword. Of the 12 crafts selected for survey, as many as ten were selected by the Registrar General, India, himself, after a discussion in

February, 1964 with Dr. B. K. Roy Burman, Officer on Special Duty (Handicrafts & Social Studies) of the Office of the Registrar General, India, and myself. The first Monograph of the series was earlier published on the survey of the craft on Conch Shell Products.

S. P. Rice is stated by V. Elwin to have written many years ago about the destruction of colours and romance among the tribals. 'Once they loved gay colours. Once the women took a delight in decking themselves with flowers and a pride in the silver ornaments that jingled..... Where are now the grasses that adorned them and the innocence ? Gone ! withered by the blast of the breath of a "superior" civilisation.' Without however letting the mind dwell on the monody of a craft which once primarily served the tribals of the region around Jhalda, it was thought more prudent to go there and see if the tribals still loved the gay colours and simple ornaments. The inkling of this asphyxiation of the "romance" of the tribals was enough to direct the thoughts to the craft of Lac Ornaments which was selected for an intensive survey to see if the tribals adapted themselves in the changed context of their environs to the rudimentary wares, which their forefathers had once accepted as a thing of beauty, and also to see if the craft was in distress making the helpless artisans "roll darkling down the torrent of fate."

The investigation conducted in October-November, 1964, followed up by one more visit to the craft-centre later, provided a painful pleasure—a pleasure in the knowledge of an art and of its glorious past but pain in the failure to give a lease of life to this art. The pessimism of the craftsmen, writ large on their worried looks, rang a note of premonition for this craft and their forewarning of its death sounded sombre as infallible declaration of the ancient oracles.

The questionnaires for this as well as other enquiries on the selected craft were devised and made available by the Office of the Registrar General, India. They are included in the Appendix of the Monograph on Conch Shell Products. The schedules could not all be canvassed in the field of survey, as the conditions prevailing there did not call for those schedules which were designed for a particular institution or organisation. Again, it will be redundant to suggest that dry-to-dust statistics, collected through schedules, were not considered enough to paint the real portrait ; so, informations were culled through eyes and ears, by discussions and observations, sometimes as an interested spectator and sometimes as a detached enquirer. Subjectivity, though kept in bay most of the time, could not always be ignored, but even then, not at the cost of objectivity. If sometimes some observations are made in which there are emotional tints of a very personal nature, these will not, it is hoped, detract from the objectivity of the Report. Omissions there still may be, and if so, they may be excused. Opinions expressed here or elsewhere in the Monograph are made by me in the capacity of an individual, representing neither the policy nor the views of the Government.

Dated, Calcutta,
The 15th July, 1966,
The 24th *Asad*, 1881 *Sakabda*.

Sukumar Sinha

An Epilogue in Dedication

"When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
... ...
And moan the expense of many a vanished sight."

In the shadow of a glorious name left by a craft, almost a century old, there live in Jhalda seven craftsmen, who give but do not count the cost, who fight but do not heed the wounds, who toil but do not seek for rest and who labour but ask for no reward. The present Monograph, as a testimony to their lonesome, relentless struggle for the handicraft's life, is dedicated in salutation to the seven, silent fighters, dauntless and resolute to keep an art agoing but helpless to stave off hunger. Even though the gates of affluence have been closed to them and they have been debarred from the easy callings of available means of livelihood because of their old age or widowhood, these valiant torch-bearers of our country's culture earn my unstinted praise, deep respect and unqualified tribute. One day as "precious friends hid in death's dateless night", they will live in honour and rest in peace in the pages of this little Monograph.

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Dated, Calcutta,
The 15th July, 1966,
The 24th *Asad*, 1881 *Sakabda*. ***Sukumar Sinha***

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I

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY OF THE CRAFT AND THE CRAFTSMEN

INTRODUCTION

Though loveliness "needs not the foreign aid of ornament, but is when unadorned adorned the most", the womenfolk in India enhance their beauty by ornaments. Sometimes, rich and rare are the gems they wear, and sometimes, widely glittering here and there are the gems entangled in their hair. Again, a woman heightens her natural beauty by ornaments of cheaper materials like conch and lac. The oriental habit of wearing ornaments of different materials, some costly and some trite, is found among all sections of people, rich and poor, advanced and backward. For the present, interest lies in lac ornaments and on the basis of the investigations carried out by the Department of Anthropology, University of Calcutta, it is learnt that the Oraons, Mundas, Bhumij, Ho and Bhuiyas among others, of Ranchi, Palamau, Lohardaga, Seraikella and Purulia, (in a word the cultural belt of Choto Nagpur plateau) are particularly fond of lac ornaments.

HISTORICAL AND LITERARY REFERENCES

Though Lac Industry, as organised in the district of Purulia today, is 100 years old, the use of lac was not unknown earlier. Pānini in the Aṣṭādhyāyi (IV. II. 2) mentions lac or *Lākṣā* as a dyeing agent. He says :

लाक्षा-रोचना-शकल-कर्दमाट्ठक् ।।

Lākṣārocanāśakalakardamāṭṭhak

(Women used to dye their feet with lac.)

There is the reference of such use of lac-dye in Vijayapura, the Capital of Lakshmanasena, described by Dhoyi in the Pavanadūta (V. 34).

लाक्षारागश्चरणगलिताः पौरसीमन्तिनीनाम्

Lākṣārāgaścaraṇagalitāḥ paurasīmantinīnām

(The feet of the urban ladies are dyed with lac.)

The great Sanskrit poet Kālidāsa has also referred to lac in Abhijñānaśakuntalam (IV. 5)

क्षौमं केनचिदिन्दुपाण्डुतरुणा माङ्गल्यमाविष्कृतं
निष्ठयूतश्चरणोपभोगसुलभो लाक्षारसः केनचित् ।
अन्येभ्यो वनदेवताकरतलैरापर्वभागोत्थितै—
र्दत्तान्याभरणानि तत्किसलयोद्भेदप्रतिद्वन्द्विभिः ।।

Kṣaumaṃ kenacidindupāṇḍu tarūṇā māṅgalyamāviṣkṛtaṃ Niṣṭhūtaścaraṇopabhogasulabho lākṣārasaḥ kenacit Anyebhyo vanadevatākaratalair āparvabhagotthitairdattānyābharaṇāni tatkisalayodbhedapratidvandvibhiḥ

(By a certain tree was put forth a fine silk garment, white like the moon, and suited to this auspicious occasion ; by another was exuded the lac-dye for application to this feet ; the ornaments were presented from other trees by the palms of sylvan nymphs put forth as far as the wrist and vying with the bursting of tender sprouts from there—IV. 5)

The great poet Bhārāvi mentions about lac in Kirātārjunīyam (V. 23)

दिव्यस्त्रीणां सचरणलाक्षारागा
रागायते निपतितपुष्पापीडाः ।
पीड़ाभाजः कुसुमचिताः साशंसं
शंसन्त्यस्मिन् सुरतविशेषं शय्याः ।।

Divyastrīṇāṃ sacaraṇalākṣārāgā
Rāgāyate nipatitapuṣpāpīḍāḥ
Piḍābhājaḥ kusumacitāḥ sāśaṃsaṃ
Śaṃsantyasmin surataviśeṣaṃ sayyāḥ.

"Many beds are spread for the divine ladies of the Himalayas. The flower-strewn beds are tinged with colour from the touch of the lac-dyed feet of these women....."

Kālidāsa has also referred to lac in his Ṛtusaṃhāram (VI-13).

गुरूणि वासांसि विहाय तूर्णं
तनूनि लाक्षारसरञ्जितानि ।
सुगन्धिकालागुरुधूपितानि
धत्ते जनः कामशरानुविद्धः ।।

Gurūṇi āsāṃsi vihāya tūrṇaṃ
Tanūni lākṣārasarañjitāni
Sugandhikālāgurūdhūpitāni
Dhatte janaḥ kāmaśarānubiddhaḥ

And discarding heavy garments
Those whose limbs are overcome
By love's lassitude
Soon assume the lighter vesture
Dyed in lac-juice and scented
With the incense of black aguru.

Sanskrit literature apart, there are references about lac in the Mahābhārata in the Vāraṇāvata Adhyāya of Jaturgṛha Parva that the *Kauravas* machinated to kill the *Pāndavas* by asking them to live in a house of lac, known as *Jatugṛha* or *Lākṣāgṛha*, built by *Purochaṇa*. In the *Atharva-Veda* lac is described as *Lākṣa* and the lac insects have been described in poetic language.

In Excavation Reports there are copious references about lac ornaments. [1]Bright red and green shellac bangles were once used in India in the protohistoric period. [2]In Mohenjodaro also, bangles of metal, faience shellac and pottery have been found. Dr. Chandra also refers to gold bangles the core of which consisted of shellac as referred to by Mackay in his report on Chanhudar Excavation in 1931. [3]Lac was used in the Middle Ages in Asia and Europe for making sealing waxes in view of its ability to reproduce faithfully very delicate inscriptions. There are innumerable references to lac also in the old manuscripts of these countries from the 16th Century onwards, pertaining to its growing use in those days. Thus, Garcia de Orta described the uses of lac and lac-dye in India.

Definite recipes have been given in *Ain-i-Akbari* (1590 A.D.) for the preparation and application of pigmented lac-varnishes on bamboo. In [4]*Ain-i-Akbari* Abu-L-Fazl Allami states : [5]Lac (varnish work) used for chighs (sliced bamboo sticks, placed horizontally, and joined by strings, with narrow interstices between the sticks. They are painted, and are used as screens). If red, 4s. of lac and ls. of vermilion ; if yellow, 4s. of lac, and ls of zarnikh (auripigment). If green, ½s. of indigo is mixed with the lac, and zarnikh is added ; if black, 4s. of lac and 8s. of indigo.

Tavernier recorded in 1676 that in India lac-dye was used for calico-printing and lac-resin for sealing waxes and polishes. Later, it came to be used for moulding beautiful caskets with elaborate designs.

The excavated lac-beads from the site of Chandraketugarh are now preserved in the Ashutosh Museum. The photograph of a specimen, preserved in the Museum, is given. Age of Chandraketugarh is supposed to be from the 3rd Century B. C. to the end of the Pala period.

The historical accounts, specified above, are by no means exhaustive ; rather they are sketchy in nature. Still, it is evident that materials in different periods of history point to the use of lac for decorative and designing purposes.

The uses of lac have been varied in India in different periods of history. Describing lac George Watts gives a very interesting account about how it was used in India.

USES

(a) Dye

[6]Lac cosmetic for dyeing the soles of the feet and the palms of the hands or tips of the fingers, taking the place of *mehndi* or *henna*, (lawsonia, alba) is almost universally employed for that purpose. To prepare this cosmetic, pieces of stick-lac are bruised in water, and cakes, made either of cotton (Murshidabad) or of the similar floss covering the seeds of the *mudar* (calotropis gigantea), are steeped in the water so that the fibres may attract the dye.

1. Studies in the Development of Ornaments and Jewellery in Protohistoric India—Dr. Rai Govind Chandra—Chapter V, Page 111
2. *Ibid.* Page 119
3. Indian Lac Cess Committee Report, 1956—Uses of Lac by M. Venugopalan
4. The Ain-i-Akbari, translated from the original Persian by H. H. Blochmann, Second Edition, Cal. 1939. (Bibliotheca Indica, A Collection of Oriental works)
5. *Ibid.* Pages 236-237
6. A Dictionary of the Economic Products of India, Vol IV (Gossypium-Linociera), Calcutta, 1890—George Watts, pp. 574-575

These are the cakes used as cosmetics, either by wetting them on the hands and feet or else by soaking them in water, and applying the water to the skin. The cakes are called *āltā*.

(b) Medicine

A decoction of shellac is much used in Hindu medicine for preparing several medicinal oils, such as *Lākṣādi taila, Candanādi taila, Aṅgāraka taila*, etc., (U. C. Dutta). Honigberger states that the substance was official at Lahore during the Sikh rule, being used in enlargement of the liver, dropsy, ulcers, etc., and also in the form of a varnish, as an application to wounds.

[7]The recipe for *Lākṣādi taila* has been described in the *Bhāvaprakāśaḥ* as follows :

Take shell-lac two seers, water sixteen seers, boil till reduced to four seers and strain. To this decoction of shell-lac add four seers of prepared sesamum oil, sixteen seers of whey, and two *tolas* each of the following substances, namely, withania somnifera (*Aśvagandhā*), turmeric, *devadāru* wood, root of Sansiviera Zeylanica (murvā) Pandanus odoratissimus (*Ketaki*), Vanda Roxburghii (rāsna), dill seeds and liquorice root in the form of a paste and prepare an oil in the usual way ; lastly add four *tolas* of camphor. This oil is much used for inunction in chronic fever and consumption. The other oils containing lac are prepared in a similar way, with the addition of various medicinal substances in form of paste.

लाक्षादितैलम् ।—लाक्षारस समं तैल तैरान्मस्तु चतुर्गुणम् । अश्वगन्धा निशादारु कौन्तीकुष्ठाब्दचन्दनैः । समूर्व्वी रोहिणी रास्ना शताहा मधुकैः समैः । सिद्धं लाक्षादिकं नाम तैलमभ्यञ्जनादिना । सर्व्वज्वरक्षयोन्माद श्वासापम्भार वातनुत् । यक्ष राक्षस भूतघ्न गर्भिनीना च शस्यते ।। भावप्रकाशः ।।

Lākṣāditailam—

Lākṣārasa samaṃ tailaṃ tailānmastu caturguṇam.
Aśvagandhā niśādārū kauntīkuṣṭhāvdacandanaiḥ.
Samūrvvam rohinī rāsnā
śātāhā madhukaiḥ samaiḥ.
Siddhaṃ lākṣādikaṃ nāma
tailamabhyañjanādinā.
Sarvvajvarakṣayonmāda
śvāsāpambhāra vātanut
Yakṣa rākṣasa bhūtaghna
garbhinīnāṃ ca śasyate.

Bhāvaprakāśaḥ

In describing lac Bhāvaprakāśaḥ comments :

लाक्षा पलं कषालक्तो यावो वृक्षामयो जतुः ।
लाक्षा वर्ण्या हिमा वल्या स्निग्धा च तुवरा लघुः ।।
अनुष्णा कफपित्तास्रहिक्का का सज्वरः प्रणुत ।
व्रणोरःक्षतवीसर्प क्रमिकुष्ठगदापहा ।।
अलक्तको गुणै स्तद्वद्विशेषाद्व्यङ्गनाशनः ।

Lākṣā palaṃ kaṣālakto
yāvo bṛkṣāmayo jatuḥ.
Lākṣā varṇyā himā valyā
snigdhā ca tuvarā laghuh.
Anuṣṇā kaphapittāsrahikkākāsajvaraḥ praṇut.
Vraṇoraḥkṣatavīsarpakṛmikuṣṭhagadāpahā.
Alaktako guṇai stadvadviśeṣādvyaṅganāśanaḥ.

Lākṣā, pala, kaṣā, alakto, yāva, bṛkṣāmayo and jatu are some of the well-known synonyms of lac. Lac is used as a dye, tonic ; astringent to taste and easily digestible, it has therapeutie uses against cough, biles, polluted blood, hiccup, consumption, fever, pimples, erysipelas and leprosy.

[8]Carak Saṃhitā the Bible of the Hindu Ayurvedists, lays down several medicines, in which lac is a constituent.

[9]Sūtra 94 of the same book prescribes that the patient may take a linctus prepared from long pepper, emblic myrobalan, grapes, lac-roasted paddy and sugar-candy cooked with milk and when it is thickened and cooled mixed with 1/8 quantity of honey.

पिप्पल्यामलकं द्राक्षा लाक्षा लाजा सितोपलाम् ।
क्षीरे पक्त्वा घनं शीतं लिह्यात् क्षौद्राष्टभागिकम् ।।

Pipyalyāmalakaṃ drākṣāṃ
lākṣāṃ lājāṃ sitopalām.
Kṣīre paktvā ghanaṃ śītaṃ
lihyāt kṣaudrāṣṭhabhāgikam.

7. Dutt, Udoy Chand, (Civil Medical Officer) The Materia Medica of the Hindus, compiled from Sanskrit Medical Works, Calcutta, 1877. Pages 276-277

8. The Caraka Samhita Volume IV. Translated by Shree Gulabkunverba Ayurvedic Society, India 1949

9. *Ibid* Page 2,009

[10]Again, medicine of lac is good for skin-colour, as Sūtra 117 refers to the preparation, saying that the unguent prepared of roots of ginger grass, holy fig and *hijal* tree along with lac and chalk, mixed with fragrant poon and blue vitriol, is a promoter of skin-color.

ध्यामकाश्वत्थनिचुलमूलं लाक्षा सगैरिका ।
सहेमश्चामृतासङ्ग कासीसं चेति वर्णकृत् ।।

Dhyāmakāśvatthaniculamūlaṃ
lākṣā sagairikā.
Sahemascāmṛtāsaṅgaṃ kāsīsaṃ
ceti varṇakṛt.

[11]Sūtra 238 prescribes : "Eye-drops with the cooler decoction of great cardamom, Indian berberry, Indian madder, lac, liquorice and aquatic liquorice and blue water-lily, mixed with sugar, is curative of the condition due to morbid blood and *pitta*."

पृथ्वीकादार्विमञ्जिष्ठालाक्षाद्विमधुकोत्पलैः ।
क्वाथः सशर्करः शीतः पूरणं रक्तपित्तनुत् ।।

Pṛthvikādārvimañjiṣṭhālākṣā-
dvimadhukotpalaiḥ.
Kvāthaḥ saraśakaraḥ śītaḥ
pūraṇaṃ raktapittanut.

(c) DOMESTIC USES

Lac is largely used in India for the manufacture of bracelets (*churis*), rings, beads, and other trinkets worn as ornaments by women of the poorer classes, and also in the production of turned wood-lacquer work. It appears to have been employed from very remote times for the latter purpose, perhaps the earliest description of the process being that of Linschoten in the 16th century, who, in describing the lac of Pegu, wrote as follows :

"Being refined and cleansed they make it" (the lac) "of all the colours of India. Then they dress their bedsteads with all, that is to say, in turning of the woode, they take a peece of lac of what colour they will and as they turne it, when it commeth to his fashion, they spread the lac upon the whole peece of woode which presently, with the heat of the turning (melteth the waxe, so that it entereth into the crestes, etc.), cleaveth unto it about the thickness of a man's naile : they then burnish it (over) with a broad straw or dry rushes so (cunningly) that all the woode is covered withall, and it shineth like glasse, most pleasant to behold, and continueth as long as the woode being well looked into. In this sorte they cover all kind of household stuffe in India, as beds-teddes, chaires, stooles, etc., and all their turned wood-work, which is wonderful, common and much used throughout all India."

The history of lac-industry in the district of Purulia is interesting. The district of Purulia holds a very proud position for producing best quality of lac in the world. About 100 years back, late Mahesh Chandra Banerjee settled at Tulin of this district and established his lac-factory there. Later, Haradhan Kundu, Nandalal Bhattacharyya, Surjanarayan Haldar and some other enthusiastic lac-manufacturers settled at Tulin and started their lac factories. In 1896 one Armenian gentleman named Mr. Arathoon came from Mirzapur (U.P.) and settled at Jhalda and started his lac-factory there. One year after, Messrs. Shyambaran Mahadeoprasad and Mahadeo Kashiprasad established their lac-factories at Jhalda. Late A. M. Jordon was also one of the pioneers. Again in the beginning of the twentieth century another group of lac manufacturers came from Bankura and settled at Tulin.

Lac was exported outside from early British days in India and it earned a good amount of Sterling. Much valuable information is obtained about the foreign trade of India from Milburn's Oriental Commerce which does not fail to mention lac in the list of merchandise.[12] [13]In 1805 shell-lac, among other articles of export from Bengal to London, alone accounted for an income of Sicca Rs. 12,139. Again, to the money earned by the aggregate sea-borne trade of Calcutta with foreign countries and with other ports for 1902-1903, the contribution of lac was Sicca Rs. 18,233,836.

This is in short the history of lac and lac-industry in India.

MYTH, LEGEND OR HISTORY OF THE CRAFTSMEN COMMUNITY

At present there are altogether 23 artisan households in the municipal town of Jhalda. The community of all these households is known as *Laheri* and every member of the community uses *Laheri* or *Lahiri* as his surname. Persons, belonging to other castes and communities residing in this area, also call this artisan caste *Laheri*.

10. *Ibid.* Page 2,274
11. *Ibid,* Page 2,342
12. The Early History and Growth of Calcutta—Raja Binaya Krishna Deb (1905), Chapter—VI, Page 133
13. *Ibid*—Page 157

The *Laheris* are so named, because all the artisan families in the past had direct association and a close link with manufacture and sale of lac-bangles and other articles of lac. But now, though the community as a whole is known as *Laheri*, majority of its members have severed their connections with the craft and only a few are pursuing it.

The attempt to elicit information about the myth, legend or history of the *Laheri* community was practically infructuous, for very meagre information could be available. Of the five practising and 18 non-practising households, none, except a solitary person belonging to the non-practising group, could throw any light on the origin of the community. The source of the informant is his deceased brother, who dates the origin of the community from the traditional massacre of the *Kshatriyas* by *Parasurama*, the mythological spitfire among the saints. It is claimed that the ancestors of the *Laheris* were *Kshatriyas*, who, in order to escape the wrath of *Parasurama*, who was bent on a planned genocide to exterminate the *Kshatriyas* from the earth, took to this craft as their occupation to hide their identity. The informant supports his legend by quoting a story, reproduced below :

One day when the ancestors of the artisan community were moving from one place to another to escape from the stroke of the famous axe of *Parasurama*, they accidentally met him on their way. Fortunately they saw some *lac* on the twigs of a tree and having found no other way to escape the inevitable confrontation, they posed to collect the *lac* and began to cut them into pieces. When *Parasurama* approached them and asked them who they were, they gave their identity as people traditionally dealing with lac products. The ingenuity saved them from a crisis but from then onwards the people came to be known as *Laheris*.

Obviously this account about the origin of the community, as given by the particular head of the family, is a mere myth and has little historical truth. But even then, the legend is valuable in the face of lack of information from any other source.

The members belonging to the craftsmen community of this place are divided into two groups or sections. One group is known as *Chhatri* and the other group claims to be *Vaisyas* or *Vais*. That *Laheri* is a community or a functional group based on occupation is very clear from the fact that their traditional occupation is production of lac articles.

In *Tribes and Castes of Bengal* H. H. Risley refers to *Laheri* or *Lahera* as a caste. According to Risley, *Laheri* or *Lahera* is "a Behar Caste engaged in the manufacture and sale of lac bangles (*Lah ka churi*). The group is probably a functional one, consisting of members of several different castes which happened to adopt that particular profession."

A reference to *Laheri* or *Lakhera* is also made in *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces* by Russel and Hira Lal, according to whom *Lakhera* or *Laheri* is "the small caste whose members make bangles and other articles of lac..... The name is derived from the Sanskrit *Laksha-Kara*, a worker in lac. The caste is a mixed functional group closely connected with the *Kacheras* and *Patwas* ; no distinction being recognised between the *Patwas* and *Lakheras* in some localities of the Central Provinces."

Baillie in his Census Report of the North-Western Provinces (1891, Page 321) gives the information about *Laheri* or *Lakhera* that "the accounts given by the members of the caste of their origin are very various and sometimes ingenuous. One story is that like the *Pqtwas*, with whom they are connected, they were originally *Kayasths*. According to another account they were made from the dirt washed from *Parbatti* before her marriage with *Siva*, being created by the God to make bangles for his wife, and hence called Deobansi.

Again, it is stated, they were created by *Krishna* to make bangles for the *Gopies*. The most elaborate account of their origin reveals that they were originally Jadobansi Rajputs, who assisted the *Kurus* to make a fort of lac, in which the *Pandus* were to be treacherously burned. For this traitorous conduct they were degraded and compelled eternally to work in lac or glass.....They make *tiklis* as well as lac and glass bangles."

The members of the Laheri community in Jhalda are, however, ignorant of the various accounts of the origin of their community.

In regard to the history of migration a particular non-practising artisan belonging to the *Vaisya* or *Vais* group mentions two stories, which indicate the history of migration of the *Vaisya* or *Vais* group to this particular area. According to the first story the members of this group resided either at Gaya in Bihar, or in Kashi (Banaras) in U.P. in the past. They started on a pilgrimage to Puri in a group. When they had reached Jhalda, the ancestors of the present

Ojha family, now residing here, asked and invited the pilgrims to stay and settle here. The other fellow pilgrims settled here at the request. Even now, majority of the *Vais* people reside at *Ojha-kuli*, a locality of Jhalda. The second story states that the members belonging to the *Vais* group accompanied the forefather of the present Raja of Jhalda on his journey from Rajputana to this place as bodyguards and eventually settled here along with their master.

It is not known if any of these two stories is authentic. The members of the *Chhatri* group do not know any history of their migration to this place.

MAGICAL AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

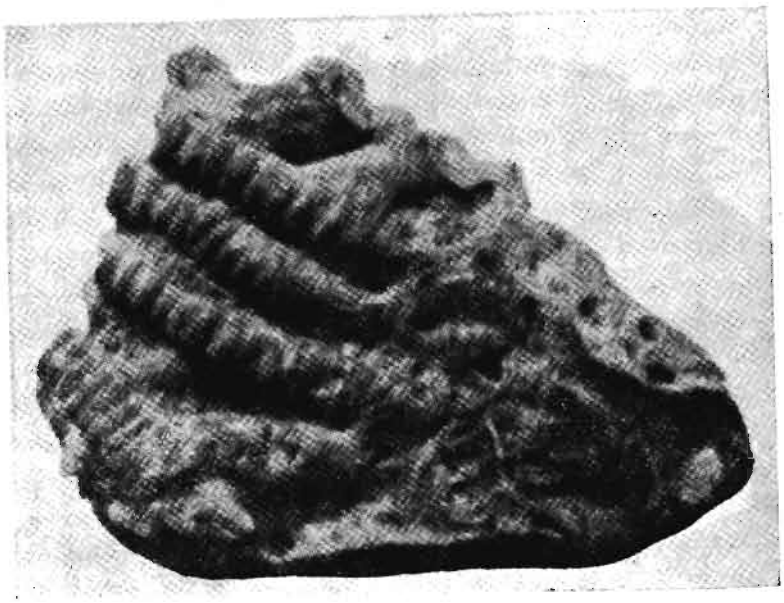
The practising artisan households worship *Viswakarma*, the Divine Architect, twice in a year. They worship the deity, for he is looked upon as the tutelary deity of the caste. The artisans' tools and implements are believed to enshrine and represent the deity.

The practising artisan households worship their tools and equipments in the name of *Viswakarma*, once on the *Navami* day of the *Durga Puja* ceremony in September-October and once more on the day of *Saraswati Puja* (worship of the Goddess of Learning). The first worship is held in the month of *Aswin* (September-October) and the second one is held in the month of *Magh* (January-February) of the Bengali calendar.

On both the occasions the tools and implements are washed and cleaned before the worship. Vermilion marks are applied to each of them. The *Puja* or religious ceremony on both these occasions is conducted by the heads of the households in their houses individually, without the assistance of any Brahman priest. During the worship different tools and implements are spread on the floor of the dwelling-*cum*-workshop and worshipped with flowers and wooden apples' leaves, collected from the place of worship of the Goddess *Durga* and of the Goddess *Saraswati*. Rice and sugar, offered to the deity, are placed on the tools and implements. The offerings are taken by the members of the household after the worship.

It is said that the purpose of this worship is to seek the favour of *Viswakarma*, who, pleased after the worship, is supposed to bless the artisans. The practising artisan households have been worshipping *Viswakarma* on these two occasions from early times. The non-practising households do neither hold the worship in their households nor do they participate in the worships held in the houses of the practising artisans.

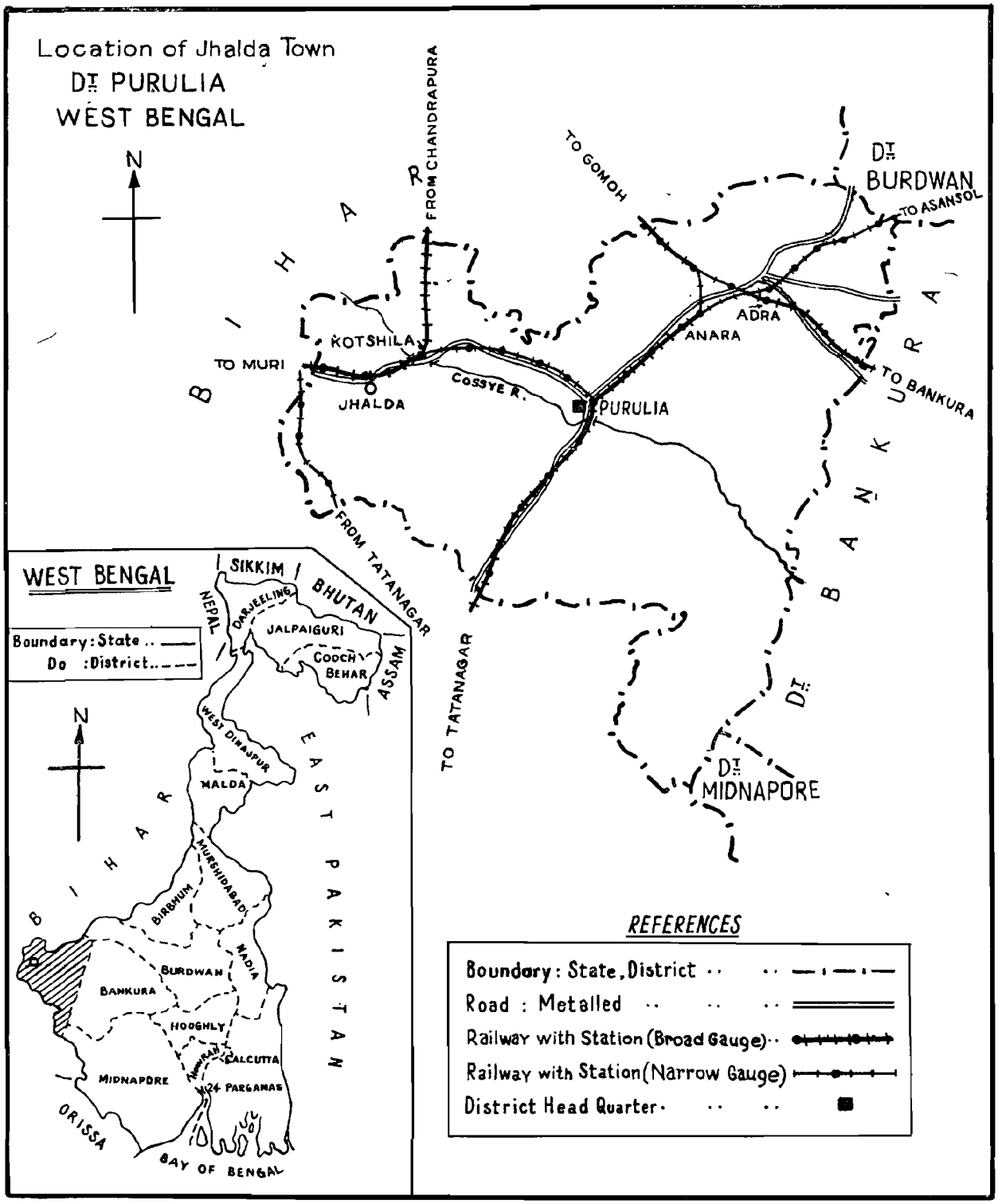
Besides, there is no other festival having any bearing on the craft. The practising artisans regard red and green colours as sacred, but they do not know why the colours are sacrosanct.

