ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

NO. 13



CENSUS OF INDIA 1961

VOLUME—I

MONOGRAPH SERIES

PART V—B (iv)

BUKSA

A Scheduled Tribe in Uttar Pradesh

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FOREWORD

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

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

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

For conducting the ethnographic studies, a number of ancillary operations are undertaken by the Social Studies Unit of the Office of the Registrar General, India, as well as the staff of the Superintendents of Census Operations in the various States. These ancillary operations include: (i) compilation of available information on each Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe and preparation of bibliography in respect of them; (ii) preparation and interpretation of maps showing distribution of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes over time and space; and (iii) special studies on cultural, technological and economic changes taking place among the various tribal communities.

Dr. B. K. Roy Burman, Deputy Registrar General, Social Studies Unit, assisted by Shri N. G. Nag, Officer on Special Duty and Shri A. M. Kurup, Research Officer is coordinating all these studies at the central level. I avail of this opportunity to extend my warm thanks to all my colleagues who have undertaken various studies on different aspects of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of India.

Shri Chandra Sen, Senior Technical Assistant, of the Registrar General's Office conducted the field investigation on the Buksas of Uttar Pradesh and prepared the draft. Shri N. G. Nag and Dr. B. K. Roy Burman edited the report.

NEW DELHI
November, 1970.

A. CHANDRA SEKHAR
Registrar General, India

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

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

labour and next to them a high proportion is found in cultivation and also that there is considerable diversification of occupation, the following questions of sociological and practical importance arise:—

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

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

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

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

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

general nature, which have bearing on the different aspects of the lives of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of the country. These subsidiary studies are as follows:—

1. Shifting cultivation in Santal Parganas of Bihar and Garo Hills of Assam.
2. Pattern of Rehabilitation of displaced tribals of Rourkela.
3. Socio-economic survey of the Scheduled Areas of Rajasthan.
4. Socio-economic developments among the Hillmen of North-East India.
5. Social structure and cultural orientation of Christians converted from Scheduled Castes.
6. Traditional right of scavenging as claimed by scavengers in urban areas.
7. Grouping of castes and tribes with reference to occupation and inter-group and intra-group comparative study on the basis of the data available in earlier censuses.
8. Social mobility movements among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

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

The present report on Buksa of Uttar Pradesh is one of the monographs included in the series of ethnographic studies. The field investigation was undertaken by Shri Chandra Sen under the guidance of Shri N. G. Nag, Officer on Special Duty. The draft report prepared by Shri Chandra Sen was revised by Shri Nag. It was finally edited by Shri Nag and myself.

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

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

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

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

B. K. ROY BURMAN

BUKSA - A SCHEDULED TRIBE IN UTTAR PRADESH

Name and Identity

The Bhoksas or Buksas were first included in the category of Scheduled Castes in Uttar Pradesh in 1950 (*vide* President's Order of 1950), but the community was deleted from the list of Scheduled Castes in 1956 and placed under the category of 'Other Backward Classes'. The Backward Classes Commission (1954) had, however, earlier recommended the inclusion of Bhoksa or Buksa in the list of Scheduled Tribes instead of its being treated as a Scheduled Caste. It may be worthwhile to mention that until recently no community was notified as a Scheduled Tribe in Uttar Pradesh. However, many competent observers were in favour of inclusion of the Buksa in the list of Scheduled Tribes. Now Buksa (Bhoksa) has been declared as a Scheduled Tribe in Uttar Pradesh along with four other communities *vide* the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) (Uttar Pradesh) Order, 1967.

Earlier writers have referred to this community as Buxa, Bhuksa, Bhogsa and Bhoksa, but in the 1967 Order, it has been spelled as 'Buksa', hence in this monograph on the community the name 'Buksa' has been adopted.

According to Majumdar (1944, p. 66), Buksas are a cognate tribe of Tharus and most probably an earlier off-shoot of the main body of the latter. He has further mentioned, "Bhoksas are the nearest kins of the Tharus. There is little doubt that they belong to the same ethnic stock and it is perhaps true that both of these groups had come to Tarai at the same time". Crooke also holds a similar view and has stated that the Bhoksa is "a tribe analogous to Tharus found in the Tarai and Bhabhar from Pilibhit district on the east to Chandpur on the Ganges in the West ....." (1896, Vol. : p. 55).

During the field investigations in Bazpur tahsil of Nainital district, where the Buksas are found in large number, the above statements were verified from some elderly and knowledgeable persons of the Buksa community. These persons agreed that the Buksas and the Tharus originally belonged to the same stock but in course of time, the former have become more Hinduised and have succeeded in obtaining the services of Brahmin priests whereas the latter have remained more or less the same and have not been able to secure the services of Brahmin priests. Thus, according to this point of view through their growth history they have cleavaged into two distinct communities.

The etymological meaning of the word 'Buksa' is not very clear. According to some informants, the area of Tarai where the Buksas reside, was formerly infested by *Bhakshi* (cannibals) and when they (Buksas) came to the area, they conquered and exterminated them and came to be referred to as *Bhoksa*, the killer of *Bhakshi*. There are, however, other views as well about the origin of the name. In Hindi language *Ban* means forest and *Bonk* means forest dwellers. According to one view, since the Buksas were living in the forests, they might have been called 'Bonksa' and due to corrupt use of the word, were later came to be known as Bhoksa or Buksa.

Origin and History

During the present study some Buksas claimed to be the old inhabitants of Tarai and Bhabar areas of Uttar Pradesh who had come from outside and settled there in the remote past. But they had no idea about the period, when they actually settled in their present habitat. They could only tell that they came to this area about one thousand years ago when no other community was living here. From the earlier references in history, etc., it is more or less corroborated that their settlement in the Tarai area must be quite old. A reference to the Boksas is found in *Ain-i-Akbari* (A chronicle of historical events during King Akbar's time). It makes a mention of 'Bhuksai' or 'Bhoksar'—a mahal of Tarai region, during the region of Mughal King, Akbar. The location of 'Bhoksar' referred to in the chronicle coincides with the present pargana of Gadarpur in Bazpur tahsil of Nainital district which is even now an area of fairly high concentration of the Buksas.

According to Crooke, (*Ibid* : p. 56), there are a number of legends narrated by the Buksas, which trace their origin from the Rajputs. According to him some say that they came from *dakshna* (south), while the others trace their origin from Delhi; yet a few others hold the view that they were expelled by the Marhattas from the South. According to the Mehra or Dehra Dun branch of Buksas, they came into the district from beyond the Ganges at the invitation of Raja Sukh Deo Sah of Tarai, who used them as guides through the jungles on his shooting expeditions. They fix this immigration into Dehra Dun at some five or six generations from the present day (1896). It may be mentioned that according to the same author the name Mehra is applied only to the Dehra Dun section.

According to Elliot (1869, Vol. : I; p. 20), the Buksas claim to be Panwar Rajputs and assert that their chief, Udvaijit, was driven away from his home after a quarrel with his brother, Jagat Rao, the Raja of Dharanagar, and came to dwell with a few followers in *banbasa* (exile) on the banks of Sarda river. Udvaijit had not been there long, when his aid was solicited by the Raja of Kumaon whose territories

required defence against some of the neighbouring powers. The efforts of Panwars succeeded in defending the territories of Raja whose gratitude induced him to offer his defenders an asylum in his territories. They thereupon left their *banbasa* and came to stay in their present abode.

According to Blunt, "there are two accounts of their origin. One a comparatively simple story which makes them Rajputs from Delhi who either voluntarily settled in, or were exiled to, the Tarai during Moghul period. The other story is to the effect that certain Rajputs, being about to rebel against the Moghul power, sent their wives with their maid servants and an escort of *Kahars* to the safety, to this wild tract. The rebellion failed, their husbands were all killed, and the Bhoksa were the offsprings of the union of the Rajput women and their *Kahar* servants. In support of this story they point to certain customs of the caste which all presuppose the superiority of women over men—namely, that their women will not eat food cooked by the men; they eat indoors, whilst men eat out of the doors; that they do the marketing, whilst those men attend them to carry home their purchases". (Blunt, 1931; p. 218).

During the field investigations conducted in the area in connection with the present study it was gathered that they did not have much idea about the tradition of their origin. However, many of the elderly Buksas informed that they had migrated from Dharanagar. The informants narrated a legend of their migration, which is as follows: The king of Dharanagar had two wives. Once while the king had gone to the jungle for meditation, each of his wives gave birth to a son at an interval of twenty four hours. The elder one was named Jagat Deo and the younger one Randhor. As a rule, Jagat Deo should have become rightful occupant of the throne, but it so happened that the messenger sent by Jagat Deo's mother to inform the king was slow and lazy; while the other messenger sent by Randhor's mother was smart and clever and he informed the king earlier about Randhor's birth. As a result, the king declared Randhor as his successor. Later on, Jagat Deo was exiled by his younger brother and the former who is believed to be the ancestor of the Buksas came to live in the area of Bhabar and Tarai.

Though the Buksas of Bannakhera village in Bazpur tahsil were unable to recount any other legend of their origin, they stressed that they came to settle in the area hundreds of years ago, from Dharanagar, for the fear of conversion to Islam under the Muslim rule. It is said that at that time the Raja of Kashipur was ruling the area who settled them there along with other communities. He made the settlers from the different communities drink water from the same *lota* (jug). As a result all the communities were brought at the same level and commensal relations were established among people of diverse origin. What was the motivation of the king for this alleged near revolutionary behaviour by the standard of the time is not clear; but it appears that while this legend on the one hand legitimises the traditional social structure of the area, based on comparatively little ritual stratification; it on the other, provides a potential link with the caste idiom of Hinduism, which can be made operational under suitable conditions.

Distribution and Population Trend

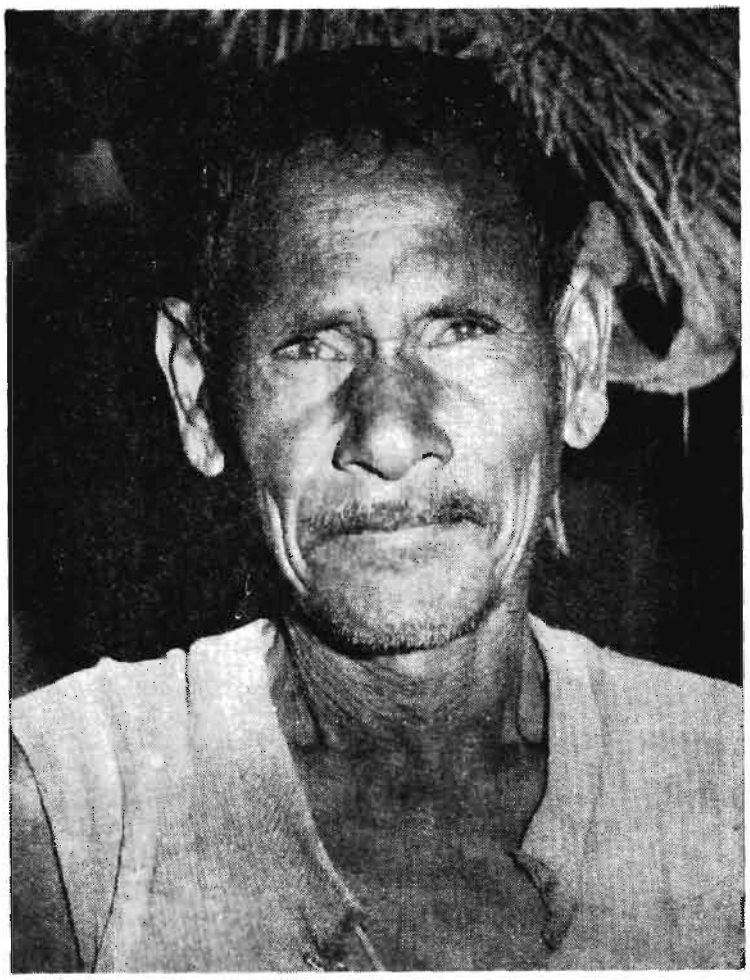
The Buksas are found in the forest tracts in the foot-hills of the districts of Nainital, Bijnor and Garhwal. In the Census of 1921, they were reported from the districts of Faizabad, and Sultanpur and also Benaras State. A small number, 145, was also recorded in Dehra Dun during the same Census. But in 1931 Census they were found only in the three districts mentioned earlier. During the 1961 Census also they were found to be confined to these three districts only.

The district-wise break up of the population of the Buksas as returned in the different Censuses has been furnished in the table below.

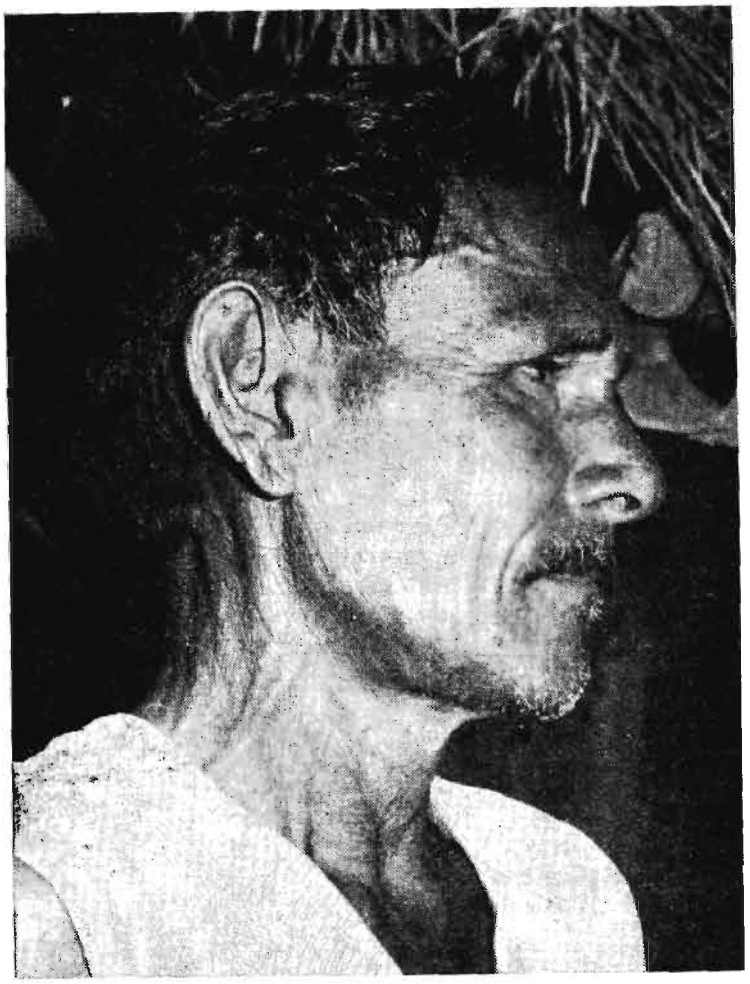
District	Census Year							
	1961*	1941	1931	1921	1911	1901	1891	1881@
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Bijnor	783	202	304	1,177	—	288	—	—
2. Garhwal	633	47	631	7	518	256	—	—
3. Nainital	9,330	—	6,683	6,285	5,974	4,364	1,208	—
4. Faizabad	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—
5. Sultanpur	—	—	—	18	—	—	—	—
6. Benaras State	—	—	—	120	—	—	—	—
7. Dehra Dun	—	—	—	—	145	—	—	—
8. Bulandsahar	—	—	—	—	—	16	—	—
9. Agra	—	25	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	10,746	274	7,618	7,610	6,637	5,064	1,208	5,664

*Estimated.

@District-wise break up is not available.



1. Front view of a Buksa man.



2. Profile of a Buksa man.



3. Front view of a Buksa woman.



4. Profile of a Buksa woman.

From the previous table, it is clear that Nainital district has remained the most important area of concentration of the Buksas, except during 1941 Census. As it is well known that the 1941 Census was not complete in several aspects, the figure in relation to this Census can be overlooked. The other two areas, which have shown some concentration of the Buksas, with a degree of consistency are Garhwal and Bijnor. The erratic changes registered during the different Censuses, seem to reflect more, the accuracies of enumeration, than any actual change of population. The number of Buksas returned from other areas during some of the Censuses has perhaps represented only temporary migrants, because they are not known to have permanent settlements in those areas.

If the total population of the Buksas, as referred in the various Censuses is considered some interesting facts come out. The following table will illustrate variation in population of the Buksas from 1881 to 1961 in the State as a whole.

Census Year	Population	Variation
1881	5,664	—
1891	1,208	—4,456
1901	5,064	+3,856
1911	6,637	+1,573
1921	7,610	—27
1931	7,618	+8
1941	274	—7,344
1961	10,476	+10,195

It is obvious from the statement that the data relating to 1891 and 1941 Censuses are grossly unreliable. If these are left out the Buksa population registered either slight decline or slow rise in the different Censuses during 1881 to 1931. On the other hand during 1931-61, the community has registered a sharp rise in its population. If again the eighty years span of 1881 to 1961 is considered it is found that during this period, the population has almost doubled. This seems to be quite significant in the context of the fact that during 1961 for thousand males only 785 females were estimated in the community. Earlier, in the 1931 Census the sex ratio was 878. The considerable rise in the population particularly during 1931-61 when the sex ratio was low and showed a declining trend, seems to suggest that either there has been accretic of population migration or by people of other communities returning as Buksas or there has been under enumeration of females.

Present Distribution

According to 1961 estimates the district-wise distribution of the Buksas in the Uttar Pradesh is as follows :

1. Bijnor	783
2. Garhwal	633
3. Nainital	9,330
Total	10,746

In Nainital district, where there is overwhelming majority of Buksas, they have been reported mostly from Bazpur tahsil followed by the Kashipur and Ramnagar tahsils. From the revenue records of the tahsils it is found that 41 villages have been noted as 'Bhoksari' villages in the Bazpur tahsil. They are as follows :

Bhoksari villages in Bazpur Tahsil of Nainital District

Pargana—Bazpur	Pargana—Gadarpur
1. Guljarpur	1. Madanapur
2. Shyamalpuri	2. Buksaura
3. Bajawala	3. Khanpur east
4. Ratanpuri	4. Khanpur west
5. Faridpur	5. Bipia Daulat
6. Rajpura No.1	6. Maholi jangal
7. Guladia Jivra	7. Nandpur
8. Khushalpur	8. Barirai
9. Kilabandvari	9. Mukandpur
10. Bhikampuri	10. Kopa
11. Mansia	11. Kulha
12. Khammari	12. Jajarpur
13. Chanakpur	13. Alkhadai
14. Barhauni	14. Andkhera
15. Hajira	15. Gadarpur
16. Haripura	16. Pipilia
17. Thapak Nagla	
18. Harsan	
19. Madaia Hattu	
20. Bannakhera Sari	
21. Vijay Rampura	
22. Shivpuri	
23. Banskhera	
24. Banskheri	
25. Bhagna Nagla	

There are only a few Buksa villages in Kashipur and Ramnagar tehsils, there being 10-20 villages in each.

Physical Characteristics

As early as in 1865, Dr. J. L. Steward made some somatoscopic observations on the Buksas of Bijnor district and described them as follows : "The members of the trible are of short stature and very sparse in habit, in both respects, somewhat exceeding the ordinary Hindu peasant of the district, from whom they do not differ much in general build or complexion. No measurements of their crania were made but so far as ordinary inspection goes their features are marked by several of the Turanian peculiarities. Thus, the eyes are small, the opening of eyelids being narrow, linear and horizontal. (The inner angle not inclined downwards so far as I observed). The face is very broad across the cheek

bones, and the nose is depressed, thus increasing the apparent flatness of the face, the jaw is prognathous and the lower lip thick, and the moustache and beard are very scanty". (Stewart, 1865, Part II; pp. 150-151).

A preliminary field enquiry among the Buksas in Pipalsana village in Kashipur tahsil of Nainital district also corroborates the statement of Dr. Stewart. Bhattacharya has described the physical features of Buksas of Nainital as follows : "They are a physically well-built people having a combination of both the Rajput and the Mongoloid traits. They are medium-statured and possess skin colour varying from light brown to medium brown. Some of the Bhoksa men and women have fine leptorrhine noses, light skin colour, long medium waved hair and they have no oblique eye slits and epicanthic folds. The women are slender and graceful in youth and quite attractive in appearance. In a few cases, the Bhoksas do show the presence of Mongoloid eye-slits and folds in general though not as a rule, but the existence of fine nose and normal growth of hair on body and face cannot be denied. (Bhattacharya, 1957, *Vanyajati*, Vol. V; No. 4, pp. 184-185).

