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Village Survey Series No. 7

A MONOGRAPH

ON

VILLAGE RANGAMATIA

(In Baripada Subdivision of District Mayurbhanj)

M. AHMED, I.A.S.
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VILLAGE SURVEY SERIES No. 7

A MONOGRAPH

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(In Baripada Subdivision of District Mayurbhanj)

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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FOREWORD

APART from laying the foundations of demography in this subcontinent, a hundred years of the Indian Census has also produced 'elaborate and scholarly accounts of the variegated phenomena of Indian life—sometimes with no statistics attached, but usually with just enough statistics to give empirical underpinning to their conclusions'. In a country, largely illiterate, where statistical or numerical comprehension of even such a simple thing as age was liable to be inaccurate, an understanding of the social structure was essential. It was more necessary to attain a broad understanding of what was happening around oneself than to wrap oneself up in 'statistical ingenuity' or 'mathematical manipulation'. This explains why the Indian Census came to be interested in 'many by-paths' and 'nearly every branch of scholarship, from anthropology and sociology to geography and religion'.

In the last few decades the Census has increasingly turned its efforts to the prsentation of village statistics. This suits the temper of the times as well as our political and economic structure. For even as we have a great deal of centralization on the one hand and decentralization on the other, my colleagues thought it would be a welcome continuation of the Census tradition to try to invest the dry bones of village statistics with flesh-and-blood accounts of social structure and social change. It was accordingly decided to select a few villages in every State for special study where personal observation would be brought to bear on the interpretation of statistics to find out how much of a village was static and yet changing and how fast the winds of change were blowing and from where.

Randomness of selection was, therefore, eschewed. There was no intention to build up a picture for the whole State in quantitative terms on the basis of villages selected statistically at random. The selection was avowedly purposive : the object being as much to find out what was happening and how fast to those villages which had fewer reasons to choose change and more to remain lodged in the past as to discover how the more 'normal' types of villages were changing. They were to be primarily type studies which, by virtue of their number and distribution, would also give the reader a 'feel' of what was going on and some kind of a map of the country.

A brief account of the tests of selection will help to explain. A minimum of thirty-five villages was to be chosen with great care to represent adequately geographical, occupational and even ethnic diversity. Of this minimum of thirty-five the distribution was to be as follows :

(a) At least eight villages were to be so selected that each of them would contain one dominant community with one predominating occupation, e.g., fishermen, forest workers, jhum cultivators.

potters, weavers, salt-makers, quarry workers, etc. A village should have a minimum population of 400, the optimum being between 500 and 700.

(b) At least seven villages were to be of numerically prominent Scheduled Tribes of the State. Each village could represent a particular tribe. The minimum population should be 400, the optimum being between 500 and 700.

(c) The third group of villages should each be of fair size, of an old and settled character and contain variegated occupations and be, if possible, multi-ethnic in composition. By fair size was meant a population of 500—700 persons or more. The Village should mainly depend on agriculture and be sufficiently away from the major sources of modern communication, such as, the district administrative headquarters and business centres. It should be roughly a day's journey from the above places. The villages were to be selected with an eye to variation in terms of size, proximity to city and other means of modern communication, nearness to hills, jungles and major rivers. Thus there was to be a regional distribution throughout the State of this category of villages. If, however, a particular district contained significant ecological variations within its area, more than one village in the district might be selected to study the special adjustments to them.

It is a unique feature of these village surveys that they rapidly outgrew their original terms of reference as my colleagues warmed up to their work. This proved for them an absorbing voyage of discovery and their infectious enthusiasm compelled me to enlarge the inquiry's scope again and again. It was just as well cautiously to feel one's way about at first and then venture further afield, and although it accounts to some extent for a certain unevenness in the quality and coverage of the monographs, it served to compensate the purely honorary and extramural rigours of the task. For, the Survey, along with its many ancillaries like the survey of fairs and festivals, of small and rural industry and others, was an 'extra', over and above the crushing load of the 1961 Census.

It might be of interest to recount briefly the stages by which the Survey enlarged its scope. At the first Census conference in September 1959 the Survey set itself the task of what might be called a record in situ of material traits, like settlement patterns of the village; house types; diet; dress; ornaments and footwear; furniture and storing vessels; common means of transport of goods and passengers; domestication of animals and birds; markets attended; worship of deities, festivals and fairs. There were to be recordings, of course, of cultural and social traits and occupational mobility. This was followed up in March 1960 by two specimen schedules, one

for each household, the other for the village as a whole, which apart from spelling out the mode of inquiry suggested in the September 1959 Conference, introduced groups of questions aimed at sensing changes in attitude and behaviour in such fields as marriage, inheritance, moveable and immoveable property, industry, indebtedness, education, community life and collective activity, social disabilities, forums of appeal over disputes, village leadership, and organization of cultural life. It was now plainly the intention to provide adequate statistical support to empirical 'feel', to approach qualitative change through statistical quantities. It had been difficult to give thought to the importance of 'just enough statistics to give empirical underpinning to conclusions', at a time when my colleagues were straining themselves to the utmost for the success of the main Census Operations, but once the Census count itself was left behind in March 1961, a series of three regional seminars in Trivandrum (May 1961), Darjeeling and Srinagar (June 1961) restored their attention to this field and the importance of tracing social change through a number of well-devised statistical tables was once again recognized. This itself presupposed a fresh survey of villages already done; but it was worth the trouble in view of the possibilities that a close analysis of statistics offered, and also because the 'consanguinity' schedule remained to be canvassed. By November 1961, however, more was expected to these surveys than ever before. There was dissatisfaction on the one hand with too many general statements and a growing desire on the other to draw conclusions from statistics, to regard social and economic data as interrelated processes, and finally to examine the social and economic processes set in motion through land reforms and other laws, legislative and administrative measures, technological and cultural change. Finally, a study camp was organized in the last week of December 1961 when the whole field was carefully gone through over again and a programme worked out closely knitting the various aims of the Survey together.

This gradual unfolding of the aims of the Survey prevented my colleagues from adopting as many villages as they had orginally intended to. But I believe that what may have been lost in quantity has been more than made up for in quality. This is, perhaps, for the first time that such a Survey has been conducted in any country, and that purely as a labour of love. It has succeeded in attaining what it set out to achieve to construct a map of village Indian's social structure. One hopes that the volumes of this Survey will help to retain for the Indian Census its title to 'the most fruitful single source of information about the country'. Apart from other features, it will perhaps be conceded that the Survey has set up a new Census standard in pictorial and graphic documentation. The schedules

The 24th May 1962 Registrar General, India

NEW DELHI
The 24th May 1962

A. MITRA
Registrar General, India

PREFACE

The monograph is based on a survey of the socio-economic structure and the demographic and cultural features of the village Rangamatia in Mayurbhanj district. The village is not far from Baripada, the district headquarters and is one of the typical Bhumij villages of Baripada Subdivision. The village was selected in accordance with the principles and criteria laid down by the Registrar General in the Foreword but the apparent significance of this tribal village lay in its close proximity to an urban centre and it was implicit, therefore, that the Survey should include a study of the impact of the urban centre on the socio-economic life of the villagers. Apart from data processed and presented in tables, the broad conclusions of the survey reveal that the pace of change in this village has not been as brisk as expected.

The village was first visited by the Investigator in July, 1961. After a preliminary analysis and processing of data, it was thought necessary to follow up this visit by a few more subsequent visits. Another short visit to the village was found necessary before bringing the draft to its final stage.

I have every hope that all those interested in the village life of Orissa will find this small monograph useful.

CUTTACK
The 29th August 1967

M. AHMED

CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER I : THE VILLAGE	
INTRODUCING THE VILLAGE	1
LOCATION AND COMMUNICATION	1
PHYSICAL FEATURES	2
CLIMATE	3
SOURCES OF WATER	3
FLORA AND FAUNA	5
HISTORY OF THE VILLAGE	5
LEGEND	6
CHAPTER II : THE PEOPLE	
AREA AND DENSITY	7
AGE-GROUPS	7
RELIGION, CASTE AND COMMUNITIES	7
HOUSES	8
HOUSE TYPES	9
DRESS	11
ORNAMENTS	12
HAIR STYLE	12
TATTOO	15
HOUSEHOLD EQUIPMENTS	16
FOOD AND DRINK	19
PUBLIC HEALTH	21
CHAPTER III : ECONOMY	
LANDS HELD BY COMMUNITIES	23
AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES	23
FOREST RESOURCES	27
LIVESTOCK	28
ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES	28
NON-WORKERS	29
OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY	30
INCOME	30
EXPENDITURE	30
INDEBTEDNESS	30

	Page
Marketing Facilities	30
Land Reforms and other measures influencing Economic Life	31
Village Organization	32
Administrative Organization	33
Co-operative Society	33
CHAPTER IV : SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE	
Birth Customs	34
Customs relating to Puberty	35
Marriage Customs :	35
General Type Marriage	35
Daw Dopa Marriage	37
Sinduri Gesa (Marriage by Force)	37
Apartipi (Marriage by Capture)	37
Divorce	38
Widow Remarriage	38
Death Customs	38
Structure of the Family	39
Literacy and Education	39
Social Legislation and Reforms	40
Religious Institutions	41
Beliefs and Practices	41
Community Festivals :	41
Salui Puja	42
Uda Parba	42
Herpuna	44
Gamha Parba	44
Karama Parba	44
Saharai	44
Leisure and Recreation	45
CHAPTER V : CONCLUSION	46

TABLES

			PAGE
INSET :	1.	Area and density ..	7
	2.	Population by sex and age-group ..	7
	3.	Castes and communities ..	8
	4.	Size and composition of households ..	9
	5.	Number of rooms and number of members living in the households ..	9
	6.	Possession of furniture ..	16
	7.	Possession of consumer goods ..	19
	8.	Communitywise acreage of land held ..	24
	9.	Economic activity of different communities ..	28
APPENDIX :	I.	Settlement history of households ..	49
	II.	Cultivated land held by caste/community ..	49
	III.	Livestock ..	50
	IV.	Workers classified by sex, broad age-groups and occupations ..	51
	V.	Non-workers by sex, broad age-groups and nature of activity ..	52
	VI.	Monthly income per household by occupation-groups ..	52
	VII.	Average monthly expenditure per household by income group and occupation ..	53
	VIII.	Indebtedness ..	54
	IX.	Age and marital status ..	54
	X.	Education ..	55
	XI.	Range of information ..	56

MAPS AND SKETCHES

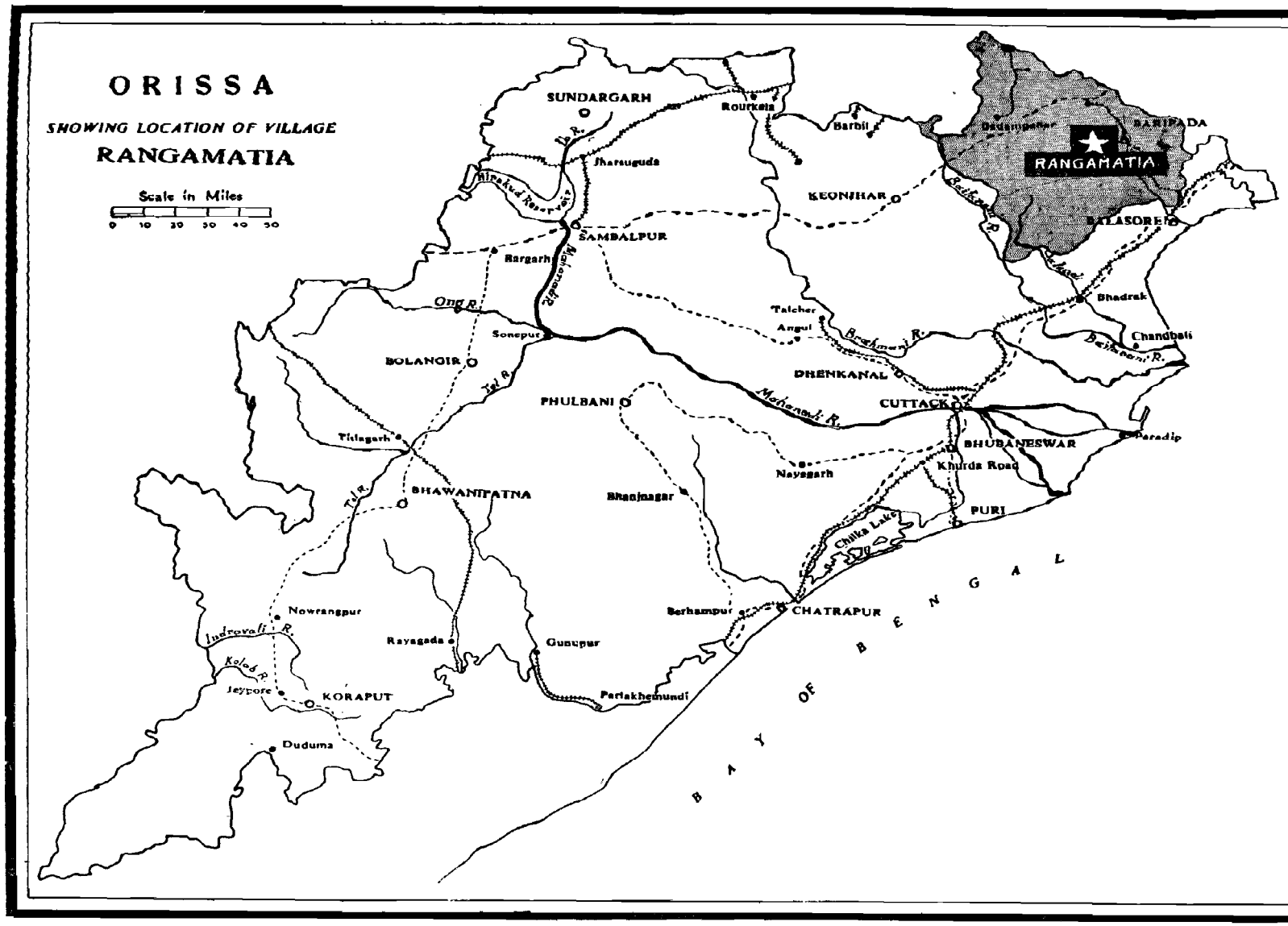
1.	Orissa showing location of village Rangamatia ..		XV
2.	Physical features around village Rangamatia ..		2
3.	An outline map of village Rangamatia ..		4
4.	Front view and ground plan of a typical house ..		10
5.	Ornaments ..		13
6.	Ornaments of the neck ..		14
7.	Ornaments of the hand and arm ..		15
8.	Tattoo designs ..		16
9.	Utensils ..		17
10.	Household articles ..		18
11.	Dhenki ..		19
12.	Sunum Janta ..		20
13.	Agricultural implements ..		26