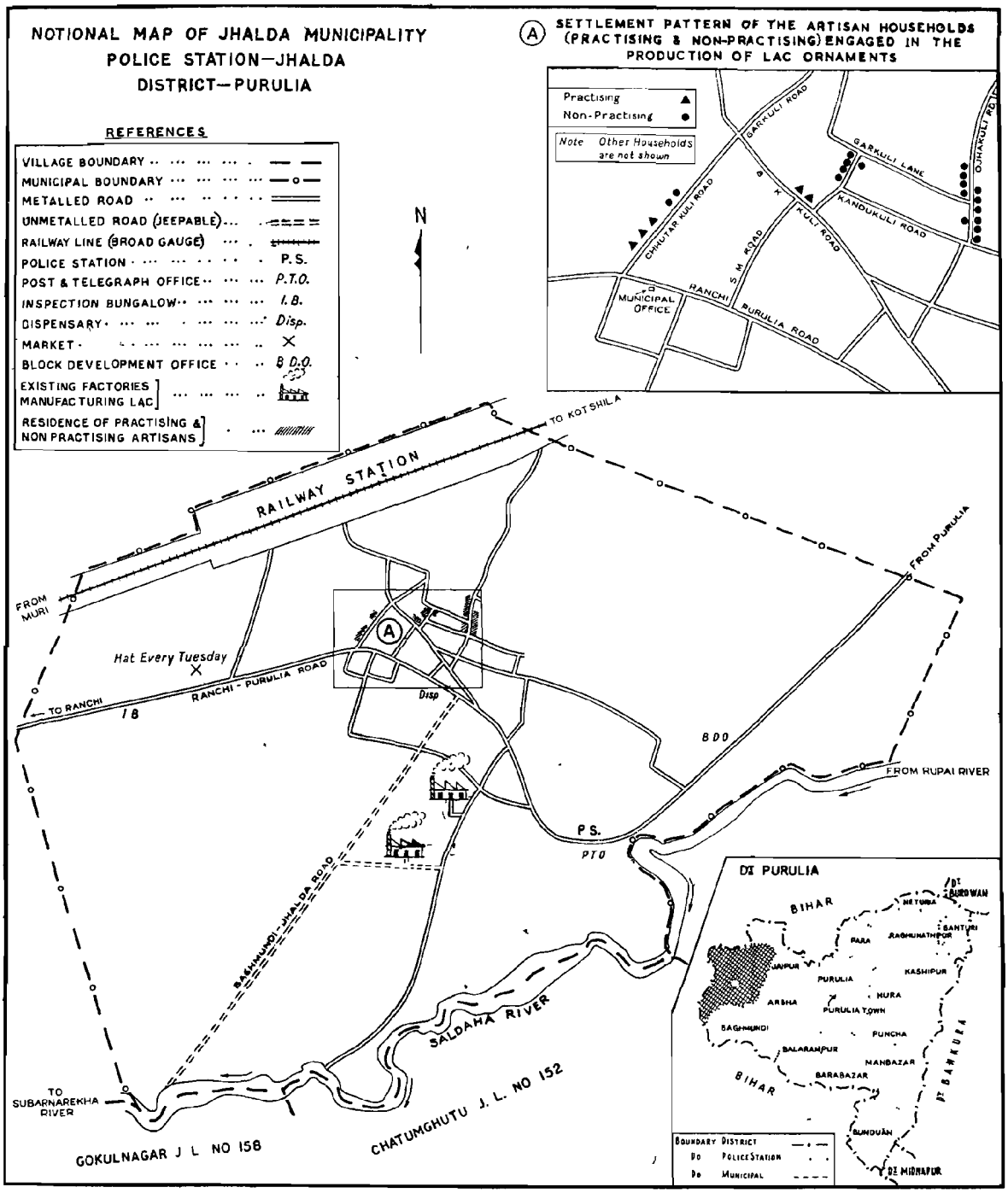


Beads of lac, once used in some unnamed ornament, excavated at the site of Chandraketugarh (3rd Century B.C. to the end of the Pala period), is now preserved in Ashutosh Museum, Calcutta

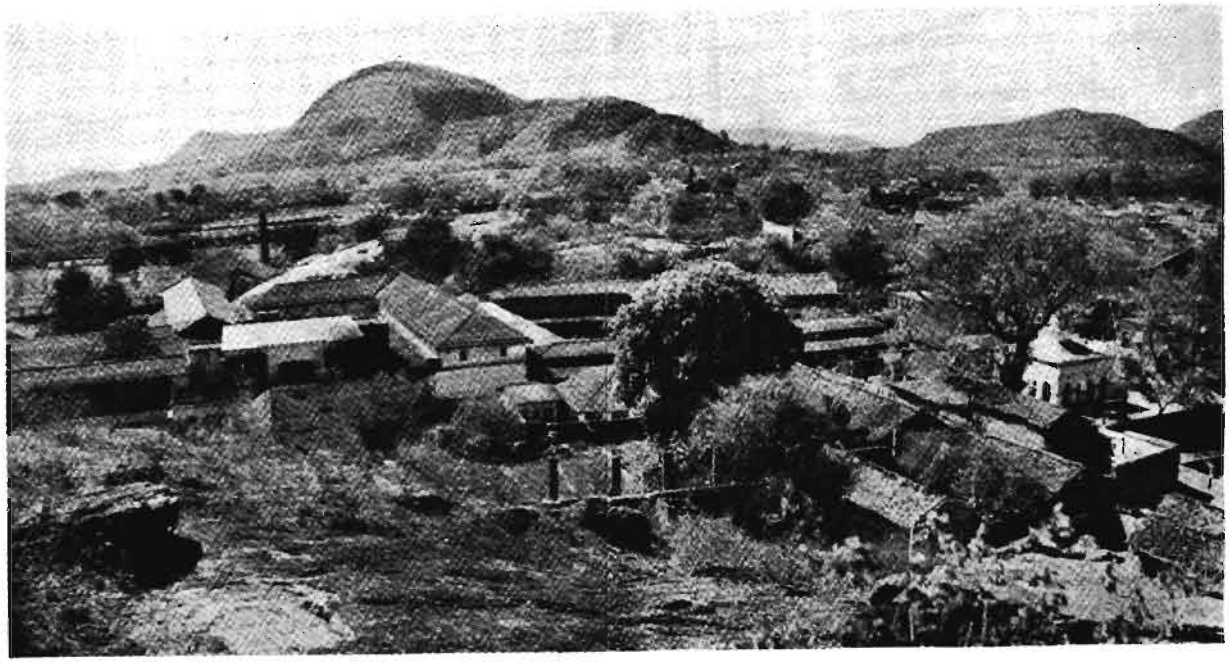


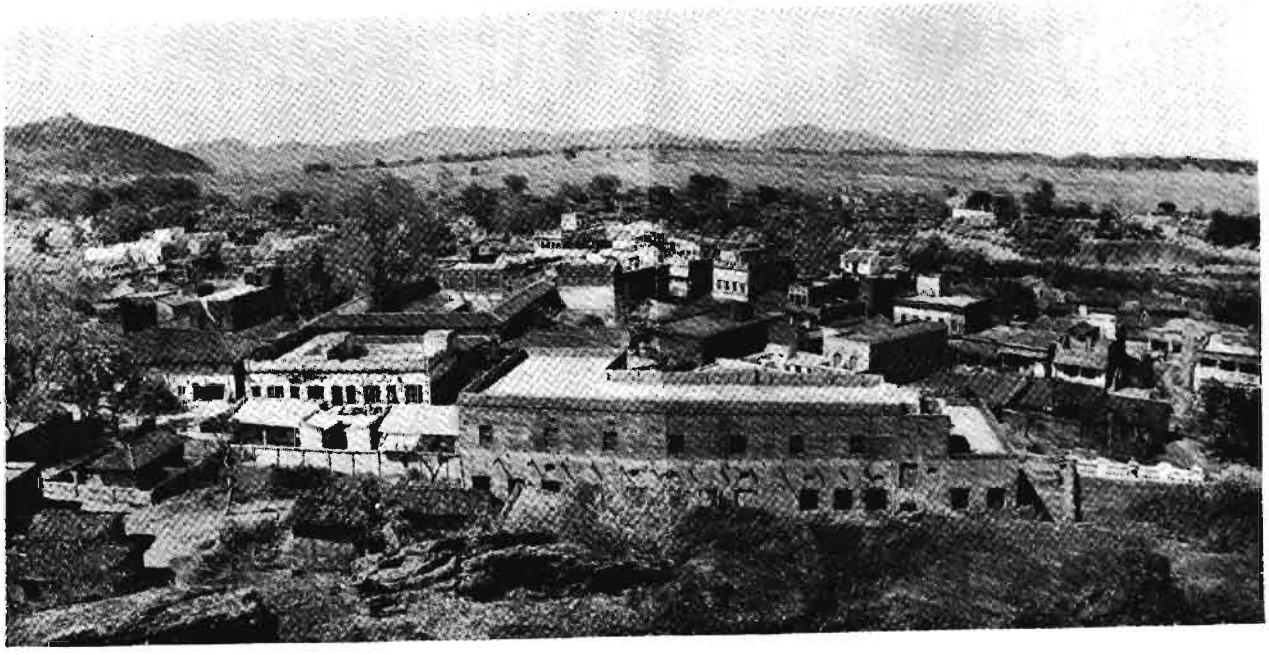
A coloured decorated bowl of lac, as a mark of craftsmanship of the artisans of Illambazar, Birbhum, (who also produced ornaments of lac), collected in 1939 and now preserved in Government Industrial and Commercial Museum, Calcutta, exists as a relic of a craft, dead and gone


Location of Jhalda Town
Dt. PURULIA
WEST BENGAL
N
BIHAR
FROM CHANDRAPURA
TO GOMOH
Dt. BURDWAN
TO ASANSOL
ADRA
ANARA
KOTSHILA
TO MURI
JHALDA
COSSYE R.
PURULIA
TO BANKURA
BANKURA
FROM TATANAGAR
TO TATANAGAR
Dt. MIDNAPORE
WEST BENGAL
SIKKIM
BHUTAN
NEPAL
DARJEELING
JALPAIGURI
COOCH BEHAR
ASSAM
Boundary: State ..
Do : District..
WEST DINAJPUR
MALDA
MURSHIDABAD
BIRBHUM
NADIA
BURDWAN
BANKURA
HOOGHLY
HOWRAH
CALCUTTA
MIDNAPORE
24 PARGANAS
ORISSA
BAY OF BENGAL
EAST PAKISTAN
REFERENCES
Boundary: State, District
Road : Metalled
Railway with Station (Broad Gauge)
Railway with Station (Narrow Gauge)
District Head Quarter


NOTIONAL MAP OF JHALDA MUNICIPALITY
POLICE STATION—JHALDA
DISTRICT—PURULIA
REFERENCES
VILLAGE BOUNDARY
MUNICIPAL BOUNDARY
METALLED ROAD
UNMETALLED ROAD (JEEPABLE)
RAILWAY LINE (BROAD GAUGE)
POLICE STATION P.S.
POST & TELEGRAPH OFFICE P.T.O.
INSPECTION BUNGALOW I.B.
DISPENSARY Disp.
MARKET
BLOCK DEVELOPMENT OFFICE B.D.O.
EXISTING FACTORIES MANUFACTURING LAC
RESIDENCE OF PRACTISING & NON PRACTISING ARTISANS
N
(A) SETTLEMENT PATTERN OF THE ARTISAN HOUSEHOLDS (PRACTISING & NON-PRACTISING) ENGAGED IN THE PRODUCTION OF LAC ORNAMENTS
Practising
Non-Practising
Note Other Households are not shown
GARKULI ROAD
GARKULI LANE
GARKULI ROAD
CHHUTAR KULI ROAD
S.M. ROAD
KULI ROAD
KANDUKULI ROAD
MUNICIPAL OFFICE
RANCHI
PURULIA ROAD
TO KOTSHILA
RAILWAY STATION
FROM PURULIA
FROM MURI
Hat Every Tuesday
TO RANCHI
I.B.
RANCHI - PURULIA ROAD
Disp
B.D.O.
FROM RUPAI RIVER
P.S.
P.T.O.
BAGHMUNDI - JHALDA ROAD
SALDAHA RIVER
TO SUBARNAREKHA RIVER
GOKULNAGAR J L NO 158
CHATUMGHUTU J. L. NO 152
DI PURULIA
DT. BURDWAN
BIHAR
METIABA
SANTURI
RAGHUNATHPUR
PARA
JAYPUR
PURULIA
KASHIPUR
ARSHA
HURA
PURULIA TOWN
BAGHMUNDI
PUNCHA
BALARAMPUR
MANBAZAR
BARABAZAR
BIHAR
DT. BANKURA
SUNDUAN
DT. MIDNAPUR
BOUNDARY DISTRICT
Do POLICE STATION
Do MUNICIPAL

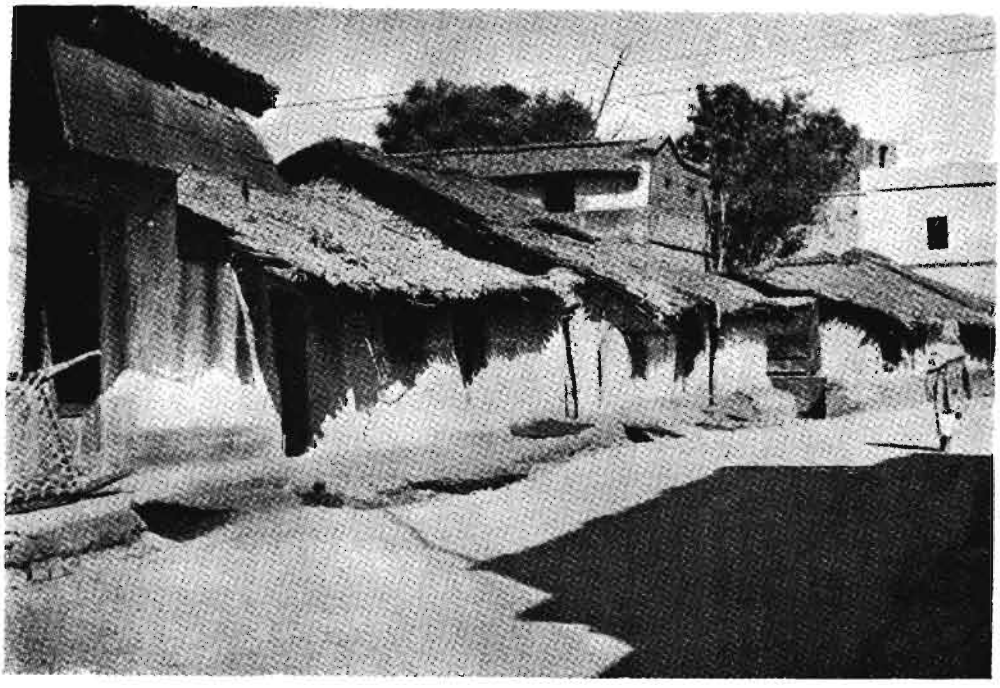
A PANORAMIC VIEW OF JHALDA TO A SIGHT-SEER ATOP A HILLOCK





Lac-factories with or without chimney (smokeless in the solitary one) are in view in the left part of the picture—the right part (picture above) represents the residential cluster of *pucca* houses of the townsmen obliterating the identity of the modest huts of the artisans

ARTISANS' LOCALITY STILL SLEEPY



'Modest mansions' of two artisans on Bamankhas Kuli Road, Jhalda

ARTISAN TRIO UNDER ONE ROOF



In the single hut with pantiled roof on Chhutarkuli Road, Jhalda, live three artisan households in three partitioned portions

CHAPTER II

THE CRAFT, THE CRAFT-CENTRE AND THE CRAFTSMEN

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Owner of workshop 25
Owner-craftsman 25
Financier 25
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Number and type of production-units 26

Family-structure of the craftsmen 27

II

THE CRAFT, THE CRAFT-CENTRE AND THE CRAFTSMEN

INTRODUCTION

From the Report of the Backward Classes Commission (1955) one may have an idea of the distribution of the craftsmen, producing lac bangles or glass bangles.

TABLE 1

Name of the State	Traditional occupation	Estimated population, 1951
	LAHERI	
Bihar	Lac bangle-makers	Not available
Uttar Pradesh (Lahera)	Ditto	Ditto
West Bengal (Lahera)	Glass bangle-makers	Ditto
	LAKHERA OR LAKHERI	
Ajmer	Lac bangle-makers	1,490
Bhopal	Glass bangle-makers	492
Bombay	Makers of lac bangles	493
Coorg	Lac bangle-makers and sellers	Not available
Madhya Bharat	Bangle-sellers	4,079
Madhya Pradesh	Bangle-makers	6,093
Orissa (Lakhera)	Cultivate lac and prepare ornaments	. .
Patiala and East Punjab	. .	. .
Punjab	Lac bangle-makers and sellers	. .
Rajasthan	Lac bangle-makers	. .
Vindhya Pradesh	Bangle-makers	2,635

Though there is no account of the craftsmen in West Bengal from the Report of the Backward Classes Commission itself, it has been gathered from literature and actual investigation that lac ornaments were once the speciality of the craftsmen of Jhalda. It is with a view to finding out if the craft still survives that the present study was made in Jhalda, on which a description will follow shortly. The craftsmen have survived all right, but the craft itself has not. The discussion in all the following chapters will delineate how the five practising craftsmen families with seven working artisans are pursuing the craft in Jhalda.

INTRODUCING THE PLACE

Situated at the foot of a range of hillocks and surrounded by a picturesque landscape, providing a feast for the eyes and the mind, Jhalda is a small municipal town in the district of Purulia, the westernmost district of West Bengal, bordering the State of Bihar. From Jhalda the border of the State of Bihar lies at a distance of only five miles, straight as the crow flies. The river Shaldah, an important river of the district, flows by the southern fringe of the municipal area. A tributary of the river Rupai, it falls in the river Subarnarekha.

The metalled Ranchi-Purulia Road, known as National Highway 32, passes through the town in east-west direction. It functions as a very important road, connecting the place with the industrial areas of Bihar. There is a small Railway Station Jhalida on the Tatanagar-Muri-Kotshila-Chandrapura-Gomoh Branch Line (Broad Gauge Section) of the South Eastern Railway. The place is, therefore, well-served by road and rail-routes. It has been observed that

people generally prefer the road-route to the rail-route, for few trains ply on the route, in contrast to the frequent bus services.

LOCATION

Jhalda town is situated 29 miles to the west of the district and the subdivisional headquarters at Purulia and 45 miles to the east of Ranchi, a very important town in the State of Bihar.

The Post Office, the Police Station and the Railway Station are all located within the jurisdiction of the municipal area. There are three different places of daily market and a separate place for the weekly *Hat* (open-air country market) in the town of Jhalda, held once in a week every Thursday. Jhalda itself is an important trading and commercial centre, where there are numerous shops and stalls, scattered all over, and situated particularly on both sides of the Ranchi-Purulia Road in a row.

The two Block Development Offices of Jhalda I and Jhalda II are situated in the town. Electrified Jhalda gets its power-supply from Durgapur Power Grid under the State Electricity Board, the Office of which is situated in the town itself.

As it is a *Thana* headquarter, many Government Offices at *Thana* level are functioning here.

REASON FOR SELECTION

The craft of preparing *Lac Ornaments* is now being practised by a limited number of artisans living in the town. Jhalda was selected for a detailed intensive survey of the craft, pursued here.

The craft of preparing *Lac Ornaments* is practised now by 111 persons all over West Bengal in the Household Industry as per 1961 Census, as will be evident from the following table.

TABLE 2

Name of the districts	No. of persons engaged in this Household Industry
24-Parganas	3
Calcutta	45
Howrah	8
Bankura	4
Midnapore	51
Total	**111**

The establishments, producing lac bangles and other ornaments, are, however, very few and there is no specific information about them from the Report on Housing and Establishment on West Bengal published as Part IV (i) Report of the 1961 Census. A thorough scrutiny of the Houselists of the district of Purulia reveals that in the Police Station of Raghunathpur there is one workshop with two persons, in Barabazar Police Station one workshop with two artisans and another in Neturia Police Station, employing four workers, all producing lac ornaments of some kind or other.

AREA OF THE PLACE AND ITS POPULATION

The notified area of Jhalda Municipality covers only 1.50 sq. miles. The municipality, divided into four Wards, was established on the 1st July, 1888, prior to which date the Raja of Jhalda had his suzerainty over the present town area.

According to 1961 Census there are 9,692 persons, consisting of 4,973 males and 4,719 females, in 1,868 households within the municipal area of Jhalda.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AND TOPOGRAPHY

The municipal town of Jhalda is bounded on the north by the South Eastern Railway's Broad Gauge track, on the south by the river Shaldah and on the east by the village Bagbinda and by the Agricultural Farm under the Government of West Bengal. The municipality's western boundary extends to the *nullah* or a narrow drain.

The soil of this area is reddish in colour, sandy and lateritic in nature. Patches of land are gravelly and without any grass. The soil of the low lands is said to be well-suited for paddy-cultivation. In the rainy season rain-water hardly accumulates on its surface and surface-water flows to the river through the open municipal drains. The topography of the place is marked by wide undulations. One or two hillocks are located within the jurisdiction of the municipal area. The land has a gradual slope towards the west.

The northern side of the town is flanked by agricultural fields. Pasture for the cattle is located by the side of the river Shaldah on the southern outskirts of the town. The climate of this place is healthy, but of extreme nature due to its remoteness from the sea. Summer starts from the month of March and continues upto the end of June. In the month

of July first drops of rain quench the parched fields and the monsoons take leave in September. Preceded by a short spell of autumn in october, winter dominates the place till February and even in autumn one may feel the nip in the air. Annual rainfall of the area varies between 30″-35″, but the figure stood as high as 50″ in 1964.

FLORA AND FAUNA

Trees like banyan, *Aswath (Peepul)*, *Kul* (plum), *Palas*, *Sal*, tamarind, papaw and cactus are plentiful in and outside Jhalda town. Paddy is the main crop cultivated here. Winter-crops like mustard and pulses are raised in some agricultural plots. The fields are situated in close proximity to reserved forests, where lac is cultured very extensively. *Tulsi* plant is grown in every courtyard as a sacred plant, representing the God *Narayana*.

Dogs, cats, pigs and cows are the domestic animals of the place. In some households bullocks and buffalloes may also be found. In the outskirts of the town animals like rabbits and hayenas move out of their jungle-abodes at night.

SOURCES OF WATER

There are six ring-wells for public use and a large number of masonry-wells for private use in the houses of the residents of the town. There is only one tube-well for public use in this area, located in the High School.

Besides, there are two big tanks and approximately five or six small ponds. The right-wells and the tube-well are used mainly for drinking purpose and the tanks and ponds are used for washing, cleaning and bathing purposes. In dry season water of the ponds and tanks dries up completely.

The river Shaldah flowing at the southern end of the town is used mainly for bathing and washing purposes. Its water is also used for irrigation of the adjoining fields, when necessary.

SOCIAL AND WELFARE INSTITUTIONS

There is one Higher Secondary (Multi-purpose) School situated outside the municipal boundary of Jhalda town, where educational facilities are imparted to boys and girls. There are two Junior Schools each upto Class VIII in the town. One of the two Schools is meant for the girls and the other one is a co-educational institution with Hindi as the medium of instruction. There are five Primary Schools within the town.

There is one Primary Health Centre with arrangements for both outdoor and indoor treatment of the attending patients. For indoor treatment there are four beds. This Health Centre was previously a Charitable Dispensary, run by the District Board, but for the last five years it has been managed by the Government of West Bengal. Now, it is under the control of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Purulia, under the Development of Health, Government of West Bengal.

There are three libraries in the town, one of them being a Public Library. The other two are for the exclusive use of the Harijan and Subarnabanik communities. There is an Information Centre-*cum*-Library under the Block Development Office, Jhalda II.

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Railway Station of Jhalida connects the town with places like Ranchi, Patna and Gomoh along the Railway. As the number of passenger trains on this route is very limited, the Station remains most of the time desolate and forlorn.

The Ranchi-Purulia Highway passes through the town. Buses, taxis, cycles, cycle-rickshaws, motor cars, lorries and trucks ply along this road almost non-stop and the stretch of the road, that passes through the town, is a very busy thoroughfare. The 13 bus-routes are operated by private companies and the State Transport Organisation of the Bihar Government also runs buses. Ranchi is not very far from here (about 48 miles) and Jhalda is visited by tourists on way to Ranchi.

There are many routes from Calcutta. Two routes are commonly used now.

(1) After detraining at Muri Junction of the South Eastern Railway one may board a private bus to take one directly to the town within half an hour. One may travel the distance in a cycle-rickshaw also. The distance between Muri and Jhalda is only six miles or nine kilometers and the distance between Howrah and Muri is 216 miles or 346 kilometers. It takes about nine hours to travel from Calcutta to Jhalda along this route in an express train.

(2) Detraining at Purulia Railway Station on the South Eastern Railway one may reach Jhalda within two hours' time covering 30 miles or 48

kilometers in a bus or taxi cab. The distance between Howrah and Purulia is 201 miles or 323 kilometers. This route being a little more circuitous, the journey from Calcutta to Jhalda takes 13 hours or so.

It has already been stated that there is a Post Office in the town. From this Post Office both money orders and telegrams can be sent outside. Jhalda has also a Telephone Exchange and the residents are well served by the telephonic network.

PLACES OF WORSHIP

There are 12 common places of worship, where the worship of different deities takes place daily. In addition, there are two places, where though there are no permanent deities installed, at particular times the deities are installed and worshipped.

Besides, there are four *Mandaps* or places of community-worship, where *Durga Puja* (worship of the Goddess *Durga*) takes place in the month of September-October. Goddess *Kali* is worshipped in a temporary structure, erected during *Diwali* every year.

CREMATORIUM AND BURIAL GROUND

The crematorium or the burning *ghat* is situated at the southern end of the town by the side of the river Shaldah in a secluded and desolate corner. The crematorium is used by all the communities living in the town. The Muslims have a graveyard on the northern side of the Railway line.

HISTORY OF THE PLACE, ITS LEGEND AND MYTH

Two sets of beliefs are propounded by the residents of Jhalda about the naming of the town. Both the versions are legendary in nature, not supported by any historical evidence. Jhalda is believed by a section of the townsmen to have derived its name from the river Shaldah, flowing by the side of the town.

Others argue that in the distant past the town was inhabited by the Adibasi people, who used to take *Jhillim* or raw meat (in the Santali language). The town is said to have derived its name from the word *Jhillim*. In support, people of the town are quick to point out that some local tribes take fried blood of slaughtered animals even now. But, it is not clear how the name Jhalda was transformed from *Jhillim*.

The town is said to be approximately 300 years old. The ancestors of the present Raja of Jhalda came here for the first time from Rajasthan or Rajputana for business and settled here, so points out the Raj family. The natural setting of Jhalda and also the easy availability of brood lac in the neighbouring areas were two factors, which influenced the early settlers of the Raj family to choose the place. They settled here with a large retinue and invited people from their ancestral land to migrate here. Thus, at the initiative of the Raja's ancestors Jhalda had its birth.

The Raja of Kashipur, a famous king of this district, and a historical figure too, has relation with the Raj family of Jhalda. The Raja's residence and fort are located in the extreme north-west corner of the town, covering an area of nine acres and encircled by a dry moat, six yards deep and twenty five yards wide.

The history of Jhalda is more or less interlinked with the Raj family in Jhalda, who was the overlord of the place till very recently. The history of the town, supposed to have been the seat of the Raja of Jhalda, will be significant with reference to the Manbhum District Gazetteer (1911), extracts from which are reproduced below :—

"According to one of the traditions of the Panchet family Jhalda was their earliest seat in the district, and the sacred cow *Kapila Gai*, who nourished the abandoned child of Anot Lal, Raja of Kashipur, who eventually became the first king of Sikharbhum with headquarters at Panchkot, is supposed to have been converted into stone and to have her resting place, one of the hills north of Jhalda. The traditional history of Jhalda Raj family contains nothing of special interest..... ..... The territory comprised in the present district Manbhum was acquired by the British with the grant of the Dewani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in 1765. Even as late as this, however, our knowledge of the district hardly extends beyond the Zamindari Raj of Panchet, to which Jhalda was described few years later as a recent annexation.

In 1782 Panchet with Jhalda was given a separate Collector. In November of the same year there were disturbances in Jhalda and Tamar ; the zamindar of Panchet is described as exposed to daily depredations from the petty estates of Jhalda, and to the same time the zamindars of Nawagarh and Jharia had

taken to plundering and the latter to withholding his rent. The immediate rusult was the deputation of Major Crawford with an armed force to Jhalda to quell the disturbances and to take charge of the collection. By July 1783, the Officer had restored Jharia to tranquillity and was prepared to proceed with the revenue settlement with Jhalda; at the same time he recommended that the inhabitants of this area and also part of Ramgarh on the west and Panchet on the east should be disarmed.

HISTORY OF THE CRAFT IN THIS CRAFT-CENTRE

Besides, there is little material, which may throw any light on the history of the place. There is, however, an account relating to the circumstances in which the lac industry had its genesis in Jhalda. An interesting and fascinating reading, it is given below :

"A tragic incident of a brutal murder towards the end of January 1896 led to the growth of Jhalda into the world's foremost shellac and seedlac manufacturing centre. A tiny village with barely 100 to 150 small huts and without any rail connection. Jhalda was very rich in lac cultivation, both in quantity and quality, but there was no shellac factory here. The main and the most important centre of shellac manufacturing in India in those days was Mirzapur in U.P. Many of the Mirzapur factories had their purchasing Officers, *Gumastas* at Jhalda, where they purchased stick-lac for their factories Mr. G. Carapiet was one of these factory-owners and had appointed two *Gumastas* in Jhalda, Bachen Bania and Sitaram Bania. One day at midday there was some serious trouble between these two. Bachen killed Sitaram and threw him into a well. When the news of this murder reached Mirzapur, Mr. Carapiet sent one of his assistants Mr. A. M. Arathoon to Jhalda for enquiry into the matter. And that is how Mr. Arathoon Mackertoon Arathoon, the founder of the shellac industry in Jhalda, arrived here in January, 1896.

After completing this enquiry Mr. A. M. Arathoon studied the local condition very carefully and found a great scope for prosperous shellac factories at Jhalda, a place only 235 miles from the port of Calcutta. Though there was no direct rail connection and people had to travel up to Purulia, the district headquarters at the rail point, 28 miles from here by wardrives push carts, or bullock carts, yet Mr. Arathoon found no sense in taking the raw material from Jhalda to Mirzapur, a distance of about 450 miles and again bringing back the finished goods to Calcutta, another 500 miles. On return he put before his boss a suggestion for opening a shellac factory at Jhalda and Mr. Carapiet agreed to it. Thus Mr. Arathoon gave up his job at Mirzapur and returned to Jhalda and started his factory in early 1897. While raw material was very cheap, Mr. Arathoon had to undergo immense difficulties in getting skilled melters and seed lac clearers. Most of the skilled workers needed for his factory, had to be brought from Mirzapur. Later on, local workers were trained".

A year later, Messrs. Mahadeoprasad Kashiprasad also started a shellac factory at Jhalda. Subsequently, several new factories were started, mostly by those, who at one time or other had worked with Mr. Arathoon. Mention may be made of Mr. S. J. Apcar, who started his factory in 1902, Mr. M. G. Gregory (1907) and Mr. Amin (1908). Later, Creet Bros. and Horsep Bros. started their factories.

Messrs Fakirram Bhairoprosad of Mirzapur and Sri Acchram of Rupar also built up factories here and established their trade marks as "National and International Fame."[1]

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PLACE

Despite its salubrious climate, Jhalda is not a popular health-resort. Its fame is not because of its being a Thana level headquarters of administration. Traditionally famous as a production-centre of lac, it acquired importance for her long trade in the same commodity. A slump has recently affected the industry because of scarcity of raw materials in brood lac and also for the depression in the shellac market. But, the townsfolk are ever watchful on the industry, which has pulsated the commercial life of the town for long.

At present there are eight big Lac Factories, of which three are owned by Armenians, and the rest by Indians. But, in October, 1964 only two lac factories, run by Indians, were working. The other factories were temporarily closed and were expected to reopen shortly.

THE CRAFT CENTRE AND THE CRAFTSMEN

One of the specialities of Jhalda was the lac ornaments of the place. But, the pride of the place is now past, though some house-

[1]Indian Lac Cess Committee Souvenir (Silver Jubilee Issue—1931-1956).

holds are practising the craft in their dying bid to revive it.

The place is noted for other crafts, discussion on which will be made later.

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

All the artisans, whether producing lac ornaments or not, are Laheris by caste, with the title of *Laheri.*

They live in two groups in two localities of the town, *Chhutarpara* and *Madhabtali* with the members of other castes. They have no separate locality of their own. The non-practising artisans also live in these two places along with the practising artisans. Some of the non-practising artisans live in *Ojhapara*, where there is no residence of the practising artisans. In *Madhabtali* and *Ojhapara* the non-practising artisans reside in a group.

The practising artisans live in a group in a planned settlement and not in a haphazard way. Their Social set-up bespeaks of their settlement to have been based on considerations of caste and occupation. On linguistic and religious grounds there is no variation in the settlement pattern, as all of them speak Bengali and all are Hindus.

In Jhalda there are other artisan localities, where the artisans practising different crafts also reside. The distribution of the localities or *Kulis* is given below :

Domkuli, Ghasikuli, Saodagarpara, Sonarpara, Bamankhaskuli, Garkuli, Loharpara, Chhutarpara, Kumarkuli, Ojhakuli and Madhabtali.

SETTLEMENT-PATTERN OF THE CRAFTSMEN

The persons producing lac ornaments live at *Chhutarpara* and *Madhabtali.*

From the Ranchi-Purulia Road Chhutarkuli Road takes off. Walk of a few steps towards north along the Chhutarkuli Road will bring one to the locality of the craftsmen on the left hand side. Here, the huts of three practising artisans are located with those of the non-practising artisans. Proceeding further towards north along this Road, one will come to a road-crossing, where Chhutarpara Road and the B. K. Kuli Road cut each other. At this crossing one will have to turn towards the right to proceed along Bamankhaskuli Road. A few steps will lead one to the huts of the remaining two practising artisan families, which are clustered with the households belonging to other castes. The houses of the practising artisans are situated only on one side of the two Roads.

After a turn towards the left, near the houses of the practising artisans, mentioned above, one may walk along Kandukuli Road to find the houses of some non-practising artisans. Garkuli Road has taken off towards the left to the houses of the locality of the non-practising artisans. Following either of these two Roads, one will reach Ojhapara Road, which has taken off from the crossing of Kandukuli Road and Beniakuli Road. Majority of the non-practising artisans reside on Ojhapara Road.

The practising artisans all live in *kutcha* huts, the roof of which is made of *khopra* or pantiles and consists of four slopes. The roof of the huts is supported by a bamboo structure. The walls of the huts are made with mud and plastered with lime or mud-coating. The huts are all one-storeyed and rectangular in shape. There are two rooms generally in one hut, one used as workshop-*cum*-bedroom and another as kitchen-*cum*-bedroom. The artisan's place of work is situated in the covered verandah or in the open front facing the road. Except two non-practising artisan families, all others live in *kutcha* houses. The two families making the exception live in *pucca* houses.

Pantiles are available in Jhalda town and bamboos are purchased in the local market. Masons and labourers for the construction and repair work are recruited from the local people.

SETTLEMENT HISTORY OF THE CRAFTSMEN FAMILIES

The settlement history concerning the practising artisan families may be outlined by assessing first the number of generations, for which each family has been living in this town. The information available from the different interviewees is not enough for comparison of the length of settlement of the households. To compute the age of the present interviewee or head of the household the following method has been worked out :

Number of generations including the present as stated by the head of the household

$$\frac{\text{+Present age of the head}}{\text{25 years}} - 1 = \text{Settlement of a household in generations}$$

The table that is prepared on this basis is given below to show the period of settlement of the five practising households in generations.

TABLE 3

GENERATIONS OF SETTLEMENT

Present Generation	1—2 Generation	2—3 Generations	3—4 Generations	4—5 Generations	5—6 Generations	6—7 Generations
Nil	Nil	Nil	1 household	Nil	2 households	2 households

None of the five households are recent settlers. The youngest settler has lived here for more than three generations and the rest for more than six generations.

Viewed from the point of years, one household has been here for more than 50 years but has yet to become a centenarian household. Two households have lived here for more than 150 years, two other households for more than 170 years but less than two centuries. They claim to have been invited by the ancestors of the Raja of Jhalda. Of the five families, two have stated that their ancestors came to Jhalda from Begunkodar, a place situated within the same Police Station. The remaining three families have pointed out that their ancestors migrated from Seraikela, a place now in the district of Singhbhum in the State of Bihar.

OTHER CRAFTS IN THIS AREA AND THE REASON FOR THE CLUSTERING OF DIFFERENT CRAFTS IN THE SAME AREA

Cutlery, carpentry, blacksmithy, goldsmithy and pottery are the other important crafts of this area. Jhalda is specially famous for its cutlery. A large section of the population of this town is engaged in these crafts. Some persons are also engaged in the different *bidi* (country cigarettes) factories and lac-factories.

These crafts clustered here due to the strategic position of Jhalda as an industrial and commercial centre, commanding a large market in Bihar and Bengal both. The available means of transport and easy communication-system influenced the clustering of the different crafts at a place.

ABSENCE OF ANY INSTITUTION FOR THE CRAFTSMEN

There is neither a Co-operative Society nor a Training-*cum*-Production Centre for the artisans of this craft. The craftsmen are self-dependent and self-centred. Mutual co-operation is very little observed among the craftsmen.

The techniques of production remain as old as the craft itself. Except the traditional skill inherited from their ancestors, no new knowledge has been acquired by the craftsmen for use in their craft.

NUMBER OF CRAFTSMEN FAMILIES AND PRACTISING MEMBERS

Of the 23 Laheri households, five are practising ones. In the 23 households there are 104 persons, of which 55 are males and 49 are females. 16 households belong to the *Chhatri* group and seven households to the *Vaisya* or *Bais* group. 67 persons, consisting of 33 males and 34 females, live in the 16 households of the *Chhatri* group. The seven families of the *Vaisya* or *Bais* group consist of 37 persons with 22 males and 15 females.

The following table gives the details at a glance :

TABLE 4

POPULATION OF THE ARTISAN COMMUNITY

Caste	Group	Males	Females	Total no. of persons
Laheri (a)	*Chhatri*	33	34	67
(b)	*Vaisya*	22	15	37
	Total	**55**	**49**	**104**

The table above reveals that in the *Chhatri* households the females outnumber the males, but the position is just reversed in case of the *Vaisya* or *Bais* households. Moreover, in the artisan community the persons, belonging to the *Chhatri* group as a whole, outnumber the persons of the *Vaisya* or *Bais* group.

It has already been stated that only five households are actively connected with the manufacture and sale of lac bangles and of other articles of lac. So, the total number of families actually engaged in the craft is only five. All these families belong to the *Chhatri* group of the artisan community and consist of only 16 persons, comprising six males and 10 females. Of them again,

only three males and four females are actually engaged in the craft.

The following two tables will show the actual number of practising artisan households and the workers therein :

TABLE 5

PRACTISING ARTISAN HOUSEHOLDS OR HOUSEHOLDS ACTUALLY ENGAGED IN THE CRAFT

Caste	Group	No. of households
Laheri	*Chhatri*	5
	Total	**5**

TABLE 6

PRACTISING ARTISANS OR PERSONS ACTUALLY ENGAGED IN THE CRAFT

Caste	Group	Males	Females	Persons
Laheri	*Chhatri*	3	4	7
	Total	**3**	**4**	**7**

The two tables make it evident that all the practising artisan households belong to only one group of the craftsman community and that in the households female artisans are larger in number than the males.

While 31.3 per cent of the *Chhatri* households are engaged in the craft, only 1.04 per cent of the persons in those households pursue the craft. The participation rate in the practising households is 43.8 per cent. As in the case of practising artisans, so in the different practising artisan households also, the females are found to outnumber the males. Moreover, out of six males, only three are engaged in the craft and out of ten females, only four women are actively connected with it. Fifty per cent of the total males and 40 per cent of the total females are, therefore, practising artisans.

AGE

Of the seven workers, only a solitary female worker falls in the age-group 15-19. Another female worker comes in the age-group 35-39. Two male workers come in the age-group 45-49. The age-group 50-54 includes a single female worker. A solitary male worker belongs to the age-group 55-59. The remaining female worker is in the age-group 60 years and above.

MARITAL STATUS

No practising artisan is unmarried. Three craftsmen, consisting of two females and one male, are married. Of the four widowed artisans, two are males and the rest females. No artisan is living a divorced or separated life. The mean age at marriage of the three practising artisans is 20 years and that for the four females is eight years. It is found that dowry or any marriage-payment has not been paid or received by any of the five households during the marriage of the practising artisans.

EDUCATION

The educational standard of the practising artisans is very poor. Of the seven practising artisans, as many as five are illiterates, of which four are females and only one is a male. The two literates are both males, of whom one can only read and write and the other has read upto Class I in a Primary School.

None of the seven practising artisans has obtained any training, either from any institution or from any private person. All of them have learnt the techniques of the craft from their parents and their excellence lies in their inherited traditional skill.

TYPE OF WORKER

All the practising artisans of the place are independent workers. None works under any employer or under any person outside. No artisan works either as a contract-labour or as a hired labourer. The question of piece-rate work also does not arise in regard to the practising artisans of this place. There is no Co-operative Society of the craftsmen. Every practising artisan works at his own dwelling-*cum*-workshop at his own initiative and interest.

BIRTH-PLACE

The birth-place of the three practising male artisans is in Jhalda. But, the birth-place of all the four female practising artisans are located at places outside. As a matter of fact, the birth-places of the different practising female artisans are situated within a radius of fifty kilometers from this place.

The names of these places and their distance from Jhalda is shown below :

TABLE 7

BIRTH-PLACE OF THE ARTISANS

Birth-place	District	State	Distance from Jhalda town (kilometer)
Pithoria	Ranchi	Bihar	40
Kashmar	Hazaribagh	Bihar	32
Mahal-Asansol	Dhanbad	Bihar	44

From the above table it is clear that the practising artisans have brought their life-partners from the three neighbouring districts of the State of Bihar. It may be due to the reason that previously Jhalda was a part of Bihar and in 1956 it was transferred from Bihar to West Bengal.