During the field investigations for the present study, height vertex and somatoscopic observations were recorded in respect of some unrelated adult male Buksas in Bazpur tahsil of Nainital district. An analysis thereof is given below :

The Buksas are generally of medium stature, their height vertex ranges from 157.5 cms. to 170 cms. with the mean being 164.5 cms. The tallest individual recorded in the sample was 170 cms. in height and the shortest one was 157.5 cms. Their skin colour on exposed portions varies from yellow brown to medium brown, 20% having yellow brown skin colour and the remaining 80% having medium brown. The hairs on their head are straight or tow wavy. They usually have round faces with medium cheek bones; in some cases, however, their cheek bones are quite prominent. The lips are mostly medium in thickness. Slight prognathism (projection of face or jaws) is evidenced in only 15% cases, while marked prognathism is found in 7% cases, the remaining 78% do not betray any prognathism at all. Their eye-slits are mostly straight as only 15% have oblique eyes, and in only 7% cases epicanthic fold is present, while it is absent in the remaining 93% cases.

The above data on physical characteristics of the Buksas, collected during the present study, by and large support the data on physical features of Buksas furnished by Bhattacharya (ibid). It is noticed that the Mongoloid features are not very predominant though certainly noticeable among some individuals.

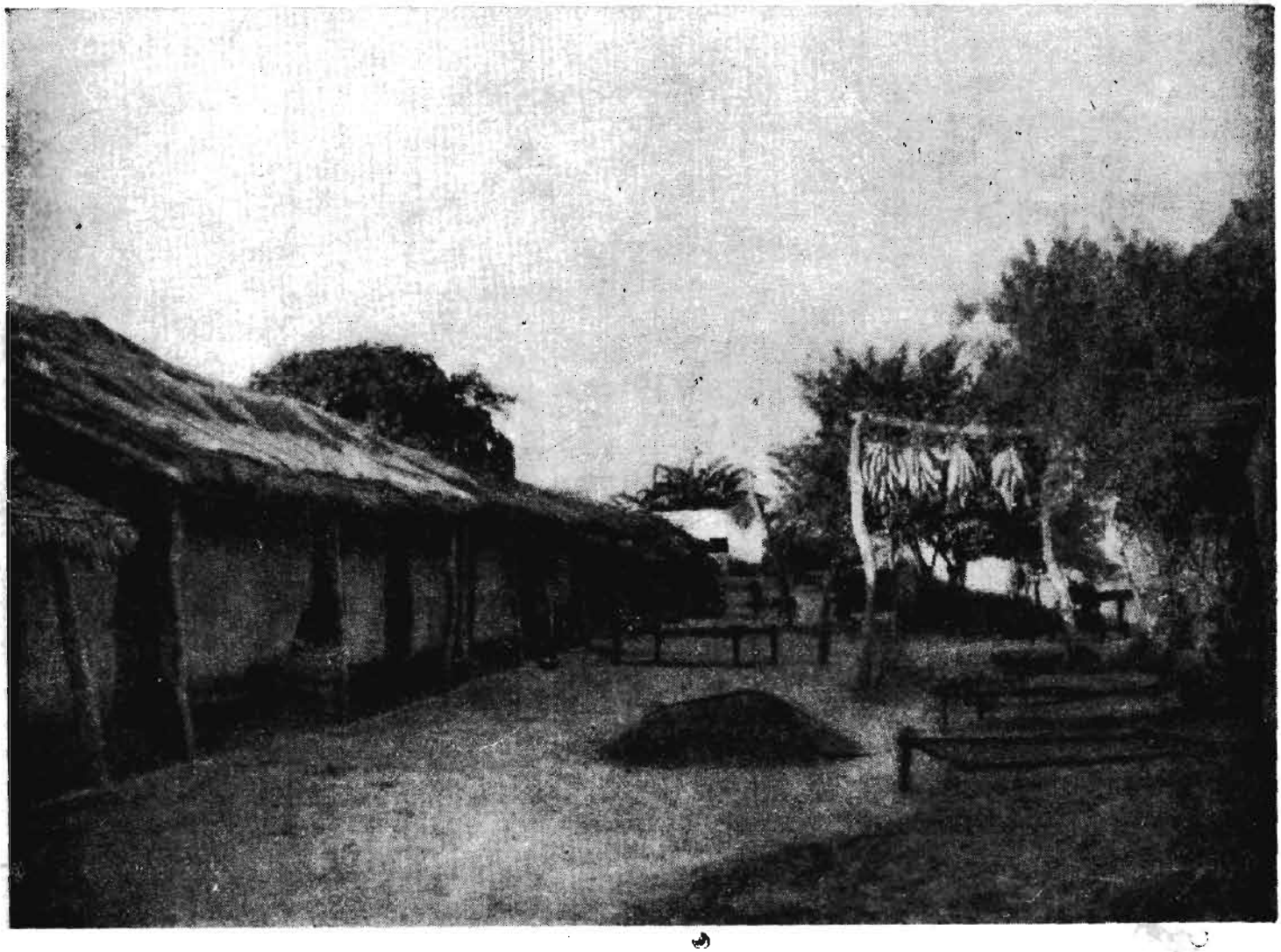
Family

The family among the Buksas is patrilineal, the descent being reckoned along the male line. The property is equally divided among the sons. A widow, however, gets an equal share of property along with the sons. The residence is patrilocal but as after marriage the husband and wife usually set up a separate household, it is neolocal, though patrivicinal.

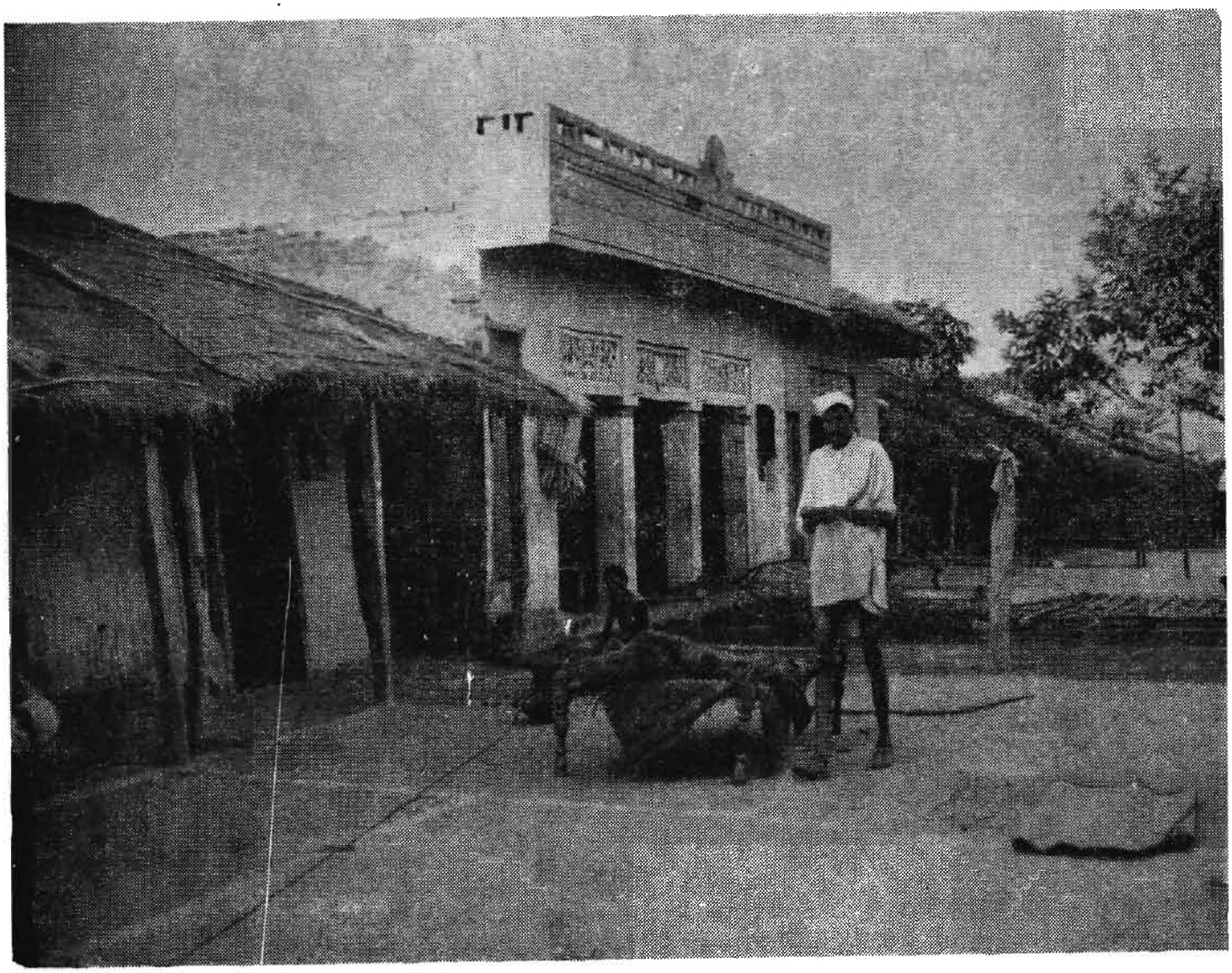
Composition of the Family

Bhattacharya (ibid : p. 189) has mentioned that family among Buksas consists of a man, his wife and unmarried children. According to the same author, the married sons settle in separate huts nearby, if they are economically well-off; but whether they stay under the same roof or not, harmonious relations are maintained in the family and the elder members are not considered as mere burden by the members belonging to the younger generation. But the data collected in respect of twenty six households of Buksas at Birhaini and Banakhera during the present study do not fully support the observations of Bhattacharya. It is noticed therefrom that the incidence of extended type of families is quite significant. The same is indicated below :

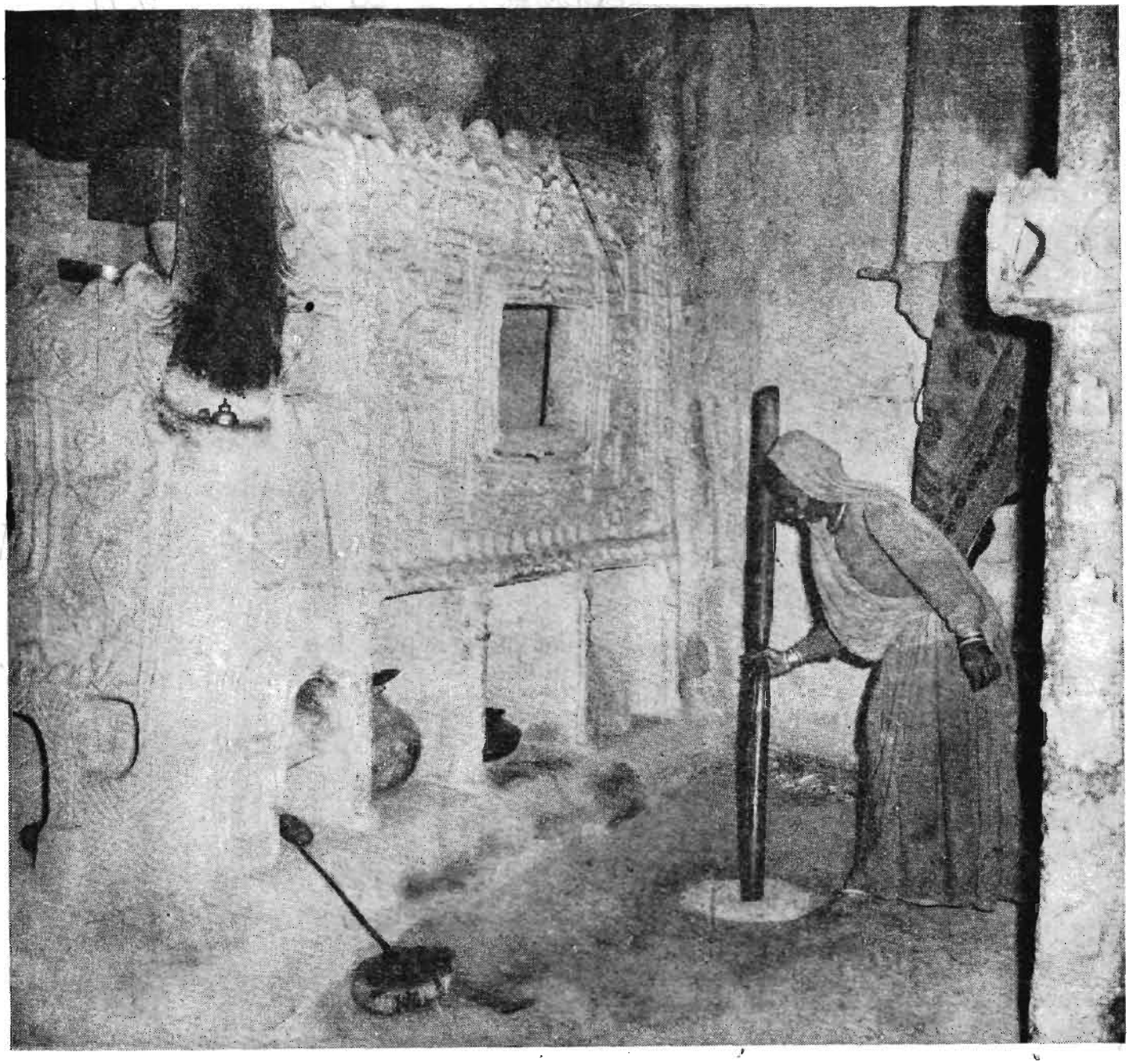
Sl. No.	Composition of household	No.	Typology	Percentage
1.	Husband and wife and their unmarried children	9	Nuclear 34·6%	38·4%
2.	Self and widowed mother	1	Nuclear (Broken) 3·8%	
3.	Husband and wife and their unmarried children and widowed mother of the former	2	Nuclear with adhesion	23·11%
4.	Husband and wife and their unmarried children and widowed father of the former	2		
5.	Husband and wife and their unmarried children and an unmarried brother of the former.	1		
6.	Husband and wife and widow of younger brother's wife and his unmarried children	1		
7.	Husband and wife and married son and his wife and their unmarried children	8	Extended (linear)	30·7%
8.	Husband and wife and brother of the former and his wife and their unmarried children	2	Extended (Collateral)	7·7%



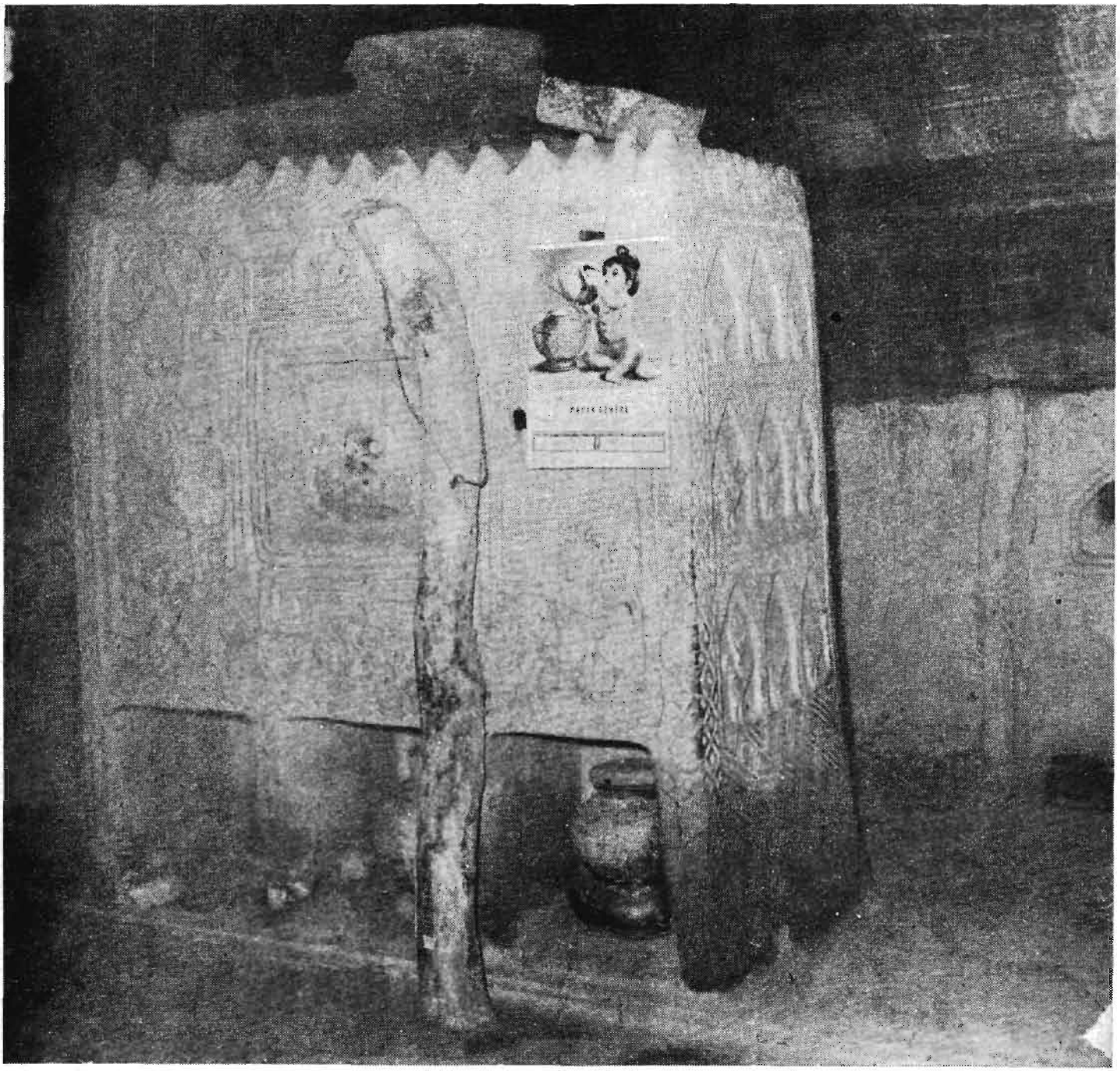
5. A part of the Buksa linear settlement.



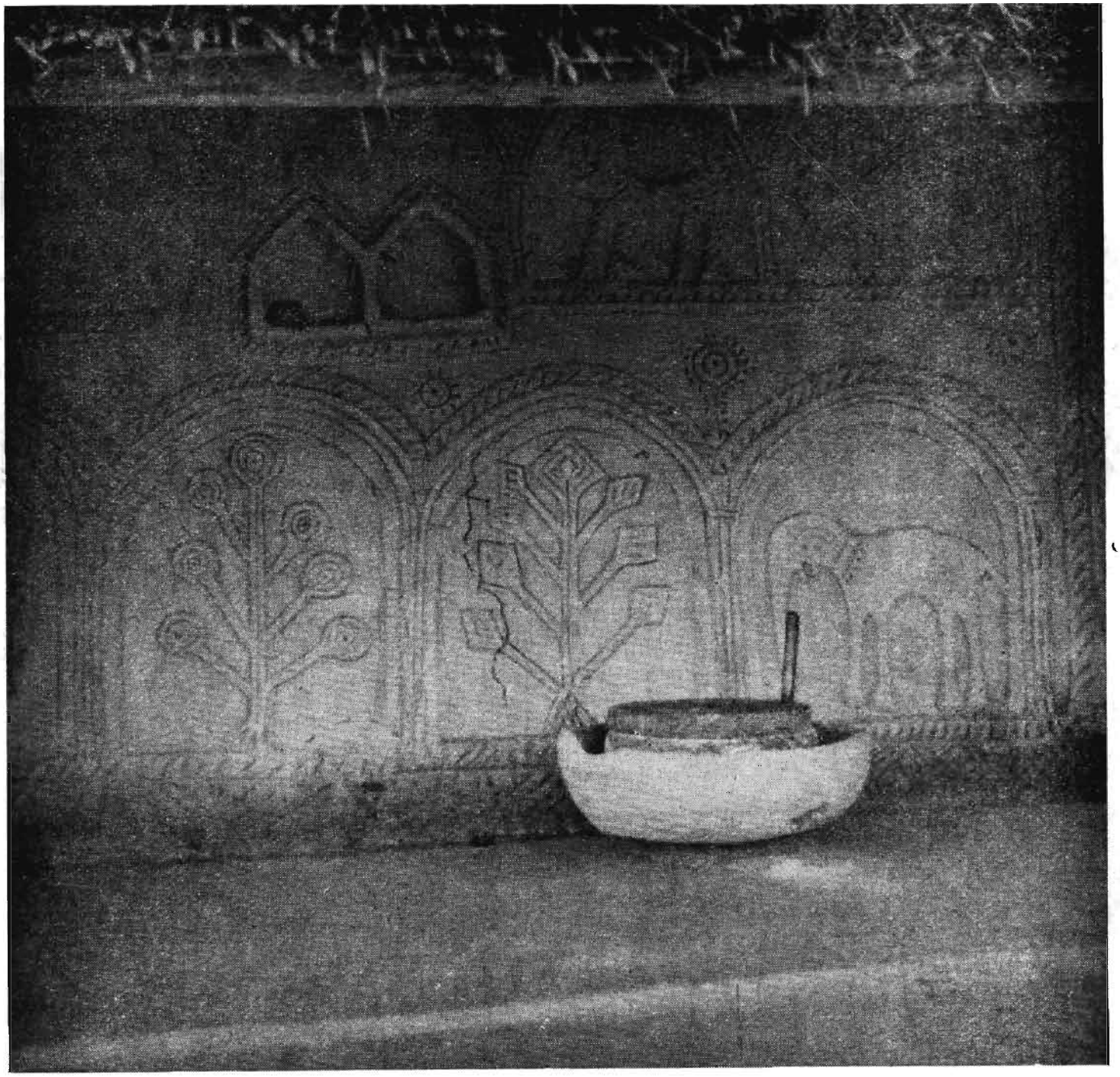
6. The traditional and the modern—a *pucca* house just exposed with *kacha* house.