PAGE

14. More Agricultural implements .. 27
15. Musical Instruments .. 37
16. More Musical Instruments .. 38
17. Hunting Weapons .. 43

PHOTOGRAPHS

1. A happy ride .. XVII
2. Bhumij girls .. XVIII
3. Bhumij cultivators .. XIX
4. Bhumij girls on a shopping .. XIX
5. A Bhumij woman .. XX
6. A Bhumij belle .. XX
7. Higgling in the HAT .. XX
8. The Village pond .. XX
9. Two Bhumij males .. XXI
10. A Bhumij cultivator .. XXI
11. Bhumij children .. XXI
12. Bhumij youngmen .. XXII
13. The Village High School .. XXII
14. The Village street .. XXII
15. Bhumij women in the HAT .. XXIII
16. Ornaments .. XXIII
17. A HAT scene .. XXIII
18. A villager and his cart .. XXIV


ORISSA
SHOWING LOCATION OF VILLAGE
RANGAMATIA
Scale in Miles
0 10 20 30 40 50
SUNDARGARH
Rourkela
Barbil
Jharsuguda
Hirakud Reservoir
SAMBALPUR
KEONJHAR
RANGAMATIA
BARIPADA
BALASORE
Bhadrak
Chandbali
Bargarh
Mahanadi R.
Ong R.
Sonepur
BOLANGIR
Tel R.
Talcher
Angul
Brahmani R.
DHENKANAL
CUTTACK
Mahanadi R.
PHULBANI
Titlagarh
BHAWANIPATNA
Bhanjnagar
Nayagarh
BHUBANESWAR
Khurda Road
Paradip
PURI
Chilka Lake
Berhampur
CHATRAPUR
Nowrangpur
Indravati R.
Rayagada
Gunupur
Kolab R.
Jeypore
KORAPUT
Parlakhemundi
Duduma
BAY OF BENGAL



A happy ride—that proud and possessive look



Bhumij girls—after the day's toil



Bhumij cultivators—as you sow, so ...



Bhumij girls—the shopping spree is on



A Bhumij woman—the graceful smile of age



A Bhumij belle—curiosity is thy name



Higgling in the HAT



The Village pond



Two Bhumij males—a study in contrast



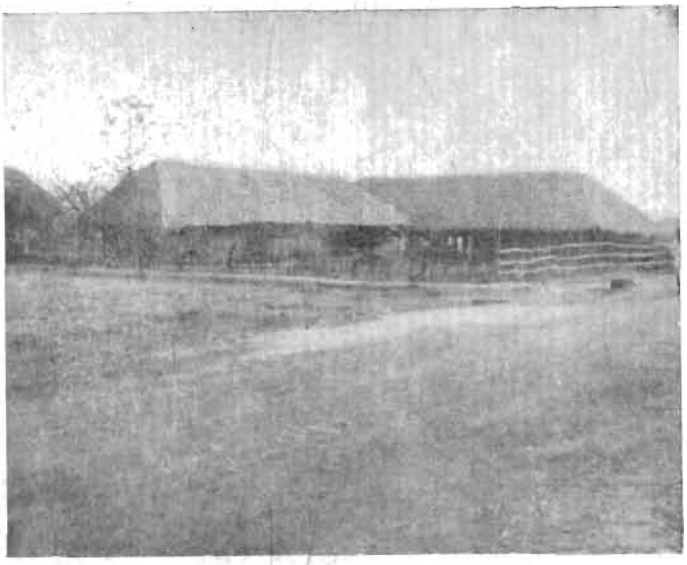
A Bhumij cultivator



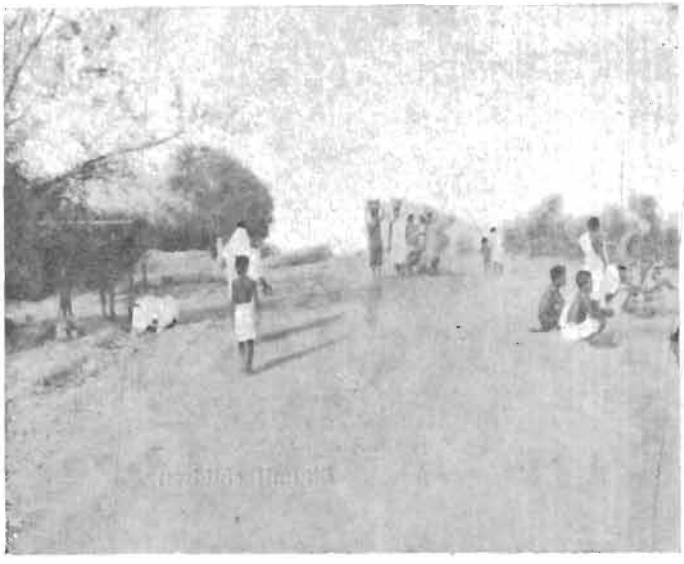
Bhumij children



Bhumij youngmen—with the stamp of education



The Village High School



The Village street



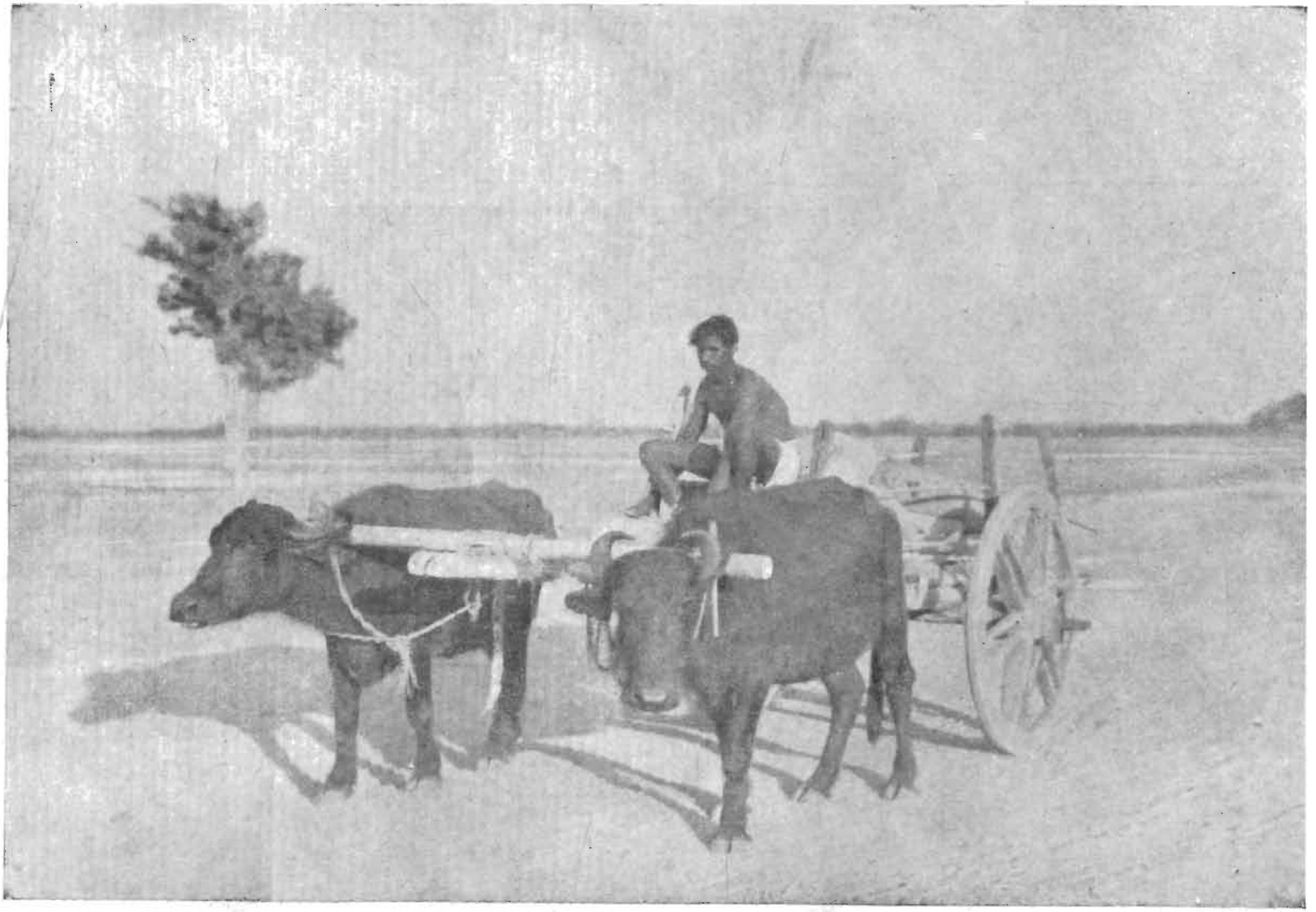
Bhumij women—a HAT-time gossip



Ornaments for sale—cheap, yet charming



A HAT scene—business going brisk



A villager and his cart—where is the journey's end ?

A villager and his cart—where is the journey's end ?

CHAPTER I

THE VILLAGE

Introducing the village

Rangamatia, a fairly big village in the Baripada Subdivision of Mayurbhanj district is multi-ethnic in character with Bhumij, a Scheduled Tribe predominating its population. The village was selected primarily for the study of the socio-economic life of this community and for an overall assessment of the impact of change. The village, in a way, is typical of numerous such Bhumij villages in this subdivision, which compared to any other has the highest concentration of Bhumij.

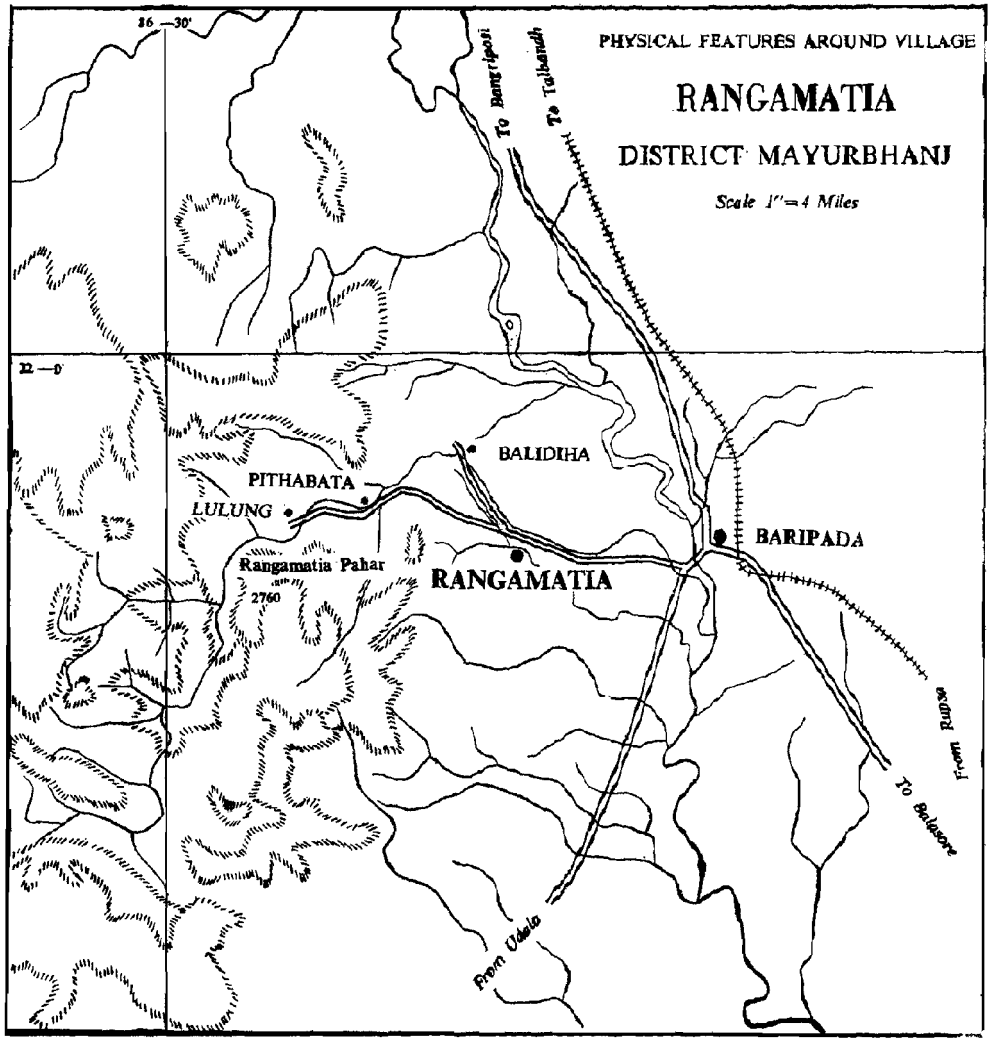
2. Lying in the midst of cultivated fields, the distant view of the village is one of diffused clusters of houses against the backdrop of a continuous range of hills. A few trees and bamboo clumps break the monotony of the landscape.