ROLES OF THE ARTISAN FAMILIES

Manufacture of tools

This particular craft requires various tools and implements in the different stages of production. All these tools and implements are manufactured not by any household of the artisan community but by people, in no way connected with the manufacture of the products, though they are all local people residing at this place for a long time. A discussion about them will be made later.

Production of raw materials

The main raw material for the different products of the craft are manufactured at the different lac factories in Jhalda by hired labourers, some of whom are Laheris. The basic raw material is cultivated in the neighbouring areas by persons residing outside Jhalda town. The different practising artisan families have no direct relation with these households.

Collection of raw materials

One of the raw materials of lac is *stick lac*, which is collected by the cultivators and supplied to the different factories through *Paikars* or intermediaries. *Stick lac* is transformed into *Button lac*. *Kuni*, the lac-dust, is salvaged after various operations (discussed later).

One particular practising artisan family is engaged in the collection of only *Kuni*, the lac-dust, from the municipal drain attached to the factories. It supplies this raw material to other practising artisan families. The detailed account is given in a later chapter.

Sale of raw materials

The main raw material like *Button lac* is always purchased from the factories by the different practising artisan households against payment in cash.

The particular craftsman, mentioned above, who procures *Kuni* or the lac-dust from the municipal drain, also sells it to other practising artisans, whenever required.

Owner of workshop

All the practising artisan households work in their own workshops, which are in the nature of dwelling-*cum*-workshop, a place of work located either in the verandah or in the living room. No artisan household works in any workshop, not owned by it.

Owner-craftsman

In the practising artisan households the five artisans may be treated as owner-craftsmen and two other practising artisans in the same households may be classified as family-workers. The different functions connected with this craft are done mainly by the head of the household with the assistance of the family-members, if any.

Financier

The head of the practising family takes all the responsibilities of finance. He himself is the financier of his independent work. The head of the family of an artisan household takes financial help from outside, only when he cannot finance the craft from the income of the family.

No practising or non-practising artisan family plays the role of a financier to other artisans, engaged in the same craft.

Skilled craftsman

Skill is the *sine qua non* in all stages of production of the articles of lac. Good training and experience alone make a skilled worker. In this production-centre all the seven persons, engaged in the craft, are skilled artisans, of whom two are master craftsmen ; one of them is a male, aged 55 years, who has been practising the craft for the last 30 years after an apprenticeship of one year under his father, since deceased. He has specialised in producing neckchains.

The other artisan is a septuagenarian widow, engaged in the craft for half a century ; her preceptor was her husband. The bangles, produced by her, are the pride of the production-centre at Jhalda.

Unskilled labourer

There is neither an apprentice nor any new entrant in this craft. None is working at present as an unskilled worker.

Craft-supervisor

Supervision is done by the artisan himself. The head of the family takes and bears the bur-

den of the proper and smooth operations of the craft. In a small-scale household craft, like the present one, the initiative comes from the artisan and from other working members of the family.

Traders

The different practising artisan households sell their own manufactured products to the customers either from their own premises or at the various selling centres. No artisan is engaged in the trade of the products of other artisans. Trading is an integral part of the craft.

Salesman

This craft does not call for the services of trained salesmen to boost the sale of the finished products. On account of limited number of customers and lack of any permanent clientele the artisans explore all the avenues for selling their products. The sale is conducted by the artisan himself.

Manager

As there is no factory of large sized employment, there has been no need for the post of a manager.

Accounts personnel

The artisan himself keeps an account of the expenses, incurred during production of different articles. There is no systematized budget and accounting. Everything is left for the memory to record and often details are lost because of the forgetfulness of the artisans.

Transport

The different activities connected with the transportation aspect of the craft are done entirely by the practising artisans themselves. None is exclusively engaged in this particular job.

To sell the finished products at an outside place the artisans take the help of transport. They do so not for the carriage of goods but for themselves to travel from one place to another with small basketful of ornaments.

Packing

The products being very few and limited in number, their packing does not require elaborate arrangements nor does it call for any skilled labour. The wrapping, rather than packing, is done by the artisans.

NUMBER AND TYPE OF PRODUCTION-UNITS

The workshops or production-units, in which the different practising artisan families work, are all owned by them. It is obvious that all the families have independent workshops of their own. No artisan in any of these families work in others' workshops. The workshops are located in the residence of the artisan families within the town and are not situated outside. There are five such workshops, where the five practising families produce the lac ornaments. Excluding three households, each consisting of a single member, two households work in their own workshops, where a member each from these families participates in the operations of the craft. Neither any hired labour nor any labour on contract works in any workshop.

No paid apprentice works in any of the five workshops and none is engaged in the craft as a worker on piece-rate basis.

The table below will give the reader an idea about the nature of ownership of the production-units or workshops :

TABLE 8

HOUSEHOLDS, CRAFTSMEN AND THE OWNERSHIP OF THEIR WORKSHOP

Nature of the ownership of the workshop	Number of households engaged	Number of persons engaged
Own	5	7
Employee	. .	. .
Co-operative Society	. .	. .
Others	. .	. .
Total	**5**	**7**

From the above table it may be asserted that all the units in this particular production-centre are run by the owners themselves.

It is found that the craft here runs fully in the single entrepreneur system, indicating that in each artisan household it is owned and managed by a single individual. If everything goes well, the owner-craftsman takes a personal interest in his work and tries to run it efficiently. He is responsible to himself alone, and whenever necessary, he takes prompt action to solve any problem that emerges from time to time. He is at liberty to produce articles to suit the individual tastes of his customers or to produce those of his own choice. But, under the existing system, the owner-craftsman can hardly invest a large amount of capital in his productive activities. He takes no risk in experimenting with either designs or with techniques.

FAMILY-STRUCTURE OF THE CRAFTSMEN

Before any discussion about the types of the practising artisan households is opened, the nature of the various types of families should be perused.

On analysis, the practising artisan families are found to consist of only one *Intermediate* family, one *Simple* family and three families of *Others* type. The distribution of the various practising artisan families according to size is given below :

Single-membered household	2
Two-membered household	1
Three-membered household	..
Four-membered household	..
Five-membered household	..
Six-membered household	2
Total	**5**

In this connection a table showing the distribution of the households engaged in the craft according to the size of the household is shown below :

TABLE 9

HOUSEHOLDS ENGAGED IN THE CRAFT, THEIR SIZE AND PERSONS THEREIN

Size of household	No. of household	No. of persons
1	2	2
2	1	2
3	..	..
4	..	..
5	..	..
6	2	12
Total	**5**	**16**

Moreover, a table is given to show the distribution of the practising households according to the number of persons engaged in the craft.

TABLE 10

HOUSEHOLDS AND THE PERSONS ENGAGED IN THE CRAFT

Size of household	No. of persons therein	No. of members engaged in the craft
1	2	2
2	2	1
3	..	..
4	..	..
5	..	..
6	12	4
Total	**16**	**7**

The last but not the least important point in this regard is the relation between the size of the households and the percentage of the family-members participating in the craft. A table is given below to focus this point.

TABLE 11

PARTICIPATION RATE

Size of household	No. of persons therein	Percentage of participation in the craft (participation rate)
1	2	100
2	2	50
3	..	..
4	..	..
5	..	..
6	12	33.4
Total	**16**	**43.8**

The total number of persons living in the different practising artisan households is 16 and the total number of persons engaged in the craft is only seven, the participation-rate being only 43.8 per cent.

CHAPTER III

ARTICLES PRODUCED

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Articles of the past 35

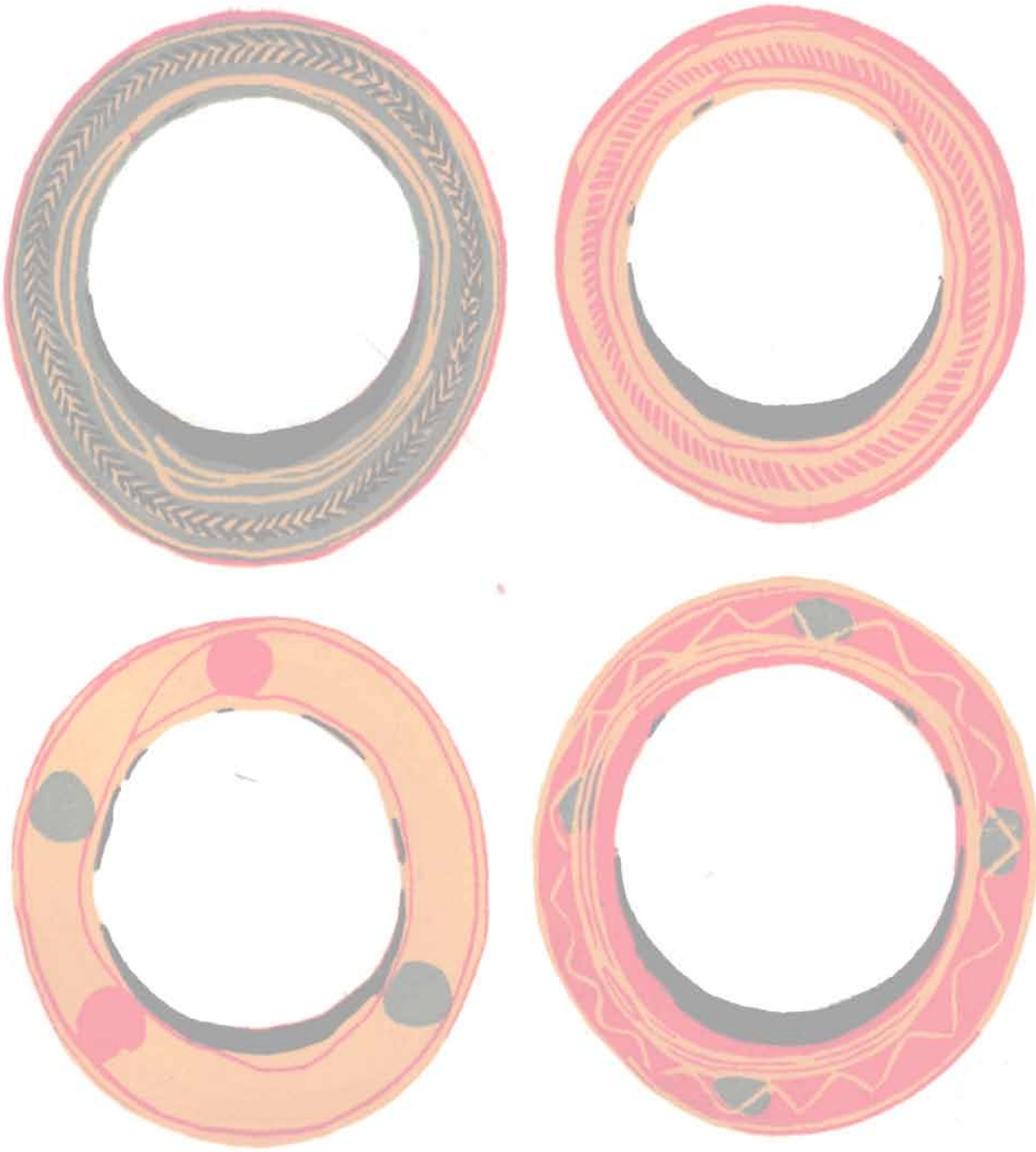
Articles of the present 36

- Description 36
- Designs 37

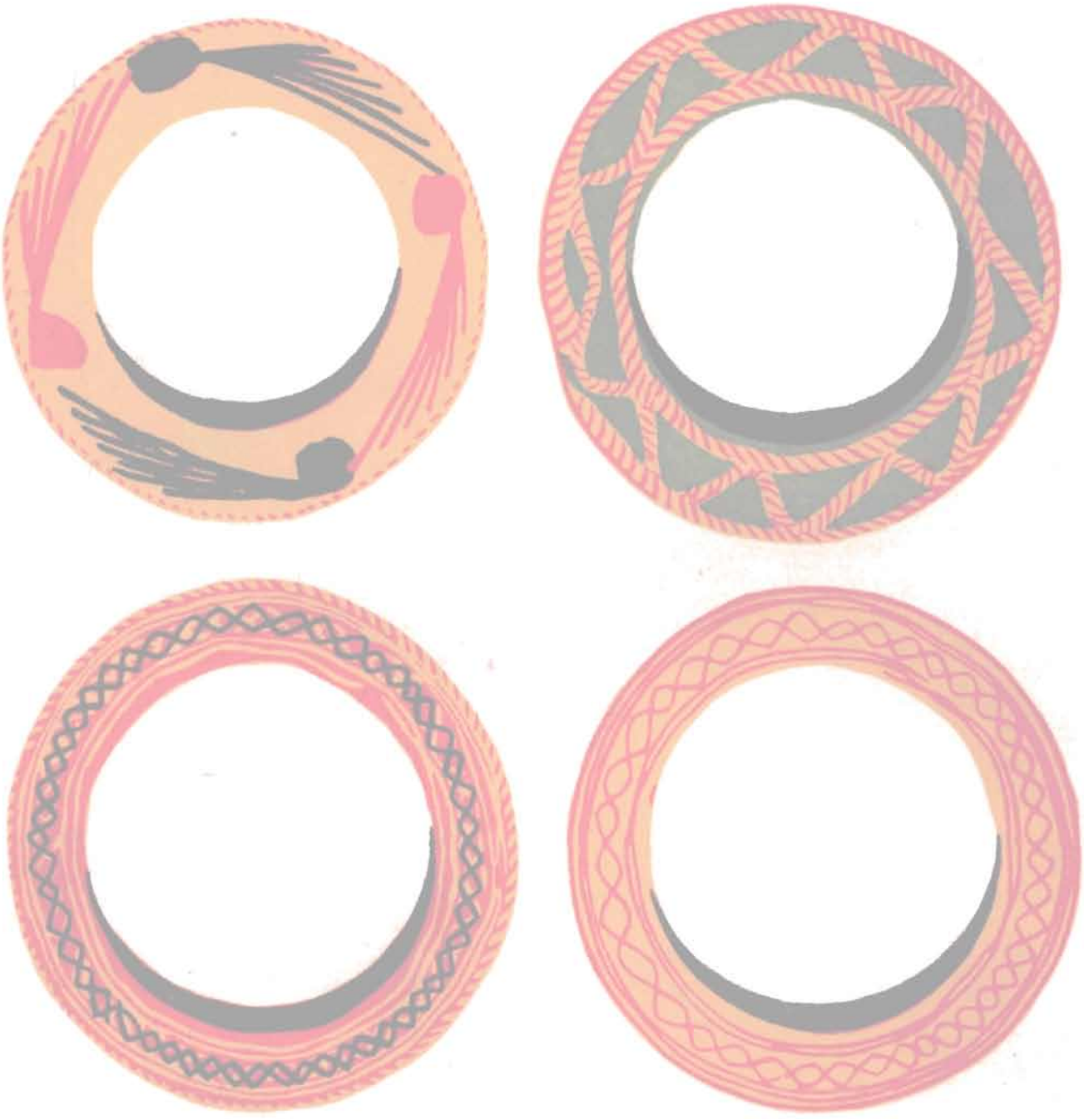
BALA (BRACELET)



Bala of two designs without any name—venison red, yellow and green colours soberly used—designs and colours traditional

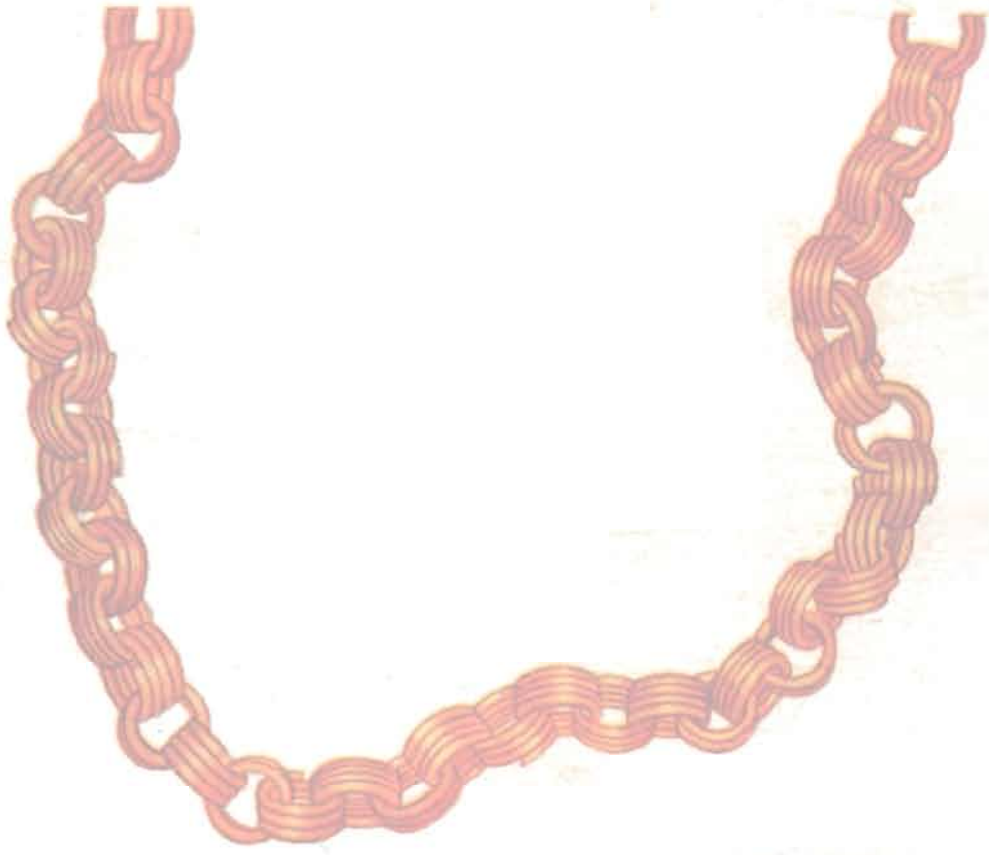


Ruli of different designs and colour-schemes—*Manchkanta* or fish-bone (top left and top right) with differences in colour-schemes, *Thapa Deoa* or drop design (bottom left) and *Dhenkua Jal* or double chain (bottom right)



Mayur-Pankh or peacock's feather (top left), Barphulia or four chains (top right), *Jal Bandha* or wired net (bottom left) and *Sikri Jal* or single chain (bottom right)

MALA (NECKCHAIN), A GARLAND THAT DOES NOT WITHER



Mala or neckchain of interlocked coils—the colour is of lac itself

III

ARTICLES PRODUCED

INTRODUCTION

Jhalda has long been renowned for its lac ornaments and this craft has bestowed some glory on the small town, which has the pride of the tradition of an age-old craft. The expert experienced craftsmen of the locality have turned out many products of lac to adorn feminine hands. They have not concentrated their time and energy on the production of any particular article; rather, they have always manufactured a wide range of lac products, which have distinctive features of their own. Each product has differed from another in form, size and design. The articles have not failed to reveal the rare skill and innate artistic sense of the local craftsmen.

For a considerably long period of time the local artisans have been associated with the exclusive production of lac ornaments, bangles and neckchains.

Russel and Hiralal (*Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces*) state that Lakhera artisans of Central Provinces were in the past engaged in the production of lac bangles, lac spangles, red cotton wool ball dipped in melted lac and lac toys. *Gaya District Gazetteer* (1906) mentions the artisans of Gaya district in Bihar being engaged in the production of bangles, bracelets, rings, beads and other trinkets from lac. The number of articles produced at Jhalda are, however, not so varied.

An attempt is made here to give a picture of the pattern of production of the articles from the perspective of time and the discussion will relate to (1) Articles produced in the past and (2) Articles produced at present, in order to pinpointing the attention of the reader on two historical landmarks, the Second World War and the Independence of India, which have produced revolutionary effects on this craft. The discussion is based on the data collected from the households, now practising the craft. It has not been possible to interview on the point any household, which has left the craft. Nor is any information available about those craftsmen, who have left the place.

ARTICLES OF THE PAST

The past has been divided into two distinct periods :

(1) The first lap of the period is marked by that preceding the outbreak of the Second World War (August, 1938).

(2) The second lap of the period marks the beginning of the Second World War and continues upto the Independence of India (September, 1938 to August, 1947).

During the first period lac products of four varieties were manufactured by the practising artisan households. The articles were *Ruli, Bala, Tarka,* and *Mala* or *Har*. The first three articles are bangles of different designs and the last one is the neckchain.

All the present five practising artisan households were engaged in the production of *Ruli,* three households produced *Bala* and an isolated one was associated with the production of *Tarka.* Lastly, three practising artisan households manufactured *Mala* or *Har.*

Ruli was exclusively produced in only one household. *Ruli* and *Bala* were manufactured by one household. *Ruli* and *Bala* along with *Tarka* were turned out in one household. One household produced *Ruli* in combination with *Har* or *Mala*. *Ruli, Bala* and *Har* were manufactured in the remaining one household.

No wind of change swept over the craft in the second period and the same articles were produced by the craftsmen as before. No craftsmen made any change in the production of the articles either. It is thus evident that the five practising artisan households have throughout produced *Ruli*. Three of these households were engaged in the manufacture of *Bala* and one isolated household was connected with the preparation of *Tarka*. But, in regard to the production of *Mala* or *Har* a change is noticeable. In the second period four households, in place of three, were connected with the manufacture of this article.

In the second phase of the past history *Ruli* and *Tarka* were produced in an isolated household. *Ruli* and *Mala* or *Har* were prepared in two families and *Ruli* along with *Bala* and *Tarka* was manufactured by a solitary household. *Ruli* was exclusively produced by one practising family.

ARTICLES OF THE PRESENT

Tarka has long ceased to be produced. None of the practising artisans is now engaged in the production of this article. On account of the decline in demand the artisans do not evince any interest in its production. Totally obsolete, the article is now a thing of the past and is of some interest only to an old curiosity-shop.

Ruli has been produced consistently by only four households and three families are now engaged in the production of *Bala*. Besides, four households also produce *Mala* or *Har*, against orders from the customers.

Mala or *Har* is exclusively produced now in only one household. *Ruli* along with *Har* or *Mala* is produced also in one household. Again, *Ruli* with *Bala* and *Har* or *Mala* is being prepared by only two families. Lastly, *Ruli* and *Bala* are produced by one household.

Of all the lac products, *Ruli* holds a very important place in the artisan's view. It is an article of wide use. Obviously, its production is also quite extensive, contrary to that of other articles of lac. This particular article has the greatest demand among the customers. As *Mala* or *Har* has recently become popular to its customers, it is being produced in a larger number of families than before. Its production has also registered an increase.

Description

(1) Ruli (A kind of bangle)

It is a kind of bangle prepared from *Kuni* or lac dust, a waste from lac-factories. The standard bangle is $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter with a circumference of $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

This product is used as an ornament by the Hindu married females belonging to some depressed castes and tribes, discussion on which will be made in the appropriate chapter. It is put by women on their wrists. It signifies the symbol of a woman's marital tie among certain communities like the Ghasis, the Mahatos, the Santals, the Mundas and the Oraons.

It is also a traditional custom among brides of some tribes to wear the bangles at the time of a marriage-ceremony, on which occasion this article is presented to the bride by her parents.

Before marriage, its use is optional among the small girls. Children are also found to wear this bangle. But, a widow cannot wear the bangle, as it is profane for a widow to put it on her wrist.

It is interesting that a recent tendency has developed among married females of some tribes and castes to avoid this article and the reason for this avoidance is said to be its thickness and crude shape. Its use has been supplanted by glass and synthetic bangles. The attitude of these girls is comparable to that among the Caste Hindu women, who are replacing conch shell bangles by cheaper wares, though it is customary for the latter to put on conch shell bangles after marriage as a symbol of married state.

(2) Bala (A kind of bracelet)

It is a kind of bracelet prepared from the rejected portions of the finished *Bala* and *Ruli*, recovered at the time of fixing the products on the customer's wrists. A discussion on how some cut and broken pieces are salvaged will be made in details in due course.

A standard *Bala* is $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter with a circumference of $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches, as in the case of *Ruli*.

This article is used by the Hindu females only as an ornament. There is no religious significance behind its use. It is used by the customers only for personal decoration and is demanded by those, who use *Rulis*.

To fit any bangle on a woman's hand is a trying job. To slip a pair of lac bangles into the feminine wrists is no easier task. It is delicate and at the same time technical. To sell a pair of lac bangles will not be enough and the deal is not complete, till they are fitted into the wrists of the customer to her entire satisfaction. The technique is described below :

When a customer wants to put bangles (*Ruli* or *Bala*) on her wrists, she goes to an artisan, who first measures the size of her wrists and then cuts a portion of the bangle to suit the wrist's size. He enlarges the mouth of the bangle with a *Janti* or nut-cutter. The spare portions, cut off from the bangles, are used afterwards as raw material for a *Bala*, to be produced in future and, therefore, the scrap does not go to the waste. The artisan holds the cut bangle over a *Chulli* or portable oven. When it is heated, he puts a *Pati* or small rectangular iron plate on the wrist of the customer and places the heated bangle on it. The artisan then presses the two broken heated ends of the bangle on another *Pati* and joins them together. The *Patis* are removed.

The technique of fixing a lac bangle on the wrist of a customer is unique and singularly different from that used elsewhere in fixing bangles, made of other materials, on women's hands.

(3). Mala or *Har* (A neckchain)

It is a neckchain, $1\frac{1}{2}$ ft. long, consisting of approximately 200 ring-shaped pieces, all interlocked. This article is prepared from *Button lac*, a finished product of lac factory.

The article is produced in the artisan households restrictedly and only on special requests from the customers. It is used mainly by the Rajput and Punjabi merchants as ornaments for necks. In some cases this article is purchased by customers from Jhalda and outside to garland the pictures of the Hindu pantheon.

Designs

The artisans of this production-centre use various traditional designs on the outer surface of the lac bangles. The designs are garnished with colour and coloured lac-threads or coirs, specially prepared for that purpose. With the help of colour-sticks and by deft fingering the bangles are designed. As no finer implement or tool or brush is used for colouring, the designs look somewhat crude. None the less, they are very simple.

The names and descriptions of the designs with reference to the products are given below in details :

A. Ruli

(1) MANCHKANTA

Designs of fish-bone are made on the outer surface of the *Ruli* with the help of colours and coloured threads or coirs, prepared from different pigments mixed with lac. A monochromatic thread is known as *Tar* and an interwined thread from two different monochromatic *Tars* is a *Machra*.

To graft this design on the *Barha*, the latter is coloured yellow with the help of yellow colour-sticks. On the yellow base colour interwined coloured threads or *Machra* are fixed concentrically on the outer surface of the bangles. The artisan does the work with his fingers. Then, some *Tar* or threads made from red colour are fixed concentrically on the yellow background of the surface of the bangle along the *Machra*. Two colours, yellow and red, are used as colour-schemes for the design, any of them being used as a base colour.

(2) DHENKUA-JAL

Designs like double chains are patterned on the outer surface of the bangle with the help of different colours and *threads* or *coir* made from these colours.

The *Barha* or the crude bangle is first coloured yellow by the yellow colour-stick and then on the coloured base interwined red and yellow threads or *Machra* are adjusted with finger-tips. Red *Tars* or threads of red colour are then fixed on the bangle. Red and yellow are the primary colours for the colour-scheme of this design. The setting of threads is done carefully so as to produce the effect of overlapping zigzag lines.

(3) MAYUR-PANKH

Designs like peacock's feather are drafted on the outer surface of this article by the dexterous use of red, yellow and black colours.

At the time of garnishing the design, the *Barha* or the crude bangle is coloured in red by a red colour-stick and on the single colour-base, yellow and black colours are painted decoratively by the artisan with the help of his nails.

In this particular design three colours *viz.*, red, yellow and black, are used to effect the colour-design. Neither *Machra* nor *Tar* is fixed on the surface of the bangle. There is a red circular patch on the bangle and black streaks are drawn from one side of the patch.

(4) SIKRI-JAL

Designs like single chain are drawn on the outer surface of the bangle by the use of different colours and coloured threads.

A *Barha* or unfinished bangle is painted yellow by the yellow colour-stick and then on the base colour *Machra* or interwined threads of yellow and red colours are adjusted. Lastly, red *Tars* or threads of red colour are fixed on the bangle in a zigzag way. These adjustments of colours and threads are made by the artisan himself with his fingers and nails.

Here, yellow and red are used as matching colours in the colour-scheme of this design.

(5) BARPHULIA

Designs of four chains are made on the surface of the article by using different colours and coloured threads.

A base of yellow colour is painted on the *Barha* or the crude round bangle with the yellow colour-stick. *Machra* is then adjusted on the painted outer surface of the bangle. Four *Tars* of red colour are fixed on the bangle in parallel zigzag lines. *Tars* and *Machra* are adjusted on the surface of the bangle in the same way as in other designs.

Red and yellow colours are the components of the colour-scheme in this design.

Except in the case of *Mayur-pankh* design, the colour-scheme remains the same for all other designs. It may be pointed out that in most cases red and yellow colours are extensively used. But, in *Mayur-pankh* design red, yellow and black colours are mainly required. In other designs though the colour-scheme is the same, there are differences of patterns and decorative motifs.

The decorative motifs of *Manchkata, Dhenkua-jal, Sikri-jal* and *Barphulia* designs are hard to define in the true sense of the terms. The decorative motifs of these designs resemble curved coir pattern. On the other hand, in *Mayur-pankh* design, the decorative motif is the combination of two standard motifs : (1) A *plait ornament or guilloche of two lines and* (2) Zigzag lines.

B. Bala

In this bangle two designs are made on its outer surface, but the designs have no local names and are known generally as *Bala* designs. These designs are made on the outer surface of the article with the help of a brass mould, on both sides of which the two designs are engraved.

The *Kothar* or the mould is coloured either in yellow or in red with the help of colour-sticks. One side of the metalled mould is placed over the coloured bangle and the particular design is impressed on it. For engraving the second design on the other bangles the same process is followed.

One design has a screw-like pattern and the other one has a floral pattern.

C. Mala or *Har*

Har or *Mala* has no design or decoration. Ring-like interlocked coils give a particular pattern to this neckchain. The surface of each ring is plain. The neckchain is generally made of lac rings of golden colour. Occasionally, a combination of ringlets in red or in green are used, so that the neckchain consists of three or four colour combinations. The practising artisans have reported that all their designs are traditional. All the artisans have learnt the technique and knowledge of the designs from their parents. In this household-craft traditional skill plays a very important part in grafting the designs. None has obtained any design from any outside source and no design or pattern has ever been supplied to the artisan either by any Design Centre or by any Co-operative Society, as there is no such institution in Jhalda. No artisan has either

improvised any new design. Inventive mind does not work in this craft. There has been no experiment with any design before. The artisans are contented with their knowledge of very few designs and do not break away from their tradition. They do not know that a new design goes a long way in creating demand also. The artisans are not in favour of deviation, mainly because their facilities are meagre, uncertain and often self-made. So, they want to follow the beaten track. They are afraid that by making any experiment with new designs they may involve themselves in the risk of losing their standing customers.

The artisans cannot narrate any myth or legend associated with the designs. May be that they do not know the myths, if there be any, or that there is no myth at all.

The diverse designs and decorative motifs used on the lac bangles do not bear any symbolic significance. All the designs are engraved by the artisans for decorative and ornamental purposes to satisfy the aesthetic demand of the customers, who are attracted more by colours and simple known motifs than by complex artistic patterns.

In the use of colour-scheme in the designs the artisans have a fascination for red and yellow colours. It is so because both these colours possess some symbolic meaning. It is believed by the Laheris of this locality that both these colours are held sacred for their protective influence against evil spirits.

Of the various designs applied by the artisans, the particular design *Manchkanta* is most popular to the customers So, the artisans have to use this design frequently. Other designs are less frequently used. Other designs are used by the artisans only at the special request of the customer. In large scale production of *Rulis* though *Manchkanta* design is mostly used, some of the articles have also other designs painted on them.

Bala being produced in limited numbers now, the designs are also used in a restricted way During its production the two designs are engraved on them more or less in equal frequency

CHAPTER IV

RAW MATERIALS, TOOLS AND EQUIPMENTS

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IV

RAW MATERIALS, TOOLS AND EQUIPMENTS

INTRODUCTION

The two most important requirements of any craft are the raw materials, the tools and equipments, used in the multifarious stages of production. The discussion, that will follow, is concerned with these two aspects of the craft.

RAW MATERIALS

Crude lac supplies the basic raw material used in the production of various lac ornaments. The crude or raw lac, is a resinous encrustation, formed around the bodies of the lac-insect by its own secretions and excretions, after it has been cultured on the barks of a host of trees, the most important of which are the *Kusum*, the *Palas* and the *Bair* or *Kul*. The life-cycle of the lac-insect and the production of lac may be discussed with the help of informations available from *District Gazetteer Of Manbhum (1911)*, extracts from which are given below :

"The production of the lac of commerce commences with the birth and swarming of the larvae, which occur twice or occasionally three times in the year, *viz.*, July, December and January. The larvae emerge from the dead bodies of the females and crawl away in quest of fresh feeding grounds covering the adjoining branches and twigs, till the latter look red and are literally alive. In this stage they have numerous enemies and the vast majority perish ; the more fortunate are wafted by the breeze or carried by the bees, birds or squirrels or by their own exertions to new situations. There the larvae become fixed, their legs, no longer required, fall off, and a resinous excretion begins to form round their bodies, and in course of time, by the aggregation of many, the twigs become more or less completely and thickly encrusted. Two and half months after swarming, the insects are produced, the females have no power to locomotion and remain in the cells, the males emerge winged and fly and flutter away impregnating the females. Shortly afterwards, the bodies of the females become greatly enlarged, assume a bright red colour and in due course develop viviparous larvae. The mother then dies, the body becomes the resting place of her numerous off springs (1,000 in number), which at their time escape by swarming and thus twice or sometimes thrice in the year the strange cycle of life is repeated."

* The lac-producing insect is commonly known as *Tachardia lacca*. The lac-producing insects are members of the order *Homoptera* and family *Lacci ferida*, having four lac-producing genera. The most important genus from economic point of view is *Laccifer* and the species *Laccifer lacca*. The lac-producing insect is really an unique creation of nature.

The crude lac or lac-crop consists of two varieties :—(1) *Kusmi* and (2) *Runguni*. The *Kusmi* variety again may be subdivided into two types : *Aghani* and *Jethna*, according to their time of harvest. The lac-crop of *Kusmi* variety is both cultivated and produced on *Kusum* trees. The *Aghani* type is propagated in the months of June-July and matured during January-February. The *Jethna* type is propagated

*P. S. Negi- "25 years of Entomological Research on Lac"- An article from "Souvenir Silver Jubilee 1931-1956" published by Indian Lac Cess Committee,

in the months of January-February and matured in June-July. On the other hand, the *Runguni* variety of lac-crop is of two types : *Katki* and *Baishakhi*, according to their time of harvest.

The *Katki* type is propagated in the months of October-November and matured in June-July. The *Baishakhi* variety is propagated in January-February and matured in May-June. Both the varieties are cultivated and propagated on *Palas* tree and produced on *Kul* or *Bair* tree.

The process, by which raw lac is propagated or cultivated, is very interesting. Few twigs of well-formed *Runguni* lac are cut off with a sickle from the *Palas* trees before the expected date of swarming and are fastened conveniently on the fresh branches of the *Kul* or *Bair* trees. But, in case of *Kusmi* variety the same process is repeated except that the cut portion is fastened either on a fresh *Kusum* tree or on fresh branches of the *Kusum* tree, which has nurtured the lac insects.

Crude or raw lac is thus a gift of nature. The people of Purulia district regard this object as an important agricultural produce and as one of their major sources of livelihood.

Main raw material

(1) Ruli

The main raw material used for turning out *Ruli* is *Kuni* or lac-dust. It is not a factory-made finished product. It is provided by the lac-refuse from the different lac-processing factories. It is lac-refuse in the sense that the waste material is not considered by any factory to be of any use and of any value. As factory-waste, *Kuni* or rejected lac-dust passes out of the drains of the factory. It may be of interest to know how this waste is obtained. After crude lac is sifted and crushed in the factories, it is washed with water in washing barrels. During the washing operation coloured water with small quantity of lac-dust passes out through the mouth of the barrels. To preserve as much *Kuni* or lac-dust as possible, the coloured water is filtered in the factory. But, still then some lac dust-particles flow with the rejected coloured water out of the factory. The washed water flows through the municipal drains of the town and finally falls in the river Shaldah. The *Kuni* or lac-dust passing with the coloured water is preserved at selected places in reservoirs, artificially formed near the junction of the municipal drains and the river Shaldah, by small barrages erected by the leaseholders. The reservoirs are not in the ownership of any factory.