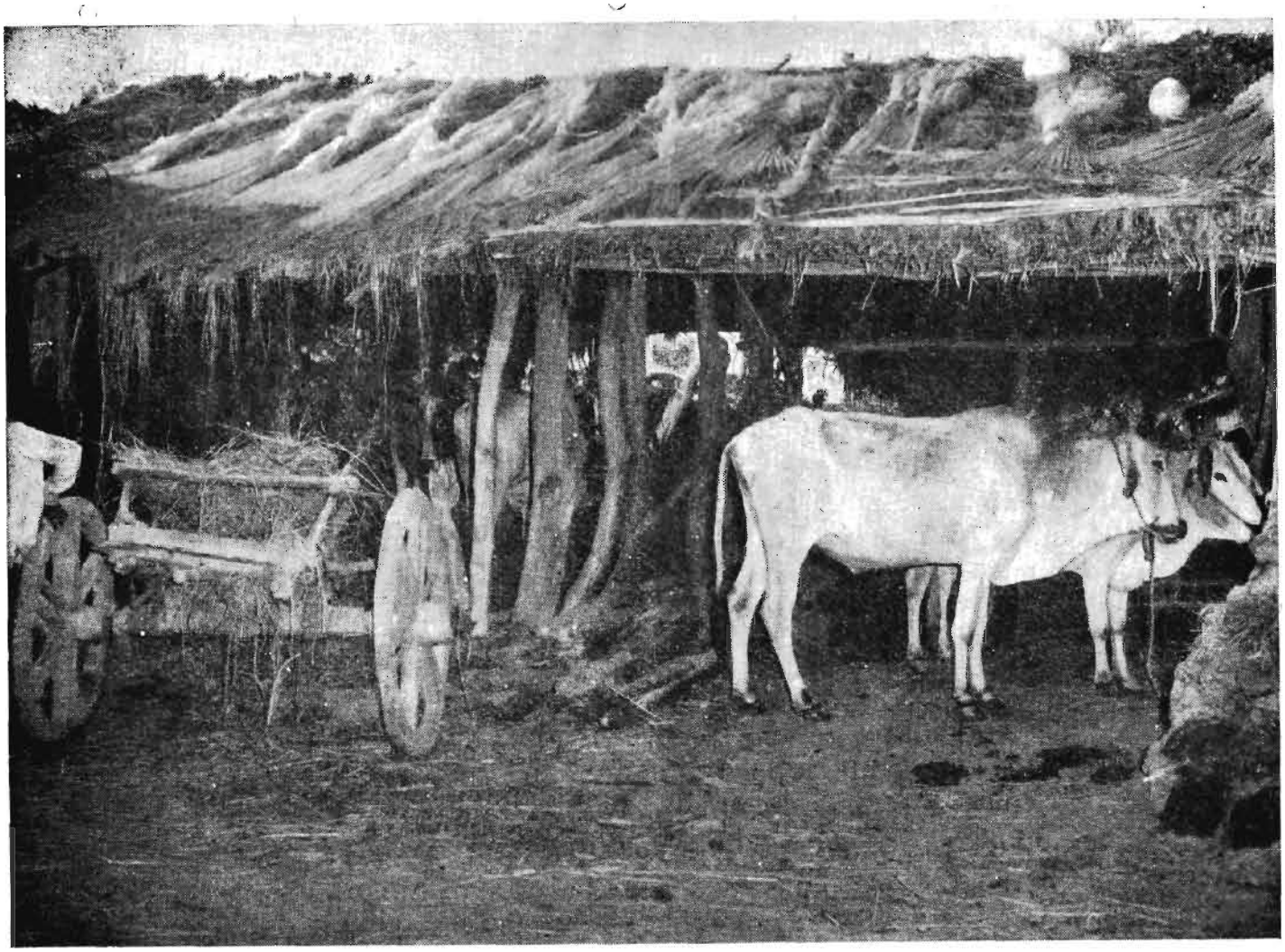
7. Interior view of a Buksa house.



8. A close up of the big container for storing grains.



9. A view of the clay designs commonly found on the walls of the Buksa houses.



10. A Cattle shed.

It will be seen from the previous table that there are only 10 (38.4%) families which can be termed as nuclear families. In 2 cases each (15.4%), a widow or widower was found to be living with her or his married son and the latter's wife and children. In one case (3.6%) a person was living with his married brother, the latter's wife and unmarried children. In another case (3.6%) a widow and her unmarried children were living with her late husband's brother and wife. This was an extended household of collateral type but has been reduced to the category of 'nuclear with adhesion', due to the recent death of one of the married brothers. In the extended type of families there are linear types as well as collateral ones. There are 8 (30.7%) cases of linear extended type of households, where a couple and their married son and the latter's wife and unmarried children are living together in the same household. The remaining 2 households (7.7%) are of collateral type.

The Buksa informants mentioned that in their society nuclear as well as extended type of families are found. They do not consider it deviant behaviour on the part of the married son to set up his separate household. Generaly, if there is only one son he continues to stay with the parents after his marriage. Separation usually takes place when there are two or more sons. But even in case of separation, the married sons or brothers usually build their houses nearby. It is also obligatory for the married son to maintain his aged widowed mother or father. Their society takes a serious view of a person who does not maintain his aged parents.

Clan Organisation

Elliot (op. cit) has mentioned that the Buksas have 15 different gotras or clans—12 superior and 3 inferior. The superior gotras reported by him are Badjugar, Taaleri, Barhanai, Jalwar, Adhoi, Dugugiya, Rathor, Negauria, Jalal, Upadhya, Chauhan and Dunwaria. The inferior gotras mentioned by him are the Dimar, Rathor, descending from a Teli (oil presser) Dhangra, from a hill woman; and Goli from a woman of barber caste. Some of the names of their gotras, such as Upadhya, Rathor and Chauhan are also found among some other castes, such as Brahmins and Rajputs.

During the Census of 1931, all the clans reported by Elliot, except Dugugiya, Upadhya and Chauhan were found among the Buksas of Nainital. (C.I. 1931, Vol. XVIII, Part I, 1933 : p. 588).

Bhattacharya (op.cit : pp. 188-189) reports fourteen gotras—11 belonging to superior group and 3 to the inferior group. But some of the 10 superior gotra names given by her differ from those reported by Elliot. The names of the 10 superior gotras given by Bhattacharya include Panwar and Rajbanshi which have not been mentioned by Elliot. On the other hand, Badjugar, Taaleri, Barhanai, Nagauria and Jalal gotras mentioned by Elliot do not find a place in the list of gotras furnished by Bhattacharya.

During the present field enquiry among the Buksas of Nainital, it was found that the distinction between superior and inferior gotras has no practical implications in social relations among the members of the community or in the matter of regulating marital relations. In the two villages, where the field investigation was carried out, the following names of gotras were reported—Agarwal (Mehtab Bania), Gaindola, Chimmal, Gulzarpuria, Jogipuria, Rajauria, Bargujar or Badgujar, Bilgaria, Dalwariya, Bhikampuria and Baruwere. It is seen that the names of gotras recorded during the present survey are in many cases different from those reported by earlier scholars. The reason for this difference could be that the data relate to different villages. From the examination of the names of these gotras it is found that except Agarwal, Chimmal and Bargujar, others derive their names from the various villages in the three tahsils of Nainital. Agarwal is, however, an important sub-division among the Banias of North India.

Settlement and Dwellings

As stated earlier, the Buksas are mostly found in Bazpur tehsil in Tarai region of Nainital district where they are having 41 Buksari villages, sixteen of these villages fall in the Gadarpur Pargana and 25 in Bazpur Pargana. It is understood that before 1945 this area was mainly inhabited by the local people, viz., Buksas and Pahari Brahmins and some Scheduled Castes, such as the Chamars and Doms. But after the partition of the country displaced persons from Pakistan were rehabilitated in the region, and given sizeable land for cultivation.

In the past the Buksas are stated to have led a semi-nomadic life and to have practised *uthau-kheti* (shifting cultivation). Further, they were not having permanent settlements. But after the settlement of other communities in the area, the Buksas were forced to settle on a permanent basis in different villages. Now, the Buksas are found to be living in small villages, as in the Bazpur tehsil of Nainital district. In the two villages—Bannakhera and Birhani where field investigation was carried out, it has been found that the former is exclusively occupied by Buksas, while the latter is a mixed village, though having predominantly Buksa population. Both the villages are small, the population of Bannakhera being 150 and that of Birhani 200. Though the exact population data in respect of the Buksari villages could not be collected it was reported by various informants that as in case of the two villages under reference, they also have small population.

The Buksa villages generally have a linear pattern of settlement. Their houses are constructed in rows leaving a gap after every 4-5 adjacent houses. The houses in a row of 4-5 houses mostly belong to close relatives. In this area linear pattern of settlement is found among the Buksas only. The other communities do not follow any definite settlement

pattern and their houses are scattered in a haphazard manner.

Dwellings : In the past, the Buksas were known for living in houses built on stilts, a device used for avoiding damp surface in areas where rainfall is high. The walls of Buksa houses are made of reeds, split bamboos and dry stalks of *arhar* plant which are plastered with mud; the roofing is done by thatching grass.

In the village, Bannakhera, mud walls are more common among the Buksas, but the inner arrangement is more or less similar to the reed-plastered walled houses. The roofing material is the thatching grass. However, the Buksa informants told that because of the restriction on the use of forest produce, they were in favour of replacing their *kachha* houses with brick-walled *pucca* houses. Accordingly in Birhani and Bannakhera, more than half the houses had been constructed with bricks, and in the remaining cases also the people were looking forward to the opportunity of replacing their *kachha* houses with *pucca* ones.

A typical Buksa house is made on a rectangular plan, measuring about 20 feet × 16 feet. The front of the house is provided with an open verandah partially covered with slanting and projecting thatched roof which is called *sapil.* An entrance is provided in the centre which opens in a spacious apartment called *usara* with a dimension of 20′ × 8′. The entrance and the roof are very low and the floors made of mud are considerably raised above the level of the ground. The inner portion is partitioned with earthen grain containers, called *kothli.* Its one portion is utilised for cooking meals; it is called *khana rasoi,* and the other one as *deota rasoi,* where household deities are kept. In *deota rasoi,* small holes are provided for ventilation. In some cases, a door is provided at the back also. The front wall is decorated with clay designs of animals, flowers, etc., which are usually drawn by the females.

In *pucca* houses, the walls are made of bricks and the roofing is done with cement and steel bars. In many houses, the front portion is constructed with baked bricks and the inner portion with mud walls.

Facing the house, at a little distance, a cattle-shed is provided which is covered with long poles, and is locally called as *sal.*

Dress and Ornaments

Dress : The dress of a male consists of a *kamiz* (shirt) or *kurta* (long collarless shirt) and a *dhoti.* Sometimes, a Pyjama replaces the *dhoti.* Usually, for daily use a coarse *dhoti,* 2½ y ards in length, is tied upto the knees; but when a person goes out of his village he dons a *dhoti* of normal length *i.e.* 5 yards. At home, men generally wear a *banyan* (locally called *mailkhora*) as upper garment. A cap of white cloth, as a head gear, is considered a must for an elderly male. But the younger generation is deviating from this custom of wearing *topi* (cap). One elderly Buksa remarked that the cap spoils their (young boys) hair style, hence they seldom use it. In winter season, woollen sweater and waist coat are also worn. Generally, males cover their body with a thick sheet of cloth. Children are seen wearing underwear of striped cloth with bush-shirt. The use of nickers and trousers is also finding its way among the young boys. Shoes of *desi* (indigenous) type are put on by them as footwear but now *hawai* chappals, made of rubber, seem to be very common.

The dress of the Buksa males is similar to other communities of the region and no item of dress, or the pattern of the same, appears to be distinctive of their community.

A female ordinarily wears a *lehnga* (locally known as *tukri*) or plaited petticoat made of a piece of cloth about 9 yards in length as lower garment and a *kamiz* (short shirt) or *jampar* (loose blouse) as upper garment. She also puts on an *orhni,* or 2½ yards long fine piece of cloth to cover head and shoulders. *Lehnga* or *tukri* is generally made of black or red *chint* cloth with black or red border. Sometimes, the women are found wearing *angia* (small tight fitted bodice) of black and white or red and white colour, as upper garment. However, the use of *angia* is becoming less common now. According to one elderly woman, making *angia* requires much labour and time; as a result now women go in for ready made *jamper* or *kamiz* available in the markets. The above description gives an idea of the dress, traditionally worn by the Buksa females. But now they have started wearing mill-made sarees of coarse type with floral borders alongwith *jamper* or blouse. They prefer to wear upper garment of velvet cloth because it is more lasting and also because it keeps them warm during the cold weather. Young girls wear frocks or underwears; sometimes they even wear shirts or *banyans.* They also wear chappals as foot wears.

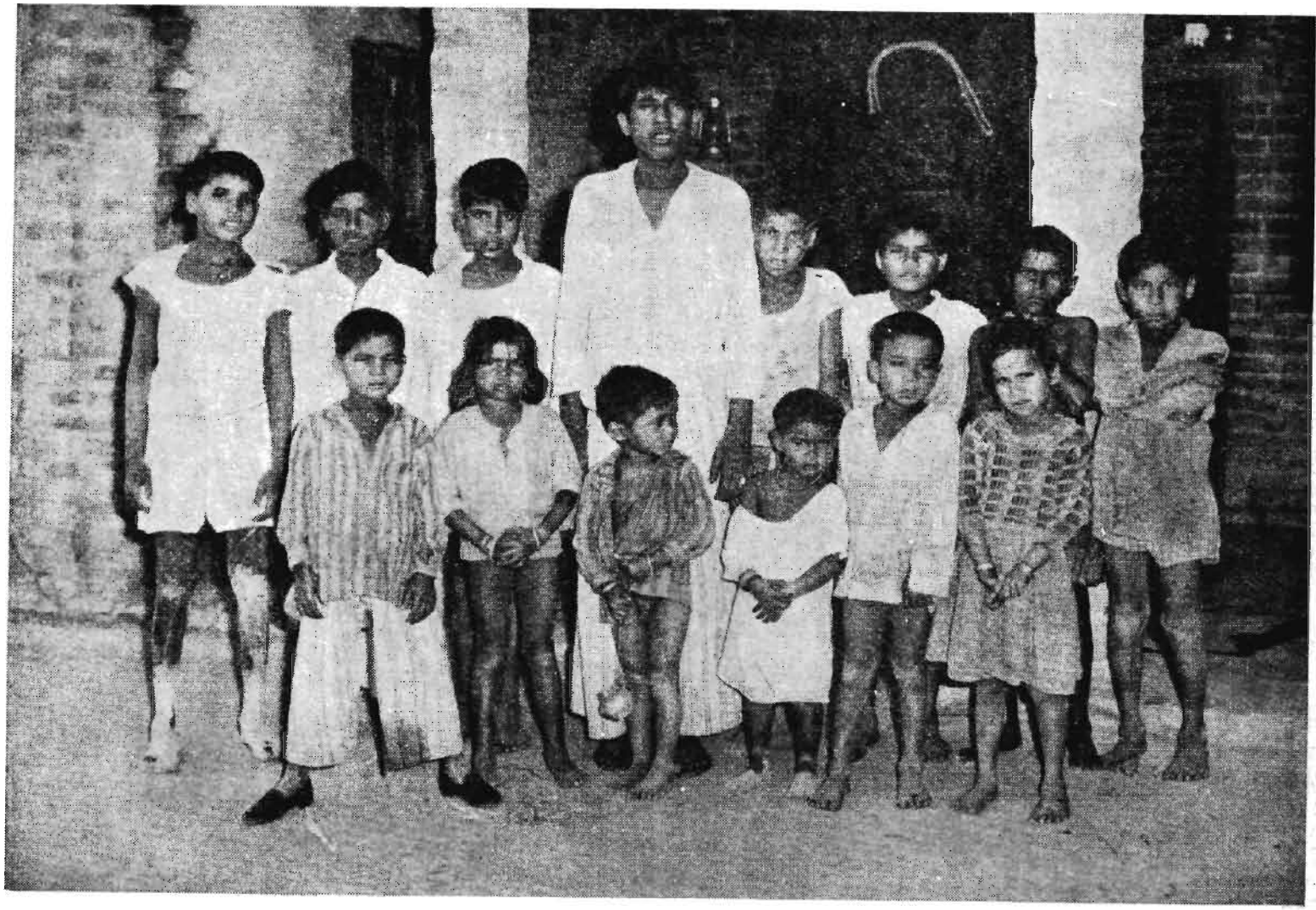
Here it is to be noted that, the dress traditionally worn by Buksa females is by no means distinctive of them. The same type of dress is found among their neighbouring communities as well. It is, however, believed that the dressing habit of the Rajput women, hailing from Rajasthan serve as the model for them.

Hair Style : The Buksa women have a distinctive and beautiful style of dressing their hair. They generally dress their hair, once a week, in a pyramid-like coiffure. This is done by putting a grass disc on the head and by plaiting and tying the hair around it in the shape of a raised bun, leaving the two free ends hanging down the coiffure over the shoulers. When they visit the weekly markets they dress themselves in their best clothes and carefully make the coiffures after rubbing oil liberally on the hair.

Tattooing : Tattooing is not very popular among the Buksas. However, a few women were found to have tatoo marks on their forearm which, according



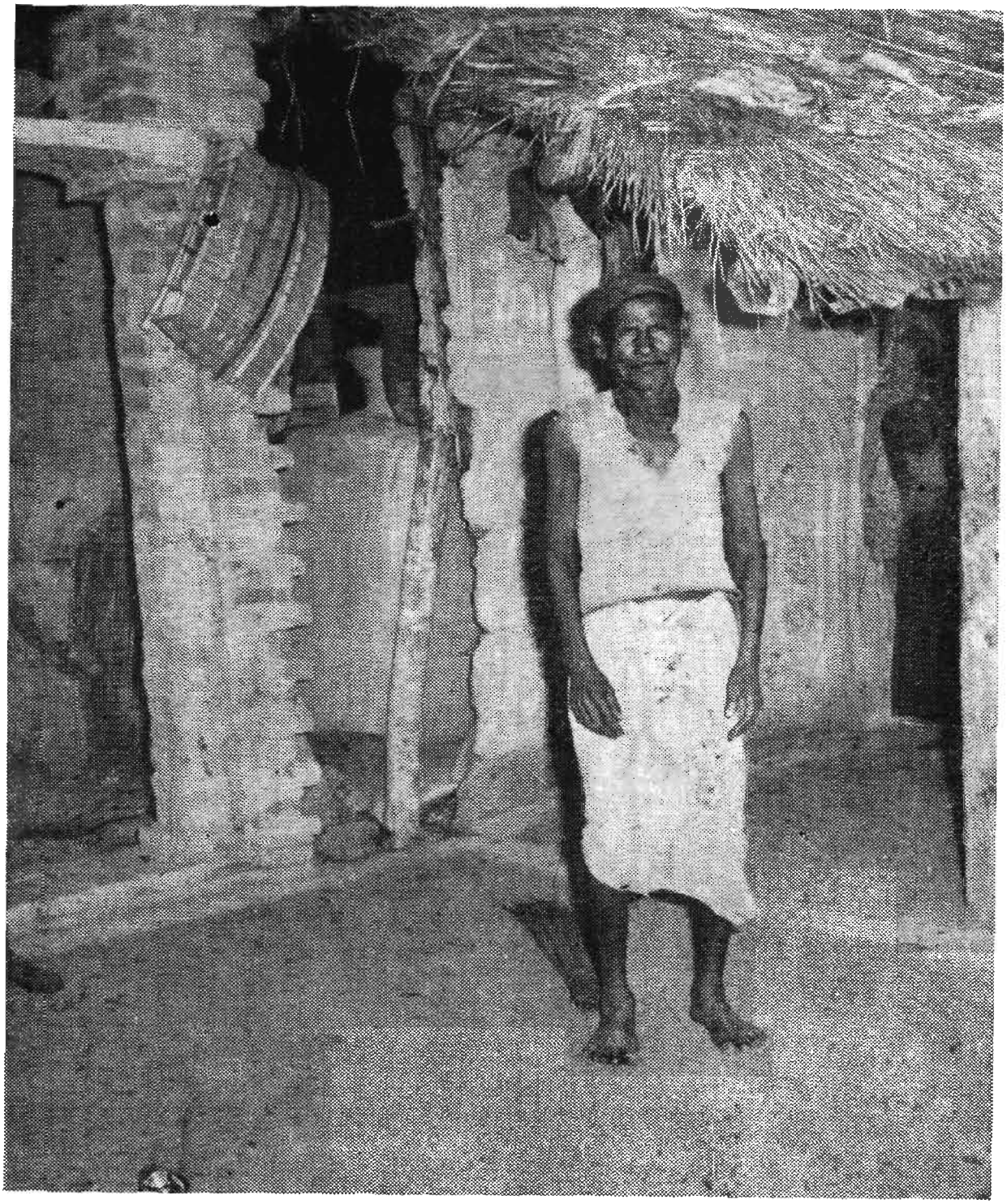
11. A group of Buksa males.