Location and Communication

3. Rangamatia is situated in 86°-39′ East longitude and 21°-56′ North latitude. The villages bordering Rangamatia are: Jaibilla to the east, Sapanchua to the west, Kundalboni and Salboni to the north and Badsul to the south. It lies 7 miles west of Baripada which is the district headquarters and the commercial centre of the district. Being the hub of district administration, it locates the District office, Subdivisional office and the district level offices of all departments of State Government. The hospital, Post and Telegraph office, High School and College are a few other institutions located at the District headquarters. Among a few of the small industries at the place may be mentioned oil mills, flour mills, saw mills, rice mills, banian knitting factory and an industrial-cum-production centre. It has also a Railway station on the narrow gauge line which connects the South Eastern Railway broad gauge line from Calcutta to Madras at Rupsa. It is connected by road over the National Highway No. 5 with Balasore and over National Highway No. 6 with Keonjhar. The State Transport Services of the State Government link these places and Tatanagar by daily bus services.

4. The village is connected with Baripada for the major portion by a kutcha moorum road which is borne in the book of the Rural Engineering Organization for annual repairs and maintenance. This road really begins from village Astia which lies on the Baripada—Udala road less than a mile from Baripada on the opposite side of the river Budhabalang. In other words, from Baripada, one can reach the village Rangamatia by a cycle or a rickshaw, and after crossing the bridge recently constructed over the river Budhabalang on the Baripada—Udala—Nilgiri Road, one reaches the village Astia wherefrom one diverts to the kutcha road on the right. The entire distance from Baripada to the village Rangamatia is an all-weather communication.

5. The road from Baripada beyond Rangamatia which belongs to the Forest Department passes through the thick woods of the Similipals, and runs up to Nahana on one side and Kaptipada via Dungam on the other. The entire stretch is bad and even worse during the rains. The track has its utility almost exclusively for the trucks who carry timbers from the Similipals during the summer.



Physical features

6. The nature of the terrain round the village is somewhat undulating. To the east, west and north there lies an extensive stretch of paddy fields with a few settlements here and there masked by green vegetation. A few miles to the west of the village lie the forests of the Similipal range of mountains which extends for about 40 miles from north to south and 25 miles from east to west. The major part of this forest area consists of dense forests and mountain ranges. Of this, two hills not far from the village are Rangamatia Pahar and Gurusadar Pahar which have an altitude of 2,760 feet and 2,943 feet respectively.

7. The village Rangamatia is a little more than 200 feet above sea level. A nullah—a perennial stream named Rangamatia Nala cuts through the village separating the high lands

to the south from the low lands to the north. Though some houses in the village have been put up on a high level, most of them have been built on the slopes and undulating surfaces on either side of the stream. The level of some of these houses is so low that they are normally not visible from the road which is at a higher level. Most of the lands in the plain have been brought under plough for paddy cultivation leaving some stony sterile patches here and there with only brushwood growth.

8. The stream, Rangamatia Nala, although perennial, aids very little in agriculture as it flows at a level much lower than the paddy fields. The position is amply compensated by the irrigation canal which runs beside the road, and being higher in level, it irrigates lands to the north of the stream. The stream provides the main water source for all kinds of domestic use. The stream and the canal, indeed are great blessings for the village.

9. The village has, so to say, no grazing area for the cattle. There is in the neighbourhood no khesra or village forest either which would otherwise provide firewood and timber for house building and for construction of agricultural implements. The reserve forests of the Similipal ranges are also reported as inaccessible for any of these purposes.

Climate

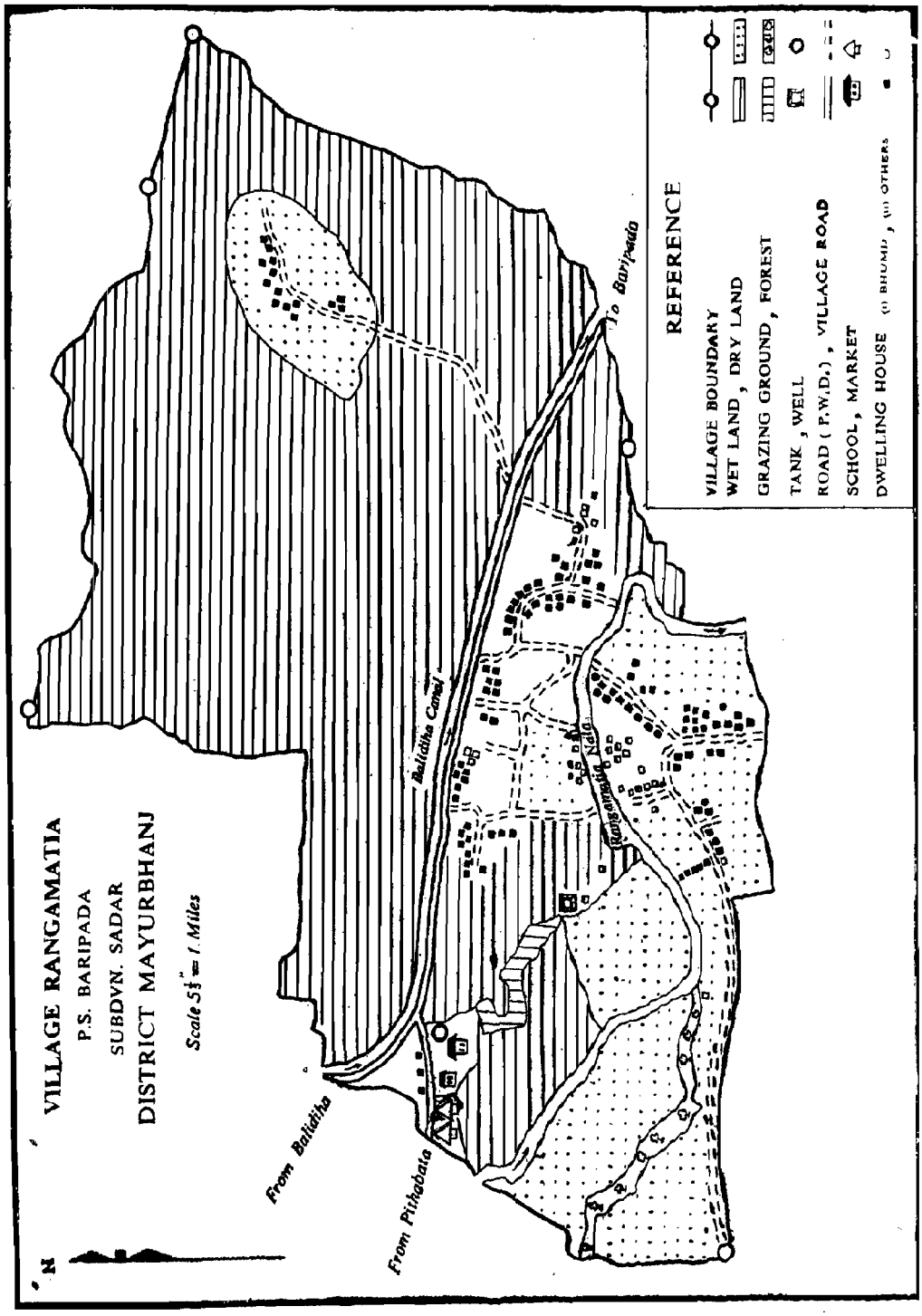
10. Heat is extreme during Baisakh and Jyestha (April—June). Usually May is the hottest month of the year and December the coldest. The rains start in mid-June and continue till September. The rainless months are November and December. Storms are infrequent. The villagers could recount one of some severity in 1941-42 which caused considerable damage to blooming harvest. Occasional hailstorms occur and the one during 1965 was said to be of great intensity. No earthquake of a severe intensity seems to have occurred during living memory. The village also does not experience any flood. In 1965, flood in a small river nearby named Palpala brought down a young elephant and killed it. The force of the current also swept away the thatched structure of the Kachdaghati Primary School.

11. There is no arrangement for recording rains or temperature in the village. The same recorded for Baripada holds true to a large measure for this village also. Rainfall and temperature recorded at Baripada during 1961 is reproduced below.

Month	Rainfall in Millimetre	Temperature in degrees (Fahrenheit)	
		Maximum	Minimum
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
January ..	06·4	86·2	44·2
February ..	10·6	88·6	47·5
March ..	04·6	103·9	60·9
April ..	39·6	110·6	67·5
May ..	144·2	111·3	69·9
June ..	296·6	105·3	72·9
July ..	94·2	94·5	76·3
August ..	414·8	95·5	75·9
September ..	474·8	93·1	74·7
October ..	184·2	93·7	63·9
November —	..	86·1	52·7
December —	—	82·9	44·1

Sources of water

12. There are two pucca wells—one in the village was constructed by the C. D. Block with some contribution from the villagers and another within the High School premises was completed in 1957. Both the wells are fairly deep and yield water even during


VILLAGE RANGAMATIA
P.S. BARIPADA
SUBDVN. SADAR
DISTRICT MAYURBHANJ
Scale 5¼" = 1 Miles
N
From Baliditha
From Pithabata
Baliditha Canal
Rangamatia Nala
To Baripada
REFERENCE
VILLAGE BOUNDARY
WET LAND, DRY LAND
GRAZING GROUND, FOREST
TANK, WELL
ROAD (P.W.D.), VILLAGE ROAD
SCHOOL, MARKET
DWELLING HOUSE (i) BHUMIJ, (ii) OTHERS

the summer days. Besides, there are a number of kutcha wells, about a dozen or so in number and dug by the villagers on the fringe of low-lying paddy fields and on the banks of Rangamatia Nala. There are three to four small tanks privately owned whose water is used for washing cattle.

Flora and Fauna

13. There is no forest worth the name within the village boundary nor within a radius of three miles. The vegetation in the area is, therefore, limited to some isolated trees of Mohua, Kusum, Kendu, Sal, Bankhira, tamarind, mango and jack-fruit. Wild animals are rarely seen within the limit of this village. During harvest of paddy, wild elephants in herds enter the fields and cause considerable damage. It is precisely for this that many villagers choose to harvest paddy before the grains are ripe. The Similipal forest, well known for its timber reserve and allied forest wealth is not far off from the village and it is from here that the wild animals depredate the neighbouring village areas. Once a while, a bear comes in particularly when the plums like Bara and Jamu are ripe. The visit of wolves is reported to be frequent and it is said that a tiger was killed in Jagannathpur, a neighbouring village, not long ago.

14. The domesticated animals and birds found in the village are cows, bullocks, buffaloes, sheep, goats, pigeons, fowls, dogs, cats, etc. There are a few parrots too.

History of the village

15. Mayurbhanj district was formerly one of the largest Feudatory States of Orissa. It was constituted as a separate district on its merger into the State of Orissa on 1st January 1949.

16. The villagers believe that more than a century ago, a small batch of Bhumij families came to Rangamatia from a place called Tamar in the Ranchi district of Bihar. They reclaimed the area round the present village site and settled there as agriculturists. Fertile soil and alluring prospects of reclamation of waste land resulted in further immigration of Bhumij families related to the original settlers. Subsequently, people of other communities from far and near also got attracted to this village. In absence of communications, the village remained in a state of isolation till the commencement of construction of Balidiha irrigation dam in 1905. By the time of its completion in 1912 the small tribal village had grown to assume a multi-ethnic character with a spurt in its population growth owing to migration which occurred because of improved communications to the village and employment opportunities available in the construction of the dam.

17. It will be borne out from Table I in the Appendix that of the 157 households and 9 different communities in the village, the Bhumij with 128 households constitute the majority and that they are also the earliest settlers. The only household who claim to be the oldest by being settled in the village for more than 5 generations belong to the Bhumij tribe. In fact most of the households are settled in the village between four to five generations. A few have migrated during the present generation of which one Pandey family (Brahmin) and another Munda hail from Bihar and the rest from villages within the same Police Station.

18. There is hardly any account of emigration from the village. It revealed on enquiry that two Bhumij households deserted the village during the past decade. They have severed all social and economic ties with the village so completely that nothing is known regarding their whereabouts.

Legend

19. It is believed that the original settlers selected the southern side of the stream for their settlement as its reddish soil was considered most suitable for construction of dwelling house. Ranga locally connotes red and Mati means soil. The names of the village and the stream are said to have been derived from the red soil around.

According to the Bhumij members of the village, the name of the tribe finds its origin in the names of places like Dhalbhum, Singhbhum and Birbhum wherefrom they have migrated. In Bihar, members of the tribe use Munda as their title whereas in Orissa, they suffix Singh.