The leaseholders collect *Kuni* or lac-dust from the reservoirs by filtering the coloured water, stored there, through a piece of fine linen. The filtered *Kuni* is stored either in a small bucket or in a small basket, whichever is handy. *Kuni*, thus obtained, is ready for use as the main raw material for *Ruli*.

Kuni is dark lac of very inferior quality. It is not hard.

(2) Bala

The main raw material for this article is supplied by small cut pieces or chunks, obtained from the already finished *Ruli* and *Bala* at the time of fitting the articles on the wrists of the customers. Some waste is also obtained from the bangle itself during its production. As the waste portions provide the raw material for *Bala*, they are collected and preserved by the artisans.

(3) Har* or *Mala

The main raw material used in the production of this article is *Button lac* or *Tikia* in local term. It is a factory-made finished product of lac. *Button lac* is a hard round disc-like material generally with a diameter of 5″ to 6″ and with a thickness of $\frac{1}{4}$″.

Tikia may be of various sizes and shapes with a brownish crimson colour. *Button lac* may be prepared from lac of any variety, but that from *Kusum* variety is always liked by the local artisans for its superior quality and bright colour.

Button lac or *Tikia* is manufactured in the two Lac Factories, running at Jhalda at the time of survey. Six large Factories were then closed. Crude lac, also known as *stick lac*, (due to the fact that it contains small sticks and twigs of the trees) is collected by the lac-producers from different lac-bearing trees at *Jurat* and *Oudh* forests near Jhalda or from the trees in the homesteads of the small lac-producers of the area. The lac-producers take lease of the lac-bearing trees in the forests. They cut off crude lac with a sickle and bring it to the local *hats* and markets for sale. *Beparis* or middlemen purchase crude lac there from the primary producers and supply it to the Factories. They work more or less as agents of the various Factories.

(1) Crude lac is first sifted and crushed by the crushing machines in the factory. Twigs and undesirable materials are completely removed from lac.

(2) Crushed lac is then washed in water mixed with soda-ash in washing barrels. The washed lac is called *seed lac*.

(3) The *seed lac* is once more cleaned in water-vats with a piece of cotton-linen. Thus, the particles of wood and other foreign substance are strained off from lac.

(4) The washed and cleaned lac is dried in the sun on the open cemented floor of the factory-courtyard.

(5) The dried material is then thoroughly sifted with the help of hand-sieves and winnowing fans.

(6) Fine grained lac is then put into a long cloth bag, which is twisted round and round before a fireplace, the heat of which causes *seed lac* to melt and pass out through the pores of the bag in drops. The molten lac-drops fall on square stone-slabs, moistened with water. The molten lac-drops become hard, when cold, and look like flat discs. The disc-shaped lac is the finished product, known as *Button lac* or *Tikia*.

Subsidiary raw materials

(1) Ruli

Subsidiary raw materials for *Ruli* are provided by the following :—

(1) *Gulabi* or Rosy colour, (2) *Sindur* or Vermilion, (3) *Peuri* or Orpiment, (4) Green colour and (5) *Button lac* of the *Kusmi* variety.

All these materials are necessary for colouring the bangle and also for decorating designs on the article.

Gulabi and *Sindur* provide colouring materials for red and *Peuri* supplies the yellow pigment, required for colouring and decorating the designs. While the former two materials are synthetic chemicals, the latter is a mineral pigment. Green colour is obtained from the ready-made synthetic chemicals, which constitute this pigment.

These colours are not applied as such, but are mixed with molten *Button lac* before use either in colouring or in designing the bangles. The artisans state that by such mixture the colours become bright and fast. The method of preparation of colour is discussed later.

(2) Bala

Subsidiary raw materials used to produce this article are the same, as required in the production of *Rulis*. *Rajan* or resin is the additional material, the artisans use on the crude bangle for *Bala*.

(3) Mala or *Har*

Subsidiary raw materials used in the production of this article are the same as in *Ruli* and *Bala*.

Generally no colour is used in producing this article. It is on special orders from the customers or for sale in fairs that the articles are coloured. *Mala* or *Har* is produced from the light golden yellow colour, obtained from different heat-treatment of lac. *Button lac* in excessive heat assumes bright golden colour. But, if it is slightly heated, it assumes bright silver colour, which changes to golden yellow with rising temperature. The artisans stop applying heat to the molten lac at a point, where the desired colour is obtained.

Source of the main and subsidiary raw materials

(1) Ruli

Kuni, the main raw material for this article, is collected from the reservoirs, already described. Coloured waste-water, containing fine grained lac-dust, flows out of the factories and are stored in the artificial pools. The pools and the drains are municipal properties, but the Municipality, instead of itself collecting the *Kuni*, leases out the pools annually to the highest bidder.

It is reported that four persons, one of whom is a practising artisan, jointly held the pool in 1964-1965 against the bidding of Rs. 700/-. The three other persons are neither Laheris nor non-practising artisans. They are local persons. The artisan has contributed Rs. 250/- to the payment of the call-money.

It may be noted here that the lessee artisan is the single source, from which other artisans collect *Kuni* for the *Rulis*. Factories also supply *Kuni*, they collect from the washed water during the washing operation. In the past, middlemen used to collect *Kuni* from the factories and sell it in the open market.

The subsidiary raw materials like *Gulabi*, *Sindur*, *Peuri* and green colour are purchased from the local market.

In regard to availability of raw materials for *Ruli* it may be mentioned here that the local artisans do not face any difficulty in procuring them, as these are always locally available.

(2) Bala

The main raw material for this article is obtained from the cut pieces or chunks, available from the already finished *Ruli* and *Bala*. The stock is built at home and the artisans do not go outside to get the raw material for this article nor do they purchase it from others.

The subsidiary raw materials for this product, as mentioned earlier, are available in the local market, where the craftsmen purchase them, when required.

Main raw materials for this product are abundant and the supply is smooth and regular.

(3) Mala or *Har*

Button lac or *Tikia,* the raw material for this article, is a factory-made finished product, as discussed before. The artisans visit the local Lac-Factories to purchase the raw material.

The sources of the subsidiary raw materials are the same as in *Rult* and *Bala*. The local artisans do not face any difficulty in getting the main raw materials for this product, as they are readily available in the Factories.

Terms and conditions on which raw materials are obtained

The artisans mostly purchase *Kuni* from the particular artisan, who personally collects and sells it. The transaction in this regard is made generally on payment in cash. But, on some occasions, the transaction is made on credit also. Credit-facility depends on the terms of relationship between the purchaser and the seller. Transactions on credit are more an exception than a rule.

Button lac or *Tikia* is also purchased on cash-payment. In no case the Factories sell this raw material to an artisan on credit.

The subsidiary raw materials for all the three articles are purchased from the local shops against payment in cash.

It has been observed that reciprocal aid is not in practice. No artisan gives any raw material, main or subsidiary, on loan to another, nor does one ask for it.

Price

The market-price of *Kuni,* current in October, 1964, is observed to have been Rs. 5/- per *maund.* The price of *Kuni* remains more or less fixed throughout the year and it does not fluctuate. The price of the main raw material for *Bala* cannot be calculated separately due to the fact that they are not purchased from any outside source, but are available at home.

Button lac or *Tikia* costs Rs. 4/- per *seer* at the market-rate prevailing in October, 1964.

The price-list of the various subsidiary raw materials used in the production of the different products is shown below :

Sindur—(Vermilion)	1	*Chhatak*	62	paise
Gulabi—(Rosy colour)	1	,,	56	,,
Peuri—(Orpiment)	1	,,	25	,,
Green colour	1	,,	75	,,
Rajan—(Resin)	1	,,	50	,,
Charcoal	1	*Seer*	19	,,

Charcoal is the most important subsidiary raw material used for heating and melting purposes in the production of all the articles. It is obtained from the local market by the artisans against cash-payment.

TOOLS AND EQUIPMENTS

Different stages of production are carried on with the help of tools and equipments of very simple nature. From very early days of their settlement the artisans have worked with the traditional tools and equipments and have never felt the necessity to introduce any new contrivance. All the tools and equipments are indigenous and locally available, except in one case to be described later.

In this craft no machine is used in any stage of production. The question of use of any mechanised tool and implement is, therefore, not relevant in this craft.

1. Tools

(i) Name and description

In the production of the three articles the following tools are handled by the artisans :

(a) RULI

(1) *Madu* or *Haturi*—An iron hammer (with two flat bases) fixed to a wooden handle is used for beating, breaking and striking. It is three

inches in breadth and 1½ feet in length. It weighs 2½ *seers*.

(2) *Katha*—A bamboo stick, upon which lac and different colours are pasted. The tool is used for colouring purposes. It is 10 inches in length.

(3) *Kata* or *Pati*—A thin iron plate, it is used mainly for polishing purposes and sometimes also for fitting a bangle into the wrists of a customer. It is 10 inches in length and two inches in breadth. In *Pati* the plate is flat, but a *Kata* has a triangular head. Both the tools have same function.

(4) *Chipua*—It is a pair of iron tongs, sides of which are six inches in length and two inches in width, used for gripping and holding the heated articles. It consists of two limbs to grip and lift the heated articles, which cannot be touched by fingers. Sometimes, it is used for holding an article or an object.

(5) *Machna*—A pair of small tongs made of iron, it is used for the same purpose as *Chipua*.

(6) *Jarat*—A long wooden rod used for melting and heating lac, it is generally 1½ feet in length.

(7) *Kund*—It is a long wooden rod, round in shape, the length of the upper bulged portion being 1½ feet and that of the lower portion one feet. In the upper portion the crude bangles are fixed, polished, sized and coloured. The lower portion is used as its handle. Eight bangles can be held on it at a time.

(8) *Hata*—It is a ladle of wood, used for melting lac and pressing it. It is one foot long.

(b) BALA

The artisans handle all the tools, stated above, also for producing a *Bala*. Besides, they use an additional tool.

(9) *Chhunch*—It is a metallic mould, on both sides of which two designs or patterns are engraved. This tool is made from brass and is used for impressing the chosen design on the surface of the *Bala*.

(c) MALA OR HAR

In the production of this article the following tools are used by the artisans :

(1) *Madu* or *Haturi* (2) *Kata* and (3) *Hata*. In addition, two more tools are used in the production of this article.

(10) *Sarkai*—A reed stick, about fourteen inches in length, it is used for holding and supporting the ring-shaped pieces of the neckchain.

(11) *Chhuri*—A flat thin iron knife, six inches in length, it is used for cutting the rings with four coils.

(ii) How, when and from where obtained

The tools required for the craft are traditionally in use. The artisans inherit the simple indigenous tools from their ancestors. Each artisan household independently possesses and owns the multifarious tools, required for the craft. No artisan obtains any tool on hire or on loan. Very rarely reciprocal aid of tools and implements among the different artisans takes place.

In case of extreme necessity the artisans purchase new tools from the local market against cash-payment.

The artisans use the tools as long as they are useful and reject them only when they are completely worn out. The tools are then replaced by new ones, purchased from the market.

A table is given below to show the period of durability or usefulness of the various tools :

TABLE 12

DURATION OF THE TOOLS

Madu or *Haturi*	50 years
Katha	3 to 4 months
Kata or *Pati*	2 years
Chipua	2 years
Machna	1 year
Jarat	10 years
Kund	10 years
Hata	5 years
Sarkai	2 to 4 months
Chhuri	2 years
Chhunch	25 years

From the above table it is clear that only *Katha* and *Sarkai* become useless rather earlier than the other tools. That is why, they are always purchased in bulk at a time.

Jhalda, the venue of the present study, is an important business and commercial centre, which stocks a wide range of tools, purchased and procured from the local market. It is remarkable that almost all the tools are manufactured by artisans engaged in their own traditional crafts.

Sarkai is manufactured by the Santals, living outside Jhalda but not very far away from this place.

A table is given below to indicate the manufacturer and the place of manufacture.

TABLE 13

SOURCE OF THE TOOLS

Tools	Manufacturer	Place
Madu or *Haturi*	Blacksmith	Jhalda
Katha	Carpenter	Ditto
Kata or *Pati*	Blacksmith	Ditto
Chipua	Ditto	Ditto
Machna	Ditto	Ditto
Jarat	Carpenter	Ditto
Kund	Ditto	Ditto
Hata	Ditto	Ditto
Chhuri	Blacksmith	Ditto
Chhunch	Mould-makers (caste not known)	Gaya
Sarkai	Santals	Tahadini and other neighbouring areas within the Police Station of Jhalda.

(iii) Price (Past and present)

The tools are not very costly, as they are simple in design and of common use. All the tools are handmade and are locally available.

The discussion about the price of the various tools will be made from the point of time, so that a comparative study may be made between the past market price and the current one.

The following table will help to bring into focus the past and current market prices of the various tools required for the craft.

TABLE 14

PRICE OF THE TOOLS

Tools	*Present price	†Past price
Haturi or *Madu*	Rs. 2.50 paise	Rs. 1.50 paise
Jarat	.50 ,,	.25 ,,
Hata	Rs. 2.00 ,,	Re. 1.00 ,,
Kund	Rs. 2.62 ,,	Rs. 1.25 ,,
Katha	.50 ,,	.25 ,,
Chipua	.75 ,,	.50 ,,
Machna	.25 ,,	.12 ,,
Sarkai	.25 ,,	.06 ,,
Chhuri	.37 ,,	.12 ,,
Pati or *Kata*	.75 ,,	.50 ,,
Chhunch	Rs. 3.00 ,,	Rs. 2.00 ,,

*Price in 1964

†Price before the Independence of India (1947)

From the table shown above it is clear that the price of each tool has registered an increase than before. After Independence, price of all the tools have shown an upward trend. Particularly in cases of *Madu* or *Haturi* and *Kund* the price-increase is quite considerable ; the rise is 66.7 per cent in *Haturi* and 109.6 per cent in *Kund.*

The depreciation-charges of the various tools may be obtained from the table given below :

TABLE 15

COST OF DEPRECIATION OF THE TOOLS

Tools	Life of the tools	Cost price	Annual incidental Cost on the tools *i. e.* cost for repairs, processing, if any	Total outlay	Salvage price	Estimated annual depreciation
Haturi or *Madu*	50 years	Rs. 2.50 paise	Nil	Rs. 2.50 paise	Nil	.05 paise
Katha	4 months	.50 ,,	,,	.50 ,,	,,	Rs. 1.50 ,,
Kata or *Pati*	2 years	.75 ,,	,,	.75 ,,	,,	.37 ,,
Chipua	2 ,,	.75 ,,	,,	.75 ,,	,,	.37 ,,
Machna	1 year	.25 ,,	,,	.25 ,,	,,	.25 ,,
Jarat	10 years	.50 ,,	,,	.50 ,,	,,	.05 ,,
Kund	10 ,,	Rs. 2.62 ,,	,,	Rs. 2.62 ,,	,,	.26 ,,
Hata	5 ,,	Rs. 2.00 ,,	,,	Rs. 2.00 ,,	,,	.40 ,,
Sarkai	4 months	.25 ,,	,,	.25 ,,	,,	*.06 ,,
Chhuri	2 years	.37 ,,	,,	.37 ,,	,,	.18 ,,
Chhunch	25 ,,	Rs. 3.00 ,,	,,	Rs. 3.00 ,,	,,	.12 ,,

*Monthly depreciation

2. Equipments

(i) Name and description

The artisans make use of the following equipments for the production of *Ruli*, *Bala* and *Mala*:

1. (a) *Bhussi*—It is an earthen pot, in which charcoal is burnt. It is a portable oven and is used by the artisans for heating the articles.

(b) *Unan*—Hearth in the kitchen, it is used for heating purposes.

2. *Phukan*—It is a blow-pipe, made from bamboo generally, but sometimes also made of iron.

Though used mainly for blowing the fire of the oven, it is also used for pressing and rolling the heated *Kuni*, if necessary. It is nine inches in length.

3. *Pira*—A low, flat wooden board with legs, it is used as working platform, on which the pressing and hammering operations are done. It is only three feet long and two feet wide.

(ii) How, when and from where obtained

The artisans generally inherit from their parents these plain equipments, which have been traditionally in use in the household. Each artisan household possesses and owns the equipments independently. No equipment is used on hire nor it is taken on loan from outside. The same equipments are not jointly owned by two households either. At the time of production of the articles no reciprocal aid is given or taken in the use of the equipments. The artisans replace the old ones, when worn out, and purchase new ones in their place.

A table is given below to indicate the durability of the various equipments :

TABLE 16

LIFE OF THE EQUIPMENTS

Equipments	Durability
Bhussi	2 years
Unan	5 ,,
Phukan	4 ,,
Pira	15 ,,

From the table one may observe that except in case of *Bhussi* all other equipments remain useful for a long period of time.

The equipments are always purchased against cash-payment from the local market. Not a single case has been observed where any equipment is purchased from a place outside this production-centre. The equipments required for the craft are manufactured by other local artisans engaged in their traditional crafts.

A table is given below to show the manufacturer and the place of manufacture of the equipments :

TABLE 17

SOURCE OF THE EQUIPMENTS

Equipments	Manufacturer	Place of manufacture
Bhussi	Potter	Jhalda
Unan	Laheri women	,,
(i) *Phukan* (wooden)	Carpenter	,,
(ii) *Phukan* (iron)	Blacksmith	,,
Pira	Carpenter	,,

(iii) Price (Past and present)

The limited equipments required for the craft do not cost much. They are country-made and are locally available.

One interesting feature is that inflation has hit even these common equipments. The comparative price below will drive home the point that the spiral of price-rise has not left even the ordinary articles of household use unaffected.

TABLE 18

PRICE OF THE EQUIPMENTS

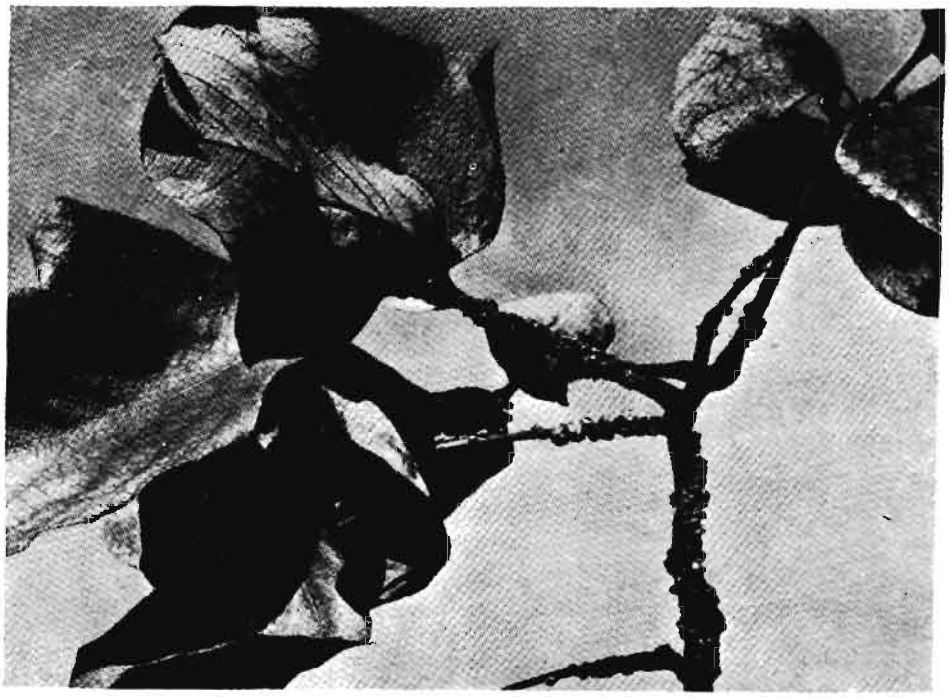
Equipments	*Present price	†Past price
Bhussi	.12 paise	.03 paise
Phukan (wooden)	.50 ,,	.25 ,,
Pira	Rs. 3.00 ,,	Re. 1.00 ,,

*Price in 1964

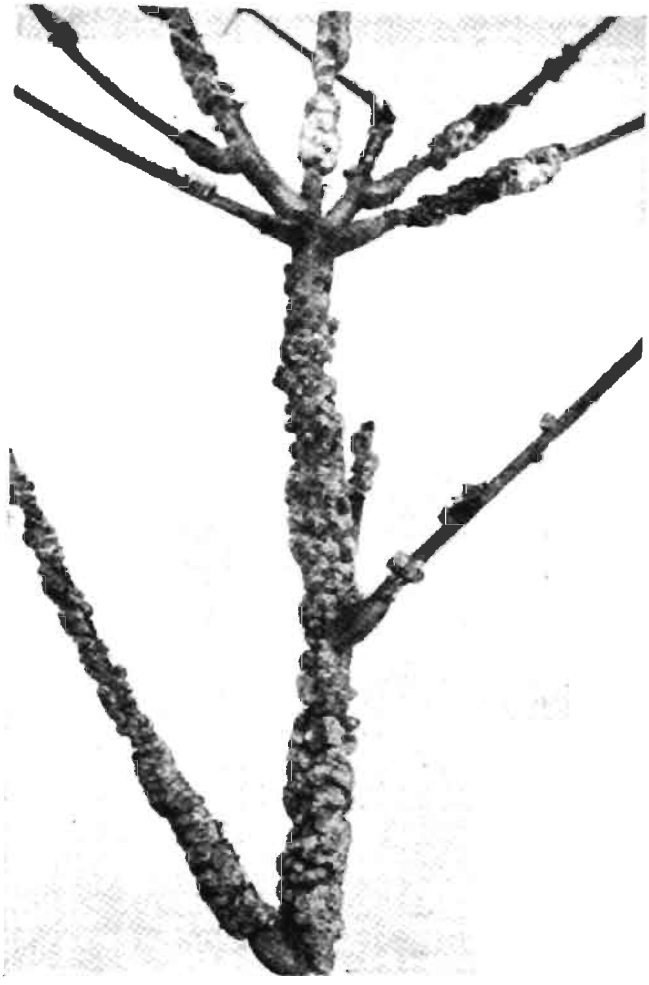
†Price before the Independence of India (1947)

The price-rise has worst confounded the artisans, already confused at the crisis of their craft. They are over-burdened with this price-load and it is a question of time when they will fail to stand the strain of this burden. The craft in this particular production-centre is now passing through the most critical period of its history.

"THE LITTLE, MEAGRE, SHRIVELLED, HOPPING" INSECTS IN THEIR SHELLS



Lac insects on the stem and branches of a *Palas (Butea frondosa)* tree in foliage



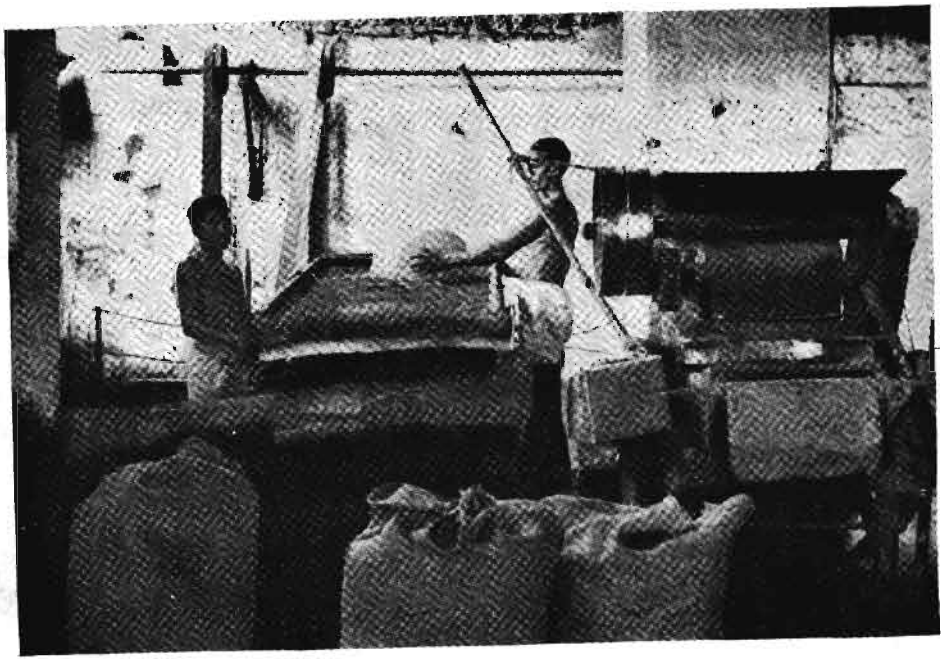
SEEMINGLY WITHERED, BUT RICH IN BOUNTY

Twigs of *Kusum (Baccauria sapida)* tree, thickly covered with encrustations of *Rungini* lac, ready for plucking and lopping

JUST COLLECTED FROM NATURE'S WORKSHOP

Stick lac, after collection from the trees, is a ready raw material for further processing in the lac-factories



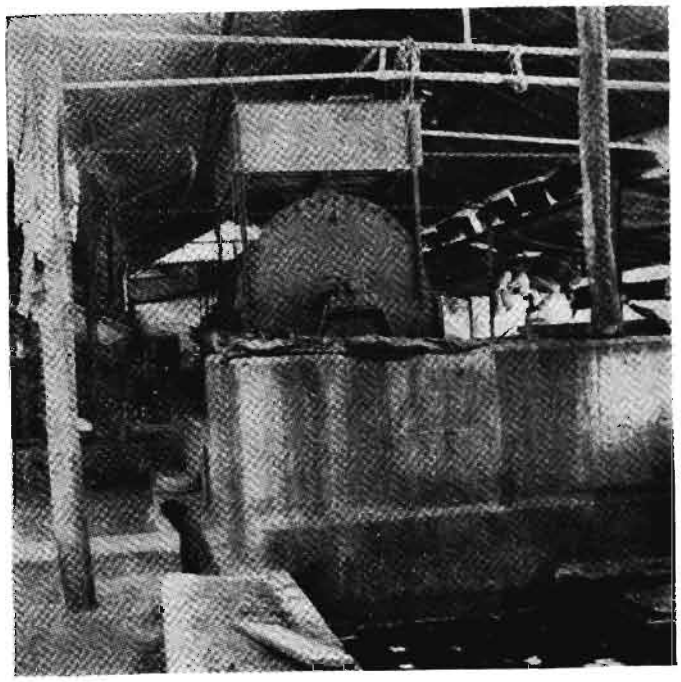


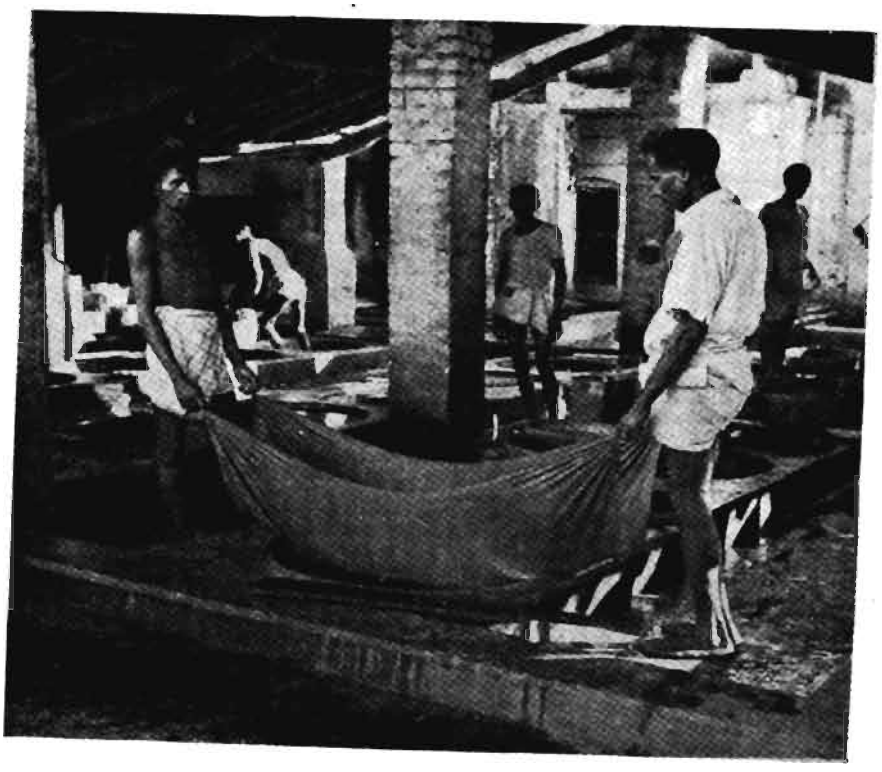
CRUSHING

Stick lac being ground to finer grains

WASHING

Crushed lac in bulk being washed in water and soda-ash in rotating washing barrels





CLEANING

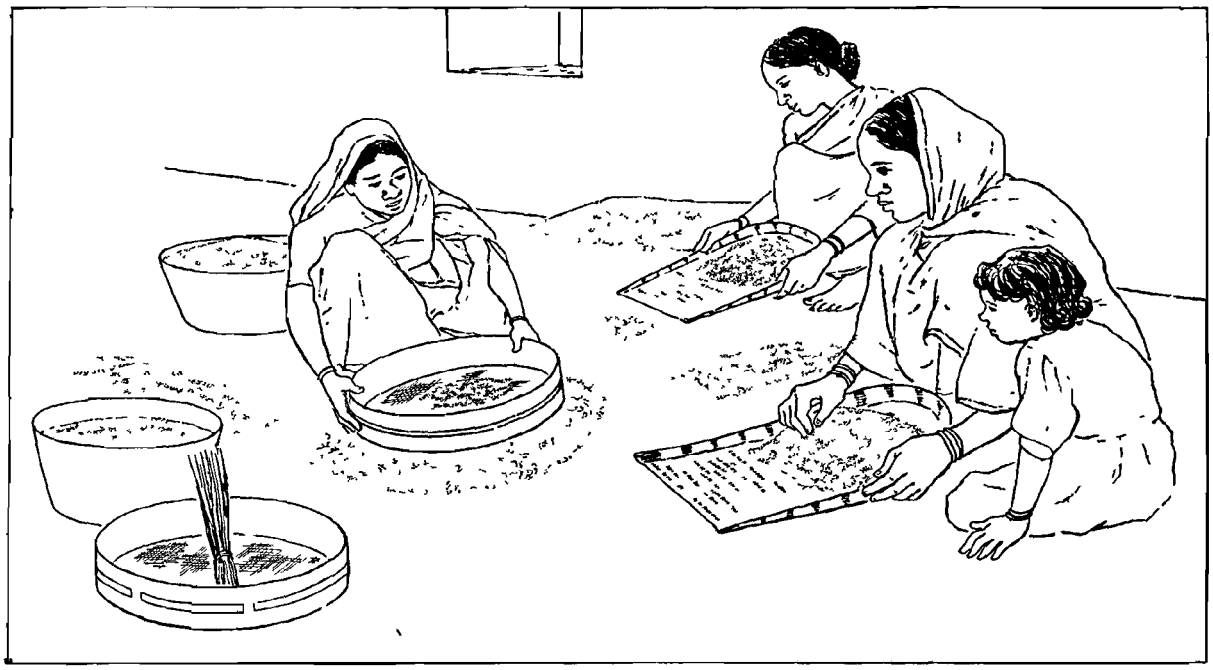
Washed lac being cleaned further in water-vats

DRYING

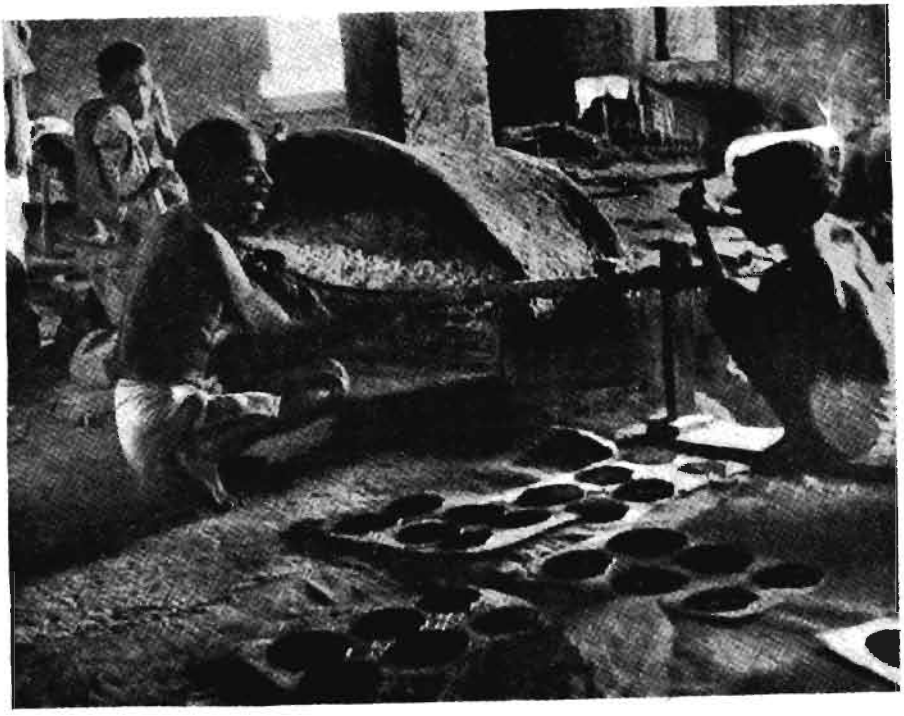


Fine grains of lac, known as *seed lac*, being spread for drying in the open courtyard

SIFTING



Dried *seed lac* being sifted in hand-sieves and winnowing fans by labourers in lac factories



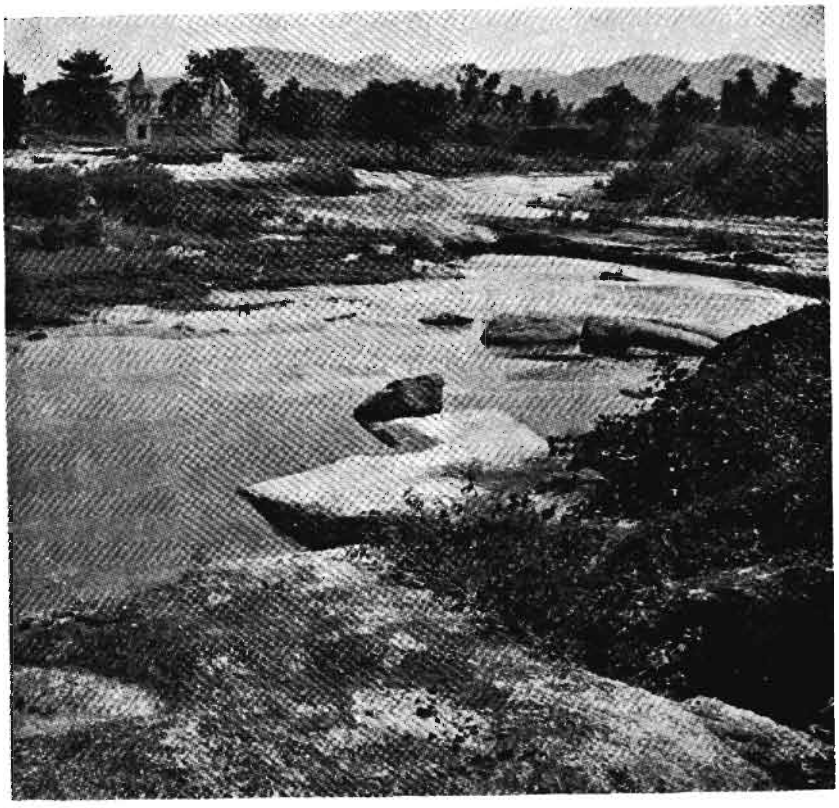
MELTING

Seed lac, stuffed
in long cloth-bags,
being melted by
twisting the bag
round before
a fire-place—
molten lac-drops,
passing through
the pores of the
cloth, fall on square
stone-slabs,
moistened with
water

**PRODUCT OF THE FACTORY,
A RAW MATERIAL FOR
THE ARTISANS**

Flat, disc-shaped, hard but
brittle lac in the finished
stage, known as *Tikia* or
Button lac