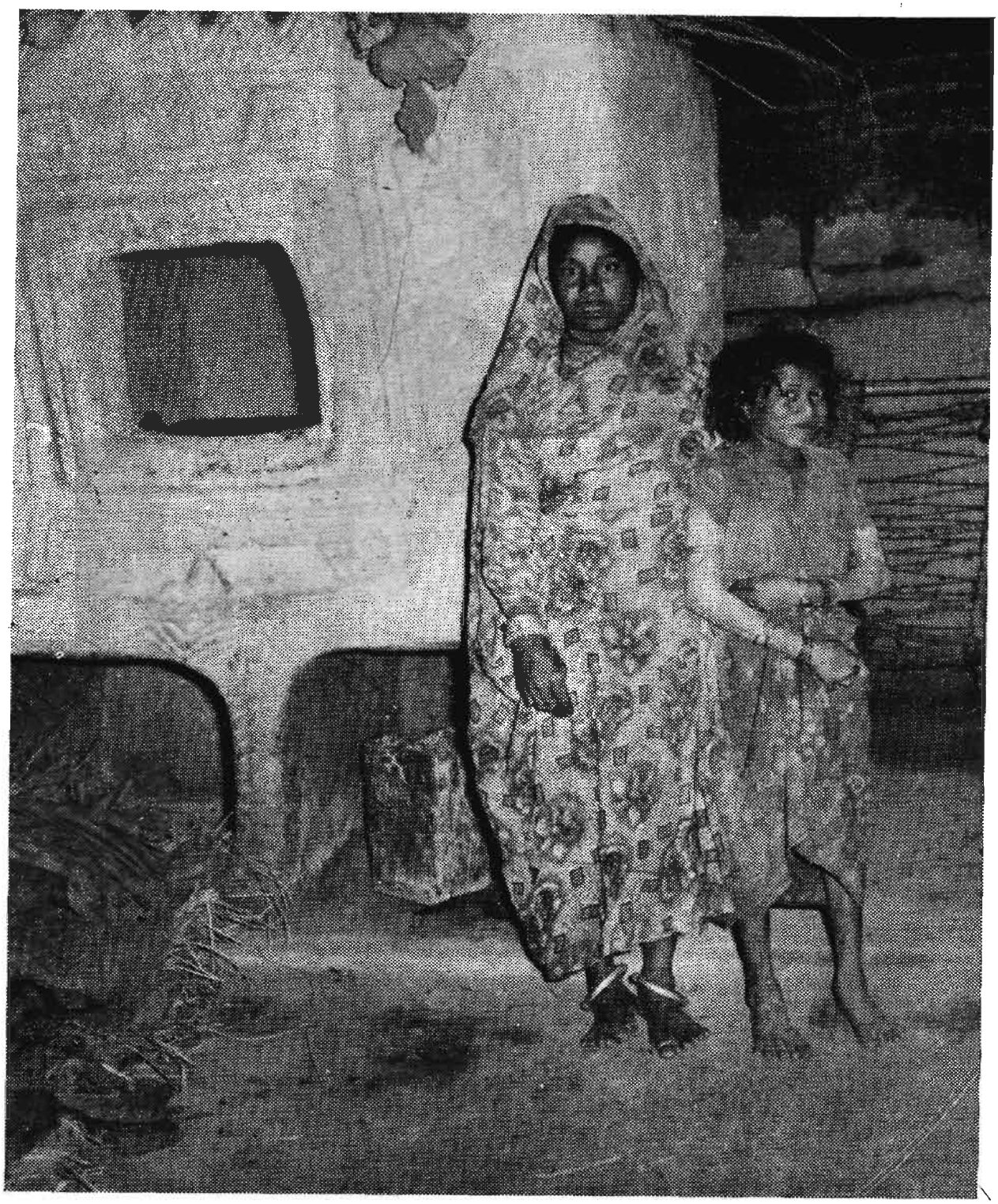
12. Buksa children in their day-to-day dress.



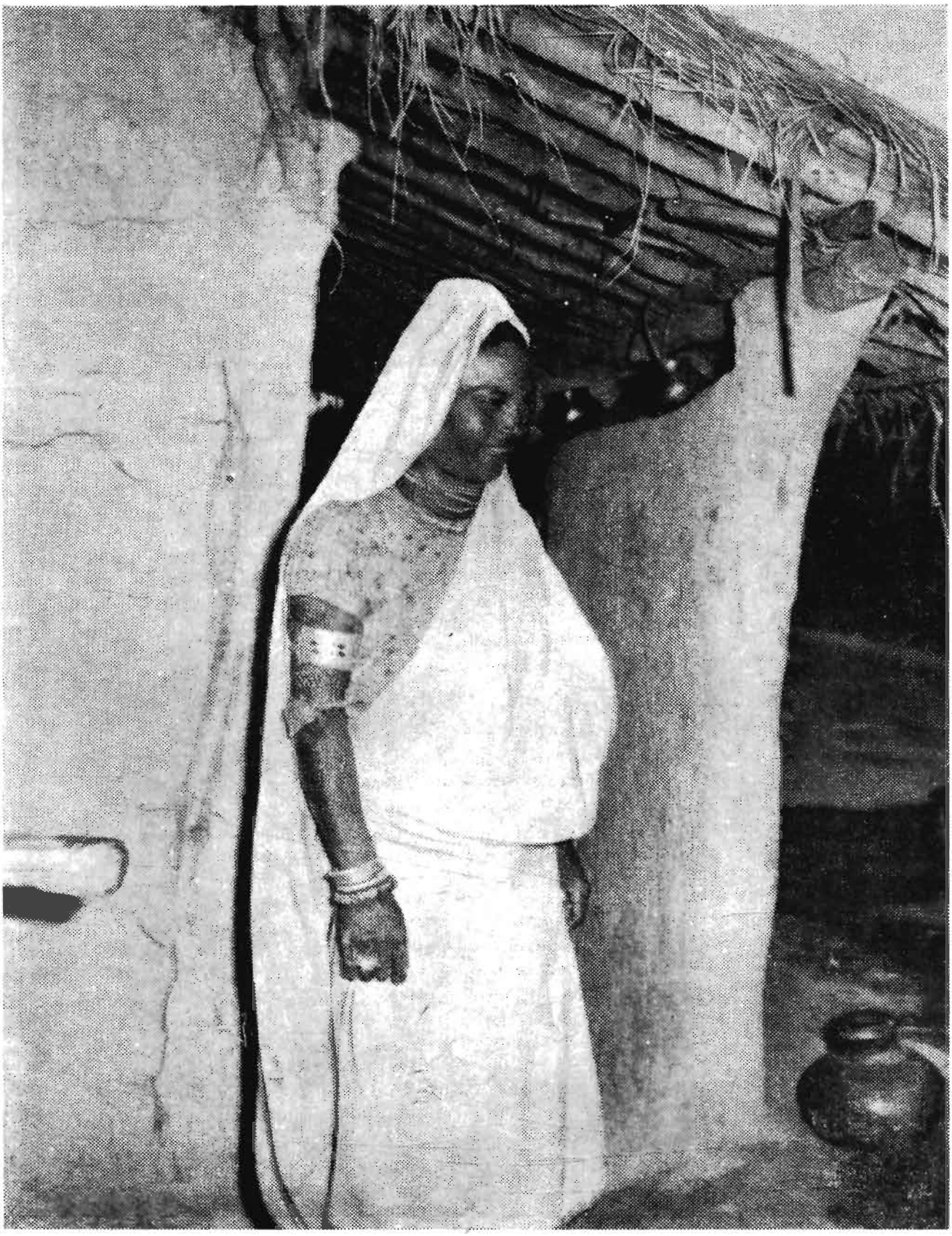
13. The dress pattern of a young Buksa woman and children.



14. A Buksa male in his traditional dress



15. A woman and a girl in traditional dress.



16. The usual ornaments put on by a woman.

to them, was done in some fair out of fancy. No social significance appears to be attached to tattooing.

Ornaments : The Buksa women are very fond of ornaments and colourful beads and shells. They put on strings of red, yellow and blue coloured beads round the neck. These are purchased from the market at Bazpur or other nearby towns or markets. Now, plastic bangles and other ornaments are also in much demand. A list of ornaments found among the Buksa women is furnished below :

Part of the body	Local name of the ornament	English equivalent	Material
1	2	3	4
1. Ear	Pakra or Pakru, Bari	Ear stud	Silver or gold
2. Nose.	Nathni, Bulak, Phulli	Nose stud, Nose ring, Nose pendant	Gold
3. Neck	Punj, Hansli, Kharwa	Necklace	Gold, silver, brass or Coins
4. Wrist	Poanchi, Choori, Kharwa	Bracelet, Bangles.	Silver, brass or gillet
5. Arm.	Vachak, Khela	Armlet	Silver or brass.
6. Finger.	Mundari	Ring	Silver, gold or brass
7. Leg, toe-foot.	Jhanjghar, Challa, Chapka	Anklets	Silver or brass
8. Toe.	Bichua	Toe-ring	Silver or gillet.

These ornaments are available in nearby urban markets. Sometimes, silversmiths from the plains of U.P. or Nepal also visit their villages and repair the gold and silver ornaments.

Buksa males are also sometimes seen wearing a *kharwa* (wrist bangle) and *bali* (ear ring). According to them, *kharwa* is generally offered to the bridegroom by his father-in-law at the time of the marriage.

Food and Drinks

The Buksas are non-vegetarians and take mutton, pork as well as fish and egg. But beef is said to be abjured by them. Their staple food is rice, with *dal* (pulses). During the present study some of them stated that in the past they were growing only paddy and various varieties of pulses and hence their diet mainly consisted of these. But now other varieties of food grains, like wheat, maize, etc., are also grown and *chappatis* (bread) prepared from flour of wheat or maize are also consumed with pulses, in addition to rice.

They take two meals in a day—one in the morning and the other in the evening. The morning meal is taken at about 10 a.m. and the evening meal is taken at about 6.30 p.m.

The meals are cooked in the *khana-rasoi* (kitchen) inside the house, by the female members of the household. Generally, rice and *dal* (pulses) are cooked in the morning. In addition to these, sometimes a vegetable curry may also be cooked. Fish is considered a delicacy and on special occasion its curry is prepared. Fish are also dried and stored in almost every household. In general, either rice or *chappati*, rice and pulse along with a vegetable or vegetable. But in a comparatively well-to-do family, *chappati*, rice and pulse along with a vegetable or fish or meat constitute the menu.

Males are served the meals first and thereafter the females take their meals. Children are, however, exception to the above rule, and can eat food as soon as it is prepared. The Buksas are known for observing privacy during eating. They would take their food inside the house in the *sari* (outer room) but the children may eat even in the open courtyard.

Dishes prepared from seasonal vegetables, such as *tori* and *karela* (cucurbataceous plants), *bhindi* (ladies finger), *begun* (brinjal) and leafy vegetables are also taken by them. Potato and onion are taken for most part of the year. In addition to the fresh vegetables, they also take dry leafy vegetables, like mustard leaves, *karela*, and *petha* which are stored and used in the off season. *Bari*—a preparation of the paste of *urad dal* and *petha*—is also prepared dried and preserved for consumption as curry.

The Buksas also take meat of chital, deer, wild boar, rabbit and peacock, which are obtained by hunting in the forest. Mutton is, however, taken regularly. The Buksas are fond of fish, the following varieties, being available in the region : (1) *thodi*, (2) *bareta*, (3) *kaila*, (4) *saur*, (5) *barsali*, (6) *mungi*, (7) *gend*, and (8) *rohu*. Of these, only the last two are large in size and the others are small.

Drinking of liquor is very common among them and country liquor, locally known as *daru*, is also sometimes brewed or distileld at home by indegenous method. Now-a-days, liquor of local variety (*doru*) is sold by *theka* (government contract shops) which they take on auction some time. Recently, efforts have been made by the tribal panchayat to eradicate

this habit, but the impact of the same seems to be negligible. According to the Buksa informants, however, their drinking habit is on the decline. They attribute this to the rising prices, and not due to any reform measure.

They are fond of smoking tobacco, especially *hookha*. When *hookha* is not available, they prepare *patwiri* a leaf twisted in the shape of a cup, in which they put some tobacco and then after putting fire on the tobacco they smoke the same like *chilam* (hubble bubble). They also smoke *bidis* and cigarettes of cheap variety.

Environmental, Sanitation and Hygienic Habits

As mentioned earlier, the houses of the Buksas are constructed in a linear pattern and the open space in the front is used as *angan* (courtyard), 3-5 houses are built in contiguity and then a gap is left after which another group of 3-5 houses is built. In this way the juxtaposition of the houses presents a systematic pattern. The cattle shed is built at some distance on the front side of the houses. The courtyard of the house is cleaned daily and occasionally plastered with clay. This gives the yard a neat and tidy look. The cattle shed is also cleaned regularly and the garbage is stored in a pit which is always located at considerable distance from the main habitation. The village on the whole gives a neat and tidy appearance. In the two villages covered during the present survey, the main source of drinking water is the hand pumps. There are nine hand pumps in one of the village and ten in the other one. Of these, two hand pumps were installed by the Block Development Office and the rest by the Buksa villagers themselves. This type of water supply is in a way responsible for maintaining the sanitary conditions and the villages are on the whole devoid of mud, slush and stagnation of waste water. The Buksas generally cover the small pits and ditches in their villages to avoid the stagnation of rainy water. The Pradhan of Bannakhera village (belonging to Buksa tribe) informed that in the past the endemicity of malaria was fairly high in the area of their habitation and small pools of water acted as breeding grounds for mosquitoes. Therefore, the villagers learnt to be careful to ensure that all such pits are filled up.

The Buksas take fairly good care in the matter of personal hygiene. They take bath regularly and wash their clothes as and when required. They also clean their teeth with a stick of *neem* (margosa tree).

Disease and Treatment: The Buksas and the Tharus living in a malarious and unhealthy Tarai tract have been popularly regarded as immune to malaria infection. As early as in 1904 Nevill mentioned "from habituation and from long course of natural selection, the Tharus have become almost immune from the deadly malarial fever of Tarai" (District Gazetteer, Nainital, Vol. XXXIV; 1904 : p. 109) These observations are equally applicable to the Buksas, who have been occupying the same territory. According to majumdar also, as quoted by Bhattacharya, people with large incidence of B & A B blood groups, as is the case with the Buksas, appear to have developed an immunity from malaria. (Bhattacharya, *op. cit* : p. 185).

At present the area is occupied not only by such tribal communities as the Tharus and Buksas but immigrants from West Punjab as well. As mentioned earlier, though now malaria is not found in virulent form in this area, stray incidences of the same are found, sometimes even among the Buksas.

Bharara, the tribal magician-*cum*-doctor, is supposed to possess the knowhow of diagnosing diseases and controlling them by magical rites. He is often consulted in case of various diseases, barrenness and other unwelcome events of life. In addition to charms and incantations, he also provides indigenous roots and herbs for curing common diseases among them. However, the Buksas are losing faith in the Bharara and now prefer to consult doctors and avail of modern medical facilities. Majumdar has also mentioned that they are losing faith in magico-religious practices. In this connection he has stated "the Tharus are a devil-ridden people, who have oaths and ordeals in plenty, and much of their disputes are settled through them but the Bhuksas have apparently lost faith in such expedients". (Majumdar, *op. cit* : p. 67).

Now the Buksas utilize the medical facilities available in towns and health centres in their areas. In case of serious illness, they also visit the hospital located at the tehsil headquarters of Bazpur.

Language and Literacy

The Buksas speak a corrupt form of Hindi, distorting a few words in a peculiar way. They pronounce 'n' as 'l' and sound of 'r' is not clear. In their speech they have taken many words from Kumaoni dialect. Many words of Urdu have also found their way in their speech. It is stated by them that they have their own dialect, which is not understood by others: but now the same is not very much in use among them.

During 1961 Census, the data on their literacy and educational levels were not separately compiled. It. is, therefore, not possible to give any accurate picture in this regard. However, from 1931 Census it appears that they were educationally backward as only 23 males were returned as literates, the percentage of literacy being only 0.7% at that time. (C.I. 1931, Vol. XVIII, Part I, 1933 : p. 590).

During the present field investigations it is gathered that the position in respect of education has not improved to any appreciable extent among them. It is understood that none from among Buksa has achieved matriculation level. The attendance of the Buksa students in primary schools in villages does not seem

to be vey encouraging, as is indicated by the data collected during the ethnographic survey in 1967. For illustration, the statistics of the Buksa students in two primary schools are furnished below :

	YEAR							
	1965		1966		1967		1968	
	General	Buksas	General	Buksas	General	Buksas	General	Buksas
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I. Primary School, Village Birhani .	63	12	78	18	102	35	110	17
	Total—75		Total—96		Total—137		Total—127	
II. Primary School, Village Bannakhera .	—	—	—	—	90	6	96	6
					Total—96		Total—102	

The above statement shows that a persistent trend in the spread of education is still to stabilise itself among the Buksas, particularly compared to 1965, the number of Buksa students went up almost three times by 1967, but in 1968, it was slashed down by more than 50% in Birhani School. During 1967-68 there is slight reduction in the number of students belonging to other communities also in the same school. In the other school, though during this period there was a slight increase in the number of other students, the number of Buksa students had remained the same. If the break-ups of the students by classes in the different years in the two schools are considered, the erratic nature of the spread of education among the Buksas comes out below :

School at Birhani	YEAR							
	1965		1966		1967		1968	
Class	General	Buksas	General	Buksas	General	Buksas	General	Buksas
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I	40	8	35	5	45	12	48	7
II	13	3	29	7	23	6	23	3
III	5	1	12	3	13	3	18	5
IV	4	—	12	2	12	2	11	1
V	1	—	8	1	9	2	10	1

School at Banna-khera	YEAR			
	1967		1968	
Class	General	Buksas	General	Buksas
1	2	3	4	5
I . . .	49	6	68	6
II . . .	17	—	8	—
III . . .	6	—	8	—
IV . . .	7	—	9	—
V . . .	11	—	3	—

The statement shows that in 1965, in the Birhani school in classes I & III, the Buksa students constituted 20% of the general students, but in class II they constituted 23% of the general students. As the students in class III must have been admitted in class I at least in 1963, it appears that during 1963-65, the position in the spread of education remained almost stagnant, with slight upward spur in 1964. In 1966, the Buksa students constituted approximately 19%, 25%, 25%, 17% and 13% of the general students in classes I, II, III, IV and V respectively. If projected backwards in time, these figures show that in 1962 the Buksa students constituted 13% of the general students in class I. In 1963, the proportion went up to 17%, in 1964 there was further increase to 25%; in 1965, the same proportion was maintained; but in 1966, it came down to 14%. If the figures of 1967 and 1968 are considered, it is found that the declining trend has not been arrested at Birhani. As regards the other school, *viz.*, Bannakhera, six Buksa students are found only in Class I during both 1967 and 1968, whereas the number of general students went up from 49 to 68 during this period. What does this declining ratio in case of the Buksa students mean ? Besides, what has happened to the six students who were reading in class I during 1967 ? Did more of them qualify for being promoted to class II in 1968? If some of them were promoted, why no Buksa student was found in class II in 1968 ? Are Buksa students in class I in 1968 the same as those in the same class in 1967 ? In that case, it seems that no fresh admission of Buksa student took place in 1968; but why ? Unfortunately during the present rapid survey, it was not possible to examine all these questions in their specific details in the field. In a general way it was ascertained during group discussions that most of the Buksa children in these villages did not attend schools. In several cases, even after taking admission, he children dropped out. Poverty was certainly the most important reason for the drop out in most of the cases; but it is difficult to say that it was the

only reason. According to an old school teacher of Birhani, the Buksas are lazy by nature and the general apathy prevailing among their elders provides an uncongenial cultural atmosphere, for the children in their pursuit of education. Perhaps there is some truth in it, but again it is difficult to say that it is the whole truth. About twenty years ago, Behri Singh, an influential member of the community, first took the initiative for the spread of education in the areas. It was due to his vigorous efforts, that the authorities were persuaded to open primary schools in six villages where the Buksas were found in good number. At this stage he received the full cooperation of the other members of the community. There was a vague realisation among them that because of their ignorance they were cheated frequently during their land transactions. But after the schools were set up, it was not possible to sustain the interest of the community. Why? It is quite possible that establishment of school in their villages, was looked upon by many of the Buksas only as a prestige symbol. It is also possible that earlier they did not visualise that sending their children to school would require some adjustments in their work habits and ways of life; when they were confronted with the realities, their enthusiasm cooled down. Even then there are individuals, who have tried to cross the hurdle, though might have failed ultimately. One such individual is Sant Ram, aged 15 years, of the village Birhani. He had read up to class VII in Bazpur Higher Secondary School, and discontinued his studies last year. He being the eldest son of his father, Paramarwar, was treated with love and affection by all the family members. He was admitted in class I in the village school at the age of 7. He was an average student and passed every year. He read in the village school up to class V. During his entire period of education he used to help his family in tending cattle and minor agricultural operations. Later, he was admitted in class VI in the school at Bazpur. He used to go to school daily. However, he failed in class VI and next year he was required to pay tuition fee also. But his family could not manage to bear his educational expenses, because of crop failure that year and also because of theft of some of their livestock. Besides being the eldest son of his father, he was expected to share the responsibility when family was faced with a difficult pecuniary situation. He, therefore, had to discontinue his studies in the middle of the session.