CHAPTER II

THE PEOPLE

The village had a population of 705 in 1951 with 312 males and 393 females. The sex ratio was 1,260 females to a thousand males. The total population has grown by 8·2 per cent during the decade bringing it to 763 persons, 378 males and 385 females in 1961. The sex ratio thus stands greatly balanced at 1,019 females to a thousand males.

Area and Density

2. It is borne out from the Table below that the density of population of the village is very much on the high side. It is 770·7 per square mile which is more than double the density of Mayurbhanj district and that of the State which are 299 and 292 per square mile respectively.

Table 1

AREA AND DENSITY

Area	Population	Density per sq. mile	No. of houses	No. of households
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
634·53 acres or 0·99 sq. miles	763	770·7	157	157

3. The total acreage of arable land in the village is 549·98 acres and the whole of it has been brought under cultivation. There is, therefore, little scope left to extend the acreage of cultivation. The per capita land holding works out to less than an acre which means that the pressure on land is considerable. With the passage of time and growth of population, one can foresee further subdivision in accordance with the laws of inheritance thus leading to uneconomic holdings and increase in the number of landless families.

Age-groups

4. The Table below shows that the bulk of the population are children in the age-group of 0—14 who number 340 and constitute about 44·6 per cent of the total population. The next in numerical strength is the age-group of 25—59 which has 277 persons or 36·3 per cent of the entire population. The most active and youthful bulk of the population who belong to the age-group of 15—24 is as low as 14·3 per cent.

Table 2

POPULATION BY SEX AND AGE-GROUP

			0—14		15—24		25—59		60 and over	
Persons	Males	Females	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
763	378	385	176	164	51	58	141	136	10	27

Religion, caste and communities

5. The caste and communitywise break-up of the population is presented in the Table below. Except four Munda families who have been converted to Christiamity, all others are returned as Hindus.

Table 3

CASTES AND COMMUNITIES

Caste/community	Sub-caste	No. of households	Population			Remarks
			Persons	Males	Females	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Bhumij ..	Tamadia	128	631	312	319	S.T.
Bindhani ..		7	27	13	14	..
Ghasi ..		7	41	22	19	S.C.
Brahmin ..		6	29	11	18	—
Munda ..		4	11	6	5	S.T.
Bhandari ..		2	8	4	4	—
Mahali ..		1	6	3	3	S.T.
Khandayat ..		1	2	1	1	..
Patratanti ..		1	8	6	2	S.C.

6. The major bulk of the population are members of the Scheduled Tribes, viz., Bhumij and Mahali, the former standing out as the single major community and both together constituting 83·48 per cent of the total population. The pattern of distribution of the remaining communities is : Ghasis, a Scheduled Caste (5·37 p.c.), Brahmins (3·5 p.c.), Bindhanis (3·54 p.c.) and each of the other communities, viz., Bhandari, Khandayat and Patratanti forming a small percentage of the total population of the village.

7. The Bhumij in Orissa are divided into a number of subdivisions, viz., Bara Bhumia Bhumij, Teli Bhumij, Tamadia Bhumij, Desua Bhumij, Haladi Pokharia Bhumij, etc. The Bhumij of Rangamatia and of the neighbouring villages belong to the Tamadia or Tamudia subdivision and are further subdivided into the following totemistic groups: Nag (cobra), Mayur (peacock), Kamal (lotus), Sukri (boar), Hara (tortoise), Tue (parrot), Tao (a kind of bird) and Chandi (milky way).

Houses

8. The striking feature in a Bhumij village is the odd number of houses and households however small the village may be. This village consists of 157 households living in the same number of houses. The latter lie scattered having no systematic pattern of distribution. The large number of bamboo clumps keep the houses separated from one another. The houses face in no particular directions and in absence of village streets, the view of the village from a distance is nothing impressive.

9. The majority of the households have 4 to 6 members. Next in order comes the households with 2 to 3 members. The large-sized households are not many in the village. These details are presented in the Table below.

Table 4

SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF HOUSEHOLDS

Total No. of households	Single member			2—3 members		
	Households	Males	Females	Households	Males	Females
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
157	7	1	6	43	55	65

4—6 members			7—9 members			10 members and above		
Households	Males	Females	Households	Males	Females	Households	Males	Females
(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)
70	166	173	32	122	119	5	34	22

House types

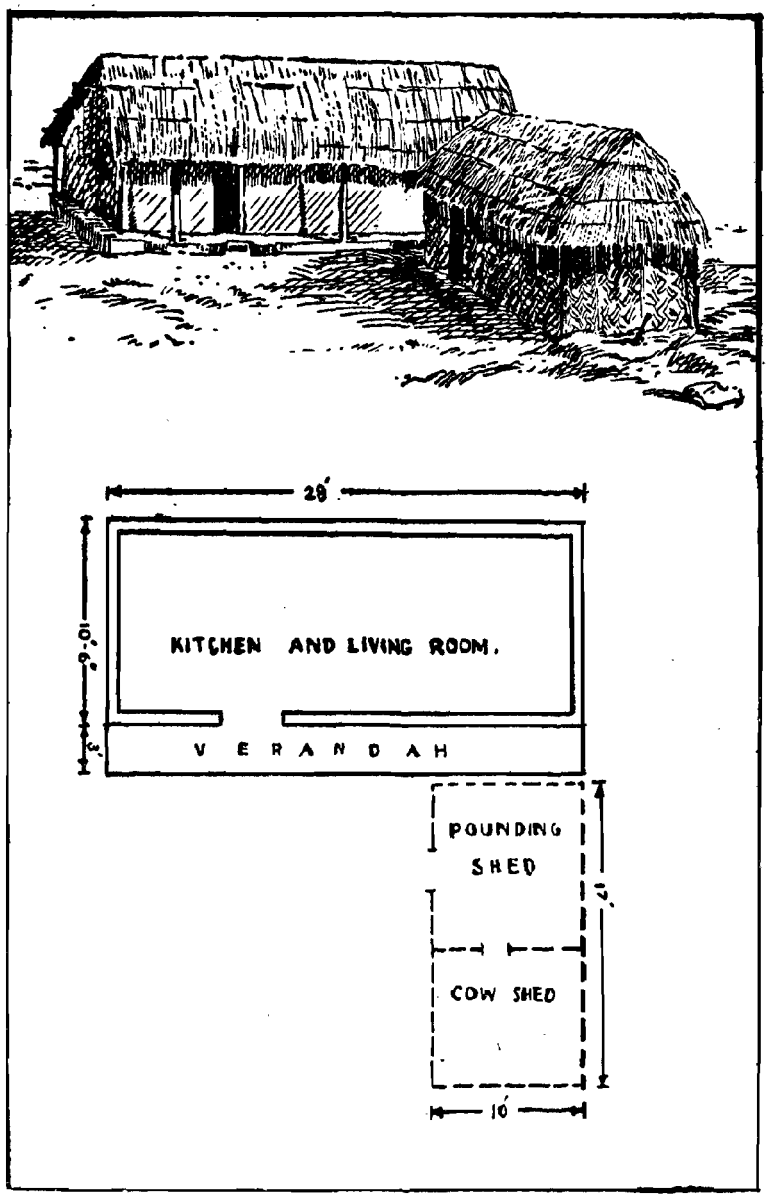
10. All the houses in the village are Kutcha with mud walls and thatched roofs except one where the owner has switched over to fireproof roofing. Most of the houses are one-roomed, the same being used as bed, kitchen and store. The oven is located at a corner without any partition wall. The corner is held as sacred as the family ancestors are worshipped here during all social and religious functions. An open thatched shed close to the house accommodates the cattle, agricultural implements and the Dhenki, or the wooden lever for husking paddy. The portion with the Dhenki has the floor plastered and is kept rather clean for use as a dining space. The old and unmarried members of the household use the shed for sleeping at night while the married members occupy the main house with children. More number of living rooms are constructed with the increase in the number of married couples in a household.

11. For 763 persons living in 157 households there is a total number of 219 rooms in the village. The average number of persons per room thus works out to 3·5. The one-roomed houses are naturally a little more congested with 4 occupants per room in the average. This is reduced to 3 or less than 3 in case of two and three-roomed houses respectively. The detailed position is given in the Table below.

Table 5

NUMBER OF ROOMS AND NUMBER OF MEMBERS LIVING IN THE HOUSEHOLDS

Classification of households according to number of rooms	One room	Two rooms	Three rooms	Four rooms	More than four rooms
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
No. of households	100	53	3	1	..
No. of persons	406	319	24	24	..



Front view and ground plan of a typical house

12. For a Bhumij, odd numbers are auspicious and even numbers spell disaster. The belief on this count is rather stray as deviations are few. They observe the rule in construction of houses, ceremonial huntings and on most other occasions. The dimension of houses are also in odd units.

13. The method of construction of the houses is simple. The mud plinth rises up to three cubits from the ground level. The walls mostly of mud or of mud and wooden poles are then put up. The frame of the roof is made of wooden posts, beams and bamboo rafters. This is thatched with

straw. The surface of the floor and walls are first plastered smoothly with thick mud and then painted with a light wash of burnt straw and cowdung or coloured earth. The house is provided with a single door of wooden planks or split bamboo. Neither windows nor openings of any sort are provided on the walls for light and air. The interior of the houses appear dark even during day time. A raised platform about 6″ high and two feet wide is provided at the corner of the kitchen for keeping the pots and utensils. The main house has verandahs on all sides.

14. The out-house is also constructed in a similar process except that no walls are provided. On a few wooden posts rest the roof frame and wattled bamboo mats are used at times to close the walls. As stated earlier, a part of the shed is for cattle and the remaining portion houses the paddy husking device (Dhenki) and agricultural implements. The floor of this portion is kept clean by dabbing with cowdung water and the same is used for dining and sleeping.

15. The sources for collection of house building materials were enquired into. Timber and materials for rope making are collected from the Similipal forests. Timbers are either purchased from the forest contractors or are procured from the unreserved forests on payment of royalty to the Forest Department. The bamboos grown on the homesteads, by and large, satisfy the annual demand of each household. Straw is preserved by them after harvesting of paddy. Many of the villagers grow sabai grass on uplands from which ropes are made.

16. It was estimated on local enquiry that construction of a small house measuring 5×9 cubits cost about Rs. 50 and the cost of a bigger one measuring 5×17 cubits comes to nearly Rs. 100.

17. No ceremony precedes site selection, construction or occupation of a new house. The Bhumij people consider Monday, Wednesday and Friday as auspicious for house construction though Wednesday is considered most suitable. A day or two before commencement of construction, a small part of the site is dabbed with cowdung water and after offering vermilion and sacred basil leaves to Dharam Devata and Gram Devata, some paddy, Mung and Biri grains in odd numbers are kept at the place alongwith a leaf cup of water. A visit to the spot the next morning foretells many omens. For example, any reduction in the number of grains would mean lack of scope for any material prosperity and their increase, if any would imply diseases and epidemics. Any reduction in the quantity of water in the leaf cup would portend dearth of water in the locality. Reduction in the number of a few faecal balls would bring calamity for the cattle wealth.

18. On the day of laying foundation the first post is struck at the spot previously cleaned with cowdung water and on the top of this mango twigs are tied. A feast according to capacity is arranged on the day of first occupation of the house.

Dress

19. Change in sartorial habits is reported to be remarkable during the past few decades. Koupin, that short and scanty wear of men has increasingly given place to Gamucha, a hand-loom piece about 8′ by $2\frac{1}{2}$′, that suffices in a way to cover up the loins. When men move out to the towns, they wear coarse Dhotis, shirts and banians. Children in the age-group of 6 to 8 either wear small pieces of cloths or Koupins. Women wear coarse white Saris about $15' \times 3\frac{1}{2}'$ preferably with coloured borders. The tail end of the Sari is thrown back through the left shoulder

and after being tied round the waist from left to right and tucked in at the waist, the last end about a foot long called Tepel is kept loose and hanging.

20. Children put on Bataye, a cloth 2 to 3 cubits long which is tucked in at the waist chord both in the front and behind with the loose ends hanging. Pate Bhagua is another way of wearing a cloth 5 to 6 cubits long which is wrapped round the loin and a portion is tied round the waist. This portion is called Pate. At times, this is also wrapped round the loin and while working in the fields the portion is loosened and thrown on the back and the head as a protection.

21. On festive occasions, however, Bhumij men and women put on fine clothes. Men wear white Dhotis, shirts, bush shirts, banians and jerseys and the women use fine and even superfine mill-made Saris. Young women put on blouses and petticoats. The educated among the Bhumij wear trousers, shirts, and hawains.

22. The winter does not bring any change of dress except the addition of a coarse cotton Chadar, usually about 5 cubits by 3 cubits. Some well-to-do people use woollen jerseys and mufflers in addition to the usual dress.

23. The villagers do not use any head dress. The only such dress prescribed is for the Bhumij bride and groom during marriage when they use pith crowns called Maunu. Its use and popularity is on the wane. Men toiling in the fields tie short napkins or Dhotis round their heads for protection from the hot sun. Jhampi, Pakhia and Changu are other contrivances which are used as protections against sun and rains.

24. There are no washermen in the village. The villagers, therefore, make their own arrangement for washing their clothes. The women, generally do this job near the stream, once a fortnight with ash prepared out of Kusum, Asan or Dha. The educated get their clothes washed with the washermen of Amsikada or Balidiha, two neighbouring villages. These washermen serve them also on death purification and other rituals.