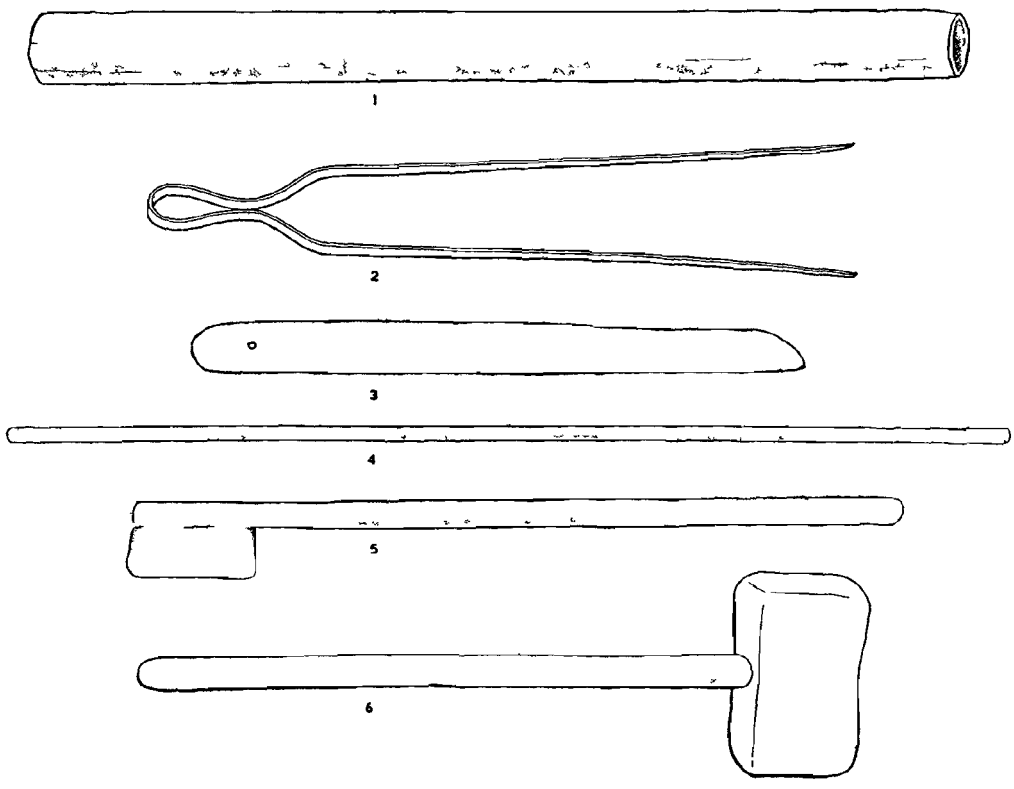
EVEN A RIVER YIELDS RAW MATERIALS, IF PROPERLY CARED FOR

Waste water containing fine lac-dusts, after crushed *stick lac* is washed in the factories, flows through the municipal drains and falls in the river Shaldah—an artificial reservoir or pool is created by barriers of stone boulders and small earthen barrages to preserve the coloured waste water of lac

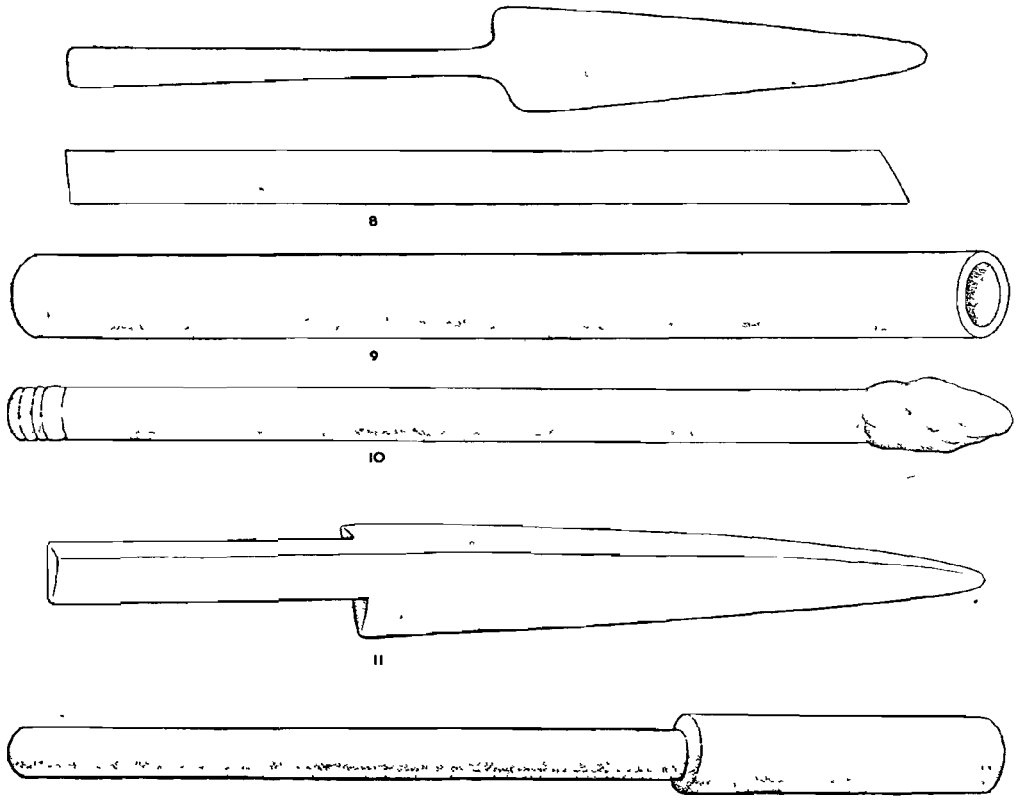
RESCUED FROM THE WASTE



Waste coloured water of the reservoir in the river *Shaldah* being filtered through a fine linen—the filtrate dust of lac, known as *Kuni*, provides raw material for *Ruli* and *Bala*

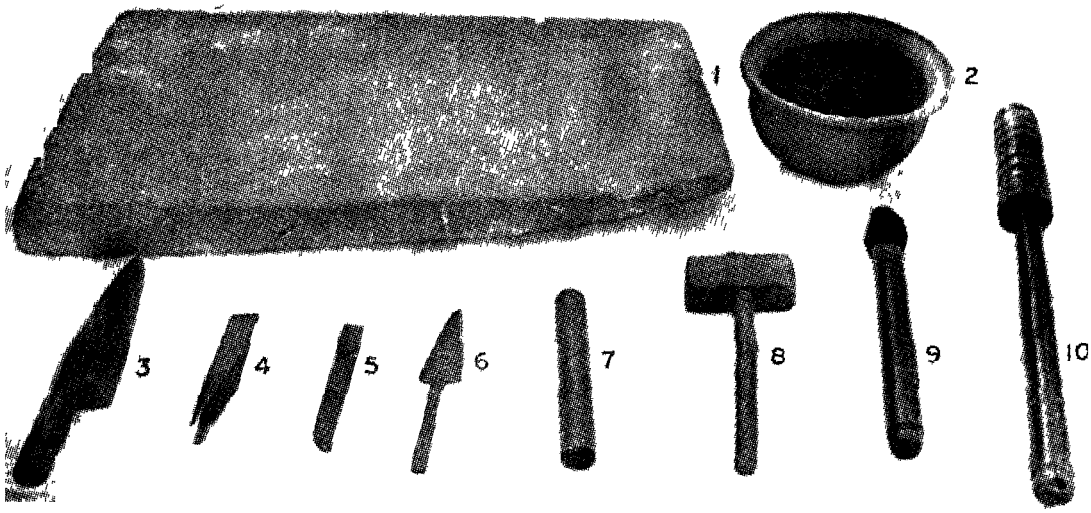


1. *Thonga* — A cylindrical hollow tube of bamboo, used as a container of colour-sticks, coloured threads and other nick-nacks.
2. *Machna* — A pair of small iron tongs, used for picking up heated articles.
3. *Chhuri* — A flat, thin iron knife, used for cutting the coils in the production of *Mala*.
4. *Sarkai* — A reed-stick, 12 inches long, used for winding heated lac-threads into spring-like coils.
5. *Katha* — A bamboo stick, 10 inches long—colour-cake, fixed to one end, is used for colouring bangles.
6. *Madu* or *Haturi*— An iron hammer with a wooden handle, 1½ feet long, and weighing 2½ *seers*, used in beating the lump of heated lac and in mixing lac with colour-pigments.



7. *Kata* — A flat iron plate, 10 inches long with a triangular head, used for polishing a bangle.
8. *Pati* — A flat iron plate, 10 inches long, used for polishing and also for fitting a bangle into the wrist of a woman.
9. *Phukan* — A blow-pipe made of bamboo and sometimes of iron, used for blowing the fire of the oven, and also for pressing and rolling lump of heated lac.
10. *Jarat* — A long wooden rod, 1½ feet long, used for heating a lump of lac, fixed to it.
11. *Hata* — Wooden ladle, one feet long, used for making rope of lac and also for stirring lac-dusts during melting.
12. *Kund* — A long, round wooden rod, 2½ feet long with a piston-shaped head.

TOOLS AND EQUIPMENTS USED IN MAKING *RULI* AND *BALA*



1. *Pira* (wooden board) 2. *Bhussi* (charcoal-oven) 3. *Hata* 4. *Chipua* (Tongs) 5. *Pati* 6. *Kata* 7. *Phukan* 8. *Haturi* or *Madu* 9. *Jarat* 10. *Kund*

TOOLS AND EQUIPMENTS USED IN PREPARING *MALA*



1. *Pira* 2. *Bhussi* 3 & 4. *Sarkai* 5. *Pati* 6. *Chhuri*

CHAPTER V

PROCESSES OF PRODUCTION

Physical structure of workshop and environment 63
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Operations of tools and processing of raw materials 64
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V

PROCESSES OF PRODUCTION

PHYSICAL STRUCTURE OF WORKSHOP AND ENVIRONMENT

The place of work of the artisans is located in their residence. No separate place of work is used by any artisan here. The workshop of the local artisans is, therefore, a dwelling-*cum*-workshop.

The artisans practise the operations of the craft either in a covered verandah or inside the outer room of the dwelling, facing the open road. At daytime, the artisans work in these places, but at night the same places are used for sleeping purposes.

It has already been stated that each artisan functions at his own workshop and that nobody works at other's place of work, either on contract or on hired labour basis. The artisans in some cases work independently in the workshops and in some cases they take the help of the family-members.

Whatever may be the place of work, the various operations are conducted by the artisans in an area, seven feet long and six feet wide. The artisans are not required to pay any rent for their workshops, as they own the houses themselves.

The entire house, no matter if the workshop is located in a covered verandah or inside the outer room, is a *kutcha* structure. The projected verandah of the house is covered by cylindrical pantiles and surrounded by lime-brick-plastered mud walls with a door, locally called *Jhap*, made of tin. An outer room is also covered by cylindrically pantiled roof and surrounded by lime-brick-plastered mud walls with a wooden door. In both the rooms the floor is made of mud. The artisan, seated on a gunny bag spread on the mud floor of the verandah or of the outer room, works at a stretch for hours together.

All the workshops are situated by the side of the open road. The idea is that they may make the most of the natural light during the day and have not to burn the lamp. The artisans squat on the floor facing the direction, from which full advantage of natural light may be obtained. All the workshops, located in the covered verandahs, are more or less ventilated, but the workshops in the outer room are always stuffy.

The head of the household supervises the activities of the craft in a multi-membered artisan household. But, in a household consisting of one member, the solitary artisan is the supervisor of his own workshop.

HOURS OF WORK

The artisans practise the craft from dawn to dusk, so that during the period the facility of natural light is obtained, the local artisans like to utilise the light of the day. An artisan can manufacture six to eight finished bangles, working for the whole day and thus can earn an income ranging from Re. 1/- to Rs. 1.12 p. But, the craft does not engage whole-time attention

of the artisans ; they know that the days are gone when they could earn what they wished. Now, the artisans distribute their daily hours between this craft and other occupations, discussion on which will be made later. The artisans are not overworked, for seldom do they work for the whole day.

A table below will show the hours of work of the practising artisans :

TABLE 19

PERIOD OF WORK

No. of workers engaged in the craft

Caste	Below 1 hour	1—2 hours	2—3 hours	3—4 hours	4—5 hours	5—6 hours	6—7 hours	7—8 hours	8—9 hours	9—10 hours
Laheri	Nil	3	Nil	1	Nil	1	Nil	2	Nil	Nil

The majority of the local artisans work below five hours a day. It is a real pointer to fortune's ebb-tide. Such a short period of working hours may be explained by the fact that uncertain market of the products does not encourage the artisans to spare much time for the craft at the risk of the articles being dumped for an indefinite period.

It is reported by the artisans that average working hour in the past was much higher than that at present. Because of the volume of production and prompt utilisation of the articles, most of the artisans then used to work for nine to ten hours a day and sometimes more. They stopped only when the twilight brought in sombre darkness. The artisans now pine for the past days.

If the working hours of the artisans are viewed sexwise, it is found that two female workers and one male worker are engaged in the craft for only two hours daily. A particular female artisan works for only three hours and another male artisan works for only six hours. Two other workers, including one male and one female, daily work for eight hours, which are incidentally the maximum period of work for any artisan here.

STAGES OF PRODUCTION

The stages of production vary from article to article. Though each finished product has specific stages of production of its own, the techniques of production are uniform. In no case a variation is found in this regard. The artisans follow the common technique for manufacturing a specific article.

The techniques of production used for the articles are age-old and the local artisans follow the traditional techniques. The artisans have acquired the knowledge of the techniques from their parents. They stick tenaciously to the techniques of their forebears.

OPERATIONS OF TOOLS AND PROCESSING OF RAW MATERIALS

The discussion here will be based on systematic description of the manufacturing processes stage by stage, with reference to the articles produced in an appropriate sequence.

Ruli

It has been described how and from where the main raw material for this specific article is procured by the artisans. Now, the techniques of production to process the raw material into finished products are described.

1. Washing of Kuni, the main raw material, in the river Shaldah

After *Kuni*, the main raw material, is procured, the artisans wash it first in the river Shaldah to remove the unwanted foreign substances like earth, sand, sticks etc., from it. The thorough wash makes *Kuni* more or less a clean material for use. For this operation the artisans use a small piece of cloth, on which *Kuni* is kept during washing in the river. The artisans do this work manually and no tool or implement is required. A piece of cloth from torn dresses serves the purpose of a sieve.

2. Drying

After the washing operation, the artisan spreads out the washed *Kuni* on the floor of his

room for drying in the air. The material is required to be dry before further use, sun being the natural desiccator.

Kuni is dried after an exposure in the air for 4-5 hours. The artisan stirs the *Kuni* with a stick from time to time.

3. *Melting on an oven*

The dried material is then ready for melting. In some cases, some quantity of white clay is mixed with *Kuni* before melting, so that the bangles produced from this material become somewhat soft and are easy for use by the customers. It has been so stated by some artisans. White clay is used (as pointed out by some artisans, who do not use it) as an adulterant to increase the volume of raw material. In fact, customers prefer pure *Kuni* to the mixed one and the artisans do not disclose to the customers that white clay has been used. It is very difficult to ascertain if the artisans, who do not admit to have used white clay, are truthful or not. White clay is mixed with *Kuni* in the proportion of 1:4 and at times in the proportion of 1:8. But, this trade-secret is rarely disclosed. *Kuni* is melted over an *Unan* or hearth, which is used for cooking purposes also. Hearth-fire is produced by burning charcoal. An earthen pot containing one *seer* of *Kuni* is placed on it. The quantity of *Kuni* may vary. The molten material is stirred by a *Hata* or wooden ladle. It takes 10 minutes to melt ½ *seer* of *Kuni*.

4. *Preparing Gaba or a lump of molten lac-dusts*

The molten material is then transformed into a viscous lump, known as *Gaba*. The lump is prepared manually by the artisans by treatment of heat.

5. *Grinding of Gaba*

After *Gaba* or the dough-like molten lac is prepared, it is first hammered on a stone slab, fixed to the ground, with a *Madu* (wooden hammer) and then rolled over by a *Phukan* on a *Pira* (wooden board). The operation is done very quickly, before the material becomes cold and hard.

6. *Making of Barha, the round-shaped crude bangle*

The pressed material, so flattened, is fixed to the *Jarat*, a long wooden stick. The *Jarat* is then heated over *Bhussi* or an oven, till a very soft substance is obtained. With the help of a *Hata* a long rope of lac is drawn from the soft *Gaba* by rolling. From this rope, *Barhas* or crude round bangles are obtained by pressing on it the edge of the *Hata* or ladle and by joining the two ends of the cut pieces of suitable length.

During the operation the artisan is alert and quick to act, so that the material retains the desired viscosity.

7. *Inserting Barha into the Kund*

The crude round bangles or *Barhas* are heated on the oven with the help of a *Katha*, a wooden stick. They are then inserted on the *Kund* by hands. A *Kund* supports eight *Barhas* at a time.

8. *Shaping*-cum-*polishing*

The inserted *Barhas* are polished and shaped, at first with a piece of cloth and afterwards with a *Pati* or *Kata*, a flat iron plate, and a *Chipua*. This operation is done over the *Bhussi* or lighted oven, so that the *Barha* remains soft all the time and enables the artisan to undertake the manual manipulations.

By this operation the proper shape and form of crude *Ruli* is obtained.

9. *Colouring*-cum-*designing*

The bangles are then coloured and designed with the help of colour-cakes fixed to a stick and with the coloured threads obtained from them. Before the coloured threads are set on the outer surface of the bangles by the artisans, the bangles with the base colour are polished with a *Pati*.

The initial colouring of the bangles with base colour are done by the coloured adhesives fixed to the sticks. Generally, red, green and yellow pigments are used on the bangles for this purpose.

Different fast and bright pigments, in the form of adhesives, are obtained in the following way :

(a) *Red colour*—Either *Gulabi* (Rosy) colour or *Sindur* (Vermilion) is mixed with *Button lac* of the *Kusmi* variety.

(b) *Yellow colour—Peuri* or lemon yellow colour is mixed with heated *Button lac* of the *Kusmi* variety.

(c) *Green colour*—Green pigment is mixed with *Button lac* of the *Kusmi* variety.

Sometimes, black colour, used on the surface of the bangles, is obtained by burning lac itself or from soots of the lantern.

Red colour is prepared in the following manner : First, *Button lac* of the *Kusmi* variety, affixed to a *Katha*, is melted on the oven. Melting over, the molten lac is filtered through a piece of cloth and filtered lac is again affixed to the *Katha* and melted for the second time. With the filtered molten lac some *Peuri* and resin are mixed. The mixture is pressed with the help of a *Kata* or *Pati* and hammered over a stone-slab, fixed to the ground. This operation continues, till bright colour in the form of a paste is obtained. The colour will be fast and bright, if the ingredients are well mixed. At the time of colouring, the paste of this adhesive colour is heated and affixed to the *Katha*. The other colours are likewise prepared.

For the preparation of the adhesive colours ingredients are necessary in the following proportion : One *seer* of lac, one *chhatak* of *Peuri* or *Sindur* or *Gulabi* or green colour and one *poa* of resin. The final colouring-*cum*-designing of the bangles is done with the help of single coloured threads (*Tar*) or multicoloured interwined threads (*Machra*).

The coloured threads are prepared in the following way : The male artisan sits in a half-bent position near the oven and hold the colour-sticks on it. The female worker also does the same work in her convenient position. When the colour-stick containing the lump of colour-mixture is heated and gets sticky, thin coloured threads are pulled out from the colour-stick with the help of the nails. The thread is wound round the knees. The wound bundle of coloured threads are kept in *Thongas*.

The coloured thread, prepared from a colour stick, is known as *Tar* and the thread, obtained by interwining two coloured threads, is known as *Machra*. Red and yellow colours are most frequently used for the *Machra*. At the time of fixing or setting the coloured threads on the bangles, the threads are heated once on the oven. Without heating, it is not possible to set the threads firmly on the bangles. It has already been stated that the setting operation or designing is done by the artisans with their fingers.

10. Final polishing with a piece of cloth

After the colouring-*cum*-designing operation, the bangles are finally polished on the *Kund* by rubbing a piece of cloth on them. Sometimes, the *Kund* is rotated and the bangles are rubbed on a lightly stretched piece of cloth.

11. Taking out the bangle from the Kund

The bangles are finally taken out from the *Kund* with the help of a knife and if necessary, again polished on a piece of cloth.

Ruli, the most important product of the craft, is thus manufactured from its main raw material, *Kuni*.

Bala

It has been explained before how and from where the main raw material for this particular product is procured by the artisans. The techniques of production of the article are described below :

1. Melting of cut pieces or chunks of rejected portions of the bangles

At first, the chunks or cut pieces, are melted on the oven of the household, used for cooking purposes. The fuel for the oven is provided by charcoal. For melting, the cut pieces are kept in an earthen pot, placed on the oven. The molten mass is obtained in 10-15 minutes. A *Hata* or wooden ladle is the only implement required in this process to stir the molten material.

2. Preparing Kothor, the round bangle in its crude form

The molten mass is then fixed to the *Jarat* and is heated over a *Bhussi* or hearth. The *Hata* is then pressed on the heated material and manually rolled to produce an elongated mass, from which *Kothor* or crude round bangles are shaped out. During this operation to produce *Kothor*, the whole work is done in a hurry, so that the elongated mass of heated lac remains soft all the time for the manual operations.

3. Shaping-cum-polishing

The *Kothor* is then shaped and polished with the help of a *Pati*, a tin plate, after placing the crude bangles one after another on the closed fist of the artisan. The artisan handles a small

number of bangles at a time and does not always use a *Kund* for this operation. To differentiate a *Kothor* from a *Barha*, the artisan paints drops of a molten mixture of colours and resins on the outer surface of the *Kothor*. After polishing and shaping the *Kothors*, the crude *Balas* are obtained in the same way as *Rulis*.

4. Colouring

The crude bangles, so produced from the *Kothors*, are coated with a thick layer of colour, either red, yellow or green, with the help of colour-sticks. In some cases, patches of green and red colours are painted on the yellow base colour. No coloured thread is used for designing.

5. Designing

After the coloured coating is painted on the bangles, a *Chhunch* or brass mould (on the sides of which two separate designs or patterns are engraved) is pressed over the surface of the coloured bangle and the specific design or pattern is impressed on it. In the same way, the other design or pattern may be impressed on the bangle with this metallic mould. A *Bala* is thus produced.

Mala

As stated earlier, *Button lac* is the main raw material for this particular product. It has also been stated before how and from where it is procured by the artisan. The following discussion will give an idea about the stages of its production:

1. Melting

Button lac of the *Kusmi* variety is melted over a *Bhussi* or oven in the same way as in the case of *Ruli* and *Bala*.

2. Colouring

When lac is thoroughly melted, the molten mass is fixed to a *Katha* and then coloured, if necessary, with the help of the colour-sticks of red or green pigment. In some cases artificial colours are not at all used, as because with rising temperature different shades of golden colour are obtained. But, in low temperature lac assumes a silvern hue. The artisans cannot give any idea about the temperature or about the time required for producing the desired colour in lac. Their trained eyes and traditional skill enable them to obtain the desired colour without using either a wrist-watch or a thermometer. The customers like both the artificially coloured and the naturally coloured finished products, prepared from this material.

3. Rolling over the Sarkai

Lac, whether coloured or not, is fixed firmly on the *Katha*, held between the feet of the artisan. From the molten mass of lac, ring-shaped pieces are rolled over the *Sarkai* or a reed. During this operation the *Sarkai* is rotated between the palms of the artisan.

4. Cutting the ringlets

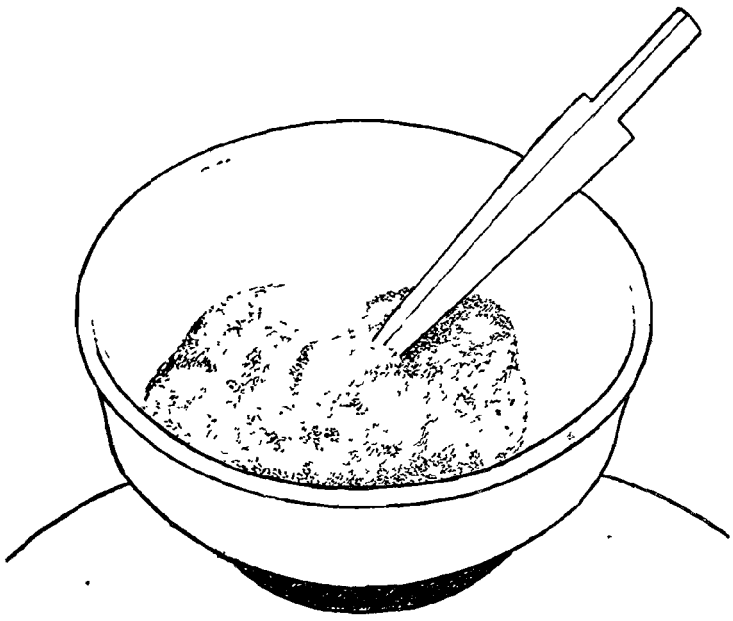
The ring-shaped spring-like coir, wound round the reed, is taken out of the *Sarkai* and small rings with four coils are pieced out by a small knife. This process is conducted, while lac remains hot and soft.

5. Tying of rings

Finally, the artisan strings the small rings into a garland with fingers and makes a *Mala* or neckchain.

One may be interested to know the sitting position, in which the artisan carries on the different processes. Most of the time the artisan takes the most convenient position, suited to his work. He keeps all the gadgets handy, before he starts his work. He squats on a gunny bag, spread over the floor of the workshop, with his back leaned against the wall. An oven is placed in front and on one side he keeps the wooden box, containing all the tools and implements, within easy reach of his arms. A cylindrical hollow bamboo-tube, containing the colour-sticks, coloured threads, subsidiary raw materials and a blow-pipe, is arranged methodically at the time of his work. The artisan does not budge from his place to get this implement or that, required at different stages, except, of course, during melting operation done inside the kitchen.

MELTING *KUNI* (LAC DUSTS)



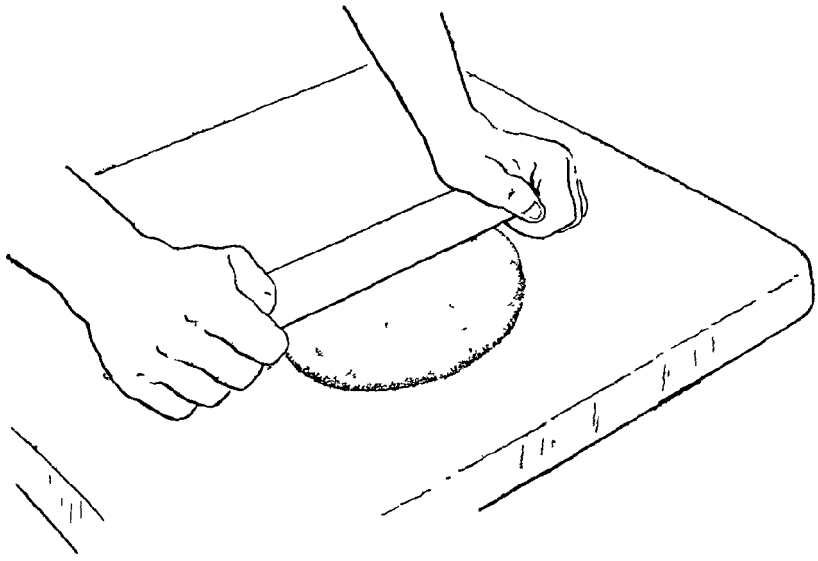
Thoroughly washed *Kuni*, dried in air, is heated in an earthen pot on an *Unan* (oven) and stirred by a *Hata* (wooden ladle) to obtain *Gaba* (viscous mass of heated lac)

HAMMERING *GABA*



Gaba, in the form of a doughy substance, being hammered by a *Madu* (iron hammer) on a stone-slab, fixed to the ground—operation is very fast, lest the *Gaba* should get hard

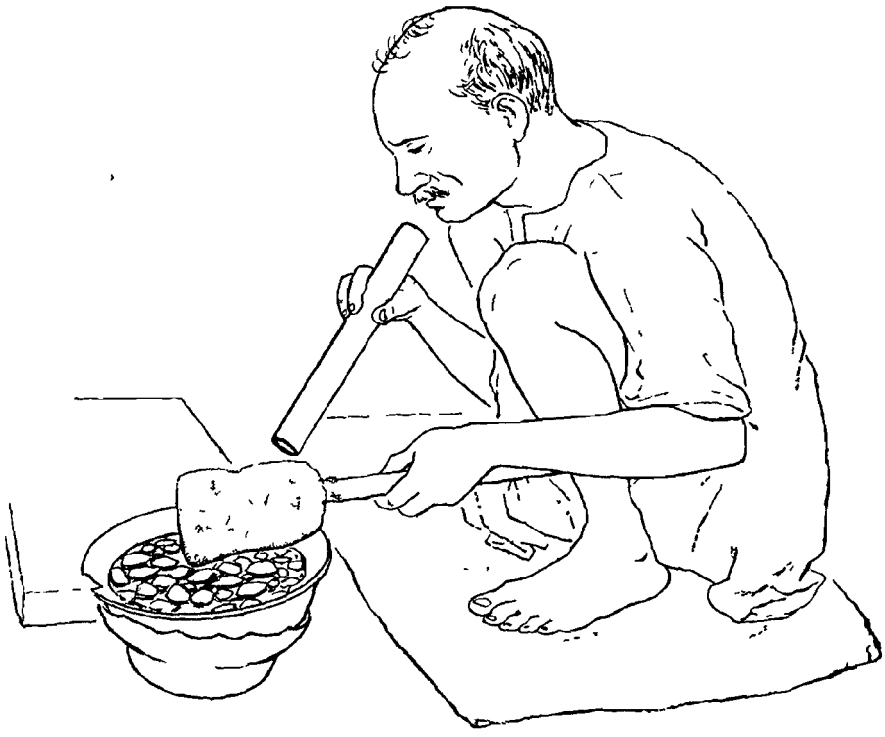
ROLLING *GABA*



Hammered *Gaba* being kneaded and rolled over by a *Phukan* (blow-pipe) on a *Pira* (wooden board) and flattened into the shape of a pan-cake

FIXING *GABA* TO A *JARAT*

Flattened *Gaba*, placed on one end of a *Jarat* (a long wooden stick), being heated over a *Bhussi* (charcoal oven)—*Phukan* serves as the blow-pipe



HEATING *GABA* FIXED TO THE *JARAT*



Gaba being heated further to obtain a very soft substance, suitable for subsequent operations



PREPARATION OF LAC-ROPE

Soft *Gaba* being rolled skilfully on a *Pira* with a *Hata* and a long rope of lac being drawn out

MAKING *BARHA* (CRUDE BANGLE)

Pieces of suitable length, obtained by cutting the rope of lac with the edge of *Hata*, being shaped into *Barha* (crude bangle) with the two ends joined together

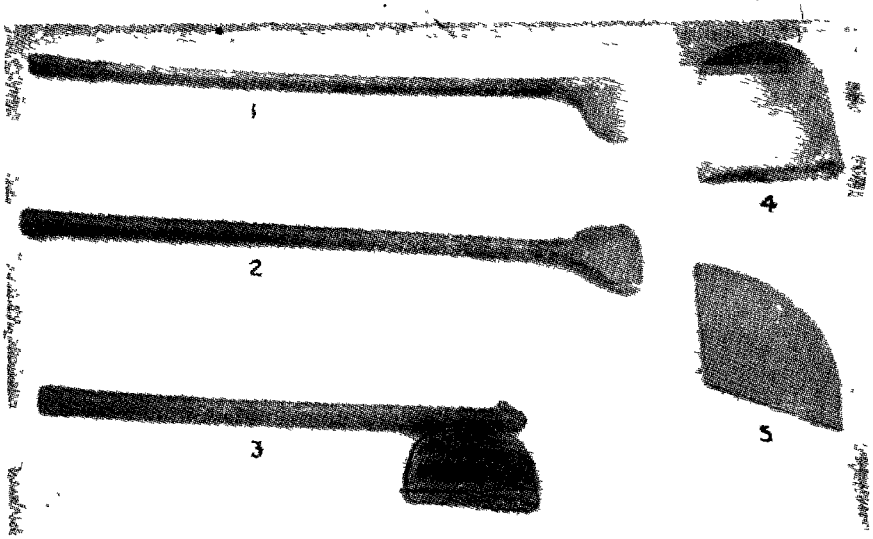


SETTING *BARHA* ON THE *KUND* (WOODEN STUMP) WITH PISTON-LIKE SHAPE



Heated *Barha* being inserted into a *Kund* and fixed on it with light pressure of the fingers—*Kund* is generally placed on a gadget (here on an extra *Kund*) to raise it from the ground

COLOURING ARTICLES FOR *RULI* AND *BALA*



1, 2 & 3—Colour-sticks or coloured lac-cakes fixed to sticks. 4 & 5—coloured lac-cakes.