Occupation and Economic Life

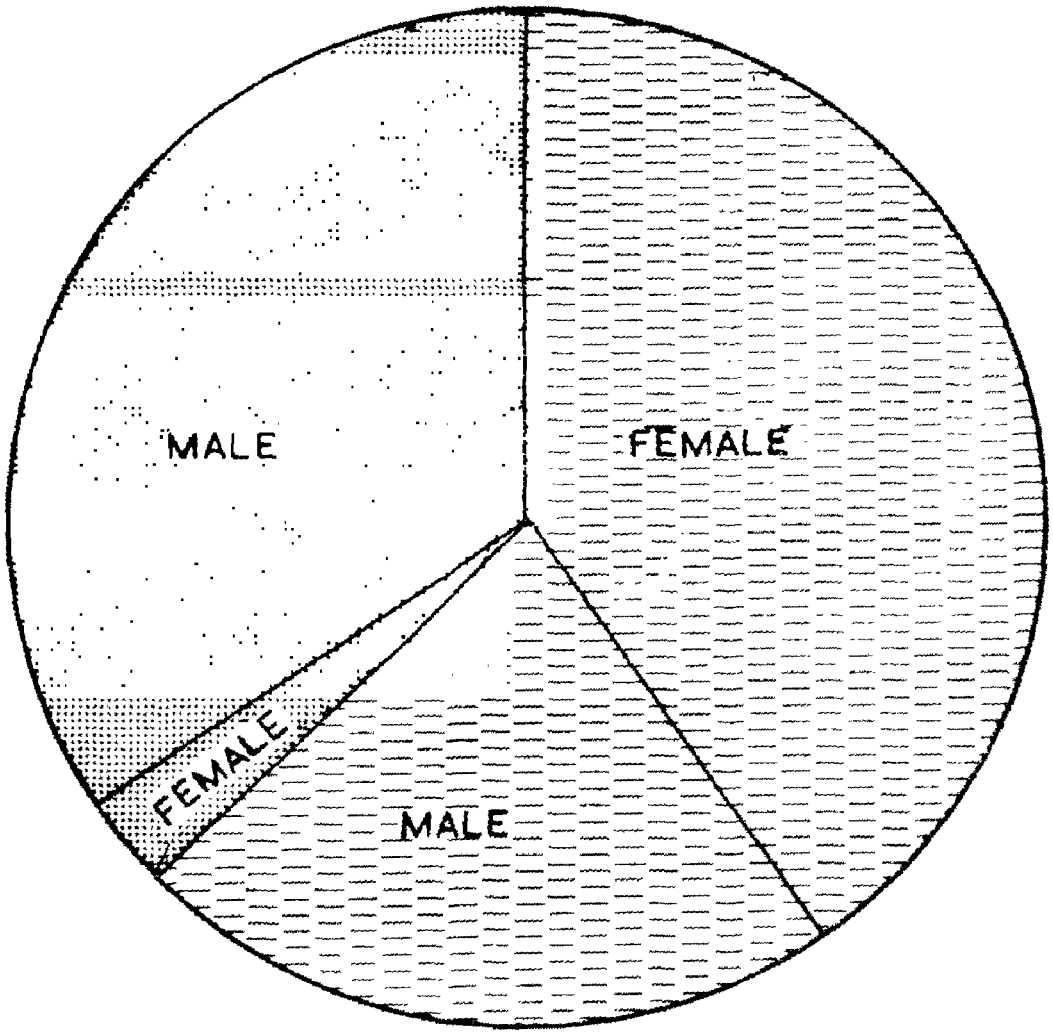
The Buksas are mainly engaged in cultivation. But, before giving with the details of their present economic life, it will be worthwhile to make a mention of the observations of earlier scholars as the same would help to examine their economic life in time prospective.

According to Crooke (*op. cit.* p. 55); "their main occupation is cultivation. They are of labour class and earn their livelihood by cultivating other's land and by selling grass and fuel. In some places, they collect the wild forest produce, but in no systematic way. They also engage in gold washing, extracting gold dust to the value of a few hundred rupees a year from the auriferous sand of the Sona Nadi. They are slowly but surely dying out and now number a few thousands. In Garhwal they are reputed sorcerers, able to cause death by injury. Some are even said to assume the form of a wild animal and thus accomplish the destruction of any enemy". According to Majumdar (*op. cit;* p. 88) the Buksas have even excelled Tharus in the field of agriculture and eke out the maximum from the land. Thus showing a higher degree of adaptability and ability for husbandry. Elliot, however, regards them as poor cultivators and mentions, "Buksas are considered bad cultivators, and they rarely remain in the same spot for about two years for by that time they generally exhaust the soil they have had under tillage". (Elliot, *op. cit*: p. 107). Thus, although Elliot also holds the view that the Buksas are cultivators, his observations suggest that in the past the Buksas were not settled agriculturists. During the field investigation for the present study the Buksas acknowledged that until recently they were carrying on *uthai kheti* (shifting cultivation). A reference about their nomadic habit had also been made by Nevill in the early part of the present century (Nainital District Gazetteer, 1914; p. 109). The observation made by Crooke in regard to the agricultural labour carried on by Buksas does not seem to be very accurate in the sense that in that period the area was mainly inhabited by the Buksas and there was no dearth of land for them, hence it does not appear likely that they worked as agricultural labourers in other's fields. In any case, it is not acknowledged by them as one of their traditional occupations. Further, Crooke's observation that they are also engaged in gold washing and collection of gold dust, has not been corroborated by the present field investigations.

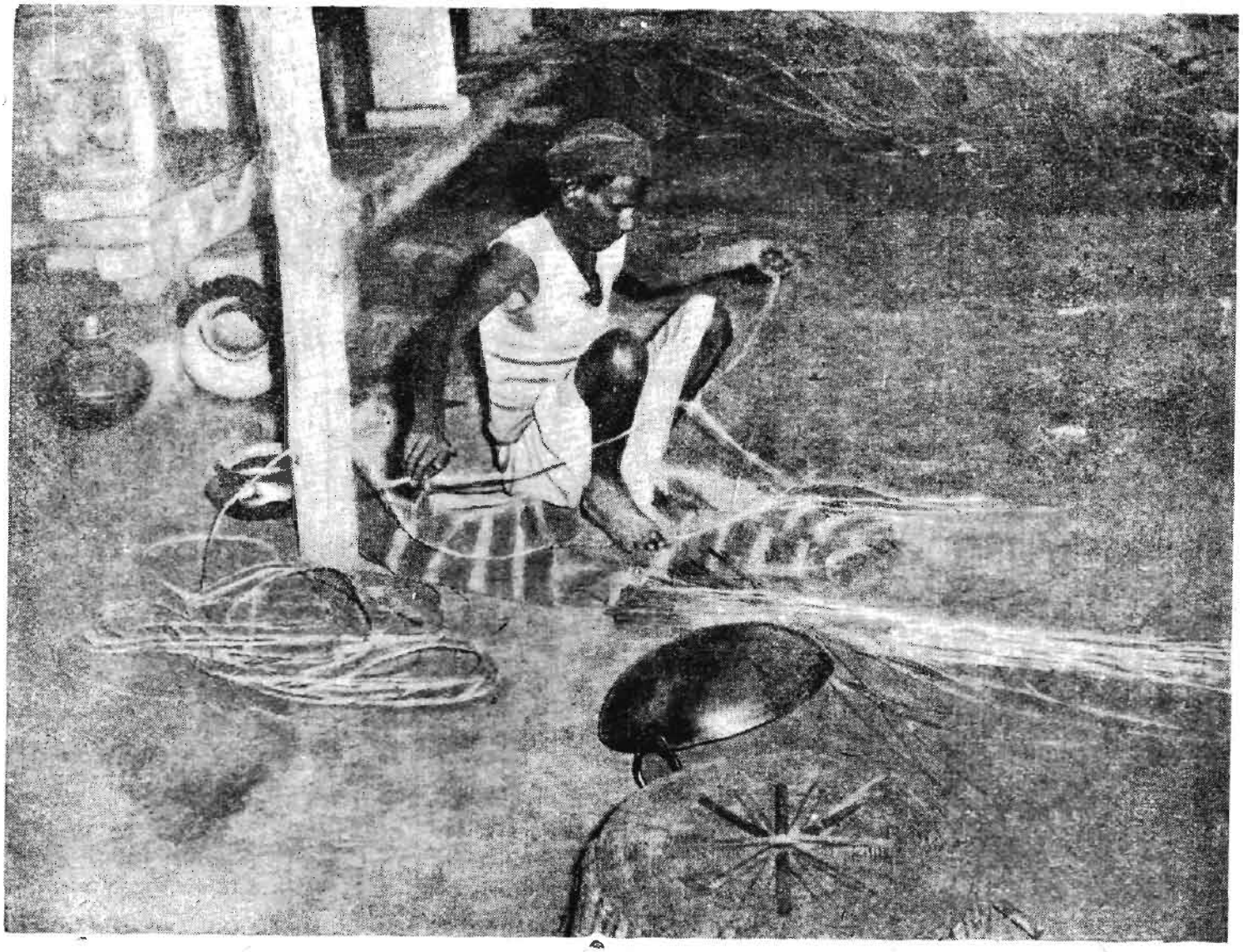
During the present field investigations it was found that the Buksas are traditionally engaged in cultivation, though as mentioned earlier, they carried on shifting cultivation until a few decades ago. The collection of forest produce, which was one of their important occupations in the past, however, no longer provides them a livelihood due to the restrictions imposed by the forest department.

Workers among Buksas : From the estimates made during 1961, it appears that nearly 35%-40% of their population constitutes the working force. The somewhat low percentage of workers among them appears to be due to low proportion of female workers, there being only 15-18% female workers according to the 1961 estimates. The field investigations conducted in connection with the present study, however, reveal that the active participation of females in economic activities is actually fairly high. The difference between the two data seems to reflect the attitude of the community towards female participation in out-door economic activity. It appears that among many communities in rural areas there is a tendency to return the women folk as non-workers though the latter, like the Biksa women, may actually

WORKERS AND NON-WORKERS BY SEX AMONG THE BUKSAS



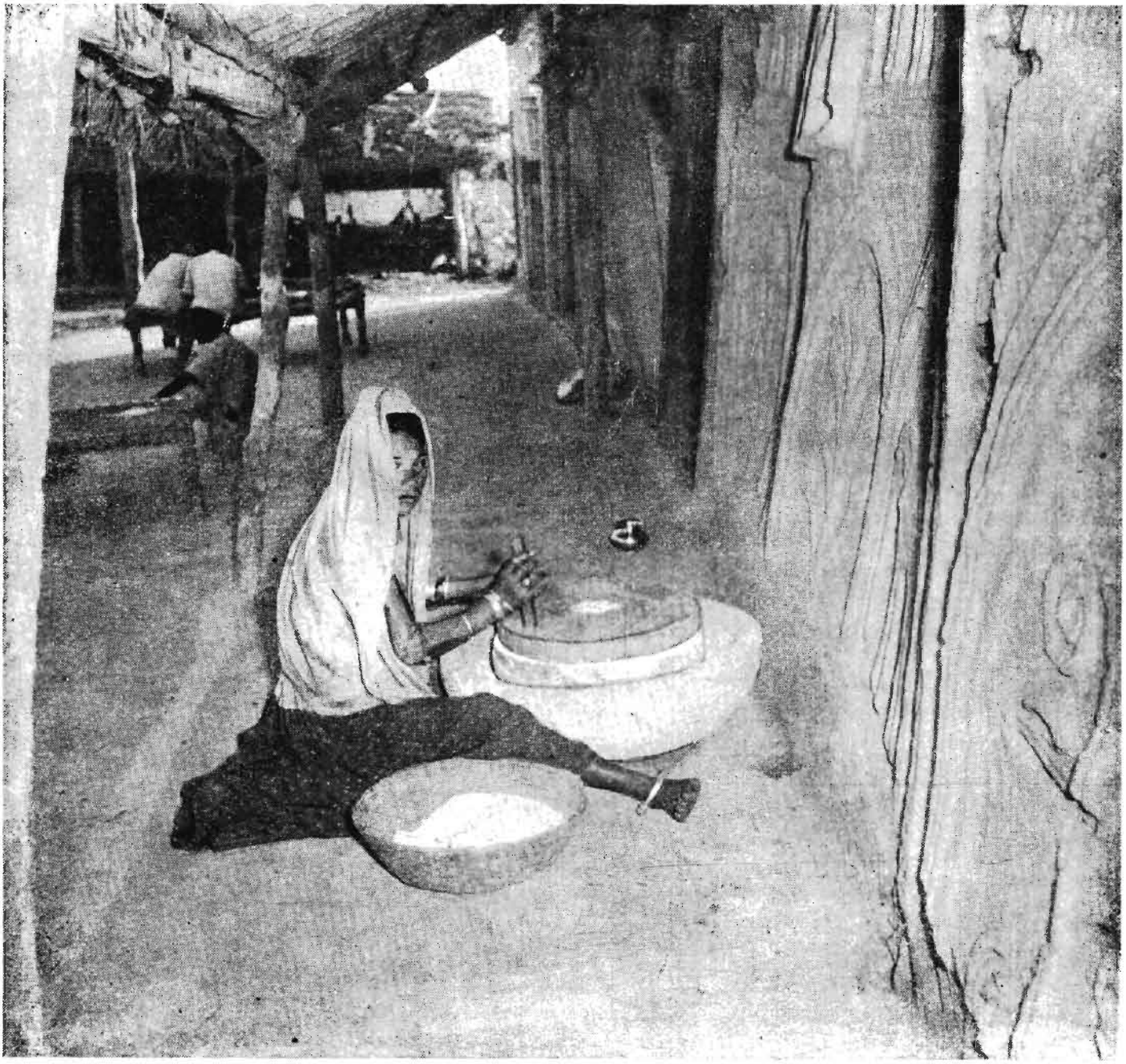
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17. A Buksa preparing rope from grass.



18. A Buksa woman husking the grain.



19. A Buksa woman at the grinding stones.

be gainfully employed in activities like sowing, harvesting and allied agricultural practices, in addition to household activities. This has been amply demonstrated by the ethnographic study of another agricultural community of north India, *viz.*, the Mallah, (Census of India, 1961, Vol. I, Part V-B(iv), 1969 : p. 16). According to the estimates worked out in 1961, more than 90% of the workers among the Buksas are cultivators. This corroborates the observations of earlier scholars, such as, Crooke, Elliot and Majumdar, etc., that the Buksas are mostly engaged in cultivation. About 5%, according to the same source, are agricultural labourers. A few individuals are engaged in other industrial categories, such as mining, quarrying, hunting, household industry and 'other services'.

As the Buksas are mostly engaged in cultivation, it would be useful to give the background and details of their agricultural practices. Until recently, *i.e.* by the end of the fifth decade of this century, Buksas were not leading a settled life. They used to remain at one site for two to three years and grow paddy and *masur* pulse. They used to sow rice in *Chait* (March-April) by broadcast method and harvest the same in *Sawan* or *Bhadon* (July-August). They allowed the stumps to remain and sprout again during rains. Later, after depletion of the fertility of the soil in 2-3 years, they used to move to another place in a group. Therefore, there were no permanent village sites. The area of their habitations, *viz.* Tarai and Bhabhar region was not very much populated and considered as Kham Estate of the government of U.P. Here, Zamindari system did not prevail and government possessed absolute right over the land. According to the practice, the cultivators rented the land from the government in the capacity of tenants. After the settlement of displaced persons from West Punjab in this area, in 1948, two types of tenants have come up; one *maurusi* (hereditary) tenants and the other allottee tenants. The latter term is applied to cultivators who have been settled recently. The Buksas fall in the first category of hereditary tenants. However, the settlement of new allottees made a far reaching impact on the economy of the Buksas as their privilege of indiscriminate cultivation of land has been curtailed and they have been forced to settle at one place on a permanent basis. In 1951, they were asked to select the sites for permanent settlement. Finally, in tehsil Bazpur of Naintal district, they have settled down in 41 villages. They have come to be known as Bhoksari villages. Though this put to an end to their habit of shifting their settlements, it benefited them by way of the recognition of their ownership of land as they were issued *pattas* (deeds of ownership) in their names. Further, as was to be expected they also occupied comparatively the more fertile lands.

The settlement of Punjabi refugees and others has further brought about significant changes in the occupational pattern of the Buksas. Although in some aspects the contact with outsiders has been advantageous to the Buksas, by and large they have been adversely affected by the changed set up. The Buksas who were hereditary tenants with no transferable rights of land have become victims of the designs of outsiders. Having not fully realised the value of their land and lured by the ready cash, in many cases they have transferred their land to the outsiders, with the alleged connivance of the *Lekhpal*. They, thus, now own much less land than in the past and in some cases have been reduced to the status of landless labourers. The livestock of the Buksas are also often stolen which has also adversely affected their economy. The details of their relationship with the immigrants are, however, discussed in a subsequent account.

As mentioned above, notwithstanding the loss of some of their land and resources to the newcomers, they have gained in some respect. Through their contact with the outsiders they have learnt cultivation of some important crops, such as, wheat, sugarcane, etc.

Agricultural Practices

The Buksas grow various types of food grains and vegetables. Now-a-days, they by and large follow the agricultural practices of their neighbours. The annual agricultural cycle of the region with special reference to practices followed by the Buksas is furnished below :

Month	Sowing	Harvesting
1	2	3
Chaitra	Sugarcane	Sugarcane (of previous year)
Vaisakha	Do.	Sugarcane, wheat and barlet
Jaistha	—	—
Asadha	Maize and Paddy of interior variety.	—
Sravana	Paddy	—
Bhadra	Paddy of superior and *lahi* variety.	Maize and Paddy
Asvina (Kuar)	Vegetables	—
Kartika	Wheat and barley grain & *masur* pulse	Paddy
Agrahayana	Wheat and barley	Vegetable and *lahi*
Pausa	Sugarcane	Potato
Megha	—	Sugarcane
Phalguna	—	Wheat and Barley

The practice of growing cash crops, like sugarcane, potato, etc., has been adopted recently. Two crops; crop, cereals, like wheat, barley, *masur,* pulse, *lahi, viz.* Rabi and Kharif, are grown in a year. In Rabi gram and *alsi* (linseed) are harvested; while the main cereals in the Kharif season are padd, maize and millet.

Paddy of inferior variety, like *dal, badal, laungi* and *naha* are sown by broadcast method and superior varieties, like *Hansraj, bansmati* and *dhania* are grown by transplantation method. They mainly depend on rain as the irrigation facilities are few. However, in the area some persons belonging to their communities have installed tubewells and employ mechanised farming techniques. Though the Buksas have taken now cash and other major crops, they have mostly failed in adopting improved tools and techniques for agricultural operations. The tilling of fields is still mostly done by indegenous and inefficient ploughs, which are manufactured by themselves.

As mentioned earlier, women have important role to perform in carrying out various agricultural operations. In fact, some of the important agricultural operations, such as, weeding, harvesting, winnowing and husking of grains are almost exclusively performed by them. Boys help the adults in repairing ridges or small drains, tending cattle and driving bullocks on the threshing ground. Ploughing, levelling of field and sowing operations are, however, a man's job.

They consult Brahmin priests at various important stages in agricultural activities. The Brahmin priest determines the auspicious day for the first ploughing of the field. He usually performs *homa* (fire sacrifice) in one corner of the field and also first sows a few seeds in a small plot of the field after marking the same by planting a stick or a branch of a tree. There are, however, some variations in this practice. Some cultivators consult a Brahmin priest for only finding out an auspicious day for the first ploughing. In such case, on the prescribed day, the head of the household himself performs certain rituals in a corner of the field. In some other cases, more elaborate rituals are gone through on this occasion. Sometimes, an earthen pitcher filled with water and a few leaves of *tulsi* plant (Ocimum sanctum) is buried at a fixed spot, which is known only to the priest and the cultivator concerned. The main *raison-detre* of these rituals is to ensure a disease free crop and a good harvest.