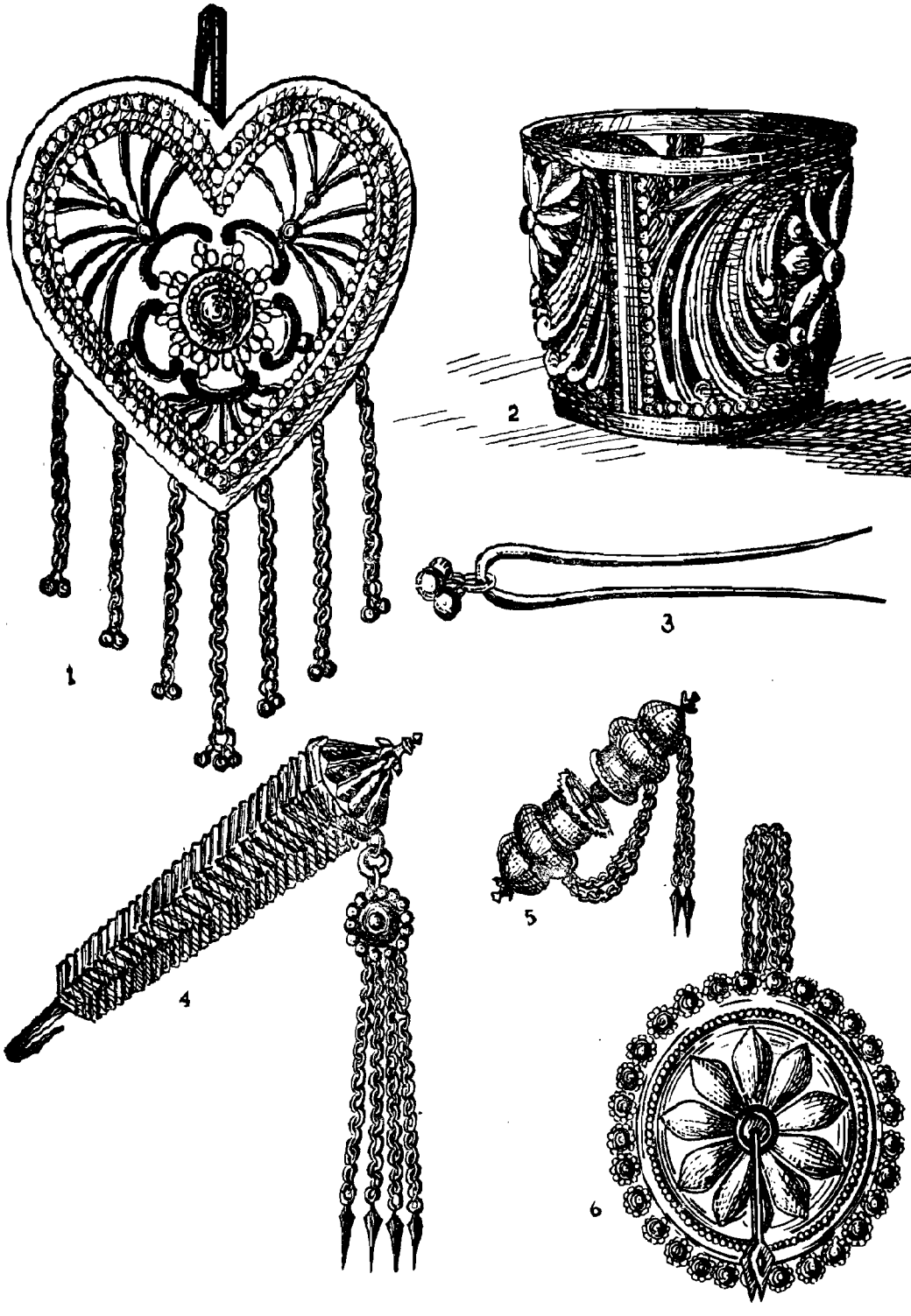
Ornaments

25. The attitude of members of the Bhumij tribe to ornaments seems to have changed considerably during the past few decades. Previously most of the ornaments were made of brass, bell-metal, lac or Sankha. Of late, there has been a discernible shift in emphasis to gold and silver.

26. Common ornaments for women are Supiraba of silver for the head, Bitula and Khab of silver for the ear, Mankadi of silver for the nose, and Pohalamali, Suki, Athana and Takamalas or Champakadhi for the neck. The ornaments popular for the wrist are Jibha katri, Hatabela, Katari and Sakam of brass and bell-metal, Ruli of lac and Sankha and Butaphala and Banka kada of silver. The rings for the fingers are Suki and Adhuli Mudis. The Thada of silver was a popular ornament for the arm but Baju is getting more popular now.

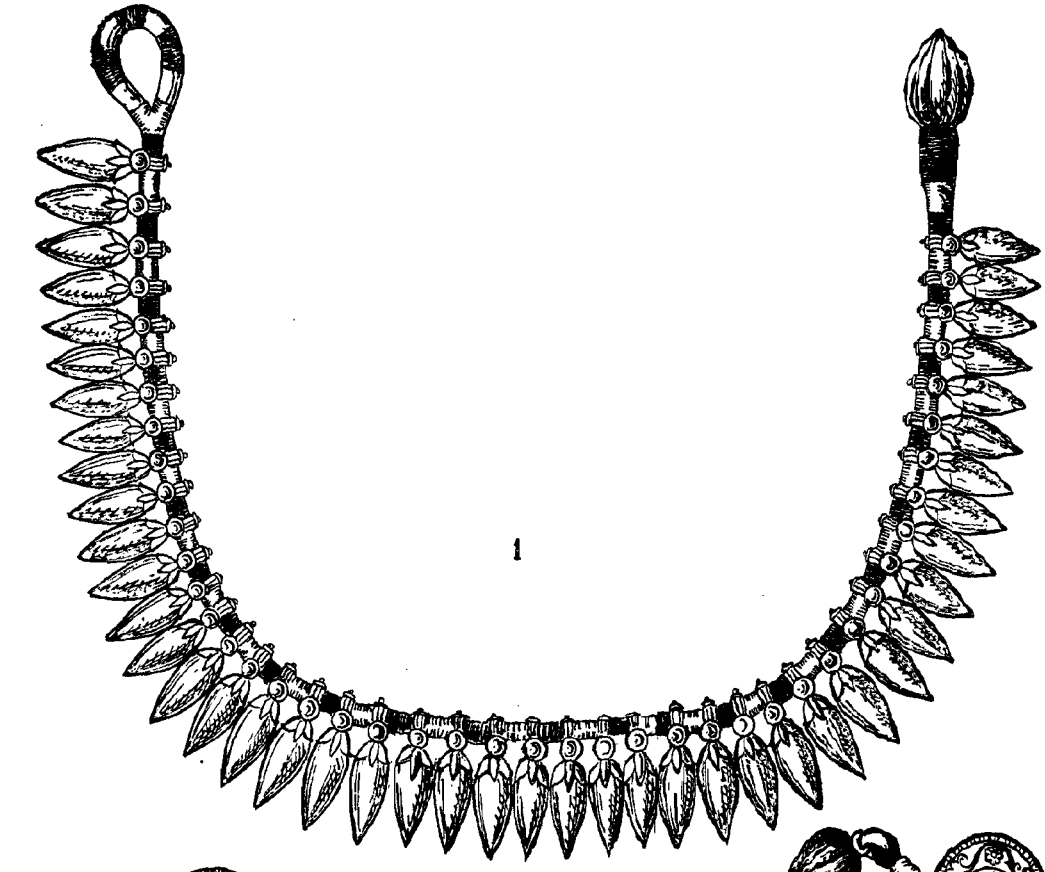
Hair style

27. The hair style of Bhumij women is rather simple. The hair is combed and parted in the middle of the head. Both the parts are joined and tucked at the back to the right. At times a plait is made and the same after being coiled round a central knob leaves a tail which is tucked in at the right. This is called Tunki Supit. Rapat is the manner of preparing the plait. Young girls attempt the hair-do with black ribbons and hair pins. Cocoanut, Kachada of Kusum oil are the oils used for hair-do.



ORNAMENTS

1. Supiraba, 2. Sanka, 3. Kanta, 4. Gujikathi, 5. Bitula, 6. Khab



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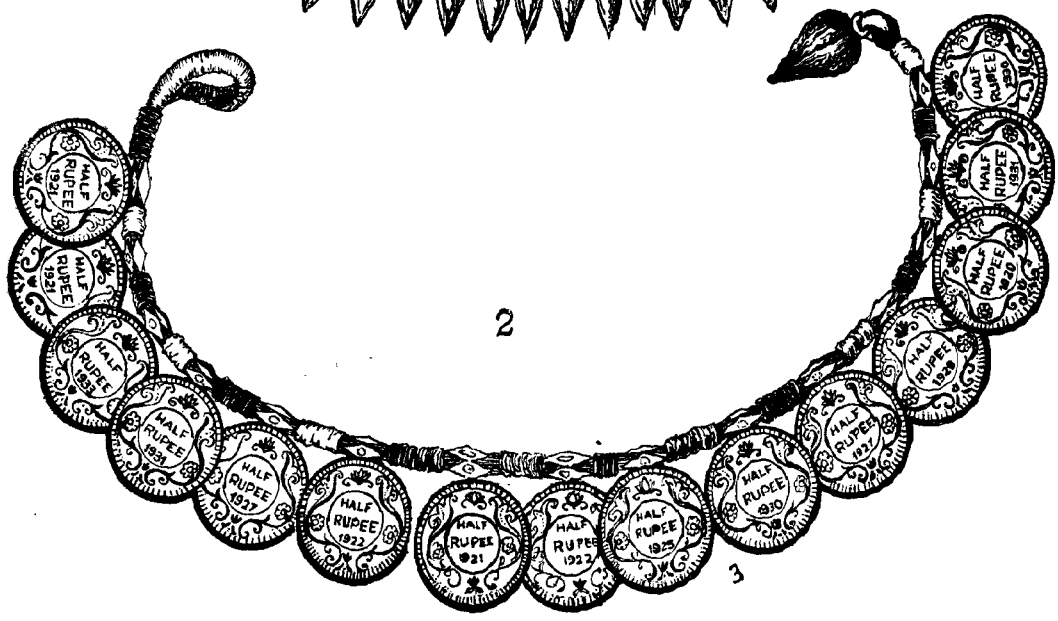

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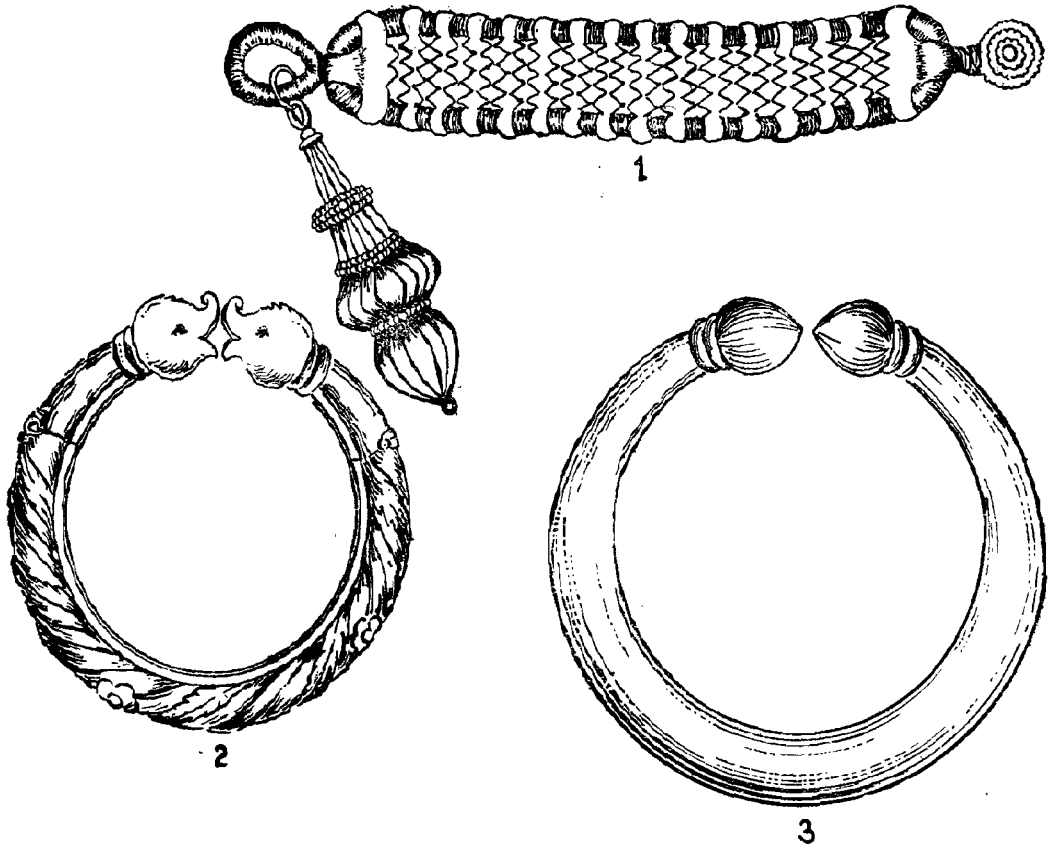
ORNAMENTS OF THE NECK

1. Champakadhi, 2. Takamala



ORNAMENTS OF THE HAND AND ARM

1. Baju, 2. Hatabela, 3. Khadua

Tattoo

28. Some form of social obligation seemed to dominate years ago in the matter of tattooing of Bhumij women. One who failed to tattoo her limbs, it was believed, was taken away by Lord Yama for physical torture, for tying her body firmly on to the thorns of a silk-cotton tree. The tattoo marks adore the palms, arms, chin and the left side of the nose. But with the passage of time, tattooing is neither deemed as obligatory nor do women take to it so elaborately as before. Women of the Kela caste called Khuduni (Khada—tattooing) visit the villages usually in winter and do the job on payment.