REPARATION OF *TAR* (COLOURED LAC-THREAD) FROM A COLOUR-STICK



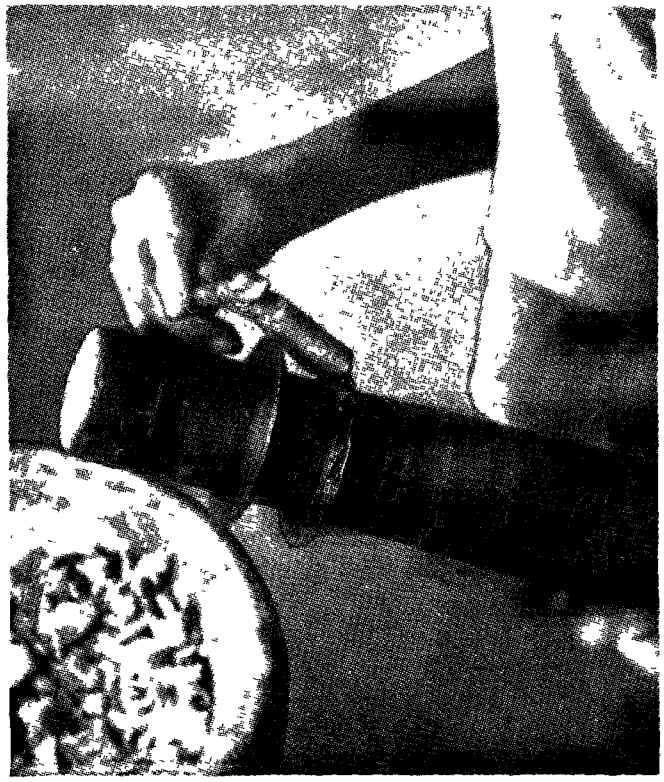
Tar (coloured lac-thread) being drawn out from half molten sticky coloured lac fixed to a *Katha* (wooden stick)



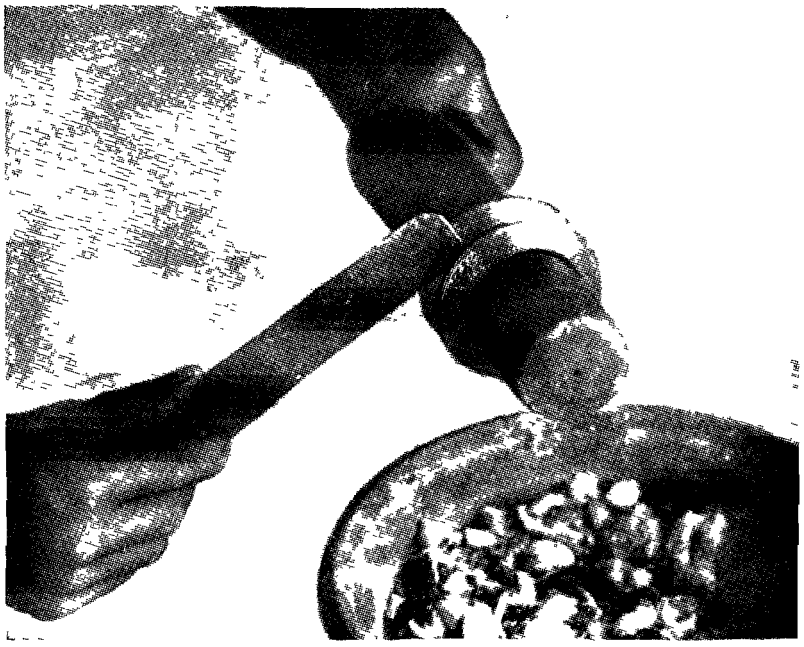
SHAPING *BARHA* INTO *RULI*

Barha fixed to a *Kund* being shaped with *Chipua* (tongs) into *Ruli*, by changing the roundish rim into steep triangular ridge by pressure

COLOURING *RULI*



Coloured lac-cake, fixed to a stick, being rubbed on the surface of the unfinished *Ruli* to give a coating of coloured lac



POLISHING THE COLOURED *RULI*

Lacquered surface of the *Ruli* being smoothened with a *Pati* (a thin strip of iron plate)

DESIGNING A *RULI*



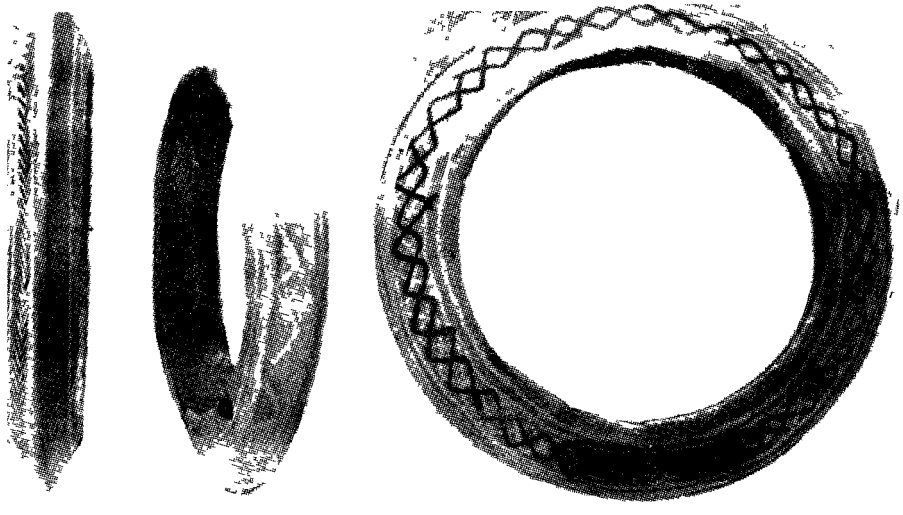
Tar (coloured lac-thread) or *Machra* (interwined *Tars*) being fixed on the *Ruli* to pattern out the desired design



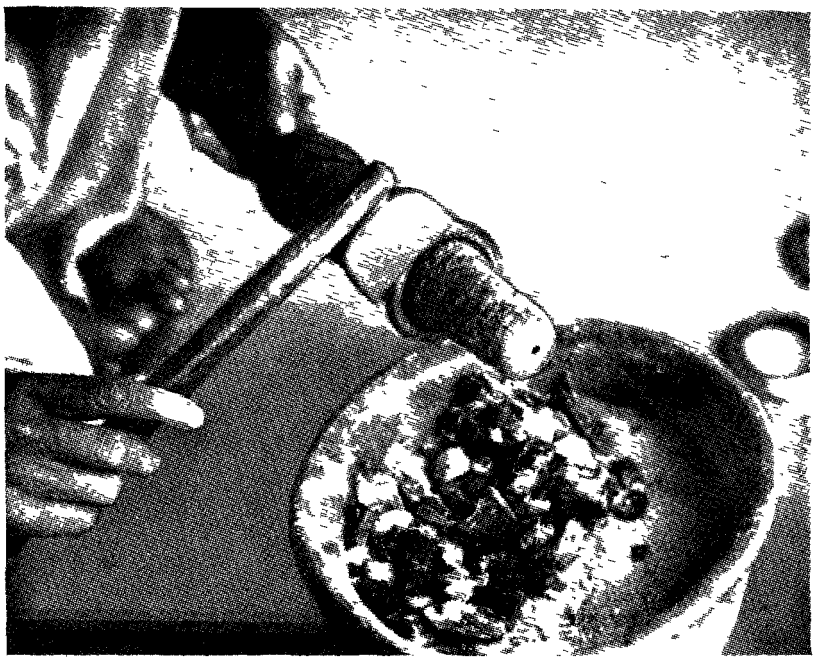
PROCESSING AT AN END

Finished *Ruli* being finally polished with a piece of linen

A LOOK PLEASE



Ruli from different angles



COLOURING A *BALA*

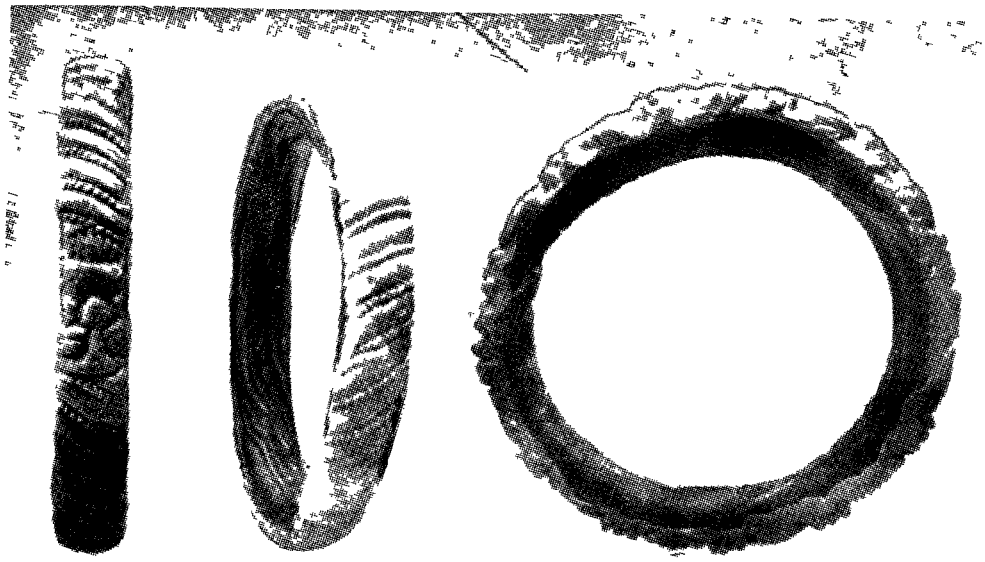
Heated coloured lac being rubbed against the outer rim of a *Kothor* to leave a thick coating of coloured lac on the surface

EMBOSSING DESIGNS



Designs being embossed on the lacquered outer rim of a *Bala* by pressing a *Chhunch* (brass-mould) along the rim

BALA READY FOR SALE



Bala from different angles



MIXING COLOUR

Heated doughy *Tikia* or *Button lac* mixed with colour-pigment, being hammered to make the mass homogeneous

DRAWING OUT *TAR*

Sarkai (Reed-stick), held in two hands, being rotated to wind round the *Tar*, drawn from the *Katha*, one end of which is supported by the toe





PREPARATION OF COILS FROM *TAR*

Tar being drawn out from half molten sticky *Tikia* and fixed on the *Sarkai*, which is slowly rotated to produce a coil of *Tar* on it

COMPRESSING THE COIL



Coil of *Tar*, wound round the *Sarkai*, being heated and the two ends of the coil being pressed in opposite directions to attain the desired compactness



TAKING OUT THE COIL

Coils of *Tar* being taken out of the *Sarkai*

OBTAINING RINGS FROM THE COIL



The coil being cut into small pieces of rings by a *Chhuri* (iron-knife)

GARLANDING *MALA*



Rings of coils being fitted in interlocks to form a chain of rings

CHAPTER VI

STORAGE, MARKETING AND TRANSPORT

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- Pattern of sale and utilisation 94
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- Undisposed stocks 94

Transport 94

VI

STORAGE, MARKETING AND TRANSPORT

STORAGE

All production units of this production centre being independent in nature, the problem of storage of the finished products is the sole concern of the artisans themselves. The head of the household generally takes the entire responsibility in this regard, no matter if it is a single membered artisan household or a multi-membered family.

The question of storage of a particular product arises, only when there is a time-lag between the production and the sale of the articles. The storage must, therefore, be made in such a way that the articles are preserved undamaged, till they are sold out.

The artisans store their finished products in the living room of their own place of residence. As they have no separate place of storage, located either in their dwellings or outside, the artisans have no choice other than utilising their bedrooms for purposes of storage. A corner of the bedroom is used for keeping the finished products safe from all damages.

After the production of the *Rulis*, if the artisans find it necessary to store them before their disposal in the market, they tie them together with a coir-thread, put them in a basket and finally cover the articles with a piece of cloth. The basket is kept in the bedroom, till the articles find their way to the market.

The *Balas* are also stored by the artisans in like fashion.

The baskets, used as containers of storage for bangles of the *Ruli* and *Bala* varieties, are made of split bamboos in all cases. The artisans purchase the baskets from the local market at Jhalda, whenever required. A basket, with a base of 1 feet 3 inches in diameter and 5½ inches in height, costs between 75 paise to Re. 1/- per piece.

In the storage of a *Mala* the artisans take special care, because its delicate design and brittle nature warrant care. At the time of its storage the artisans wrap it in papers, mainly cut pieces of newspapers, and then keep it in the *Thonga*, a cylindrical hollow bamboo-tube, which is primarily used for keeping the colour-sticks, coloured threads and various other subsidiary raw materials. When required, the finished products are taken out from the containers and sold to the customers.

MARKETS

Local

It has been observed that none of the local people, except the persons belonging to the Laheri community, purchases and uses *Ruli*. As it is customary for the Laheris to put on *Rulis* during and after marriage, the article is in demand by this community. So, the number of local customers of this particular product is restrictedly low, limited to the members of the Laheri households, both practising and non-practising. The intending purchasers of the non-practising artisan households purchase this product from the artisans' premises.

Bala, the other finished product of the local artisans, has no customer residing in Jhalda. Majority of the customers reside at various places in the State of Bihar. The product is disposed of by the craftsmen at different selling centres in Bihar, on which a discussion will follow later. A small clientele among the Adibasi people, mainly the Santals and the Mundas who live in the district of Ranchi, purchase this article occasionally.

A *Mala* is a product, not manufactured very extensively. It is only on the basis of orders from the customer that the artisans, in majority of cases, undertake its production and deliver the product to the customer at his residence. In some exceptional cases, the local customers at Jhalda take delivery of the article from the artisan's house.

It is interesting that no artisan is engaged as a pedlar. So, the wares are never hawked from door to door locally.

The weekly *Hat* at Jhalda, which has its sitting every Tuesday, is the main selling centre of the products. The artisans throng the *Hat* with a routine regularity. Women from the Kurmi, Mahato, Ghasi and Santal communities come from places far and near and purchase *Rulis* from the artisans along with other necessaries from the vendors. The craftsmen regularly frequent this *Hat* and utilise it as a place to exhibit and sell their wares.

Sometimes, the artisans visit *Hats*, held at Begun Kudar and Tulin at a distance of four to five kilometers from Jhalda. *Rulis* are sold to the customers of the communities, already mentioned, who visit these *Hats*.

During visit to the local markets the artisans always carry with them the basket, containing the bangles, an oven, two *Patis*, a *Kata* and a *Janti* or nut-cutter. The last three tools are essential for fitting a bangle round the wrists of the customer.

In years prior to 1956 the artisans used to visit the *Hats* at Nayahatu and Bartaur, located in this district, the first in the same Police Station at a distance of about 12 kilometers and the latter in the Police Station of Joypur.

Fairs and festivals

The artisans also sell their products in the different fairs, held in the State of Bihar during the local festivals. But, the number of outside markets, used by the local artisans, is very limited. The names of the outside centres of sale in Bihar are given below :

TABLE 20

SITES OF THE FAIRS

Name of the place	District	Distance from Jhalda (kilometers)
Keshmar	Ranchi	32
Barkana	Ditto	64
Hazaribagh town	Hazaribagh	128

Fairs are held in the above places on the occasion of different Hindu festivals, enlisted below :

TABLE 21

OCCASION AND TIMING OF THE FAIRS

Place	Festival	Calendar
Keshmar	Saraswati Puja	In the month of *Magh* of the Bengali Calendar (January-February)
Barkana	Ratha-Jatra	In the month of *Ashar* of the Bengali Calendar (June-July)
Hazaribagh town	Karma-Ekadasi	In the month of *Bhadra* of the Bengali Calendar (August-September)

The products are sold by the artisans direct to the customers and in no case the help of any outside agencies like brokers or commissioned sales-agents is taken. Nor does any middleman or *Paikar* come in the picture in regard to transactions of the articles.

Though the markets for the ornaments of Jhalda appear to extend beyond the limits of Jhalda, the markets are numbered few.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SALE

The finished products are disposed of by the artisans generally against cash-payment. On very rare occasions do the artisans sell their products on credit and that too, when the customers are well-acquainted with the artisans. The products are not sold on payment by *instalments*.

The sale-price of the products may now be discussed. A *Ruli* sells at 19 paise per pair and a pair of *Balas* at 12 paise. The *Mala* is costlier than the two other articles. A piece of *Mala* or neckchain costs Rs. 1.50 paise. Sometimes, its price rises as high as Rs. 2/-, an amount generally charged from outsiders.

ORNAMENTS LYING IN WAIT FOR A BELLE



Ruli and *Bala* are stored (usually) in basket, the piece of linen underneath being a protection against possible breakage of the bangles and of the bracelets during handling or during transit to the *Hat* (open-air country-market) for sale

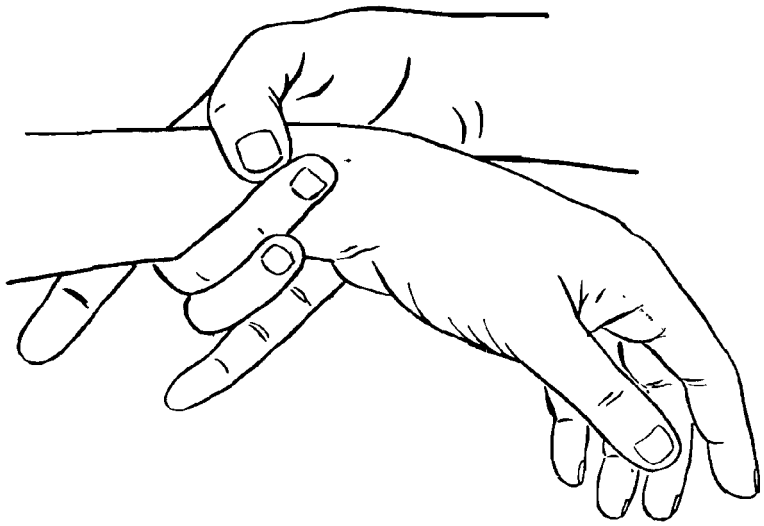


Lac products being displayed for sale at the *Hat* at Jhalda, the seller being an old Laheri artisan

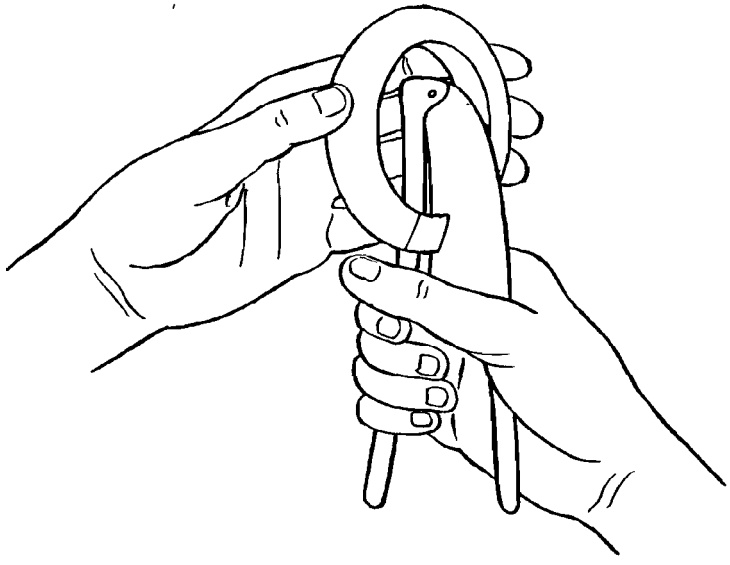
LAC BANGLES, THOUGH NOT "THE GUILED SHORE TO A DANGEROUS SEA", ARE NOT EASY TO WEAR



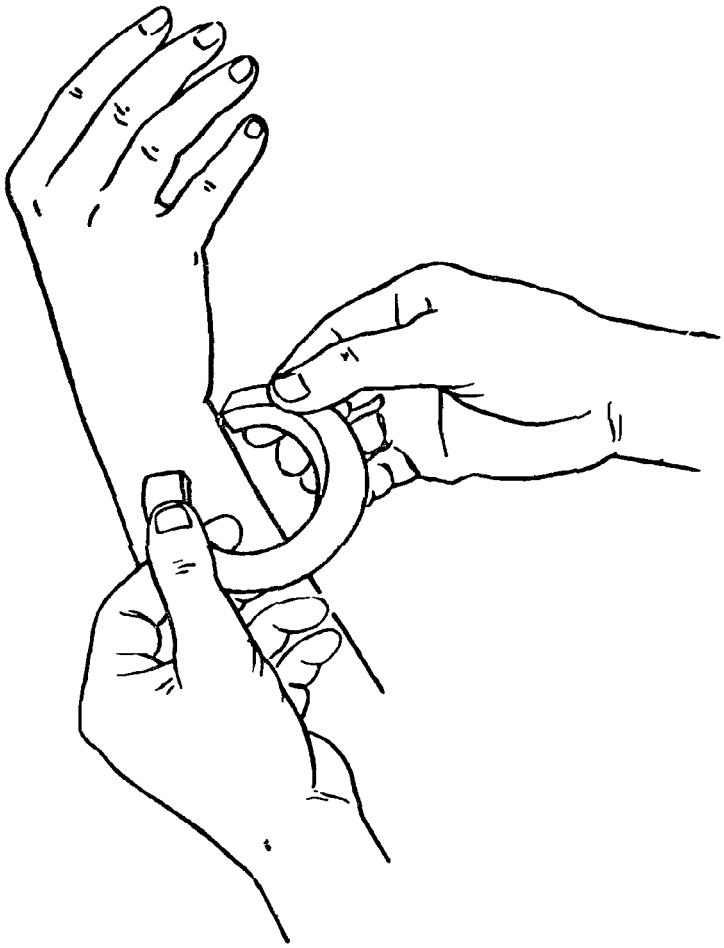
Ruli being fitted into the wrist of a tribal woman at the *Hat*—a trying job indeed for the craftsman-seller—the gadgets, required in fitting the bangles, are simple in nature, but time-consuming, when in operation



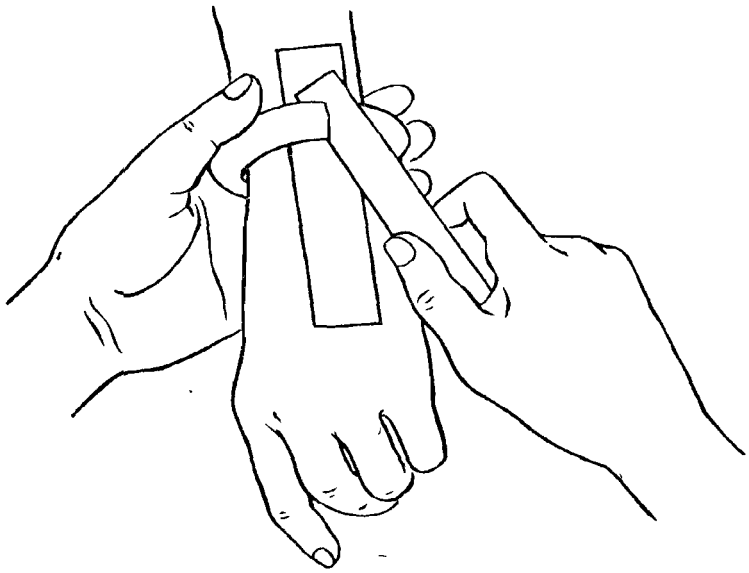
Girth of the wrist being measured with fingers



Superfluous rim of the *Ruli* being cut out by a *Janti* (Nut-cracker)



Ruli with two ends open, after being heated and softened for easy manoeuvering, being made gaping open and inserted *into the wrist*



Open ends of the *Ruli* being sealed together—heated *Pati* being held between the two ends to melt them—after taking it out, the molten ends are pressed against each other with the pressure of fingers, another *Pati* is kept on the wrist, below the ends of the *Ruli* to prevent skin-burns

Pattern of sale and utilisation

Data collected on the sale and utilisation pattern of the articles reveal that in 1963 all the ornaments were sold in retail. The articles were not disposed of in wholesale form by any artisan during the year 1963-1964.

Ruli was used in the artisan households for domestic use. Both the households utilised one per cent of their total products. Of the four artisan households, which had sold part of their products in local markets, one household had sold 10 per cent of the manufactured articles in local market, another household had sold 49 per cent of its articles locally and the other two households each had sold 50 per cent of their products in the local market. All the four artisan households had sold a part of the articles in the fairs and festivals. Of them, one household had disposed of 88 per cent of the products in the fairs. The remaining three households each had sold 50 per cent of their products likewise. None of the artisan households had sold any article to its patron-clients, as none had any.

In the case of *Bala*, it has been observed that three artisan households each had sold 10 per cent of the articles in the local markets. 90 per cent of the articles were sold out in the different fairs by these three artisan families.

As regards *Mala*, three artisan households had disposed of 100 per cent of the articles to their patron-clients and one artisan household sold in the local market what he had produced.

No barter-system is in currency in this particular centre of production.

Fluctuation in demand

It is reported that during marriage-ceremonies the demand for the articles increases, specially so during the months of *Baisakh*, *Magh* and *Falgun* of the Bengali Calendar, when the customers want more and more bangles. The demand for neckchain increases during the festival of *Durga-Puja*.

In the rainy season on account of unfavourable weather the articles are less in demand. The artisans cannot go outside in inclement weather; neither can the customers come to the local markets regularly.

Undisposed stocks

The number of selling centres for the articles being very limited, the number of customers is not at all large. Uncertainty is another factor to be reckoned with and the artisans are not sure if the articles produced would be sold at all. The artisans are, therefore, inclined to produce small number of articles at a time and are out in the market for their disposal as quickly as they can. Towards the end of the English Calendar the artisans clear the old stock of articles, so that nothing remains undisposed. Immediately before the end of the year, if there remains any unsold products in their stock, they stop further production and make best efforts to sell what they have already produced.

TRANSPORT

It has been stated already that no artisan is specifically engaged in the transportation of the articles. When required, the artisan himself becomes the transport-agent.

To purchase and collect the main and subsidiary raw materials no transport is required, as because all the materials are available in the local market.

Only when the artisans visit the selling centres outside Jhalda, they use the local transport. Generally, the artisans travel in buses, run by private companies, to visit distant places for the disposal of their products.

On the Ranchi-Purulia Road, the main thoroughfare of the area, 13 private Transport Companies ply their buses regularly.

On transport the artisans spend Rs. 10/- annually to sell *Ruli* in the outside markets. For the sale of *Bala* the artisans spend Rs. 5/- annually on transport. The total yearly expenditure on transport is thus Rs. 15/- approximately, incurred by an artisan for the sale of all the finished products.

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VII

ECONOMICS OF THE CRAFT

INTRODUCTION

In a general sense, the cost of production signifies the total money-outlay that entrepreneurs have to make in order to drawing the various factors of production into their enterprise. The same is true in respect of a small household craft, producing ornaments of lac.

While for the product of a large scale industry it is not very difficult to calculate and to estimate the actual cost of production, the case is just the reverse for any product of a small-scale household craft.

The difficulty in calculating the actual cost of production of the articles, produced by the craft under study, is posed by the following factors :

(1) There is no continuity of work by the artisans. This is explained by the paucity of sufficient working capital and by uncertainty of sale of the finished articles.

(2) In cases where the head of the household runs the household industry with the help of his family-members, it is quite difficult to calculate the unpaid wages for the voluntary labour of all the participating artisans.

But, inspite of these limitations an attempt is made to give an idea about the cost of production, as arrived at by the artisans.

QUANTUM AND COST OF RAW MATERIALS FOR INDIVIDUAL ARTICLES

(a) *Ruli*—Approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ *chhatak* of *Kuni*, the main raw material for *Ruli*, is required for the production of a pair of *Rulis*. The cost of this quantity of raw material is 5 paise only.

The artisans do not follow any hard and fast rule at the time of purchasing their main raw material. They cannot state how much raw material is purchased by them at a time. They purchase it according to their requirements at a particular moment. The quantity of raw material purchased also varies from time to time.

(b) *Bala*—It is already known that a *Bala* is produced from the cut pieces or chunks, obtained from the finished *Ruli*. So, the main raw material of this product, always available in the workshop of the artisans, is not required to be purchased from any outside source. Obviously, it is a very difficult and complicated task to ascertain the actual quantity of raw material, required for the production of a pair of *Balas*, and also to calculate the price thereof. As is usual, the artisans cannot throw any light on this aspect.

(c) *Mala*—For the production of a piece of *Mala* half *chhatak* of *Button lac* is required and it costs only 12 paise.

The artisans do not follow any fixed rule during the purchase of the main raw material for this product. They purchase at a time only such quantity, as they consider to be necessary for the production of the required number of *Malas*.

QUANTITY AND PRICE OF SUBSIDIARY MATERIALS

As regards subsidiary raw materials, it is found that for all the products the artisans pur-

chase them in very small quantity at a time and use them, till the stock is exhausted. The amount of subsidiary materials used for the production of a specific unit is negligible ; its price also is very meagre. Consequently, except one or two artisans, the majority have no clear idea about this aspect of production.

COST OF TRANSPORT

As already indicated before, the raw materials required for the production of the articles are available in the local market. The local artisans do not have to spend any amount as cost of transport for the raw materials, purchased locally.

The artisans incur some expenditure on transport, only when they sell their finished products outside this production-centre.

RENT FOR WORKSHOP

The artisans as independent workers work in their own dwelling-*cum*-workshops. As owners of the establishments, the artisans do not pay any rent to others for their workshops. But, they have some recurring expense, such as municipal tax and cost of annual repair. Here again, the artisans cannot give any estimate of these recurring expenses.

RENT FOR TOOLS

The production-units being independent in nature, the artisans work with their independent tools. They do not use either on loan or on hire a tool, owned by others. So, in this case also the local artisans do not have to pay any rent to others. All the artisans possess their own tools, which are required in the various operations of the craft.

WAGES

All the artisans are independent workers, none of whom works as a paid employee under others, either on wage or on contract. On the other hand, the artisans do not employ or engage any outsider as a paid labourer. Thus an artisan neither receives any wage from an employer nor he pays any wage to an employee. In this centre the craft is practised in a very small scale. All the work, required for the production of the articles, is done within the artisans' own households.

UNPAID WAGE

The term unpaid wage means the money, which the artisans would have paid to a labourer for the work done by their family-members at home voluntarily.

This question does not arise in single membered household, because in this case the only member constituted by the head participates in the operations of the craft himself. But, in an artisan household with more than one working member the question of unpaid wage arises, because the other members assist the head of the household or the principal artisan in the craft's operations, for which work they are not paid.

In this production-centre of seven workers only two artisans work as family-workers, assisting the head of the household, but they are not paid any wage. Both the workers are females, who earn Rs. 180/- and Rs. 100/- annually as unpaid wages.

PAYMENT FOR PROCESSING

The manifold manufacturing processes connected with the production of *Ruli* and *Bala* are done by the independent artisans themselves at their own place of work. The artisans are not required to engage any outsider to work in any stage of production nor is any process done outside the workshops. Consequently, the artisans do not have to pay any money to an outsider in this regard. The artisans pay 12 paise per *Mala* to a person, who ties the rings together. So, on a single piece of *Mala* the artisans spend only 12 paise, as payment for processing to an outsider. But, this payment should not be treated as wage, rather it is given as tiffin-expense. Secondly, the persons employed for the purpose are not outsiders or hired labourers ; they come from among the relations. This employment is also very rarely observed.

INTEREST ON LOANS

When required, the local artisans borrow money either from private persons of the locality (the owners of the lac-factories) or from the local money-lenders and use this loan for productive purposes. Two Rajputs and one Punjabi lend money occasionally to the artisans. The artisans pay interest at a rate, varying from 36 per cent to 48 per cent per annum. The rate of interest raises the cost of production and the price of the articles rises high consequently.

DEPRECIATION-CHARGES

It is the general practice to calculate depreciation-charge of a particular unit of a

product, only when a particular tool is used for its production. Discussion on it has been made in the Chapter on tools.

COST OF PRODUCTION

At the very outset of the product-wise discussion on the cost of production it should be pointed out that the accurate cost of production of a specific article is not very easy to work out. The principal impediment, that deters one, is the fact that majority of the artisans do not keep any account. Moreover, in this household-craft the labour-wages of the artisan, who is himself the producer, cannot be properly adjusted against the cost of production of a unit of a specific article. The local artisans produce only *Ruli* more or less regularly, but the other articles are manufactured in an unsystematic and irregular manner. The cost of production of articles other than *Ruli* cannot, therefore, be scientifically estimated.

Ruli (one pair)

An artisan spends half an hour's time to produce a pair of *Rulis* ; but as the wage cannot be calculated separately, it is regarded as unaccounted expenditure, included in the head 'miscellaneous'.

TABLE 22

COST OF *RULI*

Price of raw material	.02	paise
Colouring and designing	.04	,,
Charcoal	.01	,,
Miscellaneous	.03	,,
Total	**.10**	,,

Mala

To manufacture one *Mala* an artisan spends 2½ hours, the wage for which is classified as other unaccounted expenditure and included in the head 'miscellaneous'.

TABLE 23

COST OF *MALA*

Price of raw material	.12	paise
Colouring and designing	.25	,,
Charcoal	.01	,,
Fixing	.12	,,
Miscellaneous	.10	,,
Total	**.60**	,,

INPUT AND OUTPUT

A scientific study about this craft will remain incomplete, if no reference is made to its input and output problems. Informations about the input and output aspects of the craft are presented here.

Investment

Investment is the most important factor behind the input-aspect of any craft, as because without it the production of any article is well-nigh impossible. It acts as the most important agent of production.

Investment means laying out of the money on production. It is composed mainly of two categories of capital :—(1) Fixed or permanent capital, (2) Circulating or floating capital.

Fixed capital

Fixed capital is that portion of the funds of an artisan, which is represented by assets acquired by way of permanent equipments for the purposes of production and not for conversion into cash. Such assets here consist of land, workshop, tools and implements. The returns from them are spread over a period of considerable duration. All the artisans own the assets individually.

Circulating capital

Circulating capital means that portion of the funds of an artisan, which is represented by cash or readily realisable assets, acquired for the purpose of immediate conversion into cash.

In this production-centre the artisans are not habituated to acquiring capital by converting the readily realisable assets like bills of exchange and debentures. For production-purposes they are always accustomed to the use of real cash. This capital serves the purpose of production only once and it can never be utilised several times over a long stretch of time.

It is reported by one or two key persons of the artisan community that in the year 1963 approximately Rs. 400/- were used as circulating capital by the artisans of this production-centre.

In the estimate of one experienced practising artisan an amount of Rs. 20/- is the initial capital required by every artisan to start production every year in a running establishment.

The overall investment-requirements are thus very meagre. The only process, which requires some amount of capital, is the colouring-*cum*-designing.

Sources of finance

Production is financed mostly by the artisans from their own capital. The capital is secured either from the earning of the craft itself or by the diversion of fund to this craft from other subsidiary earnings or savings. But, on some occasions the production-function is also financed by borrowed capital. The artisan borrows money from the private persons and invests it in the craft. He has to pay interest on the loan to the money-lender. The interest is generally charged at the rate of Rs. 3/- to Rs. 4/- per month on Rs. 100/-. The artisans at times of necessity have to borrow money even at an interest of Rs. 20/- to Rs. 25/- per month on Rs. 100/-.

The local artisans have all borrowed money from private persons but not from any outside source.

Total turn-over in 1963

A correct and accurate estimate about total production in 1963-64 is hard to get for the following limitations :

(1) The local artisans do not keep any systematic record of accounts.

(2) All the articles are not produced throughout the year uniformly.

(3) No experienced and senior artisan can throw any light on this aspect.

(4) No information from an outside source is available, as all the products are sold by the artisans themselves.

Still, the practising artisans refreshed their memory and quoted figures to give a rough idea of the articles produced and of their value. Approximately 4,200 pairs of *Ruli* were produced at this centre by the artisans in the year 1963-64, in addition to about 70 pairs of *Bala*. About 24 pieces of *Mala* were produced during this period. The approximate value of the total number of *Rulis* is Rs. 800/-. The *Balas* and *Malas* are worth approximately Rs. 9/- and Rs. 37/- respectively. The value of all the articles, produced in 1963, thus stands at Rs. 846/-.

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VIII

ECONOMY OF THE CRAFTSMEN, AND THEIR ASPIRATIONS AND MOTIVATIONS

INTRODUCTION

In a general sense the concept of economic behaviour implies the structure and pattern of an economy. The concept is used in a very extensive sense, denoting the manifold factors controlling different sectors of the economy.

In the present household-craft the economic behaviour of the craftsmen is an important aspect, from which the nature of the craft and the way in which it is now practised, may be deciphered.

OCCUPATIONAL PATTERN

Of the seven practising artisans, only five persons including four females have adopted this craft as their only source of livelihood. They are connected with no economic pursuit other than this craft. The remaining two artisans with other economic pursuits in addition to this craft have, therefore, more than two sources of livelihood.

Of the two persons associated with other occupations, one has taken up this craft as his subsidiary means of livelihood. Detailed discussion on these craftsmen is made later.

The male artisan, who has adopted the craft as his main source of livelihood, is secondarily engaged in Other Services. This artisan, apart from working as a craftsman, also works as a *Kabiraj* or indigenous medical practitioner, when occasion demands so. It is interesting that he is neither qualified nor licensed. He earns approximately Rs. 100/- annually from this occupation, having no fixed hours of work. A single male artisan has adopted this craft as a subsidiary occupation. Both from the point of time and income, this craft cannot be regarded as his main source of livelihood. He is primarily engaged in Manufacturing. He spends the major part of his time in clay-modelling, producing images of deities. He earns the major portion of his income also from this source. The annual income from clay-modelling is Rs. 300/- approximately. The artisan devotes 10 hours daily to his primary occupation.

ENDS OF PRODUCTION

No artisan produces *Rulis*, either for domestic use or for ceremonial purpose. Neither it is principally produced for the permanent clients. The local artisans produce the article mainly for sale in the local market or in different fairs and festivals outside. On rare occasions it is produced for purposes other than sale and is meant for domestic use.

Bala is produced for sale and not for any other purpose. This article too is sold in the local market or in the different fairs and festivals, held outside. But, the local artisans produce *Mala* for their patron-clients mainly.

EMPLOYMENT

The nature of this craft is such that in the past the artisans could produce and sell the products to their customers in all seasons of the year. The customers had constant demand for the articles, not at any particular period of time but at all times throughout the year. The craft was not one of a seasonal nature.

But, due to the decadent condition of the craft at present, the local artisans do not find whole-time employment in the craft throughout the year. Sometimes on account of lack of sufficient customers production is stopped and the artisans sit idle at home. They remain unemployed, till there is demand for the articles. During this period of forced unemployment, the two artisans, who have more than two sources of livelihood, engage themselves in other economic pursuits. Still, this cessation of work cannot be regarded as seasonal unemployment, because the artisans are not thrown out of their business at any particular time of the year. It depends entirely upon the freakish behaviour of the customers. It has been observed that the artisans are out of employment for five or six days and sometimes more, whenever there is cessation of work. The total period of stoppage of work is generally 15-20 days in a year per family.

UNEMPLOYED AND NON-WORKERS IN CRAFTSMEN FAMILIES

The term unemployed is used to denote an adult member, able-bodied and capable of doing any work, on the look out for a job and not connected with the craft or any other economic pursuit at present. No such person was found in the practising artisan households.

The term non-worker signifies a person, who is not connected with any productive labour or economic activity and who is not in search of an economic pursuit. There are six non-workers in two practising artisan households. Of the six non-workers, four are children (three females of the age-group 0-5 and another female in the age-group 6-9), who cannot join the working force and are dependent on their parents. One boy, aged nine years, is a student reading in the Primary School at Jhalda and another non-worker is a housewife doing the customary household chores.

WORKERS OTHER THAN THE CRAFTSMEN IN THE CRAFTSMEN FAMILIES

Of the 16 persons living in the five practising artisan households, six are non-workers and seven are practising atisans. Three persons belonging to two practising artisan households have other sources of livelihood and are not connected with the craft. One of them works as a truck-driver and his work comes under the Industrial Category of Transport and Communications. The second man is engaged in manufacturing *Bidi* (country-made cigarettes) and his work may be classified in the Industrial Category of Manufacturing. The remaining worker is a female, engaged in the purchase and sale of glass bangles on a small scale. Her work comes under the Industrial Category of Retail Trade. The first worker earns Rs. 1,440/- per year with full-time work as a truck-driver. The second worker earns approximately Rs. 370/- per year, working nearly 14 hours a day, preparing *Bidis* on piece-rate basis. The last worker earns only Rs. 40/- per year by working two hours a day in the trade of glass bangles. Her health does not permit her to work more in her trade. All the three persons work within the municipal area of Jhalda.

INCOME-PATTERN OF THE CRAFTSMEN

The income or remuneration of the workers of this craft is the most important aspect. For recapitulation it may be stated again that except for the two artisans, this craft is the exclusive source of livelihood for five practising artisans. The income and remuneration earned from other sources of livelihood by the two artisans have been discussed earlier. The present discussion concerns income from this craft only.

The income of only those workers, whose income or remuneration can be both specified and computed, has been taken into account. Family-workers have been excluded from the purview of this discussion, as their income or remuneration cannot be calculated specifically.

The table on the distribution of the craftsmen according to their annual income or remuneration is given below :

TABLE 24

INCOME FROM THE CRAFT

Annual income/remuneration	No. of worker
Rs. 21	1
Rs. 150	1
Rs. 360	1
Rs. 405	1
Rs. 465	1
Income unspecified	2
Total	7

From the above table it is found that the maximum amount, that an artisan earns annually is Rs. 465/-. On the other hand, the minimum amount that an artisan earns in a year is only Rs. 21/-. The income is meagre, as this particular artisan has adopted his craft as a subsidiary occupation, manufacturing only one product *viz.*, *Mala*, for his patron-clients against orders.

The above table also makes it evident that the annual income from the craft is discouragingly low. Income, therefore, offers little incentive either to those engaged or to those not yet initiated in the craft. The craft is in its decay and its paltry returns reflect on its moribund state.