Collection of forest produce : In the past, the Buksas used to supplement their livelihood on agriculture by collection of forest produce, like gum, honey, resin, fuel, thatching grass, etc. They used to sell gum, resin and honey in the nearby markets which provided them some small cash for purchasing liquor for their enjoyment. Now they do not get any benefit from the forest. Previously for a village of 25 households, in one season they were permitted to collect 100 cubic-feet of *sheesham* wood (for construction of building) 100 cubic feet of *sal* wood (for being used as poles) and requisite quantity of *Khair* tree for construction of ploughs, besides *phoos* (thatch grass) for roofing. But these days, they have to purchase the above items from the Forest Department. However, wild fruits, vegetables and tubers are still collected by them for their own consumption. These include *gosum, amala, tendu, jamun, mahua, hisoru, tur, gena, bangethi* and *pinjra.*

A very small number of Buksas is engaged by the Forest Department for cutting bamboo or timber.

Fishing : Fishing is an important subsidiary occupation for the Buksas. Fishing expeditions are undertaken by groups of families, in which females take an active part. It is done with nets and traps. The females mostly catch fish by nets and *pakhaiya* (trap made of bamboo). The latter instrument is more effective in slow water. They also use *dhimri,* which is placed at the exit of water, in a stream or a dam, the same allows water to pass through, while the fish are caught inside. It is said that in the past, for catching fish, they used to dam water in small rivers and rivulets by logs of woods and bamboos and also by poisoning water with poisonous wild herbs and berries. This method has, however, been abandoned by them. For deep water fishing, which is mostly carried out by males, different kinds of nets, such as *jal* or *patia,* are used. The fish when caught, are distributed among the relatives and clansmen and are sometimes cooked together and taken in a community feast. The surplus are dried and stored for future consumption. For ordinary domestic consumption, the women of a number of households together make fishing trips to the nearby rice fields or tanks and collect their requirements.

Hunting : Like fishing, the Buksas used to hunt wild animals in the jungles. Previously, regular hunting expeditions used to be organised and big and small games such as deer, wild boar, chittah, rabbit and fowl as well as varieties of birds, (which are found in abundance in the dense Tarai forests), were killed by means of weapons and such firearms as country made guns. Sometimes, they used traps and nets for trapping big animals. It is said that whenever the catch was big, it used to be distributed to the entire village, irrespective of the fact whether all of them joined in the hunt or not. Now, due to restrictions imposed by the Forest Department, they venture in the forests for only stray hunting expeditions. The small catch is generally distributed among the members of the hunting party and cooked at home.

LIFE CYCLE

Birth

Among the Buksas, no pre-natal ceremony is performed in case of the first or subsequent births. That they prefer a male child finds substantiation in the fact that the amount of remuneration paid to *dai* is more in case of a male child. The delivery usually takes place in the house of the husband. Stoppage of menstruation followed by morning naussia is considered as an indication of conception. The news of conception is first disclosed among the female members

of the family and later on to the males. The expectant mother is not put to any special restriction except that she is prevented from going out after sun-set and not allowed to go near a stream, a grove or any supposed haunted place. She attends to her normal houselold chores but in the advanced stage of pregnancy she is not required to do heavy jobs. As soon as the labour pains start, she is kept in a separate apartment, usually the *usala* (outer room) where the delivery takes place. At the time of delivery a *dai* (mid-wife) of own community is called to assist in the delivery. The delivery usually takes place on the floor on a *chattai* or a mat. The umbilical cord is cut with a sickle by the *dai* and is buried within the delivery room. The new born child is given bath with tapid water. The *dai* attends to the mother and the new born baby for six days. During this period she daily massages their body. The mother is not given any cereal for a day; instead milk and *harira*, (a preparation of dry fruits, *gur* and *ghee*) are given to her. From the next day, light food like *khichri* (a preparation of rice and *moong* pulse) is given to her. But from the fourth day onwards, *chapati* of wheat flour is permissible. On the sixth day after the child birth, the ceremony of *chhati* is observed. On this day, womenfolk assemble at the house of the new born and sing songs especially composed for the occasion. A deity, known as Bihai, is also worshipped on this day by the mother of the new born. This deity is represented by a cowdung cake strapped up in a cloth. The worship of Bihai is said to bring good fortune to the child. In the afternoon, a feast is also thrown to the *biradari* (community men). Before the feast, the entire house is plastered with a paste of clay and cowdung.

Name-giving Ceremony

Name-giving ceremony is performed on the eleventh day and on this occasion a pahari Brahmin priest is called, who suggests a suitable name for the child. The priest is usually given Rs. 1.25 for his services. On the same day, the *dai* is paid Re. 1.00 and *seedha* (uncooked grains) in case of a daughter and Rs. 1.25 and *seedha* in case of a son.

The pollution period during the birth of a child lasts for eleven days in the household; it is over after the performance of the purificatory rites on the same day when the name-giving ceremony is performed. The priest sprinkles *gangajali* (water of river Ganges) on the members of the household and in the house as well. The mother of the new born baby takes a bath with water, in which a few drops of *gangajali* are added. This marks the end of the pollution period for the mother. She is now free to resume her routine household activities or take part in family or community worship.

Mundan : After two or three months, the hairs of the new born baby, irrespective of its sex, are shaved by a *nai* (barber) and a feast is given to the near relatives and clansmen.

Ear-boring : At the age of five years, boys and girls undergo the ceremony of ear-boring, when an expert person, man or woman, of the own community pierces the lobes of the ears of the boy or girl by means of a steel needle. In case of girls, the *alae* (nostrils) are also bored for putting on *nathni* or *bulak*. However, no religious rite is performed on this occasion nor any feast is given to the relatives.

The Buksas do not perform puberty rites for either sexes.

Marriage

The usual age at marriage for boys and girls among the Buksas is reported to be between 15 to 20 years and 13 to 17 years respectively. In order to gain some insight in the matter the actual age at marriage was recorded in respect of 50 males and 80 females during the field survey in connection with the present study. The same indicates that out of 50 males, 32 were married between the ages 16 to 18 years; one male each at the age of 12 and 14, four at the age of 13, five at the age of 15, two at the age of 19, four at the age of 20 and one at the age of 21. As regards females, out of 80 females, 43 were married at the age of 15 or 16; four each married at the age of 12 and 13; nine at the age of 14; eight at the age 17; nine at the age of 18 and three at the age of 20. Thus, it would be seen that the most preferred age for marriage for boys is 16-18 years and for girls 15-16 years. There are, a few cases where the girls married quite early Marrying early, however, does not appear to be a recent trend as the geneologies compiled do not show any notable difference in the age at marriage in the past and the present generations. In fact, the Buksa informants did not acknowledge that there has been any change in the age of marriage during the last few decades or so, despite some efforts made in this direction by their traditional council.

It will be interesting to mention here that according to some earlier scholars, such as Majumdar and Elliot, intermarriage between the Buksas and Tharus do take place. Thus, according to Elliot, those Buksas who reside in Kipuri and Sabua are said to intermarry with the Tharus (Elliot, *op. cit* : p. 21). However, during the field investigations for the present study no case of intermarriage between the Buksas and the Tharus came to light. The Buksas asserted that the members of their community could not have any marital relation with the Tharus as the latter are considered to be lower status.

As mentioned earlier, the Buksas are having a number of *gotras* or clans. They generally avoid marrying in the *gotra* of self and as well as that of the maternal uncle. They do not practise village exogamy; on the contrary it appears that sometimes marriages within the village are more sought for.

By and large, the Buksas are monogamous; but polygyny to the extent of two wives is permissible.

Behari Singh of Birharni village informed that there are some cases in their society where a man has two wives, the polygyny being permitted in special circumstances. Quoting example of his uncle Narain Singh, (father's elder brother) he mentioned that the younger sister of his uncle's wife became widow at the age of twenty one. His wife insisted on bringing her sister in the family as her co-wife to which his uncle readily agreed. Behari Singh himself was also having two wives. He first married at the age of 18 years, but his wife could not bear any child even after five years of married life. His father and other relatives compelled him to marry for the second time. But, two years after his marriage, his first wife gave birth to a male child and now he is having four children from his first wife and five from the second wife. He mentioned, that perhaps he would not have married the second time, but for the insistance of his parents. In case of second marriage, usually the custom of junior sorrorate is followed and the marriage takes place with wife's younger sister.

The marriages are generally contracted through negotiation. First, the boy's relations approach the girl's parents and the particulars relating to the age, *gotra,* etc., are solicited in respect of the girl as well as the boy. If both the parties are satisfied, then the issue of bride price or dowry is settled. It may be mentioned here that in the past, the custom of bride price was very common among the Buksas; but now the same has been stopped and the community frowns upon any one who accepts bride price from the boy's father. It is said that only in those cases where the girl's father is poor and unable to bear marriage expenses, he would ask for monetary help from boy's father; otherwise he rather offers dowry in the shape of presents to the boy at the time of marriage. During the present survey it came to light that in the past, bride price accepted by the girl's father used to be as much as Rs. 500/- to Rs. 600/-, in addition to a few maunds of paddy. But no case of bride price being paid came to notice in the present generation in the two villages where the field investigations were carried on.

Betrothal : The first ceremony connected with marriage is known as *mangni* or *sagai* (betrothal) which is performed after consultation with a Brahmin priest. On this occasion, one piece of *haldi* (turmeric), *pan supari* (betelnut), some *dub* (a veriety of grass), a lump of charcoal and Rs. 1.25 are given by the girl's parents, to a Brahmin priest, who visits the boy's house along with a *nai.* After reaching there, he applies a *tilak* mark on the forehead of the boy and offers him the items brought by him as presents from the girl's parents. It was explained by an informant that the different objects given as present have symbolic significance. Thus money represents good fortune, *haldi,* good health, *dub,* prosperity and long life, and the charcoal reminds one of death and to impress upon the necessity of leading a good life, keeping the end in view.

After performance of the *sagai* ceremony the date of marriage is fixed, for which one or two representatives of the boy's side visit girl's house along with a Nai and Brahmin priest. The Brahmin finds out an auspicious time which is suitable to both the sides.

Marriage ceremonies : The Buksas solemnize their marriages in Hindu fashion before *agni* or *havan* (sacred fire) where various rites are performed under the supervision of a Pahari Brahmin (Gaur Brahmin) priest. They generally celebrate their marriage in the month of *Magh,* the second fortnight of *Phalgun* and *Baisakh.* Three days before the day of actual marriage, the *behnoi* (sister's husband) cuts a branch of *semal* tree and brings it along with a bamboo pole to the house of the groom. Likewise, bride's *behnoi* also cuts a branch of *semal* tree and brings the same to the bride's house. These are fixed in the *angan* (courtyard) of the groom as well as the bride's house. This fixing of the branch of *semal* tree is known as *chhai.* After the *chhai* is fixed it is covered with thatching grass and is called *mandho.* A day prior to this ceremony, *ratjaga* (literally, keeping awake in night), is held in which departed ancestors are invited by the women folk of the household and a *pind* (dough ball) is offered in their name in *deota rasoi* (deity room), and food is kept in their honour. Sometimes, a feast is also given to the relatives if the bride's or bridegroom's father is well-to-do. For three days prior to marriage, the groom and the bride are given a bath after being anointed with oil and turmeric paste by their female relations at their respective houses.

On the day when *barat* (marriage party) is due to proceed to the bride's house, the groom is given a bath by *Nai,* and then his *behnoi* (sister's husband) adorns him in new dress and also puts *maur* (crown) on his head. The *behnoi* receives a suitable gift, depending upon the economic status of groom's family for his services. Then the groom is seated in a palanquin and the *barat* proceeds to the bride's house. The barat, after being received by the bride's relations, is stationed in *janvasa,* which is either a house or tent pitched in the open. Here, the marriage party is entertained with sweets. After some time, the bride's brother and the Brahmin priest from her side visit the *janvasa* where the former washes the feet of the groom and offers a sum of Rs. 1.25 and 2½ yards cloth (called *Tuk*) to him. This ceremony is called *pochhwan.* The Brahmin returns with the brother of the bride and tells the father of the groom to get ready for the ceremony of *dwar char.* Then, the *barat* visits the bride's house with a party of musicians who play on such musical instruments as *dhol, drum,* pipes, etc. On this occasion, if the means permit, fire-works are also displayed in the courtyard of the bride's house. Thereafter, the Brahmin priests of both the sides sit and perform worship with incantation of *mantras.* The father of the bride applies *tilak* mark on the forehead of the groom and offers him some cash money. Next, the groom is carried inside the house, where he performs the worship of *deotas.* Then, the ceremony of *kanyadan* is performed by the father of the bride. This is followed by *phera* ceremony (cir-

cumambulation around the sacred fire) under the *mandho*. The priest chants *mantras* and the couple goes round the first seven times, the bride leads in the first 4 and the bridegroom leads in the last three. This completes the solemnization of marriage. The father of the groom gives Rs. 1.25 to the Brahmin for conducting the ceremony of *phera*. Later, after being entertained with refreshments, the groom's party returns to the groom's village along with the bride. The couple is received by the mother of the groom and then taken to *deota rasoi* for worship of the household deities. Later, in the late evening, a feast is thrown to the *biradari*, where liquor is also served. Next day, the bride accompanied by her brother leaves for her village. She comes to stay with her husband on a permanent basis after 15 days Sometimes she may stay with her parents for nearly a year. No ceremony is performed when she returns to her husband's house and the later simply brings her back to the village along with two or three relatives.

It was informed by the Buksas that about a decade ago, the bridegroom's father was required to give *roti* (meals) five times during the marriage. These meals were known as *ratjaga* (given three days before the actual marriage), *mandhao* (on fixing of *chhai*), *tel-ki-roti* (on the day before the departure of barat), *barat-ki-roti* (on the eve of the departure of barat) and *bahu-ki-roti* (on the return of barat in honour of daughter-in-law). But now only two meals are considered essential, one at the time of departure of *barat* to bride's place and the other after the return of the *barat* with the bride.

Marriage by exchange : Another form of marriage among the Buksas is marriage by exchange which is locally termed *badle-ki-shadi*. Such marriages are also settled by the parents of the boys and the girls by negotiations. But in this case a man who gives his daughter in marriage to a person, accepts the latter's sister as the wife of his son. However, it appears that this form of marriage is not very much in vogue in the community. Only one case was reported in which one Man Singh of the village Birhani and Daulat Singh of Beria village exchanged their daughters and sons in the manner described above.

Divorce and Widow remarriage : The Buksas generally deny that they allow divorce in their society. According to Majumdar (*op. cit* : p. 67) also the Buksas look down upon divorce and remarriage of widows. But according to some other sources (C.I. 1931, Vol. XVIII, Part I, Report p. 589) the widows and divorcees are permitted to remarry. On a deeper probe during the field investigations for the present study it came to light that divorces and separations do take place although the Buksas frown upon the same and consider them as something unfortunate. Both males and females can seek divorce on various grounds. A widow may be married to the younger brother of the deceased, if both are willing, but it is not obligatory on either side. The marriage of a widow is known as *kaj* in which elaborate rituals are dispensed with and it is enough for the couple to give feast to the *biradari*. The Buksa informants mentioned that unlike their neighbours, the Tharus, the second husband of the widow does not come to stay in her parental house.

Death rites : The Buksas usually cremate their dead but those who die of accidents like burning, drowning, snake-bite, etc., or of epidemics like cholera, small pox, etc., are not cremated; their remains are buried. Children, irrespective of the cause of death, are also buried. As soon as it is certain that the dying person will not survive, he is removed from the cot or *chappar*, as the case may be, and laid on the ground. After death, relatives and villagers are informed through the *nai*. The eldest son of the deceased usually performs the last rites. In the absence of a son the deceased's brother performs the death rites. A *tikhti* (frame) of bamboo poles is prepared to carry the dead body to the cremation or burial ground. The dead body is wrapped in a white cloth, which is called, *kaffan* and put over the *tikhti*. It is then carried to the cremation ground, where it is given a bath in a river or stream. Then it is kept over a pile of woods arranged by the mourners. Before cremating two balls of kneaded flour covered with the thrmeric powder are put on the chest of the dead body. The chief mourner lits the pyre after taking three rounds. In case of burial, a pit is dug and the body is placed in the pit and covered with soil. After burial or cremation, all the mourners take a bath in a river or a stream and return to the deceased's house, where they are offered syrup prepared from *gur* (jaggery).

On the third day, *teeja* is performed, when the chief mourner visits the cremation ground to collect *phul* (ashes and unburnt pieces of bone) of the deceased and stores the same in an earthen vessel. This vessel is brought to the village and kept under a *peepal* tree over which a pitcher full of water having a small hole is hung. The water from the pitcher trickles down and falls on the vessel containing ashes. Later, the son or brother of the deceased, carries the *phul* to Hardwar for immersion in the river Ganges. The chief mourner cooks his own meals and remains secluded from others for a period of ten days. During this period he sleeps on the ground and does not take food with salt.

On the tenth day, *daswawn* is performed when *acharaj*, or Brahmin, is invited to officiate at the ceremony. The close male relatives on the father's side get their hairs and beard shaved by the *nai*. Some articles of daily use, like bedding, utensils, cot, etc., are given to *acharaj* as gift in the name of the dead. Five *pinds* (dough balls) are also offered in the name of the dead. The members of *biradari* (kinsmen) are given feast by the relatives of the deceased.

Terhrin is performed on the thirteenth day. A Brahmin priest officiates on this occasion, and assists the chief mourner in offering *pind* in the names of the deceased. The pollution period ends on this day with the performance of purification rites by the

Brahmin, who sprinkles Ganges water on members of the family as well on the different parts of the house, reciting *gau-mantra* all the time. The members of *biradari* (kinsmen) are also fed on this occasion.

It is understood that like other caste Hindus the Buksas have recently started performing annual *sharadhs* (obsequies) and on such occasion they offer food to the manes of the departed parents and then feed the Brahmin priest.

Religion

The Buksas claim themselves to be Hindus. According to Majumdar, the Buksas abandoned their tribal religion and joined the fold of Hinduism, while their cognates, Tharus, still keep to their age-long traditions and ancient beliefs and cults (Majumdar, *op. cit* : p. 66). It appears that the process of Hinduization among the Buksas is quite old. They have been availing of the services of Brahmin priest during birth, marriage and death ceremonies for quite sometime, as indicated from the accounts of the community given by early scholars. Many important Hindu gods and goddesses are included in their pantheon and, as discussed in the subsequent account, the manner of celebration of various Hindu festivals is also similar to those of the other Hindus of the area. But there are, hardly any temples in Buksari villages. They, however, visit the Mahashiva temple at Rudrapur on the occasion of Shivratri. They have also taken to such practices as fasting on certain occasions, hearing *Satyanarayana katha* (a religious discourse in adulation of god Satyanarayana) and offering water to Shiva daily, in the fashion of many other Hindus. Besides, at the time of marriage the Buksa males also put on the sacred thread, consisting of three strings.

The Buksas regard Mahasiva as their supreme God. Though there is no temple of Mahasiva as such in any of the Buksari villages, a sacred spot, represented by a mound of clay, and known as *Shivsthan* (place of the Shiva), is always kept in the courtyard in front of the house where, as mentioned earlier, the Buksas offer water daily in the morning after taking bath. Though Shiva is generally worshipped at the family level by offering water, Shivratri is celebrated as a community festival, when a group of persons perform the worship together after observing fast for the whole day. Also they visit the Shiva temple at Rudrapur in a group.

The other gods of Hindu pantheon of all India or regional spread, worshipped by the Buksas are Satyanarayana and mother-goddess in her various forms Satyanarayana is worshipped on any day. There is no fixed date or occasion for this purpose. *Satyanarayan katha* is also arranged on any day. It may be arranged by an individual family or by the villagers as a whole by collecting contributions from all the households. A Brahmin priest is always invited to recite the *Satyanarayana katha* on such an occasion. After the *katha* is over, *prasad* (oblation) is distributed among those present.

The Buksas also worship Jwala Devi of Kashipur, the Devi at Atraya, and the Hulka Devi at Illabas near Pilibit. Among them, the Devi of Kashipur is considered to be most powerful.

Many other deities, such as Purabwali Devi, Sitla Devi, Gauriji, Kalkaji, etc., are represented by mounds of clay placed over a raised platform under a tree. Generally, they are located outside the village, slightly away from the main habitation. These deities are worshipped once in a year, when annual prayer is offered to Bhum Sen in the month of *Asadh* (June-July).

The Buksas also worship Dhane Deota, a deity, who is supposed to inhabit the forest. But it is not represented in any material form. Whenever they hunt any game in the forest they offer a part of the animal killed to this deity. During the present study some Buksas informed that a pig is also offered to the Dhane Deota, if the hunt is successful or the desired forest produces are obtained from the forest.