29. The Table below gives details on possession of furniture by each caste or community. Mats of leaves called Kita or Pala are found almost in every household. This is used for sleeping and for drying paddy.

Table 6

POSSESSION OF FURNITURE

Caste/community	Total No. of households	Number of households						
		Bedstead	Charpoy	Chair	Table	Bench	Stool	Wallshelf
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Bhumij ..	128	16	126	13	7	11	16	2
Bindhani ..	7	..	6	..	..	..	..	..
Ghasi ..	7	..	7	..	..	..	..	..
Brahmin ..	6	6	6	1	1	2	1	3
Munda ..	4	2	4	1	2	..	1	1
Bhandari ..	2	1	2	1	1	..	..	1
Mahali ..	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	
Khandayat ..	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..
Patratanti ..	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..

30. Except charpoys and stringed cots, all other kinds and designs are rare and are owned only by the educated and well-to-do few. The obvious reason seems to be that they do not need them as these do not go in with their mode of living.



TATTOO DESIGNS

31. Earthen pots and pitchers are the common utensils in most of the households. Jugs, bowls, cups, plates and tumblers of bell-metal and aluminium are also used in small numbers. A few households possess big brass pitchers, buckets, aluminium cooking pots, spoons, etc. Aluminium, bell-metal and brass utensils are fast getting popular in Bhumij households but the use of earthen pots, leaf-cups, leaf-plates and laddles made of gourds is still extensive. The Duba is a large brass bowl used for taking rice with water whereas, Chipa and Gina are small cups of brass and bell-metal used for eating curry. Mundas peddle utensils made by Thentaris.

Household equipments

32. Household articles such as, Dhenki (wooden lever for husking paddy), mortar and pestle, bamboo baskets of varying sizes for storage and transport of different articles, Doli for storing paddy, broomsticks, winnowing fans and bamboo Saba and Poholas for

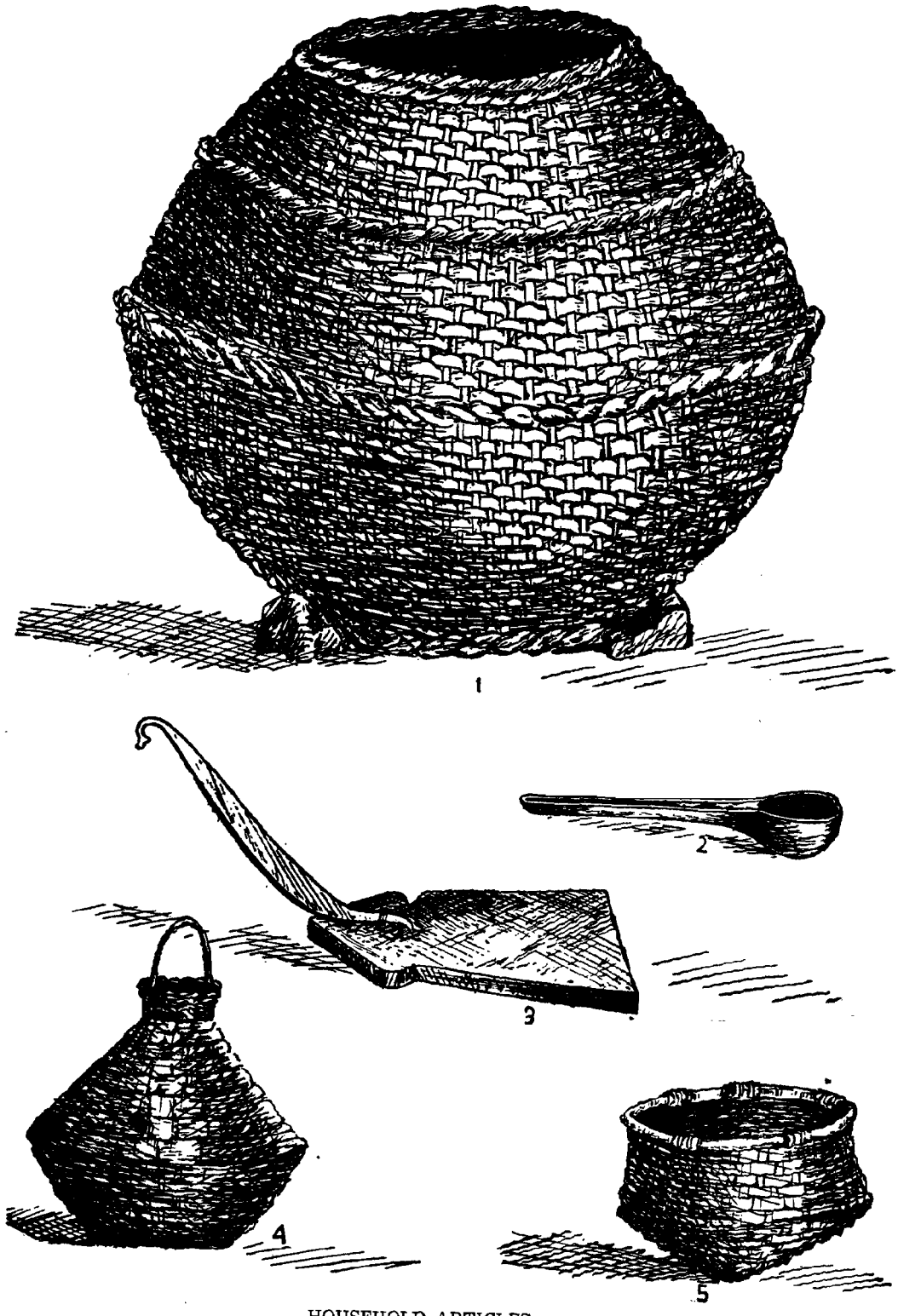


UTENSILS
1. Duba, 2. Lota, 3. Gilas, 4. Chipa, 5. Gina

catching fish are met with in most of the households. Some households own small fishing nets for catching fish in the stream. Though oil pressed in mills is sold in the shops and weekly markets, the Bhumij prepare most of the oil consumed in their households from Kachada (Mahua) seeds in wooden presses. The oil-seeds are pressed either in Gani, Ghana or Chepet Gani which is a mechanical oil-press device. The other named Sunum janta consists of two thick wooden planks and is hand-operated. The seeds are initially crushed and tied in a piece of cloth or a leaf packet and placed between the planks. The lowering of the upper plank puts enough pressure for the oil to trickle and collect in the pot placed below. A few such presses are operated in the village.

33. None of the households has a specific bed room. The living rooms, verandahs or the Dhenki sheds are utilized for the purpose. The villagers sleep on date palm mattress and stringed cots. A few well-to-do persons spread small cotton carpets or bed sheets on the mattress and cots.

34. Most of the households possess lanterns. 40 households possess toreh lights



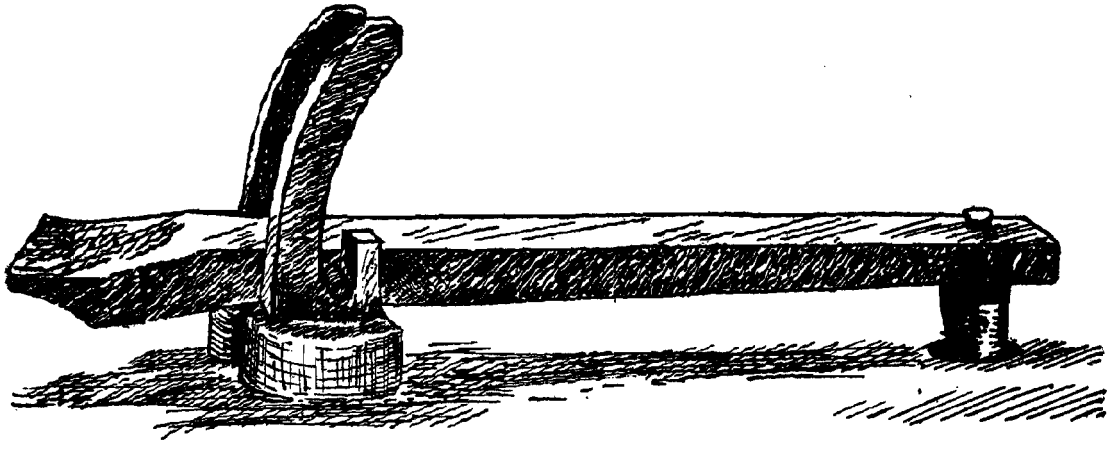
HOUSEHOLD ARTICLES
1. Doli, 2. Lundi, 3. Paniki or Katu

and 34 have bicycles. Only one household, a Brahmin has a gramophone. The Table below gives some consumer goods as posses sed by different communities.

Table 7

POSSESSION OF CONSUMER GOODS

Caste/community	No. of house-holds	No. of households possessing					Remarks
		Lantern	Petromax	Torchlight	Bicycle	Radio/ Gramophone	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Bhumij ..	128	113	..	32	30	..	
Bindhani ..	7	6	..	..	..	..	
Ghasi ..	7	7	..	..	..	..	
Brahmin ..	6	6	..	5	2	1	(Gramophone)
Munda ..	4	4	..	2	1	..	
Bhandari ..	2	2	..	1	1	..	
Mahali ..	1	1	..	..	..	..	
Khandayat ..	1	1	..	..	..		
Patratanti ..	1	1	..	..	..	.	

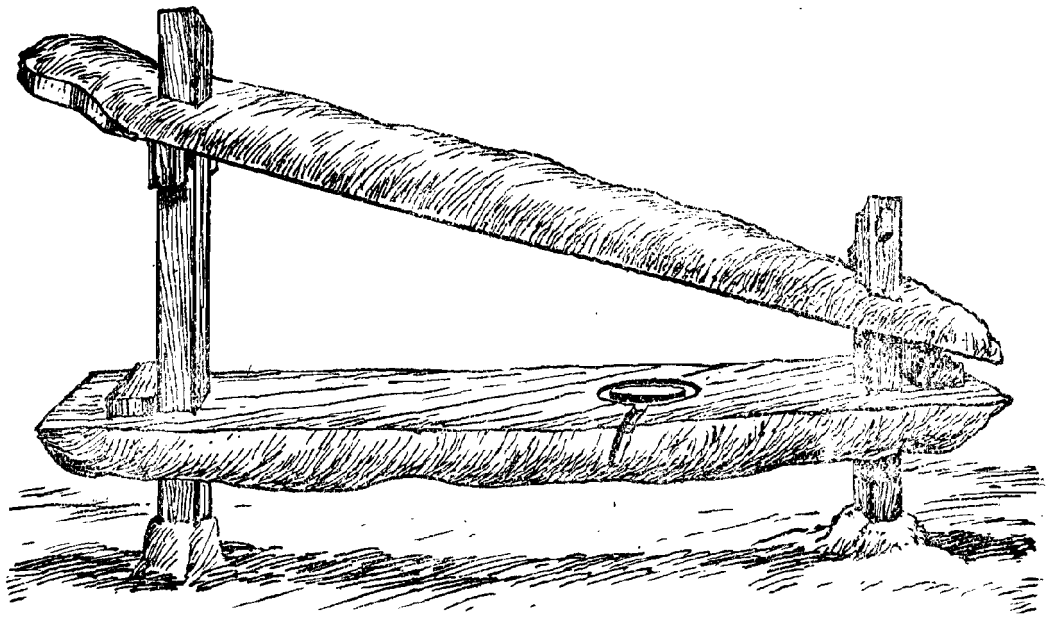


DHENKI

Food and Drink

35. Rice is the staple food of the villagers. The side dishes to rice, hot or cold are cooked green leaves, onions, garlics, chillies and a pinch of salt. Fish caught from the cultivated fields during rains are dried and preserved. This is baked in red-hot charcoal and is taken with rice. Fish and meat are relished most. Pulses such as, horsegram, arhar, etc., are occasionally used. Except the Brahmins, other communities eat crabs, red ants and termites. The Ghasis take beef and pork.

36. Three meals a day is the common practice. The first meal at about 9 a.m. consists of boiled rice soaked in cold water



SUNUM JANTA

from the previous night with red pepper, onion or garlic and a pinch of salt. The second meal is taken at noon. It consists of hot boiled rice, dal, boiled green leaves or baked dried fish, some vegetable curry or onions, garlic, pepper and salt. The last meal of the day is taken immediately after sunset. Here the menu of the lunch finds repetition.

37. Nearness to the urban centre has influenced considerably the food habit of the villagers. Many of them have learnt to prepare Khechuri or Lethe (rice cooked with ghee and spices), varieties of vegetarian and non-vegetarian curries and different kinds of cakes such as. Chitau, Manda and Arisa. During Makar festival they prepare Chitau cakes on sal leaves and Arisa too. On the occasion of Dola festival, Chitau is also prepared. Cakes generally are must-be preparations.

38. The Brahmins use mustard oil but the Bhumij and other communities generally use Kachada oil as the medium of cooking. Now-a-days, mustard oil is fast replacing other cooking media particularly in fish and meat preparations. Spices added to enhance the taste and flavour of curries are turmeric powder or paste, ginger, onion, garlic, cardamom, coriander and cumin seeds.