TABLE 25

SOURCES OF ANNUAL INCOME FOR THE PRACTISING ARTISAN HOUSEHOLDS

Source of income	Number of households earning									
	Upto 10 per cent of their annual income	Upto 20 per cent of their annual income	Upto 30 per cent of their annual income	Upto 40 per cent of their annual income	Upto 50 per cent of their annual income	Upto 60 per cent of their annual income	Upto 70 per cent of their annual income	Upto 80 per cent of their annual income	Upto 90 per cent of their annual income	Upto 100 per cent of their annual income
Arts and crafts	1	..	1	..	..	2	..	..	1	..
Wages	..	..	..	..	..	..	.	..	1	..
Borrowing	..	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Trade	..	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..
Sale of assets	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Transport	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..
Service	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Others	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	.	..	..

SOCIAL AND PERSONAL CHARACTERS

The analysis of the economy is not enough to give a full picture of the craft. The profile of the man behind the scene, his emotions and motivations, his aspirations both in the perspective of the society to which he belongs and in the light of his personal characteristics, certain freaks of his fancy and certan ideias of his pensive moments are equally important for consideration, if the travail of the work of the handicraft is to conjure up the real portrait of the present with bright and dark shades here and there.

DURATION OF ENGAGEMENT IN THE CRAFT

But, the foremost point for consideration should be the actual number of years, for which the craftsmen are associated with the craft. It not only establishes the artisan on a sound basis of experience and skill but also serves as a denouement of the craft's inevitable future. It may be known from the number of years how many young persons are working as freshers under old artisans with grizzled hair, bent under the weight of old age but rich in the experience of the craft, ready to communicate to the impressionable young minds all the secrets of the craft, to forewarn the present generation of young artisans against repitition of follies of the past and to lead the craft to lofty heights of prosperity and success. The table below will give ready information on the point.

TABLE 26

PRACTISING ARTISANS AND THE DURATION OF THEIR ENGAGEMENT

Duration of engagement in the craft	Persons	Males	Females
1- 5 years	..	..	..
6-10 years	1	..	1
11-15 years	..	..	..
16-20 years	..	..	..
21-25 years	1	..	1
26-30 years	2	2	..
31-35 years	..	..	..
36-40 years	2	1	1
41-45 years	..	..	..
46-50 years	..	..	..
51-55 years	1	..	1
Total	**7**	**3**	**4**

No idea of the artisans, who have long ceased to be partners of those still associated with the craft, is available from the table. When the number of artisans is limited to only seven

members in the five households and when four of them are females, one may not be quite assured of the prosperity of the craft. The female artisan, associated with the craft for 6-10 years, is the youngest member, aged 19 years. The seniormost artisan is a septuagenarian widow, shaping the bangles for more than 51 years. She is the master artisan, held in respect by other craftsmen for both her age and her experience. But, it does not thereby make the picture of the craft brighter than what it is now. Her skill will die with her and her story will repeat in every practising artisan's life. No young artisan is there to learn the craft and practise it. The table is a pointer to the inevitable tragedy that in the absence of young apprentices, whom the middle-aged artisans may school on the techniques, the craft is sure to die out. The three male artisans, who have been practising the handicraft for a period varying from 26 years to 40 years, are the persons, whom neither age nor physical capacity have enabled to switch over to new occupations. They have to put up with the decadent conditions of the craft. The female artisans, long associated with this household industry, learnt the craft in their household-workshops many years back and are practising it still.

ATTITUDE OF THE CRAFTSMEN TOWARDS THE CRAFT

When the prime concern of the craftsmen is to keep the wolf from the door, they are not cherishing any love for a craft, which have long ceased to offer them ample return in money, no matter how long their association with it is. Naturally, therefore, they do not encourage younger members in the family to learn the craft out of any unrealistic infatuation and force them to famish consequently. They know the inevitable end and they do not hope in the least that the craft will ever survive. That explains why they encourage the younger members to try their fortune in some other sphere of occupation and with this end in view, they impart some education to the children, as far as their purses permit.

TRADITIONAL AND HEREDITARY OCCUPATIONS

The craft is the traditional occupation of all the seven practising artisans. Moreover, all the artisans are carrying on their hereditary occupation. So, the question of any occupational mobility of the practising artisans does not arise. It is observed that the craft is of such a nature that skill traverses from generation to generation. The practising artisans have learnt this craft from their parents as home-apprentices. The artisans have not had the necessity to learn the techniques from any institution or from any private person.

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL QUALITIES REQUIRED FOR THE CRAFT

The best workman is he, who handles the tools best. To be dexterous in handling the tools, certain physical and mental qualities are required. An artisan should have a very good eyesight and also pointed fingers. Moreover, he should have the capacity to endure heat, as major part of the work is done in fire. It is also essential that an artisan should be very prompt and agile in action. The capacity to sit for hours together in a rather uncomfortable position is a prerequisite of an artisan, if he is to be treated as skilled. Those, who lack in these qualities, never become good craftsmen. Naturally, some of the physical qualities are more inborn than acquired. An artisan should be very much attentive to the processes of work, for good artisan is a tower of patience.

OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS

The residential houses of the practising artisan households in most cases look filthy. The houses are not regularly swept and swabbed. The artisans do neither appear to be very clean in their personal habits. The average health of the artisans is not very sound. They are thinly built and look emaciated. Some of them suffer from under-nourishment. As most of the operations are done before fire, the artisans suffer from chronic dysentery. It has been ascertained that dysentery is not common among the local people of other castes and occupations.

The artisans point out that constant contact with fire make their palms benumbed and devoid of any sensation. They do not suffer from any disease as a result of their sedentary work.

For their ailments the artisans take the help of the local medical practitioners. In acute cases, the artisans avail themselves of the facilities offered by the local Health Centre.

From the figures below one may have an idea of the average health of the practising artisans :

Healthy	3
Unhealthy	4
Total	7

Note : Healthy are those, who are physically fit and robust

The other members including the children in the practising households are not very healthy. Given to wants and squalor, they are not very strongly built.

HOBBIES AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The artisans do not have varied means of entertainment. Of the seven practising artisans, two gossip ceaselessly, whenever they get away from work. Idle gossips however, do not make them idle. They say that they are rejuvenated by talks. Within the four walls of their house these two female artisans have no serious thing to discuss about. Two other artisans select some lonely corner in the tea-stall and sip a cup of tea for hours together. A visit to the tea-stall is enough for them to chase the fatigue out of the body. Travelling is stated to be the hobby of a solitary artisan. He rambles in the open air or sometimes pays visits to some relative's house. The remaining two artisans have no entertainment, so engrossed they are with their life in the households.

None of the local artisans takes part in any organised form of recreational activity nor any of them finds any way of escape from their daily work in *fine arts* or *games*. Reading books or periodicals is not a habit with the artisans, as many of them have little education to foster it.

INTERNAL STRUCTURE, SOCIAL STATUS AND RELIGION

All the seven Laheri craftsmen belong to the *Chhatri* section of the *Mahuria* group and have *Kashyapa gotra*. Their position in society is more or less high. The Brahmans take water from them, though not cooked food. The members of other castes take cooked food from them. The artisans are all Caste Hindus.

Due to their backwardness in education and employment they are regarded as members of the Backward Community as per Report of the Backward Classes Commission (Vol. II, 1955).

All the artisans are orthodox religious minded Hindus and belong to the *Sakta* sect.

A *Tirhutia* (of Trihut) or *Oudhi* (of Oudh) Brahman with the title of *Pathak* officiates in their social ceremonies or functions like marriage etc., held at the artisans' households. But, in the religious festivals concerning worship of deities the head of the household functions as the priest; no help is taken from the Brahman. It is significant that the local craftsmen do not organise any ceremony on a community basis. The Brahman, who functions as the priest of the practising artisans, is a local man. He lives at a place called *Pathakdiha*, at a distance of only three kilometers from Jhalda.

All the practising artisans worship *Viswakarma* (the Architect God) in their household. It has been discussed in details previously. Some artisans also worship *Manasa*, the Goddess of Snake, at home on the last day of *Sravana*, the fourth month of the Bengali Calendar year. In some households *Satyanarayan* (the incarnation of *Vishnu*) is worshipped every full-moon day. *Tulsi* plant is worshipped at its altar in the courtyard by the female members every evening, when they place an earthen lamp at its foot. No other household-deity is worshipped by the households, either daily or seasonally.

SOCIAL INSTITUTION

The practising artisans have no *Caste Panchayat* of their own. As this production centre is in an urban area, there is neither any *Gram Panchayat* nor any *Anchal Panchayat* here.

DAILY LIFE OF THE CRAFTSMEN

An unostentatious quiet life without either any hope or dream is the essence of the daily living of the practising craftsmen. The artisans, whether a male or a female, wake up early and have a morning wash. Some are fond of early bath. Breakfast, being austere, consists of fried rice and some fried vegetables; the very popular delicacy in the morning dish is the *Pakowri* (vegetables like potatoes and onions fried in oil, after being coated with a paste of powdered pulse and water). Tea is a drink for many, but not for all.

The artisans then sit to work in front of the burning oven. The work is characterised by no sound; only the fingers move and the artisans perspire. The bangles, that slip over the wrists, are produced and coloured all alone in the quietude of the musty rooms, in which the light of the day enters through the doors or the open verandahs.

Shortly before midday, there is a break for the humble midday meal. Those, who have women in the household, get their meals ready; but those, who are alone, prepare the food themselves. *Chapatis* (thick bread) and occasionally rice, are supplemented by pulses and vegetables. The artisans are not vegetarians. But, fish or egg or meat rarely appears in the daily dishes, as the persons are too poor to afford the items. After a short nap in the post-lunch period, the work is resumed and continued till sunset. The implements and tools are arranged in their proper places. Now, it is time for rest.

Some go to tea-stalls, some to their neighbours or relatives and a few discuss family affairs within the house on the cot placed in the open, outside the huts. The dinner is taken early, the artisan houses are silent at 10 P.M. and every one is asleep.

TABLE 27

FAMILY BUDGET (ANNUAL INCOME AND EXPENDITURE) OF A PRACTISING ARTISAN HOUSEHOLD*

Higher Income Group

Source of income	Amount Rs.	Items of expenditure	Amount Rs.
(a) Cultivation	. .	(a) Food—1) Cereal 2) Non-cereal	1,865/-
(b) Livestock and products	. .	(b) Drinks	10/-
(c) Wages	. .	(c) Fuel and lighting	50/-
(d) Arts and crafts	465/-	(d) House-rent and repairs	. .
(e) Fishery	. .	(e) Clothing	80/-
(f) Forestry	. .	(f) Travelling	15/-
(g) Trade	. .	(g) Recreation	20/-
(h) Transport	1,440/-	(h) Education	. .
(i) Profession	. .	(i) Other services	. .
(j) Services	370/-	(j) Interest	. .
(k) Rent	. .	(k) Remittances	. .
(l) Investments	. .	(l) Hired labour	. .
(m) Remittances	. .	(m) Purchase for production	235/-
(n) Others	.	(n) Others	. .
(o) Borrowing	. .	(o) Purchase of assets	. .
(p) Principal received back	. .	(p) Construction and improvement of building and other structure	. .
(q) Sale of assets	. .	(q) Land development	. .
Total	**2,275/-**	**Total**	**2,275/-**

*The annual income and expenditure of this household relate to the earning members of the family, including the non-practising members.—Editor.

TABLE 28

FAMILY BUDGET (ANNUAL INCOME AND EXPENDITURE) OF A PRACTISING ARTISAN HOUSEHOLD*

Middle Income Group

Source of income	Amount Rs.	Items of expenditure	Amount Rs.
(a) Cultivation	. .	(a) Food—1) Cereal 2) Non-cereal	305/-
(b) Livestock and products	. .	(b) Drinks	. .
(c) Wages	. .	(c) Fuel and lighting	10/-
(d) Arts and crafts	405/-	(d) House-rent and repairs	. .
(e) Fishery	. .	(e) Clothing	30/-
(f) Forestry	. .	(f) Travelling	10/-
(g) Trade (collection and selling of raw material)	250/-	(g) Recreation	5/-
(h) Transport	. .	(h) Education	. .
(i) Profession	. .	(i) Other services (miscellaneous)	. .
(j) Services	. .	(j) Interest	. .
(k) Rent	. .	(k) Remittances	. .
(l) Investments	. .	(l) Hired labour	. .
(m) Remittances	. .	(m) Purchase for production	159/-
(n) Others (medical profession)	100/-	(n) Others (sale of raw materials)	250/-
(o) Borrowing	. .	(o) Purchase of assets	. .
(p) Principal received back	14/-	(p) Construction and improvement of building and other structure	. .
(q) Sale of assets	. .	(q) Land development	. .
Total	**769/-**	**Total**	**769/-**

*The annual income and expenditure of this household relate to tha earning members of the family, including the non-practising members.—Editor.

TABLE 29

FAMILY BUDGET (ANNUAL INCOME AND EXPENDITURE) OF A PRACTISING ARTISAN HOUSEHOLD*

Lower Income Group

Source of income	Amount Rs.	Items of expenditure	Amount Rs.
(a) Cultivation	..	(a) Food—1) Cereal	200/-
(b) Livestock and products	..	2) Non-cereal	
(c) Wages	..	(b) Drinks	..
(d) Arts and crafts	150/-	(c) Fuel and lighting	10/-
(e) Fishery	..	(d) House-rent and repairs	..
(f) Forestry	..	(e) Clothing	10/-
(g) Trade (purchase and sale of glass bangles)	40/-	(f) Travelling	10/-
(h) Transport	..	(g) Recreation	10/-
(i) Profession	..	(h) Education	..
(j) Services	..	(i) Other services	..
(k) Rent	..	(j) Interest	12/-
(l) Investments	..	(k) Remittances	..
(m) Remittances	..	(l) Hired labour	..
(n) Others	..	(m) Purchase for production	28/-
(o) Borrowing	50/-	(n) Others	..
(p) Principal received back	..	(o) Purchase of assets	..
(q) Sale of assets	40/-	(p) Construction and improvement of building and other structure	..
		(q) Land development	..
Total	**280/-**	**Total**	**280/-**

*The annual income and expenditure of this household relate to the earning members of the family, including the non-practising members.—Editor.

CHAPTER IX

THE NON-PRACTISING ARTISANS

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IX

THE NON-PRACTISING ARTISANS

In the previous chapters the practising artisan households of this production-centre have been discussed in details. Still, there remains many things to be said about the local non-practising artisan households, which at one time had pursued the craft. A perusal of some aspects of their lives may be useful to make the study comprehensive.

By non-practising artisan households are meant those households, which were connected with the craft in the past but which have now severed their ties for some reason or other. Though this craft is the traditional occupation of all the non-practising Laheri families, it is practised by none of them.

NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS, PERSONS AND SUBGROUPS

There are in all 18 non-practising artisan households of the Laheri community, of which 11 belong to the *Chhatri* group and seven to the *Vaisya* group. The households have in total 88 persons, of which 51 belong to the *Chhatri* group and 37 belong to the *Vaisya* group. Again, 51 persons of the *Chhatri* group consist of 27 males and 24 females. Thirty seven persons are again divided into 22 males and 15 females. In both groups of the artisan community the males are in the majority.

AGE AND SEX-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION

A table on the non-practising members is given in the next column according to age and sex :

TABLE 30

NON-PRACTISING ARTISANS BY AGE AND SEX

Age-group	Males	Females	Total
0— 4	3	4	7
5— 9	10	5	15
10—14	7	4	11
15—19	8	5	13
20—24	2	1	3
25—29	2	3	5
30—34	5	3	8
35—39	2	4	6
40 - 44	3	2	5
45—49	2	2	4
50—54	1	2	3
55—59	3	1	4
60 and above	1	3	4
Total	**49**	**39**	**88**

Children in the age-group 0-14 alone account for 37.5 per cent of the total persons, of which about 58.0 per cent are in the working age-group 15-59.

MARITAL STATUS

Forty four persons, consisting of 31 males and 13 females, are unmarried. Thirty six persons, comprising 17 males and 19 females, are married. Only seven persons are widows and one is a widower. There is no person living a divorced or separated life.

TYPE AND SIZE OF FAMILIES

Of the 18 non-practising artisan households, as many as nine families are of *Simple* type,

consisting of the husband, wife and unmarried children only. Three families are of the *Intermediate* type, composed of the husband, wife, unmarried children, unmarried brothers or sisters of the husband and one of his parents. Only two families are of the *Joint* type, which consists of the husband, wife, the husband's parents or his married sons or brothers. The rest of the families do not fall in any one of these three types and are, therefore, classified as *Others*. *Simple* families appear to be predominant.

The different non-practising artisan households are of varying sizes. There is only one single-membered household and there are two households, each consisting of two members. There are four households, each consisting of three members. Moreover, there are three households, each with four members and four households, each having six members. An isolated family is composed of seven members. There is a solitary household, where as many as nine members reside, and in another household 10 members live together. The mean average size of the non-practising households is 4.9.

LANGUAGE

Mother-tongue of all the families is Bengali with influence of Hindi. The households return their language as *Khotta-Bangla*.

LITERACY AND EDUCATION

The standard of education among the persons living in the non-practising artisan households is quite high in comparison to that among the persons of practising artisan households. The educational standard of the persons living in the non-practising artisan households is given at the bottom in a tabular form.

Twenty persons are literates with or without educational standards and the percentage of literates is 22.7.

The person, who is a Graduate, is a teacher in Jhalda Satyabhama Vidyapith, a Higher Secondary School situated in Jhalda. The School was established in 1938 and is an old institution.

OCCUPATIONAL PATTERN

The members of the non-practising artisan households are not practising craftsmen. They have adopted other means of livelihood. The table below will give the complete picture of the 30 workers in these non-practising households according to their occupation, income and place of work. From the table overleaf one gets a detailed picture of the different craftsmen, who stopped producing ornaments for some reason or other.

TABLE 31

EDUCATIONAL STANDARD OF THE PERSONS IN THE NON-PRACTISING HOUSEHOLDS

Literate (who can read only)	Class I—IV (Primary Stage)	Class V—VIII	Class IX—X	Class XI	Matriculate	School Final	Inter-mediate	Graduate	Total
2	11	4	1	1	..	..	..	1	20

TABLE 32

ACTIVITY OF THE WORKERS IN THE NON-PRACTISING FAMILIES

Category of worker and occupation of the worker	Total worker	Income per year per worker (Rs.)	Area of activity
I. Cultivator	1		
Crop-sharer	1	360	Within the area of Jhalda Municipality, where the worker resides
II. Mining, quarrying, livestock, forestry, fishing, hunting, and plantation, orchards and allied activities	1		
Coal-miner	1	200	Jharia coalfield.
III. Manufacturing	17		
(a) Cycle-repairer	1	365	Jhalda Municipal town
(b) Lathe-machine operator	1	350	Hazaribagh town
(c) Rice, gram-frying and vegetable-frying in oil	5	365 365 60 180 50	Jhalda Municipal town
(d) *Bidi* worker	6	720 720 150 360 360 Unspecified	Ditto
(e) Lac-worker or labourer in Lac Factory	4	100 300 1,560 300	Jhalda Municipal town
IV. Transport, storage & communications	3		
(a) Truck-driver	2	1,440 1,000	Jhalda Municipal town and its neighbouring places
(b) Bullock cart driver	1	300	Ditto
V. Construction	3		
(a) Mason	3	300 240 240	Jhalda Municipal town
VI. Trade & commerce	1		
(a) Retail trade in glass bangles	1	200	Ditto
VII. Other services	4		
(a) School teacher of Higher Secondary School	1	2,162	Jhalda Municipal town
(b) Peon in Municipal Office	2	804 360	Ditto
(c) Day labourer	1	500	Ditto

TABLE 33

ACTIVITIES OF THE NON-WORKERS

Different types of activities	Total	Males	Females
Non-worker	58	25	33
1. Full-time students or children attending school	19	14	5
2. Persons engaged in unpaid home duties (like house wife or other adult females)	19	..	19
3. Dependants (including an infant or child not attending school, a person permanently disabled because of illness or old age)	20	11	9

INCOME

The range of annual income of the different workers is given below :

TABLE 34

INCOME OF THE WORKERS IN NON-PRACTISING FAMILIES

Range of annual income (in Rs.)	No. of workers
Upto 100	3
101— 200	4
201— 300	6
301— 400	8
401— 500	1
501— 600	..
601— 700	..
701— 800	2
801— 900	1
901—1,000	1
1001 and above	3
Income unspecified	1
Total	**30**

The income above Rs. 1,000/- per year is earned by two truck-drivers and by one teacher. The latter, in addition to his pay as a school teacher, earns some extra remuneration from private tuitions.

TABLE 35

THE NON-PRACTISING CRAFTSMEN AT A GLANCE

Sl. No.	Sex	Age	Period of dissociation	Present occupation	Reasons
1	Male	65 years	40 years	Housewife	Shrinkage of customers
2	Female	70 ,,	25 ,,	Shop-owner selling fried vegetables	Death of her husband
3	Male	60 ,,	20 ,,	Cart driver	Shrinkage of customers
4	Female	55 ,,	20 ,,	Sells fried grams	Failure to sell her products
5	Male	42 ,,	20 ,,	Motor-truck-driver	Shrinkage of customers
6	Female	32 ,,	20 ,,	Housewife	Ditto
7	Male	54 ,,	12 ,,	Owner of a cycle-repairing shop	Uncertainty in the sale of products
8	Male	45 ,,	10 ,,	Class IV employee in Municipal Office	Shrinkage of customers
9	Male	32 ,,	10 ,,	Motor-truck-driver	Better income from other occupation
10	Female	28 ,,	7 ,,	Sells fried grams	Lack of sufficient demand
11	Female	60 ,,	6 ,,	Trading in glass bangles	Ditto
12	Male	55 ,,	5 ,,	Class IV employee in Municipal Office	Lack of demand
13	Male	40 ,,	5 ,,	Day labourer	Competition from synthetic bangles
14	Female	30 ,,	5 ,,	Housewife	Ditto
15	Female	40 ,,	3 ,,	Invalid dependant	Ill health
16	Female	28 ,,	2 ,,	Housewife	Shrinkage of customers
17	Female	45 ,,	1 year	Ditto	Lack of demand

PERIOD OF DISSOCIATION FROM THE CRAFT

In some households the parents and the grand parents were directly connected with this craft, but the present members of these households could not undergo any training on account of the early demise of their parents. In some cases they forwent their training, as they lacked in aptitude. Both these secessionists belong to the *Vaisya* group.

But, in the households belonging to the *Chhatri* group there are some members, who had pursued the craft in their lifetime and there are some among them, who still possess the craftsmen's skill.

From the table below one gets a detailed picture of the different craftsmen, who have stopped producing the ornaments for some reason or other.

TABLE 36

PERIOD OF DISSOCIATION OF THE NON-PRACTISING FAMILIES

Period of dissociation from the craft	No. of households
0— 4 years	2
5—10 ,,	6
11—15 ,,	1
16—20 ,,	6
21—25 ,,	1
26—35 ,,	..
36—40 ,,	1
41—45 ,,	..
46—50 ,,	1
Total	**18**

13 households, in which the members were directly connected with the craft in the past at different points of time, were interviewed. No statistics about the deceased members in these households or about the members, who migrated to other places for better livelihood, are available. In the remaining five households nobody, who had practised the craft in the past, is now living.

It is patent from the table that of the 17 persons as many as 10 are females and the rest are males. Ten persons gave up the craft because of shrinkage in the market. It is revealing that the decline had started about 40 years back and is now at its highest point, when only seven craftsmen are pursuing the craft in the practising households.

Though everyone has ceased to practise the craft at a point of desperation and disgust, the case of Sri Dwarik Lahiry, aged 54 years, gives a poignantly painful story. About 12 years back, Sri Lahiry went to the weekly *hat* at Jhalda with all the wares, produced laboriously during the preceding week. He had looked forward to the day in an expectation that he would sell out his products. But, the day was a barren one and he had in vain waited for a customer. No feminine hand was outstretched to put on his bangles. He turned homewards in an empty pocket and with a vacant mind. This was the greatest shock of his life and his artistic mind was torn asunder at the bleak prospects of the craft. He struggled within to hold aloft his head in the pride of his skill, but he could not assure the members of his household the bare minimum of life,—food and clothings. In dejection, he got the tools and implements together in the gloomy shadows of the dusk and burnt them in fire. "And thencefrom, this petty cycle-repairing shop," remarked Sri Lahiry and that is the end of the story.

CHAPTER X

PLACE OF THE CRAFT IN THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

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X

PLACE OF THE CRAFT IN THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

CONSUMERS' PREFERENCE

The study of the craft and the craftsmen will be infructuous without reference to the consumers, their demand for the products and their fascination for any particular design or designs. The term, *consumer's preference* in relation to this particular craft signifies the socio-religious complex, which induces a consumer to choose *Ruli* or lac bangles in preference to other synthetic bangles. As there is no local consumer for *Bala*, the preference for this item could not be studied among the consumers. The use of *Mala* is restricted to a very limited number of clients, the study of whose preferential pattern would but serve little purpose.

To study and ascertain the reasons for the consumer's preference for a specific bangle, 10 consumer households residing in the neighbouring villages, *viz.*, Natundih, Choupat, Tamarbera, Masina and Gokulnagar in the Police Station of Jhalda within a radius of eight kilometers of this production-centre have been selected and interviewed. The use of lac bangles being not so extant as it was years before, the number of consumers is now very much limited. The households have not been selected on the basis of ethnic considerations, rather they have been chosen from among the user households, which require lac bangles for their domestic or ceremonial uses.

The households using lac bangles have been selected from outside Jhalda; no local household, other than the Laheris, uses this product.

Ten consumer households, which use bangles have been selected from three ethnic groups. They are the Mahatos, the Ghasis and the Santals. The Mahatos are Caste Hindus, but the Ghasis are members of a Scheduled Caste and the Santals belong to the Scheduled Tribe throughout West Bengal. The households are constituted by seven Mahatos, two Ghasis and one Santal.

Heads of six Mahato households are engaged in cultivation, heads of three households (two Ghasis and one Santal) work as day-labourers, and the head of the remaining Mahato family is employed in the local Lac Factory as a labourer. Cultivation is the occupation of the majority.

Of the heads of the 10 households, only two persons belong to the age-group 30-35, two more fall in the age-group 40-45 and in the age-group 50-55 there are heads of two households. The head of one family comes in the age-group 55-60 and the head of another belongs to the age-group 60 and above. On analysis of the age-groups of the heads, none is found to be young and the minimum age of the head is observed to be 30 years. All the heads are mature persons, who can give reasoned answers to the queries.

In response to the enquiry heads of all the households point out that only the married women in their households purchase and use lac bangles. They use the bangles as ornaments, induced by their social and religious customs. To them bangles are the symbols of marital tie. They also point out that hard lac bangles protect the conch shell bangles, the women in their households wear from breakage. Lac bangles thus have a utilitarian aspect, apart from the socio-

religious significance. The head of one Ghasi household states that in their marriage ceremonies it is compulsory for the father of the bride to present a pair of *Rulis* to the bride.

It has been observed that in all but one household lac bangles are worn by the wives of the heads of the households. In the Mahato household the married daughter of the widower head uses them. The consumers have purchased the bangles either in pair or as a piece, as and when they required them.

The attempt to get the exact time, when the lac bangles were purchased for use in the households, has been unsuccessful. The interviewees only remember the recent purchases, made in course of a couple of years or so. It is found that one consumer household of the Santal tribe purchased two pairs of lac bangles in the year 1963 and two more pairs in 1964. In each of the four Mahato households two pairs of lac bangles were bought in the same year. In the two Ghasi households two pairs of lac bangles were purchased during 1963 and one pair more during 1964. In two other Mahato households one pair of lac bangles was purchased during the year 1964. In the remaining Mahato household one pair of lac bangles was bought during 1963 and one more pair in 1964.

The consumers purchased the lac bangles from the local artisans at the *hat* at Jhalda. They generally prefer the *Manchkata* design of the *Ruli*. The size, varying between 1½ inches to 2 inches, is generally preferred by the customer as the standard one. A pair of *Ruli* sells at 19 paise at the *hat* of Jhalda.

It is already known that the local artisans produce *Ruli* and *Bala*, the two varieties of bangles, and also *Mala* or neckchain. Of these three local products, *Ruli*, is the most important article which is in demand.

Now, a comparative study between lac bangles of this place and the articles of identical use like glass and plastic bangles, as opined by the consumers may be made.

A pair of glass bangles costs only 12 paise and a pair of plastic bangles costs only 6 paise. A pair of lac bangles is more costly than two other varieties of synthetic bangles. Moreover, lac bangles look more clumsy than the synthetic ones. The finish in the former is not upto the mark as in glass or plastic bangles. The design in lac bangles is more crude than that of the latter. But, on the other hand, lac bangles are more durable and less brittle than the two synthetic bangles.

The synthetic bangles are available at the local *hat* and are sold by the local traders. But, inspite of the easy availability of synthetic bangles of finer shapes and designs, the female members belonging to the interviewed consumer households do not use them as a substitute for lac bangles. The religious sanctity, with which lac bangles have long been associated, are hard to die or fade out. Therefore, women continue to use lac bangles and the use is not out of mere fashion. The consumers purchase new bangles, whenever the old ones are broken. They brook no delay in purchasing new ones, lest some harm should befall them. Still, the taste and outlook of many households, which used the bangles in the past, have changed considerably and many have given up the practice of wearing lac bangles.

Lac bangles are in demand during ceremonial occasions among limited number of consumers. In a marriage ceremony it is a custom among the Ghasi and Mahato married women to wear lac bangles just after marriage. So, inspite of the waning customers, the craftsmen produce the articles for the numbered few, who still use them.

OTHER IMPORTANT CENTRES IN WEST BENGAL

Illambazar, once noted for its lac-industry, has also been a spectator of its decline. No artisan is now engaged in manufacturing ornaments of lac or lacquered wares. A discussion on its past will only serve historical interest.

[1]Hunter, mentioned in 1876 that people of the low castes or semi-aboriginal tribes collected lac from the western jungles in Birbhum and after washing and filtering the crude lac, they processed it into button lac. The description of the stages of production offers a fascinating reading to any curious person. Illambazar was a centre, noted for this lac-industry. M/S. Erskine & Co. had a large shellac and lac-dye factory. Besides, some ten or twelve native factories in the village and its neighbourhood produced lacquered articles and lac-bracelets, which bore the impress of excellent workmanship. These village-industries were conducted by the villagers themselves in their own houses and their social condition was pretty good.

1. Statistical Accounts of Bengal—W. W. Hunter, 1876. Vol IV, Birbhum District. Page—336, 378-79.

In 1910 O'Malley[2] observes that the "industry is now carried on at several small factories in Illambazar and its neighbourhood, where the artisans turn out a number of lacquered articles ; *e.g* , bracelets, ink-pots, rulers, cups, pots and toys, such as imitations of fruits, flowers, and animals, which are said to be of good design and workmanship. The industry is carried on by a class of men called *Nuris*".

In 1951 Mitra[3] states that it "is now almost extinct except at Sriniketan where a lone Nuri from Illambazar works on the Sriniketan establishment and makes excellent toys and other ornaments of lac"

In 1964 an interview[4] with a solitary artisan, named Sri Gopal Chandra Guin of Illambazar at Sriniketan Cottage Industry Section, was conducted by the Extension Officer (Industries), Bolpur-Sriniketan Block Development Office

It was ascertained that in 1921-22 there were about 50 families engaged in the trade, which they pursued to manufacture only *Churi* (bangle) made of lac Two or three families including the interviewee had specialised in the preparation of dolls and toys made of lac and clay and ornament-boxes made of brood lac

Now, no artisan is engaged in the trade at Illambazar The reason for the extinction of this old cottage-industry is said to be due to the influx of the dolls and toys of synthetic substitutes available in the market at much cheaper rates

The interviewee belonged to the village Chatar (Nuripara) of Illambazar Police Station in the district of Birbhum. In 1924, the artisan was brought down to Sriniketan by Late Rathindra Nath Tagore with a view to training apprentices in this craft The figures and decorations on the dolls and toys, turned out at Sriniketan, are different from some of the traditional articles The trainees, who have been initiated in the art of manufacturing the dolls and toys of lac, number 15, till the end of November, 1964 It is reported that none of them, except one or two, stuck to the craft Sri Gopal Chandra Guin is the solitary skilled hand, having the knowledge of a time-old craft But, an octogenarian without any child, Sri Guin is the last person with a vestige of an association of the lac-industry of Illambazar.

2 Gazetteer of the District of Birbhum-L S S O Malley, 1910, Page 75

3 District Census Handbook-Birbhum—A. Mitra, I C S , 1951, Page Lvii

4. Sri A. N Mukherjee, Deputy Director of Industries (C D.P), Govt. of West Bengal, kindly furnished me with an extract from the interview—Editor

CONCLUSION

The households at Jhalda present a look of unconcern, when questioned about the steps, which might improve the state of the craft They do not know what problems have affected the craft. They do neither evoke any interest in the suggestions for improvement of the craft, out of abysmal ignorance and stolid apathy Bangles may cease to be produced But, what is that to them ? They do not feel pained at the idea

After what have been stated before, this chapter even in the hands of an optimist cannot end in a note of hope One has to face the stark reality and, therefore, one is willy-nilly forced to write the epilogue of a tragedy, a dirge on the end of a craft of Jhalda No animated imagination can make the picture of the craft a shade brighter, for the craftsmen have seen their lot and dragging "the struggling savage into day", they can little change the ways of the craft Its inevitable course is directed to the grave and ultimate forgetfulness. The grim struggle has vanquished the 18 non-practising families, which decided to sever their old ties and allowed the five practising craftsmen households to witness the craft to fall in eternal slumber, never to wake in the sunbeams of prosperity That bad days have atrophied the craft and eaten into its vital core may be evidenced from the symptoms of decay

Symptoms of decay

The dwindling number of the practising artisan families apart, one will not encounter any new entrant or apprentice in the craft, learning its techniques and methods Even in the practising households the non-artisan members look for other means of livelihood. There is no child-labour here, not because children do not live there , but because the heads of the families do not want their children to learn the craft, which has no future or at most an uncertain future The cases of the non-practising members in those households hold out a greater promise of better income in other occupations. Therefore, they do not encourage any uninitiated members to suffer by practising the craft fruitlessly. A sincere worker can hardly make both ends meet, as will be evident from the paltry income from the craft shown in the family budget No consumers, except some among the artisans, reside in Jhalda proper. As a result, there is no ready market in Jhalda. The consumers are mostly scattered in and around Jhalda, some far and some near. In the weekly market, the seller artisan has to wait patiently and often in vain he waits for some

consumers to come and purchase the articles. The uncertainties are not changed, even if he is a roving tradesman, selling his wares in distant villages. The time and energy, not to speak of the incidental expenses during the journeys, do not match the sale of a few articles ; loss is the resultant in most cases, inhibiting the artisan from peddling the articles from place to place. The taste of the consumer has not remained static in a changing world. The customers are gradually weaning away from the custom of wearing the lac bangles, prescribed by tradition and long usage. The women in the user households are no longer contented with a pair of lac bangles only. They want something else and thereby 'sing the pealing anthem' of mourning for the craftsmen. Their joy in getting bangles of other materials causes sorrow for the craftsmen and rings the death-knell of lac ornaments.

Causes of decay

The decay of the craft is the manifestation of a process worked out by a number of forces, social and economic, which have shaken the craft to its very roots. The taste and outlook of the consumers have undergone rapid and fantastically sweeping changes. They are not guided by their old sense of values. This has resulted in the shrinkage of the market. The Banias, Rajputs, Kshatriyas, Bhagats (a section of the Oraons) and the Kandus of the region, in addition to those mentioned earlier, used lac bangles before 1956. But, after creation of the district of Purulia in West Bengal in 1956, there began increased contact with Bengali women, who do not normally wear lac ornaments. Improved communications and frequent intercourse with urban areas have shattered the isolation of the villages, where village women have now learnt to take the cue of fashion from their urban sisters. Thus, the women in the distant villages, now easily swept by the wave of change in the world of fashion, have become more fastidious in their selection of ornaments than before. The demand, which their requirements constituted in the past, is now on the wane, leading to the languishment of the craft. The craftsmen do not receive patronage from the Bengali women either, who abhor the ornaments for their rudimentary crude shape and heavy weight. The income of the craftsmen does not balance their labour ; and their deals return very little profit to enable their craft to expand and flourish. The blow, that synthetic bangles like plastic ones have aimed at the craft, are not negligible ; so, the question cannot be shelved. The finer finish, lighter weight, multicoloured designs and cheaper price of the factory-made synthetic bangles do not encourage for long the craftsmen to produce lac bangles to rival them. Lastly, the consumers look upon lac bangles with dismay and impatience, because of the manipulations involved at the time of putting them on wrists. Synthetic bangles are less troublesome to wear, do not call for any skill of the artisan to put them on and finally, are more durable than the lac bangles.