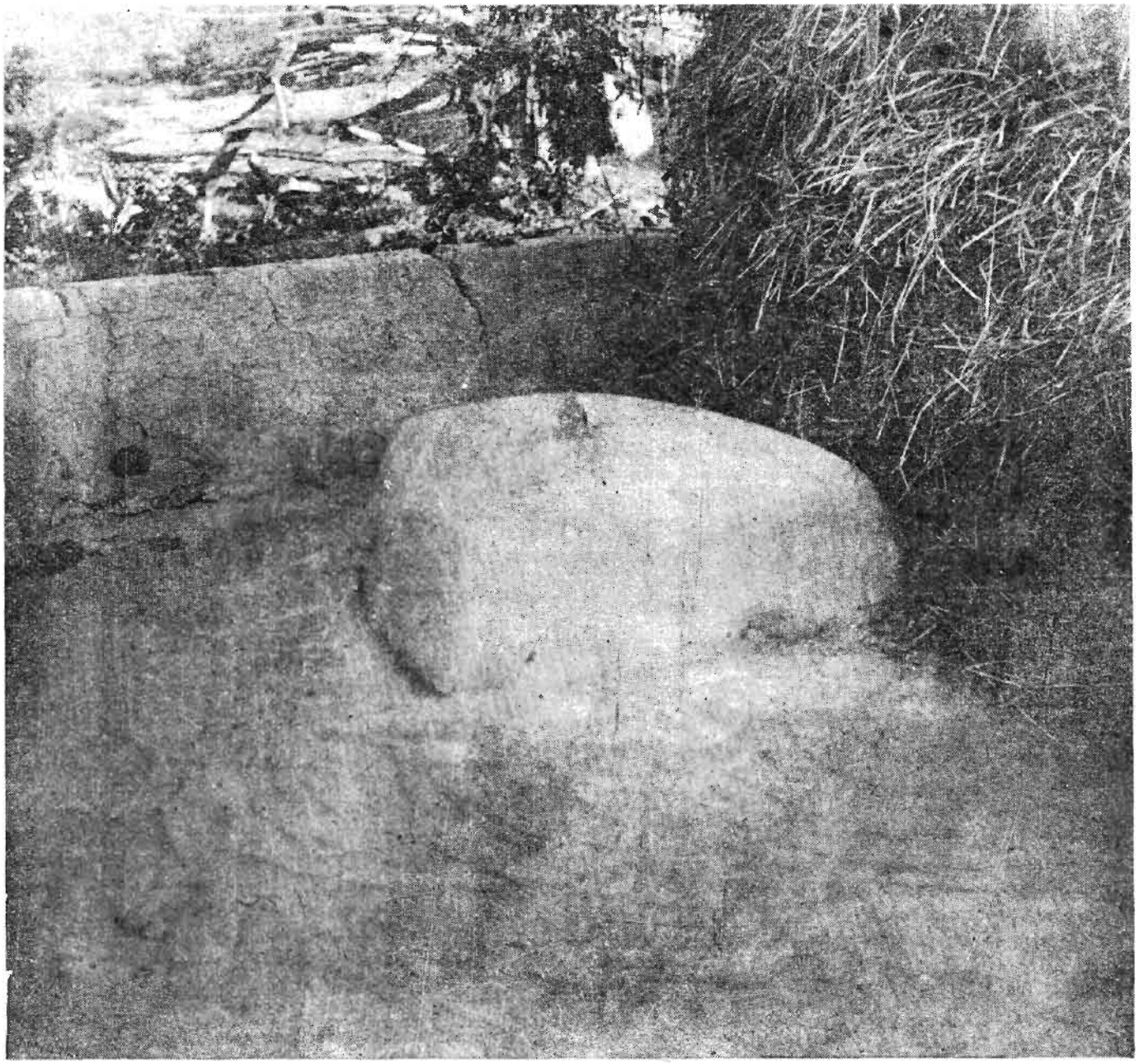
As mentioned elsewhere, every Buksa house has a separate apartment called *deotai rasoi*, where the household deities are kept for worship. This place is considered as sacred and the spot where the household deities are kept is not touched, without taking bath. The common household deities are Kashipur Wali Devi and Bhagwati Devi.

The worship of household deities is performed on all festivals and on such occasions as marriage in the household and fulfilment of one's desire. But in the month of *Magh* these are worshipped on a grand scale. On the occasion, the *deotai rasoi* (abode of deity in an apartment of the house) is cleaned and plastered with mud and a lighted lamp is kept there. The head of the household and his wife take bath and burn incense sticks before the deity after applying five marks of vermillion on it. *Prasad*, consisting of *poori* and *kheer* is also distributed among the family members.

In the open courtyard, in front of every house, a raised circular platform is built, and a round lump of clay is kept in its centre, to represent the deity Bhumsen. The worship of Bhumsen is performed in the month of *Asadh* every year. Every household pays subscription for purchasing the various items required in the worship of the deity. These items include a goat, one cocoanut, a few *batashas*, (sugar candies), liquor and milk. The worship of Bhumsen is performed by the Pradhan of the village, and only the male members participate in it. The Pradhan sacrifices the goat and first offers its flesh to the deity alongwith other items mentioned above. Besides, the offerings made collectively by the villagers, every household also offers five *pooris* and *batashas* to the deity. Though there is no fixed day for the worship, the same should be performed on any day falling in the *shuklapaksha* (bright fortnight) in the month of *Asadh*, after consultation among the villagers.

Festivals

The Buksas celebrate all the important Hindu festivals of the region, the more important among them



20. A view of the shrine of the village deity.

being Holi, Dussehra, Diwali, Teej, Gangasnan and Shivratri. These are briefly discussed below :

Holi : Holi is celebrated in the month of *Phalguna* (February-March) on the *Pooranmashi* (fullmoon day). The knowledgeable Buksas associated it with the legend of Prahlad and Holika as current among the other Hindus of the region. On the occasion of Holi, a bonfire is made which is first kindled by the Pradhan of the village. For instance, in the village Bannakhera, it is lit by Khem Singh, Pradhan. For the bonfire cow dung, straws, etc., are collected by the children of the village; no wood is used as fuel on this occasion. After the burning of the effigy of Holika, Holi songs are sung by groups of people in the accompaniment of *dholak*. Next day, the Buksas indulge in the revelry of throwing coloured powder and coloured water on each other.

Teej : The festival of Teej falls in the month of *Savana* (July-August). Women observe this festival by singing songs, composed especially for the rainy season and swaying on *jhoolas* and *hindolas* (swings) erected with ropes on branches of trees.

Dussehra : Dussehra is celebrated in the month of *Kuar* (September-October). On this occasion, the houses are cleaned and plastered with clay. Special food items, like *tel-ki-roti* and vegetables are prepared and before partaking them, a little portion is offered to the household deity. In the afternoon, people visit Bazpur town to witness the burning of the effigy of Ravana and attend the fair held there. Liquor is also freely consumed by them on this occasion.

Diwali : Diwali falls on the Amavasya day of the month *Kartika* (October-November). A few days before the actual festival, womenfolk start cleaning the house and plastering the courtyard. Cattle sheds are also thoroughly cleaned and given a new look. In case of *kachha* houses, the womenfolk decorate the walls with clay designs of flowers, animal figurines and other ornamental forms. Special items of food like; *kheer, puri,* vegetables and meat are also prepared. The *Bharara* (medicine man and sorcerer) goes on chanting sacred formulae throughout the night and if there are candidates for admission to the mysterious art of the *Bharara* they are initiated on this night; earthen lamps are lit in the house cattle shed, Bhumsen's *sthan and Shivsthan* in the night. The people enjoy the festival by merry making, eating and drinking. Next day, the cattle are washed and given rich fodder.

Gangasnan : The Gangasnan falls in the month of *Kartik* and lasts for a month and is culminated on *Poornamashi*. This is a fair which evokes a good deal of enthusiasm among the Buksas. Families of Buksas visit Garhmukteshwar or Hardwar by means of bullock carts. After having a dip in the holy Ganges, they participate in the fair held there on the occasion and purchase fancy items as mementos.

Shivaratri : As mentioned earlier, Shivaratri or Mahashivaratri is an important festival of the Buksas and is celebrated in the manner discussed earlier.

Some Buksas reported that they also observe fast during Navaratra periods falling in the month of *Chaitra* (March-April) and *Kuar* (September-October).

Leisure, Recreation and Child play

There are few organised recreational activities of purely secular nature among the Buksas. Even then, they nave devised ways and means to break the monotony of routine life. The main source of recreation for them is gossiping, narrating and listening to stories, riddles and sometimes playing cards. Events like marriage provide an opportunity to them for merry-making, singing and dancing.

Leisure hours are generally utilised in conversation in a group of 4-5 males over *hookah* or by smoking *bidi* in which matters relating to village, personal affairs and other issues are discussed. Sometimes, these hours are spent in singing folk-songs and listening to recital of Alha-Udal (a colourful legend woven around two Rajput princes, belonging to the time of Prithivi Raj Chauhan). In the villages Birhani and Bannakhera a school teacher and a shopkeeper respectively are having transistor radio sets. These attract good number of young Buksa males who listen to the songs and other entertainment items during their leisure hours.

The Buksas have variety of indegenous games which are played by young boys. Among the indoor games; playing cards, *chauper* (chess), *Ithar bagi* and *baggi* (local games) are liked and played by young and old persons alike. Among the outdoor games, *kabaddi,* hide and seek, running, pumping and *gar-gar* are very popular. The game of *gar-gar* is played by young boys who divide into two parties. A big circle is drawn on the ground and members of one party sit inside the circle. The members of the other party, who remain outside the circle, pull the members inside the circle and thereby there is a trial of strength. The modern games like football, volleyball, etc., have not yet reached them. It is said that in the past, hunting expeditions in the forest provided the recreation and thrill to them but these are now more or less stopped due to the restrictions imposed by the Forest Department.

Among the females, the most favourite pastime is to visit the weekly markets where they make purchases as well as meet men and women from other villages.

At Bazpur, the tehsil headquarter, there is a cinema hall, housed in a temporary enclousure of tin-sheets, which was opened about three and half years back. This cinema also provides recreation to those Buksas who happen to visit the tehsil market. In the two villages covered by the present survey, twelve persons informed that they had seen movies some time or other. The manager of the cinema hall at Bazpur informed that on Sundays (market day at Bazpur) quite a good number of Buksas from the nearby villages witness the matinee show from 3 to 6 p.m.

The Buksas have traditional songs and lances of their own, and even many non-Buksas, consider these to be of high entertainment value. These are arranged on moonlit nights when the villagers collect at an open space after finishing their work. More frequently, the dance is a solo dance in which the dancer, a Buksa male, dresses himself in female costume and jewellery. He is accompanied by four singers, two standing on his either side, and three players of musical instruments, who play on *mridang*, *dholak* and harmonium. The dancer gives his performance to the accompaniment of song, sung in a high pitched voice as well as instrumental music. The songs composed for such occasions are based on long stories of the local heroes, depicting their deeds of bravery or legends relating to some king or mythological heroes, like Ram and Krishna. These dances are also arranged on social occasions, like marriage, or religious occasions like Holi and Diwali. Harvesting festival is another occasion for merry making accompanied by dances and songs.

The musical instruments found among the Buksas are *mridang, nagara, dholak* and harmonium. None of these appear to be indegenous and are mostly purchased from nearby towns. Normally, there would not be more than four or five musical instruments in a Buksa village.

Relations among Different Segments of the Community

There are no recognised segments among the Buksas of Nainital district. But some Buksas are aware that there are other Buksas who live in the western part, somewhere near Hardwar and Bijnor. On the basis of their territorial distribution, two divisions are found among them. Those living to the east of Ram Ganga river are known as *Purabiya* or Eastern and those living to the west of Ramganga are known as *Pachhimi* (Western) Buksas (Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1865, part II : p. 150). These two groups have no social intercourse and inter-marriage among them does not take place. In fact, most of the Buksas of Nainital are not aware of the western group of the Buksas and their contacts remain confined within the members of their own division in the district.

Inter-community Relationship

As mentioned elsewhere, the Buksas are mostly localised in Buksari villages. Until recently, there were very few other communities who lived in their villages or in their vicinity. These included a few Pahari Rajputs, Brahmins, migrant Nepalis and Gurkhas and a few Scheduled Castes, such as Chamars and Doms. Sometimes, a few Sainis from the adjoining districts, such as Muradabad, also visit the Buksari villages temporarily to take some land on lease from Buksas for growing vegetables. But the Buksas do not have very close social relations with most of these communities. In the traditional social structure of the regions they ranked above the Scheduled Castes of the region like the Chamars and the Doms, but they rank below the Pahari Rajputs.

It is claimed that the Brahmin priests have been attending to the Buksas for performing their religious and social rites, and the process of Hinduisation seems to be quite old. Earlier authors have also acknowledged this fact. Thus, Elliot (*op. cit.* : p. 21) has stated that the *purohits* of the Buksas are Kannaujia Brahmins. Turner (C.I. 1931 Vol. XVIII, Part I, U.P. : p. 588) observed three decades ago that the influence of the Brahmins was much stronger among them than among the Tharus, and was becoming progressively more strong. One decade after this Majumdar observed that the adoption of the worship of Satyanarayan by the Buksas and employment of Hindu priests to officiate for them had raised their social status and that Brahmins did not refuse water from their hands (Majumdar : *op. cit.*, p. 66).

During the present study, the informants belonging to the Buksa community stated that they were receiving without any difficulty the traditional services of Brahmin priests and *nais* at the time of their marriages. They, however, did not require the services of washermen in their social observances. Regarding their commensal relations, they informed that they accepted *pukka* food from all high caste Hindus, such like Brahmins and Rajputs, but *kachha* food was accepted from the members of their own community only. According to them the Scheduled Castes of the area, such as Chamar, Dom, etc., accepted food and water from them, while they themselves refrained from accepting the same from the former. The Buksas further claimed that the Rajputs and Brahmins accepted *pukka* food and water from them.

They do not appear to suffer from any social disability. A few elderly Buksa informants mentioned that about fifteen or sixteen years ago their children were given scholarships for education and some of them also received government grants for construction or repair of houses. But it was felt by them that they were treated by government at par with the Scheduled Castes in the matter of educational and other facilities and hence they decided to deny to themselves such benefits as they feared loss of social status on this account. Now, it was pointed out, none of them has taken any loan or subsidy for construction of a house or for agricultural purposes, with the apprehension that they may be treated as 'Harijans'. It is, however, not certain whether the Buksas voluntarily gave up the facilities available to them earlier or whether because they were no longer entitled to such benefits after 1956. As stated elsewhere, Buksas were treated as a Scheduled Caste vide the 1950 statutory order but in 1956 they were dropped from the list of Scheduled Castes and came to be notified as a Scheduled Tribe only in 1967.

But, whatever may be their statutory status, it appears to be more or less certain that the Buksas do not suffer from any notable social disability. As regards their inter action with other communities as mentioned elsewhere, there are only a few members of other communities with whom they are having intensive social contacts. They participate in the social functions of other communities (except the Doms

and the Chamars) and reciprocally incite others in their social functions. In recent decades the position has changed somewhat. After partition, a number of displaced person from West Pakistan, who are mostly Raigariah Sikhs, have been settled in the region. The Buksas do not appear to have established amicable relations with the new settlers. They term the Rai sikhs under the generic name Punjabi and according to them the 'Punjabis' have "pushed them out" from their land and often stolen their cattle. They further allege that being illiterate they are often duped by the Punjabis in land transactions. It appears that the Buksas, who appear to be easy going type of people, are not able to stand the competition with the more enterprising newcomers.

Structure of Social Control, Prestige and Leadership

It is said that a century ago there was a single *biradari* (community) panchayat or council among the Buksas of Nainital district. The headquaters of the panchayat was at the village Bama which was later on shifted to the village Birpur in Ramnagar tehsil. In course of time, this panchayat splitted into two, the headquarters of the new panchayat being located in the village Audhkhera in Gadarpur pargana of the Bazpur tehsil. Another panchayat, with headquarters at the village Chanakpur in Bazpur paragana, came into existence only about 30 years ago. Thus, now, three panchayats are functioning in the area.

The jurisdictions of the three panchayats, *viz.* Ramnagar, Gadarpur and Bazpur extend to thirty, forty and sixty villages respectively. In other words, the recent set up of *Takht* at Bazpur paragana exercises influence over a wider area than the other two other panchayats.

The Buksas refer to their traditional panchayat as *takht* and its chairman is also known by the same name. It has not been possible to collect details of each *takht* during the present study. However, the office-bearers and present incumbents of the *takht* at Bazpur (Chanakpur village) are indicated below:

Office	Number	Present incumbent
1	2	3
1. Takht . .	One	Chandan Singh, aged 70 years, village Chanakpur.
2. Munsif . .	Two	1. Baloo Singh, aged 45 years, village Gadarpur.
		2. Mukand Singh, aged 60 years, village Hajira.
3. Daroga .	Two	1 Anoo Singh, aged 80 years, village Khanpur.
		2. Chattar Singh, aged 70 years, village Chanakpur.
4. Chaparasi	Two	1. Bikha Singh, aged 25 years, village Alimohamai.
		2. Vacant.

It is understood that Bhikham Singh, the father of the present *takht.* Chandan Singh, was the first Chairman of the Chanakpur *takht.* After his death, his brother was selected as *takht* with the approval of the other two *takhts.*

It is reported that the post of *takht* was hereditary in the past; but it is no longer considered hereditary. The *takht* is now selected with the approval of other *takhts.* The office of *munsif* is filled by selection at the *takht* level but in his case the approval of other *takhts* is not sought. After the selection of *takht,* an elaborate ceremony of *safa bandhna* (investiture of turban) is held, when a seven yards long white cloth is tied on the head of the newly appointed *takht.* The newly appointed *takht* gives a feast to five to six hundred *biradari* (community) members. wherein generally *poori,* cooked rice and cooked vegetables are served.

In case of munsif also, a turban of 7 yards long white cloth is tied on his head and he stands a feast to about hundred to two hundred *biradari* members.

Generally, the traditional panchayat of the Buksas deals with the violation of commensality rules, moral lapses as well as cases of marriage and divorce.

A case decided by the traditional council about a decade ago is given below. A girl, aged 18 years, of the village Bhikampur was found to be pregnant when her marriage negotiations were in progress with the son of one H. S. of Bhuri village. When the latter came to know of this, he took a very serious view of the matter and raised the issue in the *takht* (council). The *takht* (chairman), *munsif* and *daroga* were invited at Bhikampur village for hearing the case. The girl was produced before the *takht* and her statement was recorded. She confessed her pre-marital relations with a Buksa boy of the same village. The boy in question was also summoned by the *takht.* The latter also confessed his guilt. After hearing the statements of the girl and the boy, the council decided that each of them should be given a punishment of being publicly beaten with a shoe so that the same may set an example for others. Besides, the father of the girl was asked to offer a feast to fifty members of the community as a punishment for not getting his daughter married earlier. A fine of Rs. 250/- was also imposed on the father of the boy. Seventy five per cent of the fine, thus, collected was spent on a feast to the members present during the meeting of the council and 25 per cent of the money was shared by the *takht* (chairman), *munsif and daroga.*

From the above case, it is evident that the guilty persons are put to public shame and humiliation, and sometimes given severe beating. This in a way acts as a check on moral lapses on the part of the members of the community. However, during the present survey no case came to light, which has been recently handled by the council.

In addition to its usual role of regulating community affairs, the traditional council recently ventured

into the field of social reforms. Behari Singh, a knowledgeable person among the Buksas, stated that about 20 years ago, a meeting of the three *takhts* was organised at the village Khanpur with the purpose of introducing some social reforms in the community. The meeting, which is said to have been attended by six hundred persons passed the following resolutoins :—

1. Young girls should not go to markets alone.
2. Young girls and women should not go to far off places alone for fishing, and in group fishing expeditions, males should also accompany the females.
3. Age for marriage for girls and boys should be fixed at 13-14 years and 18-20 years respectively. Girls should be 5 years younger than the boys.
4. The traditional custom of giving five *rotis* (marriage feasts) by the bride's or groom's father during marriage ceremony should be reduced to two only, so as to reduce his burden.
5. The traditional custom of bringing the bride in *palki* (palanquin) should not be enforced and instead *ekka* (small bullock-cart) can be used for the purpose.
6. The practice of the bride's father accepting bride price from the groom's father as marriage expense should be stopped forthwith.
7. The Brahmin priest should be accorded due status. Each household in receipt of the services of the Brahmin should give the latter a suitable remuneration according to its paying capacity; in any case the amount should not be less than one rupee.

Though resolutions adopted by the *takht* did not meet with much success, it is found that in addition to handling justice according to the traditional norms, the traditional council is trying to act as an organ for introducing social reforms in the community.