39. Collection of fire wood poses a problem for the villagers, there being no such forests within their easy reach. The villagers reported that they procure their requirement of fuel from the timber contractors by approaching them within the Similipal forest some three miles away from their village. Obtaining permits from the Forest Department official stationed at Baripada is as difficult or more when contrasted to approaching the timber contractors far away for purchase of firewood.

40. Handia or rice beer is by far the most common and favourite drink of the Bhumij and other communities excepting of course the Brahmins. No feast or festival, social or

religious is complete without a liberal serving of Handia. It is prepared in almost every Bhumij household. The manner of preparation is narrated below :

A number of barks and roots of indigenous plants go to make Ili Ranu or Bakhar that is the fermenting agent. They are : the bark of Jyestha Madhur, Saram lutur and Mahul (Bassia latifolia) and roots of Pitulutur, Chauli Ranu, Toyaret and Ichaba plants. Small balls with dried and powdered rice as base and these roots and barks as accompaniments are made.

Some rice is boiled and spread on Patia (mats). The dried balls of Bakhar are then thoroughly mixed with this boiled rice and the whole lot of admixture is then put into large earthen pots. Fermentation then sets in and generally on the second or third day, the liquid extracted is Rase, which is served because of its superior quality only to the aged and respected. From the remaining fermented rice called Maya is extracted Handia which is a versatile drink consumed by almost all sections of the village.

41. The nutritive value of the food consumed by the villagers need consideration. Vegetables, milk and milk products and animal protein of fish, meat, etc., are items conspicuous by their absence in the menu of an average villager. This makes their diet ill-balanced. The general state of poverty of the villagers is as much to blame for this as the lack of urge among them to grow vegetables and rear poultry, etc. Feasts on festive occasion of course are a different question when these nutritious items of food are arranged but such occasions after all are few and far between. Vegetables in some quantity are grown during the rains but more of it goes to the market than to the kitchen.

Public health

42. A few words about the insanitary conditions prevailing in the village will not be out of place. Dung heaps of cattle and piles of dirt and refuses close to the residential sites are a common feature to meet within the village. This is bound to affect the general health of the villagers.

43. The incidence of epidemics is not frequent. It was reported that smallpox broke out in the village more than a decade ago and cholera some three to four years ago but the attacks were not so severe as there was no reported case of death. The common diseases are malaria, influenza, typhoid, hooping cough, diarrhoea, dysentery, etc. There is said to be only a single case of leper in the village.

44. There is no homeopathic or Ayurvedic doctor in the village. The Shyamakhunta C. D. Block has also not set up its own Primary Health Centre. There is one Ayurvedic dispensary at Balidiha but few avail of its dispensation. The only way out therefore is taking to indigenous methods of treatment unless the case is so chronic or acute that the patient is removed to the headquarters hospital at Baripada or the practitioners of different systems of medicine at Baripada are consulted.

45. The indigenous treatments cost them precious little. To cure spleen trouble, the abdomen is seared with a red hot iron rod. But this practice is dying out and is at present applied only to children. Rheumatism is cured by massage of tiger fat and people

procure and preserve whenever this is available. Oil extracted from Bhalia seeds (Semercarpus anacardium) is heated and applied on the inflamed veins on the forehead for chronic headache. Old wounds are also supposed to heal up by its application. The barks of Sunari tree (Cassia fistula) is used as a purgative. Neem (Azadiracha indica) oil is used as an antiseptic and for healing itches and scabies. Some anoint it on their bodies to ward off the mosquitoes. The Deana or Jhadua, the village exorcist is summoned when required to drive away the evil spirits.

CHAPTER III

ECONOMY

The economy of this village is mainly agricultural. Of the 157 households in the village, 125 own land. The remaining households earn their livelihood from agricultural labour, marketing of forest products, household industries and trade and from working in transport by carts and other services. The main economic resources of the villagers are land, labour and livestock.

2. The total cultivated area in the village is 549·98 acres which is classified into four categories. The lands adjacent to the homestead or village site are called Kala lands where maize, bean, tobacco and vegetables are grown. Uplands are of two categories, viz., Asu land where early paddy and other cereals such as maize, Kada, pulses and oil-seeds are grown. The Asu land again is divided into 3 classes, viz., Asu Aul (First class), Asu Doyam (Second class) and Asu Soyam (Third class). The other class of uplands is Dahi, which is mostly sandy and is situated at a higher level. This is utilized for growing bamboo and sabai grass. Low lying paddy lands termed as Jal are also divided into 3 classes in the same manner as Asu lands. Wet lands lying on the banks of rivers or streams are called Pal lands. There are two types of non-agricultural land, viz., Gochar or grazing ground which lies near the village site and shrub jungle, the soil of which is mostly stony and is devoid of any large trees. A little more than 250 acres are irrigated by the canal and the rest are rain-fed.

Lands held by communities

3. The communitywise possession of cultivated land is shown in Table II (Appendix). The pattern of distribution of the land-owning class is : 115 Bhumij, 3 Bindhanis, 3 Brahmins, 2 Mundas, 1 Bhandari and 1 Mahali. Of the 32 landless households, 13 are Bhumij, 4 Bindhanis, 7 Ghasis, 3 Brahmins, 2 Mundas, 1 Bhandari, 1 Khandayat and 1 Patratanti. Of these land-owning households, 4 are in possession of 20 to 50 cents each, 20 households between 50 cents to 1 acre each, 30 households each between 1 acre to 2·5 acres, 27 households between 2·5 to 5 acres each, 30 households between 5 to 10 acres each and 14 households above 10 acres each. The analysis as shown in the Table below discloses that all the households having land are the real owners. There is no tenant in the village cultivating land on lease or on share-cropping basis. The cultivator-owners attend to all the agricultural operations with relatives and agricultural labourers and draught animals on hire. It is remarkable that the seven households of Ghasis who comprise the second largest community in the village are landless though settled in the village for 4 to 5 generations. Contrary to this, the Brahmins while continuing to be true to their traditional occupation, have acquired some land in the village and have been cultivating the same by employing labourers.

Agricultural practices

4. The first ploughing is done on the 2nd day of Magha (January-February). On the day preceding, i.e., the Sankranti day, the festival Pusha Paraba is observed. The actual agricultural operations start after the first shower. Every cultivator performs

Table 8

COMMUNITYWISE ACREAGE OF LAND HELD

Number

Community	Total No. of households	Households having no land	5 cents and below	5 to 10 cents
1	2	3	4	5
1. Bhumij ..	128	13	..	..
2. Bindhani ..	7	4	..	..
3 Ghasi ..	7	7	..	
4. Brahmin ..	6	3	.	
5. Munda ..	4	2	.	..
6. Bhandari ..	2	1	.	.
7. Mahali ..	1	..	.	..
8 Khandaya ..	1	1	.	..
9 Patratanti ..	1	1	..	.

Table 8—(*concld.*)

of households and extent of land

10 to 20 cents	20 to 50 cents	50 cents to 1 acre	1 to 2·5 acres	2·5 to 5 acres	5 to 10 acres	Above 10 acres
6	7	8	9	10	11	2
..	4	19	25	26	27	14
..	..	1	2	..	..	..
..	..	..	..	..	..	..
..	..	..	2	..	1	..
..	..	..	..	..	2	..
..	..	..	..	1	..	..
..	..	..	1	..	..	..
..	..	..	..	..	..	..
..	..	..	..	..	..	..

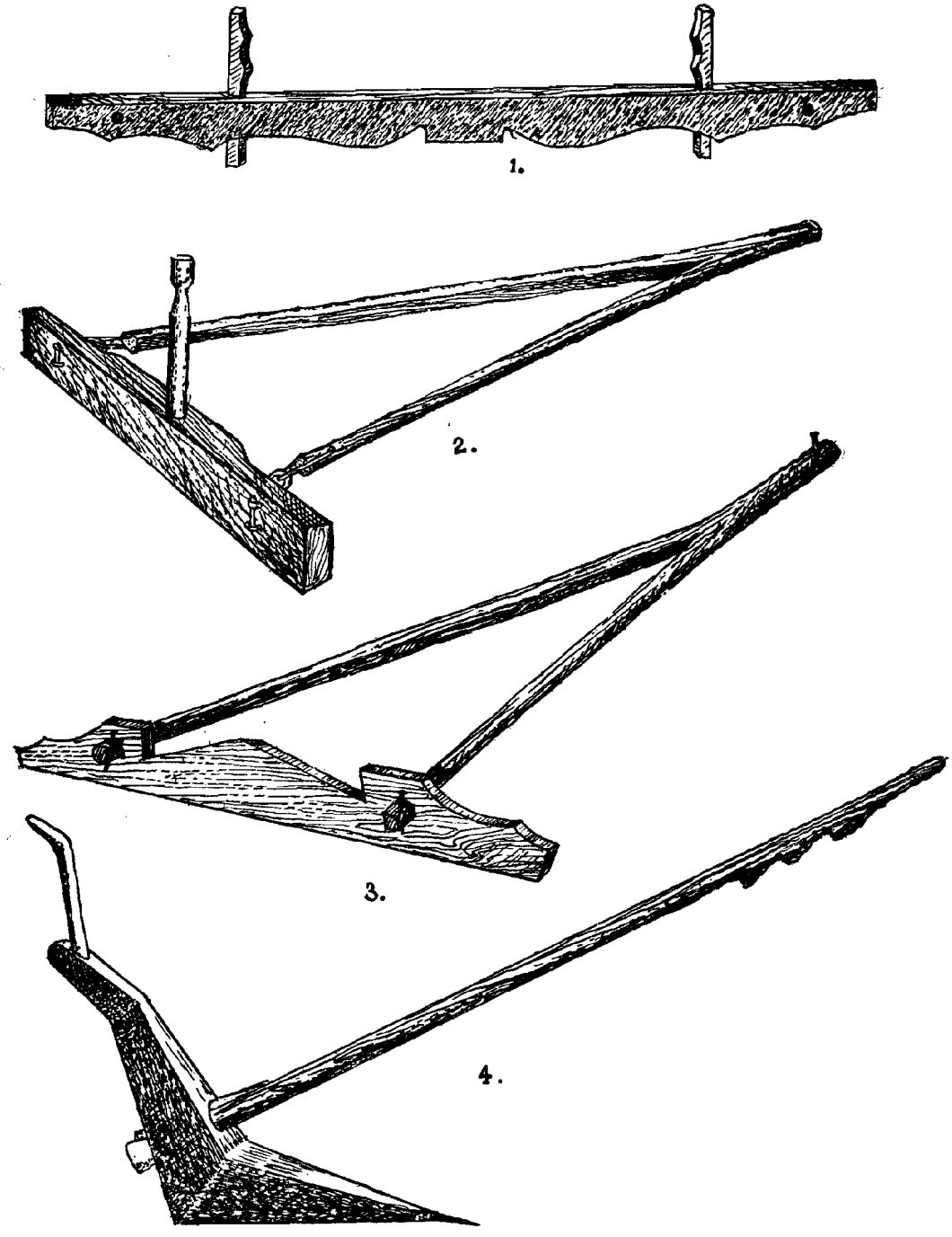
worship in his house and makes preparation for tilling the soil. Some time after Akshaya Trutiya day and the first showering, they observe another festival called Asadhia when maize, green leaves (Leutia sag), etc., are first offered in worships and then taken.

5. In paddy cultivation, both the methods of broadcasting and transplantation are taken recourse to. Broadcasting is done in up-lands, whereas, transplantation is the practice in low lands. The lands are prepared for sowing after one or two showers and broadcasting of early paddy is then completed soon so as to leave enough time to prepare wet lands for transplantation which requires more than one ploughing. Paddy seedlings are removed from the nurseries and planted manually on the fields usually by women labourers. When the plants rise to a height of two to three feet, Beusan or weeding operation is attended to. The grass and weeds growing in the field are carefully removed and great care is taken to regulate the level of water. When the paddy crops begin to mature the cultivators devote great attention to watching the crops. Kuma or straw huts are constructed for the purpose. After harvest, the paddy is removed to the Khala or the thrashing floor within the homesteads and is stacked to dry for a few days. A thick layer of paddy stalks then is spread out in a circle over the thrashing floor and a row of bullocks tied in a line to a centrally fixed axis are driven round and round until the grains are separated from the stalks. As the bullocks go round, the straw is shifted with pitch forks so that the grains fall underneath and suffer no damage from the animals' hoofs. When one layer has been well trodden out another is spread out without any loss of time and the process is repeated until the straw becomes too deep for the bullocks to make their way through. At last the straw is carefully removed and the chaff and the grains lie on the floor. The grains are separated from the chaff in winnowing fans. Another method of thrashing is by beating the paddy stalks in sized bundles against stone slabs or broad thick wooden planks.

6. Besides paddy, maize, Kada, Gundulu, Bajra and gingelly are sown in May and June and harvested in August and September. Vegetables such as brinjals, tomatoes, lady's-fingers, cucumbers, onions, chillies, etc., are grown in small quantities by some cultivators specially in the backyards during the rains and winter. There seems to exist ample scope for raising vegetables on the lands near the bank of the stream. A systematic rotation of crops could also be practised particularly in irrigated lands. Improved paddy seeds, of late are being tried by some cultivators. Commercial or cash crops have never been experimented. Some farmers have, however, taken up line sowing of paddy in roadside lands.