Foreign trade

Incredulous though it may appear in the face of it, it is a matter of joy even for a pessimist that lac bangles are being exported out of India. The lac bangles, that are earning Foreign Exchanges in these hard days of Foreign Trade, are not products of the place. Manufactured in Jaipur in Rajasthan, they are obviously better products. Of the products made of lac, only "lacquered ware (wooden)" is separately specified, on the basis of which the Statistics of the Foreign Trade of India are recorded. From the recorded Statistics in the Office of the Director General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics, Government of India, it appears that there were no exports of this commodity from India during 1963-64 and 1964-65 through Calcutta Customs Zone. But, a long search could disclose at last the whereabouts of an enterprising Firm, Dodsal Private Limited with Office in Bombay, which take interest in the export of lacquered ware. The Firm have so far exported only lac bangles to France, but they are on the look-out to develop this line with some other European countries. The Firm obtain supplies of lac bangles from Jaipur. The figures below will relate to the Foreign Trade with France of this particular commodity.

TABLE 37

FOREIGN EXPORTS OF LAC BANGLES

Year	Name of the commodity	Name of the country	F.O.B. Value
1963-64	Lac bangles	France	Rs. 4,346.40
1964-65	Ditto	Ditto	Rs. 4,664.68
		Total	**Rs. 9,011.08**

Other centres in India

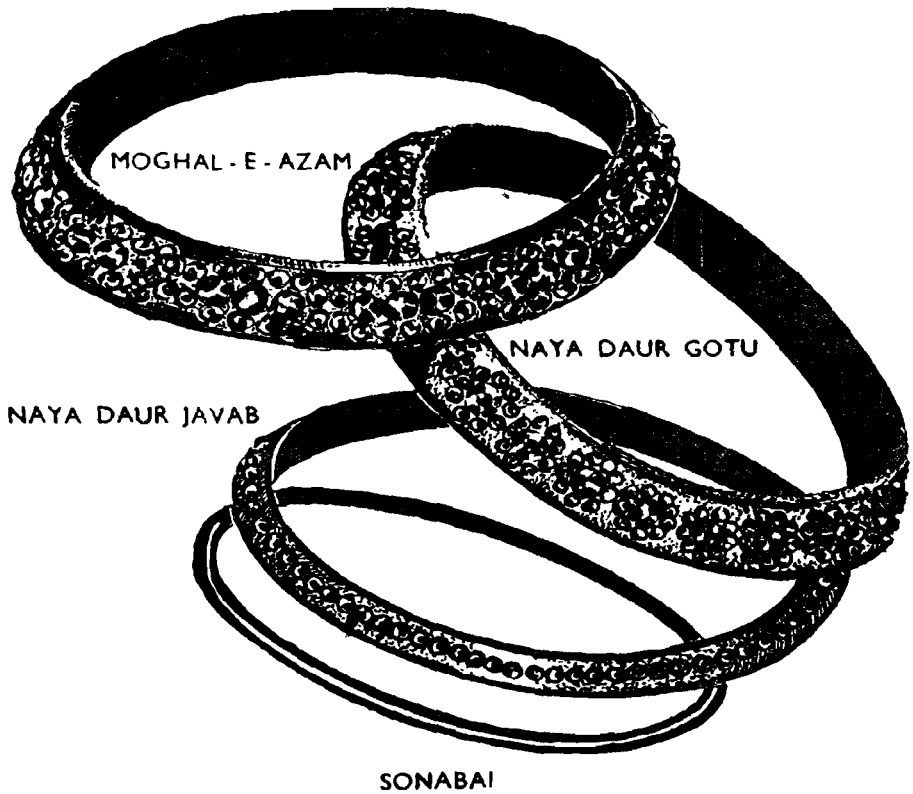
[5]The artisans, engaged in the manufacture of lac bangles in Jaipur City, are all Muslims and are sons of the City. In this cottage industry, confined to a few families, both men and women are engaged and children pick up knowledge of the craft from their parents.

5. Dr. U. B. Mathur, Deputy Superintendent of Census Operations, Rajasthan, kindly supplied with the information—Editor.



Lac bangles of Jaipur City earned about Rs. 10,000/- from France during 1963-65

BANGLES WITH AN OLD HERITAGE



Lac bangles, now studded with glass pieces but with stones during the *Qutubshahi* days, are the products of a noted industry in Hyderabad City with a good market in Andhra Pradesh, Bangalore, Mysore, Bombay and Madras

[6]Besides Jaipur, Hyderabad City has also been noted for the lac bangles studded with stones (now with glass pieces), since the Qutub-shahi days. Eighty workers, engaged in the craft, belong to Muthrasi or Mudiraj, Munnur Reddi and Muslim communities. The bangles have a good market in Andhra Pradesh and also in Bangalore, Mysore, Bombay and Madras. Some of the designs, named after popular films in Hindi, have gained customers in and outside the State of Andhra Pradesh and are popularly known as *Ek-hi-Rasta, Moghal-e-Azam, Naya Daur* etc. A set of eight bangles sells at Rs. 5.00 P. for *Moghal-e-Azam* design and Rs. 10.00 P. for the design, known as *Naya Daur*. The international market for these bangles is not known. It is understood on enquiry that the traders do not export the wares to foreign countries on commercial basis. A few gift-parcels containing the studded bangles have been sent by customers to their friends and relatives staying in the U.S.A., U.K. and in Canada. There may be a possibility of the bangles to have attracted the attention of foreign ladies. But, their reactions remain unknown and unheard.

Suggestions for improvement

Though the craft of Jhalda is in a state of coma, one will wish that it does not die out so soon. That lac bangles of India have caught the attention of foreign ladies, especially so in France, which is proverbially famous for setting new standards of fashion by innovations, is a welcome event to redeem one's lost hopes. Here is a craft, which is fed by a constant supply of raw materials ; therefore, the problem is not posed from that side. Skill has not been lost, either in the practising households or in the non-practising ones of the living generation. What is wanted is some capital to prop up the decaying craft and some organisational measures to rationalise the craftsmen into well-organised Craft-guilds or Cooperative Societies or Training-*cum*-Production Centres. Techniques and methods, designs and tools, if worn out and obsolete, should be rejected with the ruthless hand of a skilled surgeon. Sentimental attachment for time-honoured system will not help the craft to survive. True, consumers will be hard to be won over, especially when they are fascinated by other rival products in a competitive market. Yet, tastes can be shaped, if the artisans can read the spirit of the time. They may carve out some new designs and produce new forms, experiment with some new colours and think over some novel decorative motifs to influence the customers and to appeal to their present aesthetic senses.

But, suggestions as are made are difficult to implement without the help of the Government, enterprising traders interested in traditional handicrafts and lastly of the womenfolk, constituting the consumer class. The Government may advance grants and aids to the craftsmen to enable them to tide over the present crisis. It may also reorient the outlook of the craftsman in the productive techniques, followed in other parts of India, specially at Jaipur and Hyderabad. Loans with easy terms of repayment, spread over a long period, may enable the craftsmen to take interest in their occupation afresh. The enterprising traders may come as a bulk purchaser of the products, turned out by the artisans, who may thus be spared the worries and uncertainties of a shrinking market and losing customers. This step will also demarcate the dividing line between production and marketing. It is the inventive tradesman, who creates demand and who knows how to do so. The craftsmen's place should be in their production-centres and not in the open markets.

But, it is the womenfolk of this country, whose choice will be the final say in the matter. It is their choice alone which may declare the verdict of death for the craft or may give it a renewed lease of life. One will pray them to come as the *Messiah* in the present critical juncture.

6. For details please see Selected Crafts of Andhra Pradesh, Census of India 1961, Vol. II. Part-VIIA (2)—K. V. N. Gowd, Pages—31-49—Editor.

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Note: The books above were not all consulted by me. This bibliography does neither include all the references quoted or the books consulted by me. It was kindly prepared by Sm. Anima Devi of the Socio Economic Research Institute, Calcutta, at my request. Grateful thanks are due to her for this kind help and scholarly assistance—Editor.

LIST OF AGENTS FOR THE SALE OF GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PUBLICATIONS

(as on 17 February 1964)

AGARTALA—
Laxmi Bhandar Books & Scientific Sales (Rest)

AGRA—
1 National Book House, Jeoni Mandi (Reg.)
2 Wadhawa & Co , 45, Civil Lines (Reg.)
3 Banwari Lal Jain, Publishers, Moti Katra (Rest)
4 English Book Depot, Sadar Bazar, Agra Cantt. (Rest)

AHMADNAGAR—
V. T. Jorakar, Prop., Rama General Stores, Navi Path (Rest)

AHMEDABAD—
1 Balgovind Kuber Dass & Co , Gandhi Road (Reg.)
2 Chandra Kant Chiman Lal Vora, Gandhi Road (Reg.)
3 New Order Book Co., Ellis Bridge (Reg.)
4 Mahajan Bros , Opp. Khadia Police Gate (Rest)
5 Sastu Kitab Ghar, Near Relief Talkies, Patthar Kuva, Relief Road (Reg)

AJMER—
1 Book Land, 663, Madar Gate (Reg.)
2 Rajputana Book House, Station Road (Reg.)
3 Law Book House, 271, Hathi Bhata (Reg.)
4 Vijay Bros., Kutchery Road (Rest)
5 Krishna Bros., Kutchery Road (Rest)

ALIGARH—
Friends' Book House, Muslim University Market (Reg)

ALLAHABAD—
1 Superintendent, Printing & Stationery, U.P.
2 Kitabistan, 17-A, Kamla Nehru Road (Reg)
3 Law Book Co., Sardar Patel Marg, P. Box 4 (Reg)
4 Ram Narain Lal Beni Modho, 2-A, Katra Road (Reg.)
5 Universal Book Co , 20, M. G. Road (Reg.)
6 The University Book Agency (of Lahore), Elgin Road (Reg.)
7 Wadhwa & Co , 23, M. G. Marg (Rest)
8 Bharat Law House, 15, Mahatma Gandhi Marg (Rest)
9 Ram Narain Lal Beni Prashad, 2-A, Katra Road (Rest)

AMBALA—
1 English Book Depot, Ambala Cantt. (Reg.)
2 Seth Law House, 8719, Railway Road, Ambala Cantt. (Rest)

AMRITSAR—
1 The Law Book Agency, G. T. Road, Putligarh (Reg)
2 S. Gupta, Agent, Government Publications, Near P. O. Majith Mandi (Reg)
3 Amar Nath & Sons, Near P. O. Majith Mandi (Reg.)

ANAND—
1 Vijaya Stores, Station Road (Rest)
2 Charto Book Stall, Tulsi Sadan, Station Road (Rest)

ASANSOL—
D. N. Roy & R K Roy, Booksellers, Atwal Building (Rest)

BANGALORE—
1 The Bangalore Legal Practitioner Co-operative Society Ltd , Bar Association Building (Reg)
2 S S Book Emporium, 118, Mount Joy Road (Reg.)
3 The Bangalore Press, Lake View, Mysore Road, P O. Box 507 (Reg)
4 The Standard Book Depot, Avenue Road (Reg.)
5 Vichara Sahitya Private Ltd., Balepet (Reg)
6 Makkala Pustaka Press, Balamandira, Gandhinagar (Reg.)
7 Maruthi Book Depot, Avenue Road (Rest)
8 International Book House (P) Ltd., 4F, Mahatma Gandhi Road (Reg.)
9 Navakarnataka Publisher (P) Ltd., Majestic Circle (Rest)

BAREILY—
Agarwal Brothers, Bara Bazar (Reg)

BARODA—
1 Shri Chandrakant Mohan Lal Shah, Raopura (Rest)
2 Good Companions Booksellers, Publishers & Sub-Agent (Rest)
3 New Medical Book House, 540, Madan Zampa Road (Rest)

BEAWAR—
The Secretary, S. D College, Co-operative Stores Ltd (Rest)

BELGHARIA –
Granthlok, Antiquarian Booksellers & Publishers (24-Parganas), 5/1 Amlica Mukherjee Road (Reg)

BHAGALPUR—
Paper Stationery Stores, D. N. Singh Road (Reg)

BHOPAL—
1 Superintendent, State Government Press
2 Lyall Book Depot, Mohd. Din Bldg. Sultania Road (Reg)
3 Delite Books, Opp. Bhopal Talkies (Rest)

BHUBANESWAR—
Ekamra Vidyabhaban, Eastern Tower, Room No. 3 (Rest)

BIJAPUR—
Shri D V. Deshpande, Recognised Law Booksellers, Prop. Vinod Book Depot, Near Shiralshetti Chowk (Rest)

BIKANER—
Bhandani Bros. (Rest)

BILASPUR—
Sharma Book Stall, Sadar Bazar (Rest)

BOMBAY—
1 Supdt. Printing and Stationery, Queens Road
2 Charles Lambert and Co., 101, Mahatma Gandhi Road (Reg.)
3 Co-operator's Book Depot, 5/32, Ahmed Sailor Bldg Dadar (Reg)

LIST OF AGENTS FOR THE SALE OF GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PUBLICATIONS

BOMBAY—

4 Current Book House, Maruti Lane, Raghunath Dadaji St. (Reg.)
5 Current Technical Literature Co. (P) Ltd., India House, 1st floor (Reg.)
6 International Book House Ltd., 9, Ash Lane, M. G. Road (Reg.)
7 Lakkami Book Depot, Girgaum (Reg.)
8 Elpees Agencies, 24, Bhangwadi, Kalbadevi (Reg.)
9 P. P. H. Book Stall, 190-B, Khetwadi Main Road (Reg.)
10 New Book Co., 188-190, Dr. Dadabhai Naoraoji Road (Reg.)
11 Popular Book Depot. Lamington Road (Reg.)
12 Sundar Das Gain Chand, 601, Girgaum Road, Near Princess Street (Reg.)
13 D. B. Taraporewala Sons & Co. (P) Ltd., 210, Dr. Dadabhai Naoroji Road (Reg.)
14 Thacker and Co., Rampart Row (Reg.)
15 N. M. Tripathi Private Ltd , Princess Street (Reg.)
16 The Kothari Book Depot. King Edward Road (Reg.)
17 P. H. Rama Krishna and Sons, 147, Rajaram Bhuvan, Shivaji Park Road No. 5 (Rest)
18 C. Jamnadas and Co., Booksellers, 146-C, Princess St. (Reg)
19 Indo Nath and Co., A-6, Daulat Nagar Borivli (Reg.)
20 Minerva Book Shop, Shop No. 1/80, N Subhas Road (Reg.)
21 Academic Book Co., Association Building, Girgaum Road (Rest)
22 Dominion Publishers, 23, Bell Bldg. Sir P. M Road (Rest)
23 Bombay National History Society, 91, Walkeshwar Road (Rest)
24 Dawamadeo and Co., 16, Naziria Building, Ballard Estate (Rest)
25 Asian Trading Co., 310, the Miraball, P. B. 1505 (Rest)

CALCUTTA—

1 Chatterjee and Co , 3/1, Becharam Chatterjee Lane (Reg.)
2 Dass Gupta and Co. Ltd., 54/3, College Street (Reg.)
3 Hindu Library, 69A, Balaram De Street (Reg.)
4 S. K. Lahiri and Co., P Ltd., College Street (Reg.)
5 M. C. Sarkar and Sons P. Ltd., 14, Bankim Chatterjee Street (Reg.)
6 W. Newman and Co. Ltd., 3, Old Court House Street (Reg.)
7 Oxford Book and Stationery Co., 17, Park Street (Reg.)
8 R. Chambray and Co. Ltd. Kent House, P-33, Mission Road Extension (Reg.)
9 S. C. Sarkar and Sons (P) Ltd., 1C, College Square (Reg.)
10 Thacker Spink and Co. (1933) (P) Ltd., 3, Esplanade East (Reg.)
11 Firma K. L. Mukhopadhaya, 6/1A, Banchha Ram Akrur Lane (Reg.)
12 K. K. Roy, P. Box No. 10210, Calcutta-19 (Rest)
13 Sm. P. D Upadhyay, 77, Muktaram Babu Street (Rest)
14 Universal Book Dist , 8/2, Hastings Street (Rest)
15 Modern Book Depot, 9, Chowringhee Centre (Rest)
16 Soor and Co., 125, Canning Street (Reg.)
17 S. Bhattacharjee, 49, Dharamtala Street (Rest)
18 Mukherjee Library, 10, Sarba Khan Road (Reg.)

CALCUTTA—

19 Current Literature Co., 208, Mahatma Gandhi Road (Reg.)
20 The Book Depository, 4/1, Madan Street (1st floor) (Rest)
21 Scientific Book Agency, Netaji Subhas Road (Rest)
22 Reliance Trading Co., 17/1, Banku Bihari Ghosh Lane, District Howrah (Rest)
23 Indian Book Dist. Co., 6512, Mahatma Gandhi Road (Rest)

CALICUT—

Touring Book Stall (Rest)

CHANDIGARH—

1 Supdt. Govt. Printing and Stationery, Punjab
2 Jain Law Agency, Flat No. 8. Sector No. 22 (Reg.)
3 Rama News Agency, Booksellers, Sector No. 22 (Reg.)
4 Universal Book Store, Booth 25, Sector 22 D (Reg.)
5 English Book Shop, 34, Sector 22 D (Rest)
6 Mehta Bros, 15-Z, Sector 22 B (Rest)
7 Tandan Book Depot, Shopping Centre, Sector 16 (Rest)
8 Kailash Law Publishers, Sector 22 B (Rest)

CHHINDWARA—

The Verma Book Depot. (Rest)

COCHIN—

Saraswat Corporation Ltd., Palliarakav Road (Reg.)

CUTTACK—

1 Press Officer Orissa Sectt.
2 Cuttack Law Times (Reg.)
3 Prabhat K. Mahapatra, Mangalabag, P.B. 35 (Reg.)
4 D. P. Sur & Sons, Mangalabag (Rest)
5 Utkal Stores, Balu Bazar (Rest)

DEHRA DUN—

1 Jugal Kishore & Co , Rajpur Road (Reg)
2 National News Agency, Paltan Bazar (Reg.)
3 Bishan Singh and Mahendra Pal Singh, 318, Chukhuwala (Reg.)
4 Utam Pustak Bhandar, Paltan Bazar (Rest)

DELHI—

1 J. M. Jaina & Brothers, Mori Gate (Reg.)
2 Atma Ram & Sons, Kashmere Gate (Reg.)
3 Federal Law Book Depot, Kashmere Gate (Reg)
4 Bahri Bros., 188, Lajpat Rai Market (Reg.)
5 Bawa Harikishan Dass Bedi (Vijaya General Agencies) P.B. 2027, Ahata Kedara, Chamalian Road (Reg.)
6 Book-Well, 4, Sant Narankari Colony, P.B. 1565 (Reg.)
7 Imperial Publishing Co., 3, Faiz Bazar Daryaganj (Reg.)
8 Metropolitan Book Co., 1, Faiz Bazar (Reg.)
9 Publication Centre, Subzimandi (Reg.)
10 Youngman & Co , Nai Sarak (Reg.)
11 Indian Army Book Depot, 3, Daryaganj (Reg.)
12 All India Educational Supply Co., Shri Ram Bldgs., Jawahar Nagar (Rest)
13 Dhanwant Medical & Law Book House, 1522, Lajpat Rai Market (Rest)
14 University Book House, 15, U. B. Bangalore Road, Jawahar Nagar (Rest)
15 Law Literature House, 2646, Balimaran (Rest)
16 Summer Bros , P.O. Birla Lines (Rest)
17 Universal Book & Stationery Co., 16, Netaji Subhash Marg (Reg.)

LIST OF AGENTS FOR THE SALE OF GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PUBLICATIONS

DELHI—
18 B. Nath & Bros , 3808, Charakhawalan (Chowri Bazar) (Rest)
19 Rajkamal Prakashan P. Ltd., 8, Faiz Bazar (Reg.)
20 Premier Book Co , Printers, Publishers & Booksellers, Nai Sarak (Rest)
21 Universal Book Traders, 80, Gokhale Market (Reg.)
22 Tech & Commercial Book, Coy , 75, Gokhale Market (Rest)
23 Saini Law Publishing Co., 1416, Chabiganj, Kashmere Gate (Rest)
24 G. M. Ahuja, Booksellers & Stationers, 309, Nehru Bazar (Rest)
25 Sat Narain & Sons, 3141, Mohd. Ali Bazar, Mori Gate (Reg)
26 Kitab Mahal (Wholesale Div.) P. Ltd., 28, Faiz Bazar (Reg.)
27 Hindu Sahitya Sansar, Nai Sarak (Rest)
28 Munshi Ram Manohar Lal, Oriental Booksellers & Publishers, P. B. 1165, Nai Sarak (Rest)
29 K. L Seth, Suppliers of Law, Commercial Tech. Books, Shanti Nagar, Ganeshpura (Rest)
30 Adarsh Publishing Service, 5A/10, Ansari Road (Rest)

DHANBAD—
1 Ismag Co-operative Stores Ltd., P O. Indian School of Mines (Reg.)
2 New Sketch Press, Post Box 26 (Rest)

DHARWAR—
1 The Agricultural College Consumers Co-operative Society (Rest)
2 Rameshraya Book Depot , Subhas Road (Rest)
3 Karnatakaya Sahitya Mandira of Publishers and Booksellers

ERNAKULAM—
1 Pai & Co , Cloth Bazar Road (Rest)
2 South India Traders, C/o Constitutional Journal (Reg)

FEROZEPUR—
English Book Depot, 78, Jhoke Road (Reg.)

GAUHATI—
Mokshada Pustakalaya (Reg.)

GAYA—
Sahitya Sadan, Gautam Budha Marg (Reg.)

GHAZIABAD—
Jayana Book Agency (Rest)

GORAKHPUR—
Vishwa Vidyalaya Prakashan, Nakhes Road (Reg.)

GUDUR—
The General Manager, The N. D. C. Publishing & Ptg. Society Ltd. (Rest)

GUNTUR—
Book Lovers Private Ltd , Kadriguda, Chowrasta (Reg.)

GWALIOR—
1 Supdt., Printing & Stationery, M B
2 Loyal Book Depot, Patankar Bazar, Laskhar (Reg.)
3 M. C Daftari, Prop. M. B. Jain & Bros., Booksellers, Sarafa, Lashkar (Rest)

HUBLI—
Pervaje's Book House, Koppikar Road (Reg.)

HYDERABAD—
1 Director, Govt. Press
2 The Swaraj Book Depot, Lakdikapul (Reg)
3 Book Lovers Private Ltd. (Rest)
4 Labour Law Publications, 873, Sultan Bazar (Rest)

IMPHAL—
Tikendra & Sons Book-seller (Rest)

INDORE—
1 Wadhawa & Co., 56, M. G. Road (Reg.)
2 Swarup Brother's Khajuri Bazar (Rest)
3 Madhya Pradesh Book Centre, 41, Ahilya Pura (Rest)
4 Modern Book House, Shiv Vilas Palace (Rest)
5 Navyug Sahitya Sadan, Publishers & Booksellers, 10, Khajuri Bazar (Rest)

JABALPUR—
1 Modern Book House, 286, Jawaharganj (Reg.)
2 National Book House, 135, Jai Prakash Narain Marg (R)

JAIPUR—
1 Government Printing and Stationery Department, Rajasthan
2 Bharat Law House, Booksellers & Publishers, Opp. Prem Prakash Cinema (Reg)
3 Garg Book Co , Tripolia Bazar (Reg.)
4 Vani Mandir, Sawai Mansingh Highway (Reg.)
5 Kalyan Mal & Sons, Tripolia Bazar (Rest)
6 Popular Book Depot, Chaura Rasta (Reg.)
7 Krishna Book Depot, Chaura Rasta (Reg)
8 Dominion Law Depot, Shah Building P. B No. 23 (Rest)

JAMNAGAR—
Swadeshi Vastu Bhandar (Reg.)

JAMSHEDPUR—
1 Amar Kitab Ghar, Diagonal Road, P.B. 78 (Reg.)
2 Gupta Stores, Dhatkidih (Reg.)
3 Sanyal Bror , Booksellers & News Agents, Bistapur Market (Rest)

JAWALAPUR—
Sahyog Book Depot (Rest)

JHUNJHUNU—
1 Shashi Kumar Sarat Chand (Rest)
2 Kapram Prakashan Prasaran, 1/90, Namdha Niwas, Azad Marg (R.)

JODHPUR—
1 Dwarka Das Rathi, Wholesale Books and News Agents (Reg.)
2 Kitab-Ghar, Sojati Gate (Reg)
3 Choppra Brothers, Tripolia Bazar (Reg.)

JULLUNDUR—
1 Hazooria Bros., Mai Hiran Gate (Rest)
2 Jain General House, Bazar Bansanwala (Reg.)
3 University Publishers, Railway Road (Rest)

KANPUR—
1 Advani & Co , P. Box. 100, The Mall (Reg)
2 Sahitya Niketan, Shradhanand Park (Reg)
3 The Universal Book Stall, The Mall (Reg)
4 Raj Corporation, Raj House, P. B. 200, Chowk (Rest)

KARUR—
Shri V. Nagaraja Rao, 26, Srinivasapuram (Rest)

KODARMA—
The Bhagwati Press, P. O Jhumri Tilaiya, Dt. Hazaribagh (Reg.)

KOLHAPUR—
Maharashtra Granth Bhandar, Mahadwar Road (Rest)

KOTA—
Kota Book Depot (Rest)

KUMTA—
S. V. Kamta, Booksellers & Stationers (N. Kanara) (Reg.)

LIST OF AGENTS FOR THE SALE OF GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PUBLICATIONS

LUCKNOW—
1 Soochna Sahitya Depot (State Book Depot)
2 Balkrishna Book Co. Ltd , Hazratganj (Reg.)
3 British Book Depot, 84, Hazratganj (Reg.)
4 Ram Advani, Hazratganj, P. B. 154 (Reg.)
5 Universal Publishers (P) Ltd., Hazratganj (Reg.)
6 Eastern Book Co., Lalbagh Rd. (Reg.)
7 Civil & Military Educational Stores, 106/B, Sardar Bazar (Rest)
8 Acquarium Supply Co., 213, Faizabad Road (Rest)
9 Law Book Mart, Amin-ud-Daula Park (Rest)

LUDHIANA—
1 Lyall Book Depot, Chaura Bazar (Reg.)
2 Mohindra Brothers, Katcheri Road (Rest)
3 Nanda Stationery Bhandar, Pustak Bazar (Rest)
4 The Pharmacy News, Pindi Street (Rest)

MADRAS—
1 Supdt., Govt. Press, Mount Road
2 Account Test Institute, P. O. 760 Emgore (Reg.)
3 C. Subbiah Chetty & Co., Triplicane (Reg.)
4 K. Krishnamurty, P. B. 384 (Reg.)
5 Presidency Book Supplies, 8, Pycrofts Road, Triplicane (Reg.)
6 P. Vardhachary & Co., 8. Linghi Chetty Street (Reg.)
7 Palani Parchuram, 3, Pycrofts Road, Triplicane (Reg.)
8 NCBH Private Ltd., 199, Mount Road (Rest)
9 V. Sadanand, The Personal Bookshop, 10, Congress Bldg. 111, Mount Road (Rest)

MADURAI—
1 Oriental Book House, 258, West Masi Street (Reg.)
2 Vivekananda Press, 48, West Masi Street (Reg.)

MANDYA SUGAR TOWN—
K. N. Narimhe Gowda & Sons (Rest)

MANGALORE—
U. R. Shenoye Sons, Car Street, Post. Box 128 (Reg.)

MANJESHWAR—
Mukunda Krishna Nayak (Rest)

MATHURA—
Rath & Co., Tilohi Bldg. Bengali Ghat (Rest)

MEERUT—
1 Prakash Educational Stores, Subhas Bazar (Reg.)
2 Hind Chitra Press, West Kutchery Road. (Reg.)
3 Loyal Book Depot, Chhipi Tank (Reg.)
4 Bharat Educational Stores, Chippi Tank (Rest)
5 Universal Book Depot, Booksellers & News Agents (Rest)

MONGHYR—
Anusandhan, Minerva Press Building (Rest)

MUSSOORIE—
1 Cambridge Book Depot, The Mall (Rest)
2 Hind Traders (Rest)

MUZAFFARNAGAR—
1 Mittal & Co., 85-C, New Mandi (Rest)
2 B. S. Jain & Co., 71, Abupura (Rest)

MUZAFFARPUR—
1 Scientific & Educational Supply Syndicate (Reg.)
2 Legal Corner, Tikmanio House Amgola Road (Rest)
3 Tirhut Book Depot (Rest)

MYSORE—
1 H. Venkataramiah & Sons, New Statue Circle (Reg.)
2 Peoples Book House, Opp. Jagan Mohan Palace (Reg.)

MYSORE—
3 Geeta Book House, Booksellers & Publishers Krishnamurthipuram (Rest)
4 News Papers House, Lansdowne Building (Rest)
5 Indian Mercantile Corporation, Toy Palace Ramvilas (Rest)

NADIAD—
R. S. Desay, Station Road (Rest)

NAGPUR—
1. Supdt., Govt. Press & Book Depot (Reg.)
2. Western Book Depot, Residency Road (Reg.)
3. The Asstt. Secretary, Mineral Industry Association, Mineral House (Rest)

NAINITAL—
Coural Book Depot, Bara Bazar (Rest)

NANDED—
1 Book Centre, College Law General Books, Station Road (Rest)
2 Hindustan General Stores, Paper & Stationery Merchants P. B. No. 51 (Rest)
3 Sanjoy Book Agency, Vazirabad (Rest)

NEW DELHI—
1 Amrit Book Co., Connaught Circus (Reg.)
2 Bhawani & Sons, 8F, Connaught place (Reg.)
3 Central News Agency, 23/90, Connaught Circus (Reg.)
4 Empire Book Depot, 278, Aliganj (Reg.)
5 English Book Stores, 7-L, Connaught Circus P. O. No. 328 (Reg.)
6 Faqir Chand & Sons., 15-A, Khan Market (Reg.)
7 Jain Book Agency, C-9, Prem House, Connaught Place (Reg.)
8 Oxford Book & Stationery Co., Scindia House (Reg.)
9 Ram Krishna & Sons (of Lahore) 16/B, Connaught Place (Reg.)
10 Sikh Publishing House, 7-C, Connaught Place (Reg.)
11 Suneja Book Centre, 24/90, Connaught Circus (Reg.)
12 United Book Agency, 31, Municipal Market, Connaught Circus (Reg.)
13 Jayana Book Depot, Chhaparwala Kuan, Karol Bagh (Reg.)
14 Navayug Traders, Desh Banhdu Gupta Road, Dev Nagar (Reg.)
15 Sarawati Book Depot, 15, Lady Hardinge Road (Reg.)
16 The Secretary, Indian Met. Society, Lodi Road (Reg.)
17 New Book Depot, Latest Books, Periodicals, Sty. & Novelles, P.O. No. 96, Connaught Place (Reg.)
18 Mehra Brothers, 50-G, Kakaji (Reg.)
19 Luxmi Book Stores, 42 Janpath (Rest)
20 Hindi Book House, 2, Janpath (Rest)
21 People Publishing House (P) Ltd., Rani Jhansi Road (Reg.)
22 R. K. Publishers, 23, Beadon Pura, Karol Bagh (Rest)
23 Sharma Bros. 17, New Market, Moti Nagar (Reg)
24 Aspki Dukan, 5/5777, Dev Nagar (Rest)
25 Sarvodaya Service, 66A-1, Rohtak Road P B. 2521 (Rest)
26 H. Chandson, P. B. No 3034 (Rest)
27 The Secretary, Federation of Association of Small Industry of India, 23/B/2, Rohtak Road (Rest)
28 Standard Booksellers & Stationers, Palam Enclave (Rest)
29 Lakshmi Book Depot, 57, Regarpura (Rest)

LIST OF AGENTS FOR THE SALE OF GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PUBLICATIONS

NEW DELHI—
30 Sant Ram Booksellers, 16, New Municipal Market, Lody Colony (Rest)

PANJIM—
1 Singhals Book House P. O. B. 70 Near the Church (Rest)
2 Sagoon Gaydev Dhoud, Book-Sellers, 5-7, Rua, 31 de Jameria (Rest)

PATHANKOT—
The Krishna Book depot, Main Bazar (Rest)

PATIALA—
1 Supdt., Bhupendra State Press
2 Jain & Co., 17, Shah Nashin Bazar (Reg.)

PATNA—
1 Supdt.. Govt. Printing (Bihar)
2 J. N. P. Agarwal & Co., Padri-Ki-Haveli Raghunath Bhawan (Reg.)
3 Luxmi Trading Co., Padri-Ki-Haveli (Reg.)
4 Moti Lal Banarsi Dass, Bankipore (Reg.)
5 Bengal Law House, Chowhatta (Rest)

PITHORAGARH—
Maniram Punetha & Sons (Rest)

PONDICHERRY—
M/s. Honesty Book House, 9 Rue Duplix (R.)

POONA—
1 Deccan Book Stall, Deccan Gymkhana (Reg.)
2 Imperial Book Depot, 266, M. G. Rd. (R.)
3 International Book Service, Deccan Gymkhana (Reg.)
4 Raka Book Agency, Opp. Natu's Chawl, Near Appa Balwant Chowk (Reg.)
5 Utility Book Depot, 1339, Shivaji Nagar (Rest)

PUDUKOTTAI—
Shri P N. Swaminathan Sivam & Co., East Main Road (Rest)

RAJKOT—
Mohan Lal Dossabhai Shah, Booksellers and Sub-agents (Reg.)

RANCHI—
1 Crown Book Depot, Upper Bazar (Reg.)
2 Pustak Mahal, Upper Bazar (Rest)

REWA—
Supdt., Govt. State Emporium V. P.

ROURKELA—
The Rourkela Review (Rest)

SAHARANPUR—
Chandra Bharata Pustak Bhandar, Court Road (Rest)

SECUNDERABAD—
Hindustan Diary Publishers, Market Street (Reg.)

SILCHAR
Shri Nishitto Sen Nazirpatti (Reg.)

SIMLA—
1 Supdt., Himachal Pradesh Govt.
2 Minerva Book Shop, The Mall (Reg.)
3 The New Book Depot, 79, The Mall (Reg.)

SINNAR—
Shri N. N. Jakhadi, Agent, Times of India Sinnar (Nasik) (Rest)

SHILLONG—
1 The Officer-in-Charge, Assam Govt., B. D.
2 Chapla Bookstall, P. B. No. 1 (Rest)

SONEPAT—
United Book Agency (Reg.)

SRINAGAR—
The Kashmir Bookshop, Residency Road (Reg.)

SURAT—
Shri Gajanan Pustakalaya, Tower Road (Reg.)

TIRUCHIRAPALLI—
1 Kalpana Publishers, Wosiur (Reg.)
2 S. Krishnaswami & Co., 35, Subhash Chandra Bose Road (Reg.)
3 Palamiappa Bros. (Rest)

TRIVANDRUM—
1 International Book Depot, Main Road (Reg.)
2 Reddear Press & Book Depot, F. B. No. 4 (Rest)

TUTICORIN—
Shri K. Thiagarajan, 10-C, French Chapal Road (Rest)

UDAIPUR—
1 Jagdish & Co., Inside Surajapole (Rest)
2 Book Centre, Maharana, Bhopal Consumers, Co-op. Society Ltd. (Rest)

UJJAIN—
Manak Chand Book Depot, Sati Gate (Rest)

VARANASI—
1 Students Friends & Co., Lanka (Rest)
2 Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, Gopal Mandir Road, P. B. 8 (Reg.)
3 Glob Book Centre (Rest)
4 Kohinoor Stores, University Road, Lanka (Reg.)
5 B. H. U. Book Depot (Rest)

VELLORE—
A. Venkatasubhan, Law Booksellers (Reg.)

VIJAYAWADA—
The Book & Review Centre, Eluru Road, Governpet (Rest)

VISAKHAPATNAM—
1 Gupta Brothers, Vizia Bldg. (Reg.)
2 Book Centre, 11/97, Main Road (Reg.)
3 The Secy. Andhra University, General Co-op. Stores Ltd. (Rest)

VIZIANAGARAM—
Sarda & Co. (Rest)

WARDHA—
Swarajeya Bhandar, Bhorji Market (Reg.)

FOR LOCAL SALE

1 Govt. of India Kitab Mahal, Janpath, Opp. India Coffee House, New Delhi
2 Govt. of India Book Depot, 8, Hastings Street, Calcutta
3 High Commissioner for India in London, India House, London, WC. 2

RAILWAY BOOKSTALL HOLDERS

1 S/S. A. H. Wheeler & Co., 15, Elgin Road, Allahabad
2 Gahlot Bros., K. E. M. Road, Bikaner
3 Higginbothams & Co. Ltd., Mount Road, Madras.
4 M. Gulab Singh & Sons Private Ltd., Mathura Road, New Delhi

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1 S/S. Education Enterprise Private Ltd., Kathumandu (Nepal)
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