At present the traditional council does not hold meetings frequently. The cases dealt with in the *takht* are reported to be few and far between. A few elderly Buksas who were interviewed were of the opinion that the punishment enforced by the *takht* was severe, and, therefore, few persons dared to violate the community norms. But, young men among the Buksas opined that the traditional panchayat had been losing its hold, particularly after the introduction of statutory panchayat. In support of their statement they argued that the latter office was contested keenly with much enthusiasm.

This statement seems to have some validity as it is found that the Pradhan of Gram Sabha (satutory panchayat), who is also a Buksa, wields more influence and power than the tradition *takht.* It appeas that elder generation is more aligned to the traditional *takht,* while the younger generation is in favour of the statutory Panchayat. Though both the agencies provide for the election of the head or Pradhan, the *takht* is tradition bound and monopolized by a few families, while the statutory panchayat claims to be a more democratic and progressive institution as the latter also appears to provide opportunity to a wider circle among the Buksas to assume leadership and plays a greater role in the community affairs.

Social Reform and Welfare

In addition to the traditional *takht* which also tried to assume the role of an organ of social reforms, another organised body recently tried to act as an agency for introducing social reforms in the community. About three years ago, an association of the Buksas was formed at the initiative of an ex-M.L.A., hailing from Nainital district. It was known as Buksa Parishad and had following office bearers :

1. Khem Singh (of village Masra Hasan)	*Adhyakas* (President)
2. Hari Singh (of village Bannakhera)	*Mantri* (Secretary)
3. Kishan Singh (of village Bhikampur)	Treasurer
4. Munni Singh (of village Itanah)	*Sabh patj* (Chairman)

The Parishad was formed with the object of promoting the interests of the Buksas as well as for introducing social, reforms. According to its secretary, Hari Singh, the following resolutions were passed in its meeting held in 1967 :—

1. 50 volunteers should be enrolled for civil defence.
2. Buksas should not sell land to outsiders.
3. Buksas should refrain from drinking liquor in public.

However, the resolutions passed by the Parishad did not prove to be very effective as none of these found favour with majority of the Buksas.

It is said that earlier, in May, 1965, the Buksa Parishad presented a memorandum to the then Social Welfare Minister of U.P. In this memorandum the Parishad traced the history of Buksa community and drew attention to the difficulties and atrocities faced by them, after the independence of the country. In short, the memorandum referred to their earlier conditions of life practically free from interference from outside, when only a few castes or communities were residing in their area. It mentioned that after independence due to various reasons the Buksas suffered untold miseries resulting in their leading a degraded way of life. The lands which were held by them for many generations and which were reclaimed by their forefathers for cultivation by hard labour had been taken away from them. Also, there was complete dearth of education among the Buksas. In the memorandum it was further mentioned that under the

prevailing conditions the Buksa community would never be able to prosper or progress and would remain educationally backward. It added that it was the earnest desire of the Parishad that under the constitution of India their community should be declared as a Scheduled Tribe and the Government should adopt suitable measures for their rapid progress. Further, it was requested that the entry of non-Buksas should be prohibited in the Buksa villages, as it resulted in their exploitation by outsiders. It was also demanded that the wrong entries in the land records which conferred the right of ownership of their lands as non-Buksas should be corrected.

The activities and the achievements of the Buksa Parishad were discussed with a group of Buksas in the village Birhani to see how far they were aware of the move of the Parishad for their inclusion in the list of Scheduled Tribes and also to evaluate the success of the Parishad. The group consisted of, one Pradhan, who is considered quite influential and knowledgeable, and ten other persons belonging to the Buksa community. From the dicussions it appeared that the Parishad had not been able to spread its influence among the Buksas. It was gathered that none of them was aware about the move of the Parishad for the inclusion of Buksas in the list of Scheduled Tribes nor were they aware of the benefits accruing from such listing. The Pradhan informed that more than a decade ago they were put together with the Harijans and thereby given some benefits such as, scholarships for education, and subsidy for house building and agriculture. But these measures damaged their prestige. He mentioned that they did not allow such a state of affiairs to continue for long and stopped taking advantage of facilities offered to them. He quoted a few examples from his own village as well as neighbouring villages where none of them came forward to avail of the offer of the government in respect of grant-in-aid for construction of houses and installation of hand pumps in their courtyards. In another village, Bannakhera, a Buksa remarked that there was no fun in hankering for government subsidy. He related his experience when he applied for subsidy for purchasing a bullock from the Block Development Office. He alleged that in order to received the grant-in-aid he had to cross many hurdles and even bribe the officials.

According to the Buksas the main problems confronting their community primarily relate to their poor economy. They complained that formerly they had free access to the forest and its produce but the severe restrictions imposed in this regard by the government has given a set back to their economy, causing in its wake untold miseries to them.

Biographies

D. S., a 70 years old farmer of the village Bannakhera, claimed himself to be one of the oldest person of his village. Originally, he resided in Raipura village in Ram Nagar tehsil and settled in the present village about 50 years ago. While narrating the circumstances of his migration D. S. informed that he used to live with his parents and six elder brothers including one widowed sister. After the death of his father, all the brothers got separated and established their own households in the same village. After a year or so, a natural calamity visited the area and his village was flooded by the Kosi river successively for three years. D. S. had to bear the main brunt of the turbulence of the river as his plots got submerged, being adjacent to the river bank. He along with two other affected families decided to leave that village for good and settled in the present village. D. S. mentioned, "There were no restrictions during those days, one could easily settle on *kham* land after clearing the forest".

According to D. S. during those days education was not considered necessary and the parents never bothered to send their children to schools. Quoting his own case he told that he never attended any school because education was unknown among them and nor was there any school functioning at that time. Referring to the main activities of children in the past he said that these included grazing the cattles, playing with friends and giving assistance in agricultural operations. D. S. informed that in the past hunting expeditions used to play an important role in their society. Before embarking on a hunting expedition they always evoked the blessings of goddess Dana Devi by offering her a sacrifice of goat. Usually, they used to hunt spotted deer, boar and *Panda*. The jungle was also infested with dangerous animals. D. S. narrated an episode concerning himself. Once he had gone to a forest near the foot-hills to graze his herd of cattle. While returning home he had the shock of his life when he was suddenly confronted by a tiger which pounced upon one of the cows and killed it on the spot. D. S. was so frightened that he could raise alarm for help only after the tiger had vanished with its prey.

D. S. was married at the age of ten years. His wife who hails from the same tehsil was eight years old at the time of her marriage. He got his only son married at the age of thirteen to the daughter of one H. S., the Pradhan of the Majpuri village, 32 kms. away from his village. His grandson S. R. is now eight years old and studying in 2nd grade of the village primary school.

When enquired about the life in the past D. S. narrated in a feeble voice that the whole area was covered with thick forest which was almost inaccessible. The inhospitable climatic conditions were dangerous to the life. Malarial fever, ascites and droppy diseases etc., were very common; many deaths occurred in his village during those days due to snake bites. But since last twenty five years, the physical environment has been gradually changing. In the wake of partition, displaced persons from Punjab, particularly the Rai Sikhs settled there. The land became no more inaccessible, as the forests were cleared. He stated the whole area has been turned into mechanised farms. The total picture of the area is absolutely different today from what it was

in the past. But D. S. is not happy with all the present developments. In a depressed tone he spoke of the problems now faced by his community. "We were the lords here". Besides the *uthaun kheti* (Shifting cultivation), hunting and the collection of forest produce were the main economic pursuits. But the sudden opening of the area to outsiders and the setting up of the mechanised farms changed the physical environment of the area and exposed our community to sudden economic hardships by disturbing our traditional system of shifting cultivation. The problem has been further aggravated due to encroachments on our land. New restrictions were imposed on the free use of forest land and its produce. He complained that the U.P. Government's policy to encourage outsiders to settle in their habitation attracted rich people from outside who acquired their lands at a nominal price. D. S. further mentioned that in the context of changed situation, they are unable to compete with outsiders who are clever and have now dominated the entire region. He advocated that some measures should be taken by the Government to safeguard the interests of their community which has been subjected to exploitation.

Inspite of all his grievances D. S. has an open mind and appreciates all the recent developmental activities undertaken by the Government. Patting his eight years grandson who is studying in 2nd grade he remarked with a broad smile, "There were no hospitals during those days; but now one can rush to a doctor in no time."

2. M. S. a youngman of 22 years had to face the burden of running a large household comprising his wife and six brothers and sisters. Due to sudden demise of his father, M. S. was married last year to J. D. a 15 years old girl hailing from Savral village. He still cherishes the glory of his *barat* which comprised 7 *tang* (bullock cart) and a *peenus* (pallanquin). According to him the feast served at the bride's house is still talked for its grandeur as it consisted of ghee, rice and *bura* (sugar). But just after the marriage, M. S.'s father passed away. This coincidence brought a bad name to the bride who was considered as illfated and an inauspicious one.

M. S. possesses 8 acres of land for cultivation. He claims to be the first cultivator in the village who responded to the 'grow more food' compaign launched by the Block Development Department. He used fertilizers for paddy, maize and wheat crops and achieved good results. But he feels that he still lags behind the big farmers who are producing more and having better resources. According to him the big farmers have been dominating because of their economic affluence and power and have grabbed a sizeable area of land which actually belonged to Buksa community in the past. He laments the lack of enterprise in the part of his community men. In this regard he remarked, "No person from my village has ever taken any employment though there have been ample opportunities of getting jobs in farms, sugar factory and other construction works". But unfortunately the community norms and traditions consider working as a larbourer as degrading. However, he is hopeful that the younger generation will certainly respond to the dictates of changing times and new values and tap the new avenues in the changed economic set up.

Recalling his childhood experience M. S. made a mention of the time when his father took him to the village school. After the school hours he was to look after the cattles and to assist in some agricultural operations. Due to the tasks he had to perform he could not continue his studies after 2nd grade. Quite unhappy with the tradition and value system of his community he came out with the outburst. "This is what is happening to most of our children, we inherit the misfortunes of our parents and will die without achieving anything in life like our ancestors."

M. S. has an appreciation for the activities of Buksa Parishad, an association organised by a social worker and an important leader of the community. The association organises activities such as sports, cultural activities including folk songs and dances. The importance of the association according to M. S. lies in its approach to the members of the community. Many of them could know through the association that their community is entitled for special considerations being a Schedule Tribe. But according to M. S. many facilities have not reached to them and sometimes certain officials indulge in corrupt practices. In this connection, he referred to an incidence, which took place during last month. He visited the local dispensary for his own treatment but the compounder demanded some money from him for the medicines which M. S. refused to pay and came back without getting the medicines. But M. S. stated that the veterinary doctor never charges anyone for treating his cattles.

3. G. S. a middle aged man, was born in the village where he currently resides but his grandfather migrated from Bhojpur village on account of a famine. "There was no problem for land during those days," G. S. added. One could clear the *kham* (forest land) by paying revenue to the Pradhan (headman of the community). But according to him now the position has entirely changed. He sadly stated that the new settlers in the area have proved to be quite aggressive in their approach towards the Buksas and in the initial stages they caused much harm to the Buksas. The crimes such as murder, dacoity, cattle lifting which were unknown in the area in the past, became order of the day and his community found itself helpless and insecured by these happenings. He feels that their indegeneous methods of agriculture cannot withstand against the 'roaring' tractors and series of tubewells of the new settlers who have established large farms on their land.

G. S. informed that his childhood was not a happy one. He could not get the affection of his father for long and was brought up under the care of his eldest brother and the old mother. He was never sent to school, and took active part in economic acti-

vities since the age of twelve. After sometime, G. S. was asked to live separately by his elder brother. At that time G. S. was alone and unmarried. There was no hope for his marriage because of his advanced age of twenty according to the community standards. He admitted that he developed intimacy with one of his brother's wife who had became widow. In due course he brought her to his home and they started living as husband and wife. G. S. has no child so far and life seems to be monotonous for the couple.

But now he is a reasonably well-to-do cultivator and supplements his income by cattle rearing, According to him the use of improved seeds and fertilizer has improved the produce. But he complained that there is death of firewood and grass used for thatching roofs which has created difficulties for the community men.

While referring to his personal problems G. S. told that his brothers are now trying to reunite with him but according to him this is purely on account of ulterior motives as they are interested in sharing his income which has improved after the separation from his brothers.

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ANNEXURE

ABRIDGED FRAMEWORK FOR ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

I. Name, Identity, Origin and History

1. Name; Synonym; sub-caste/sub-tribe as in President's Order and as in other published sources such as Census reports, monographs, etc., grouping with other castes and tribes during various Censuses. Affinity with other castes and tribes according to recognised authorities.
2. Etymological significance of the name; names by which the community is referred to by (a) others and (b) itself.
3. Identification of the community by occupation or any other way of life.
4. Myths and legends connected with the origin and history of the community and its segments; historical references and popular beliefs about history and migration of the community.

II. Distribution and Population Trend

1. Area where found; population and concentration in the State and outside; physical aspects of the areas of concentration.
2. Numerical strength in 1961 and population variations during 1901-1961; sex ratio; age-groups and rural-urban distribution in 1961.

III. Physical Characteristics

1. Racial Stock; appearance and affinity with other known communities.

IV. Family, Clan, Kinship and Other Analogous Divisions

1. Family : sizes (observed and published), types, residence after marriage, descent, lineage and its economic and religious function and inheritance.
2. Clan/gotra and sub-clans; names, etymological meaning, clustering of clans, beliefs and mythology about origin, status among clans, clan and regulation of marriage (preference and prohibition), occupation and clan, clan and rituals, clan and food (restrictions, prescriptions, etc.).
3. Others : Phratry, Duel organisation, like moieties, etc., as in 2 above.

V. Dwelling Dress, Food, Ornaments and Other Material Objects Distinctive of the Community

1. Settlement : Village site, location, settlement pattern (agglomerated, nucleated, dispersed, sprinkled, isolated, amorphous, star-shaped, horse-shoe shaped, linear, rectangular, circular or ring-shapped etc.) and variations; regional pattern *vis-a-vis* pattern of the community.
2. Neighbourhood pattern on the basis of religion, castes (Caste Hindus, untouchables) and tribes etc., with segregations, if any, and the basis thereof.
3. Dwelling unit : compound, entrance, source of water, the use of different parts of the house (latrine, cattle shed, isolation huts, etc.); shape (square, round, irregular, etc.); storeys; nature of floor, plinth; wall; roofing thatching; ventilations and doors; materials used; decorations and embellishments; temporary structures.
4. Dress including head gear and foot wear used ordinarily, on ceremonial occasions and special occasions, sex-wise and according to majority or minority; dress of priests and office bearers; variations.
5. Ornamentats : use; materials used; from where obtained; variations according to sex and age.
6. Personal decoration : tattooing; mutiliation (chipping of teeth, etc.); hair cutting; how done, purpose, attitude and variation according to sex and age.
7. Food and drink : Materials (staple and other), prescriptions and prohibitions, fuel, utensils and mode of preparation; practices connected with serving and taking of food; preservation of food, rituals, if any.
8. Equipments connected with economic pursuits, religion and ritual; how procured, material used construction, manipulation and purpose.
9. Other household equipments. As above.
10. Equipments connected with recording to time space and weight and their methods of use; As above.

VI. Environmental Sanitation, Hygienic Habits, Disease and Treatment

1. Environmental sanitation, settlement, disposal of night soil, garbage, etc.

2. Hygienic habit; cleanliness of body, teeth, dress, houses, utensils, etc.
3. Diseases : Incidence; local names; interpretation of the causes; symptoms; diagnosis and cure, persons and methods involved.
4. Modern Systems of medicine and attitude of the community towards it.

VII. Language and Education

1. Ancestral language : classification according to Grierson, persistence of ancestral language and literature.
2. Mother tongue; classification according to Grierson; bilingualism and multilingualism; regional language.
3. Information collected during 1961 Census on language and literature.
4. Education and literacy : Tradition and modern attitude, information collected during 1961 Census—literacy and levels of education.

VIII. Economic Life

1. Economic resources : Land, community land, individual ownership and types of land possessed and land utilized.
2. Forest wealth : Flora and fauna; nature and extent of right in the forest; forest utilization.
3. Fishery, livestock and others.
4. Working force : Sexwise, urban and rural variations and comparison of the same with the region.
5. Non-workers.
6. Industrial classification : details as collected in the field and comparison with that of the 1961 Census figures, traditional occupation and changes in the pattern; main and subsidiary occupations.
7. Forced labour, bonded labour, patron-client relationship (Jajmani), made of payment.
8. Seasonal migration connected with occupation : recruitment, formation of working groups.
9. Nomadic movement : cycle and occupational pattern.
10. Shifting cultivation : method, implements and equipments, produce, participation, cycle of rotation, measure to regulate shifting cultivation and its impact.
11. Terrace cultivation : As above.
12. Income and expenditure : Source of income, extent, expenditure of food, clothing, house, education, social functions and others.
13. Other aspects of economic life.

IX. Life Cycle

A. *Birth*

1. Beliefs and practices connected with conception, barrenness, still-birth, miscarriage, abortion, child death, regulation of sex, etc.
2. Pre-natal and natal practices : residence, diet, work, taboos, etc., delivery place, assistance, equipments used in delivery, position during delivery, severance of umbilical cord (who does and how done), disposal of placenta.
3. Post natal practices : Confinement and segregation, ceremonial pollution, diet for mother and child, rituals.
4. Protection and care of child and training.
5. Attitude towards birth of child, preference about sex, preference about number, segregation of sex, etc. . .

B. *Initiation*

1. Initiation ceremony : descriptions.
2. Pre-marital sex relations within the community, outside the community, sanctions and taboos.

C. Marriage

1. Age at marriage for both sex; prohibited degrees of relationship, preferences, widow remarriage (preferences and taboos).
2. Civil status and social status.
3. Types of marriage : Monogamy, polygamy (Polyandry and Polygyny).
4. Selection of spouse : Qualities valued (for bride and groom), mode of selection, procedure.
5. Modes of acquiring mate; By negotiation, force, intrusion, elopement, etc.
6. Terms of settlement : Payment of bride price, dowry, service, exchange, adoption, etc.
7. Ceremonies connected with marriage : Details including who presides over the marriage and services of functional castes.
8. Statistical data as per 1961 Census.
9. Divorce : Reasons and procedure.

D. *Death*

1. Concept about death, measures to ensure future well being of the soul, measures to avert harm by the spirits.
2. Methods of disposal : Burial, cremation, exposure, floating on water, etc.
3. Preparation for disposal of dead, informing friends and relatives, treatment of the dead body, digging of pit, etc., for disposal; how

carried, who carry, who accompany, place of disposal, methods of disposal, norms and taboos.

4. Ceremonies connected with disposal.
5. Death rites; Details.
6. Monuments : Tombs, megaliths, etc.
7. Pollution : duration, restrictions in work, food, dress, shaving, hair cropping, sex life, etc.; removal of pollution.
8. Mourning : Mourners and duration.

X. Religion

1. Deities : supreme deity, benevolent deities, malevolent spirits, presiding deities of village and other aspects of life including occupation, clans, gotras, etc.
2. Place of the deities in the regional pattern and Brahmanical and other traditions.
3. Rituals and concepts associated with the pantheon.
4. Spots associated with the deities, pilgrim centres and methods of worship.
5. Religious functionaries.
6. Calendar of festivals and their observance.
7. Concept of soul, hell, heaven, rebirth, transmigration of soul, etc.
8. Sects and denominations : Name, distribution, beliefs and practices, etc.
9. Statistical information.

XI. Leisure, Recreation and Child Play

1. Use of leisure time : For male, female children and adult; seasonal variation in leisure time.
2. Recreations : their mode and extent, for males, females and children.
3. Leisure and recreation with reference to work.

XII. Relation Among Different Segments of the Community

Recognised segments—name, basis (territorial), ceremonial, social, prestige, religion, sect, education, age etc.; inter-relationship among various segments; status of the segment; status of women.

XIII. Inter-community Relationship

1. Ceremonial relationship : Service by Brahmins, traditional service by castes like barbers, washermen, etc.
2. Pollution by touch or proximity to high caste Hindus, use of well, admission to temple.
3. Secular relationship : Model for other communities, dominance due to economic resources, political status, social status, etc.
4. Bridge role, buffer role, alliance and antagonism of the community.

XIV. Structure of Social Control, Prestige and Leadership

1. Social control : Levels of social control, community level, regional level, hereditary, special functionaries, etc., social control by other agencies.
2. Mode of acquiring offices.
3. Control exercised by traditionally recognised leaders, functionaries of statutory bodies of the region, powerful individuals belonging to the community, etc., at the regional level and local level.
4. Relationship between spheres of social control and agencies of social control.
5. Leadership : for social change, for technological change, for political action and for other organised activities at the community level, regional level and local level.
6. Social prestige : method of gaining social prestige (by performing ritual, merit of feast, associating with historical association, etc.) symbols of social prestige.

XV. Social Reform and Welfare

1. Social reform movements : Intensity; reasons (for raising social status establishing traditional norms, for westernization, etc.); history and import of the movements.
2. Social welfare : Agency, religious organisation, community as a whole, Government official and non-official, role of the social welfare measures and impact.

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