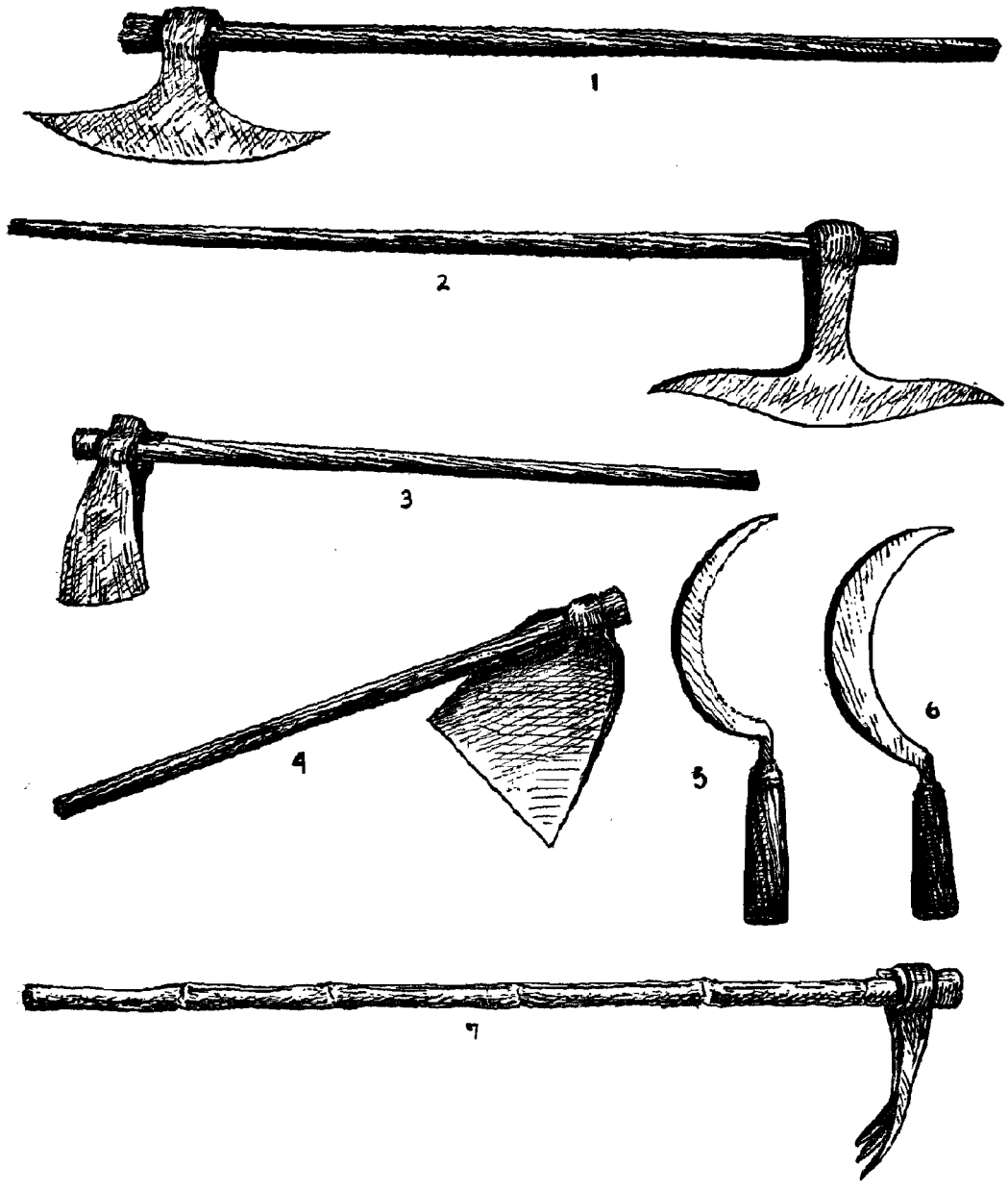
7. The accompanying illustrations show the implements used during agricultural operations. These are of the traditional types : Aram (yoke), Khara and Adgum used for levelling the soil and Noel (plough). Kapi or long bladed axe is used for clearing shrubs and tender branches. The axe, spade and sickle are of the ordinary types. The Ruba, a three-forked implement is used for removing paddy plants from thicker parts of the field for transferrence to thinner areas.

8. Cowdung is utilized as manure. A rough estimate shows that about 800 maunds of cowdung is obtained annually and no part of it is wasted as fuel as is the practice in some towns and villages where scarcity of firewood is felt. Besides this, some amount of compost, locally made, is put into the fields but chemical fertilizers have yet to be introduced.



AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS

1. Aran, 2. Khara, 3. Adgum, 4. Nocl



MORE AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS

1. Kapi, 2. Kapi, 3. Hako, 4. Kalom, 5, Datram, 6. Danli, 7. Ruba

Forest resources

9. There is no forest worth the name within the village boundary. A small area that has been set apart as village forest has only shrubby growth. Indiscriminate felling in the past has left very few large-sized trees in the area.

Livestock

10. The position regarding the livestock wealth of the village is shown in Table III of the Appendix. The population looks large considering the total of 369 heads of cows, bullocks and buffaloes, 336 heads of sheep and goats and 758 fowls. Out of 369 heads of cows, bullocks and buffaloes, 302 are draught animals and the rest are cows and calves. The number seems fairly adequate considering the total cultivable acreage which is about 550 acres. The pattern of ownership, however, is lopsided, because as many as 26 households out of 125 who own and cultivate land own none of these animals. As a result, they hire draught animals from other cultivators and at times from the neighbouring villages. The drawing capacity of the animals is also low as these are of poor breed and are not looked after properly. Compared to the over-all size of the cattle, the number of cows, she-buffaloes and calves is really small. There are only 50 cows and she-buffaloes and 17 calves. Of this, only one is a milch cow owned by a Brahmin household. A large number of goats and sheep are reared mostly by the Bhumij households. 6 Brahmin households have also reared as many as 38 goats and sheep. Most of the goats and sheep are put on sale while quite a few are offered as sacrifice during the festivals and the meat so obtained is consumed. Poultry is also bred for very similar purposes.

11. All the birds are of local breed and of poor quality. The cattle and other animals reared are far from healthy. There is no grazing ground worth the name around the village and the cattle starve for fodder. Very little grass grows on the grazing ground which is only a small strip of land close to the village site. The ground only serves the purpose of a resting place for the cattle.

Economic activities

12. The economic activities of this village are grouped into the following seven broad groups : cultivation, agricultural labour, forestry, household industry, trade, transport and other services. This classification is based on the nature of work done by the population. On the other hand, the households in the village are divided into six occupation groups taking into consideration their main occupation and income. The position is shown in the table below. The Bhumij households far outnumber others in both the occupations of cultivation and agricultural labour. In the occupation of household industry, the Bindhanis are numerically superior. The Bhumij households seem to monopolise the occupation of 'transport'.

Table 9

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY OF DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES

Economic activity	Total No. of households	Community								
		Bhumij	Brahmin	Munda	Bhandari	Bindhani	Ghasi	Khandayat	Patratanti	Mahali
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
1. Cultivation	79	67	1	2	..	..	..	..	..	..
2. Agricultural labour	63	50	..	1	..	3	7	1	1	..
3. Household industry	5	..	..	..	..	4	..	..	..	1
4. Trade	2	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..
5. Transport	10	10	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
6. Other services	7	..	5	1	1	..	..	..	..	..

13. This being the precise occupational pattern, the following lines are devoted to an examination of the size of the labour force and their participation in productive activities. The labour force of the village embraces the entire population in the age-group of 15—59 years who are potentially employable in production of goods and services. There are 386 such persons, 192 men and 194 women. Of this, 5 men and 19 women are dependants. The remaining 362 persons in the labour force contribute only 75·3 per cent of the workers in the total working force. The remaining 119 persons of the working force are drawn from the age-group of 0—14 and 60 years and above.

14. The composition by age-group of the total number of workers is as follows : 104 persons or 30·6 per cent belong to the age-group 0—14 years, 362 persons or 93·7 per cent to the age-group 15—59 years and 15 persons are 60 years and above.

15. The participation of women in the economic activities of the village is a factor to reckon with. Nearly 60·3 per cent of the women are working and they constitute 48·2 per cent of the working force. Women have yet to take part in such economic activities as trade, transport and other services but they are numerically preponderant over men in cultivation, agriculture and forestry.

16. Agriculture is the single major occupation which accounts for the employment of 244 persons or 50·7 per cent of the workers as cultivators. Another 183 persons constituting 38 per cent of the total body of workers are agricultural labourers. All the remaining occupations absorb only 11·3 per cent of the workers. None of the workers, however, are exclusively employed in any particular work. Workers are said to participate in an occupation when they devote major portion of their time to that occupation. There are 9 persons under the occupation forestry who collect and sell forest produce. But most of them work also as agricultural labourers and some cultivate their own lands. Out of 16 persons in household industry, one person has set up a cycle repairing shop, 12 persons who are Bindhanis work as blacksmiths, 3 persons from the Ghasi caste prepare bamboo baskets and date palm leaf mats and one Bhumij has set up a small rice hauler in his house. Two persons shown in trade are the grocers of the village who procure kerosine, tea, sugar, gur, matches, tobacco, etc., from Baripada and sell the same here. They also sell foodgrains in small quantities and eatables, such as, parched rice. 14 persons shown in the occupation, transport, operate 11 bullock carts which they own. They also cultivate their lands and work as agricultural labourers at times. Of the persons employed in other services, one person of the Bhumij community works as the Grama Panchayat choukidar and 9 Brahmins work as priests. They have their jajmans in this and the neighbouring villages. Similarly, two Bhandaris or barbers serve this and some other neighbouring villages. One of them also cultivates his own land. Another person in this category of occupation is a Munda Christian who works as the Pastor of the Christian community of this area.

Non-workers

17. The non-workers number 282 and form 36·9 per cent of the total population. Majority of them numbering 236 belong to the age-group of 0—14 years. Of this, 38 are whole-time students, 5 females are engaged in household duties, and 95 males and 98 females are mere dependants. The next age-group 15—59 years has 24 non-workers, out of which 5 males are whole-time students and 19 females are engaged in household duties. In the age-group of 60 years and above, the 22 females recorded as non-workers are engaged in household duties. It reveals from the analysis that there are no invalids or disabled

persons and that none from the higher age-groups finds mention as a mere dependant.

The detailed classification of non-workers is given in Table V of the Appendix.

Occupational mobility

18. It will be clear from the Tables IV and V of the Appendix that all the able-bodied persons of both sexes participate in different occupations. The occupational pattern of the inhabitants in the village is seen to have undergone little change during the last decade ending 1961. As per 1951 Census, majority of the population were dependent on cultivation and agricultural labour, and only 24 persons were dependent on production other than cultivation. The figures presumably did not reflect the correct picture as the Brahmin priests, the barbers and the choukidar were then shown as dependent on cultivation. Among the noticeable changes in the occupation structure, mention may be made of the 2 households of cultivators who have taken up business as their main occupation and another two who have taken up household industry, i.e., the cycle repair workshop and rice hauler. Similarly, 14 persons from 4 households who transport men and materials in their bullock carts and the pastor are additions.

Income

19. The monthly income of households have been arranged by occupation groups in Table VI of the Appendix. Nearly 70 per cent of the households earn Rs. 26 to Rs. 75 a month and only 10·8 per cent earn more than Rs. 100 a month. Cultivators and agricultural labourers, by virtue of their numerical preponderance dominate all the income groups, including the lowest income group of Rs. 25 and below wherein no person with industry, trade or transport as his occupation is located.

Expenditure

20. The average monthly expenditure of the households by income and occupation groups are shown in Table VII of the Appendix. With the increase in income, the expenditure on food and other items increases irrespective of the occupation and within the same income group the margin of variation in the volume of expenditure is very narrow. Within expenditure on 'other items' are included fuel and lighting, religious and social functions, etc., but substantial amounts were reported to be spent on the last two items. It revealed during survey that most of the households spend whatever they earn and save very little in life.

Indebtedness

21. The practice of borrowing was reported to be as rare as the habit of saving. None was reported to have borrowed money from the private moneylenders at the time of survey with the exception of one cultivator belonging to Munda caste in the monthly income group of Rs. 51 to Rs. 75. He has borrowed Rs. 200 from the State Government for purchase of bullocks. It was learnt that 4 to 5 Kabuliwallahs flock around the neighbouring village Jayabilla after the weeding operations and lend money at the usurious rate of eight annas a rupee. Soon after harvest, some 2 to 3 months after, they start collecting their dues and desert the village after completing their collection. The villagers of Rangamatia borrow money from this source also. Table VIII in the Appendix deals with details of indebtedness.

Marketing facilities

22. A bi-weekly Hat (market) sits in the village on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Small traders from the town set up their shops under temporary sheds constructed in rows. Shops displaying varieties of cloths, Saris and

readymade garments, grocery, jewelry and sweetmeat stalls are set up. At least twice in a week much of life and noise centre round the Hat. The place gets badly crowded as the sheds are not constructed in regular rows. Not much of attention seems to be given to set things right in this crowded place. The transaction is mostly on cash payment though barter system prevails occasionally in purchase of vegetables, tobacco, salt, gur, green edible leaves, lime, salt, etc. Such forest produces as Mahula, Kachada, Kusum, Chara, Kendu, Jamu, etc., are sold mostly in exchange of paddy. During summer, the Hat sits by about 4 to 4-30 P. M. Between both the Hats, the one on Saturday is more important from the point of the gathering and the business transacted. Business goes brisk for hardly a couple of hours and then the place presents a deserted look as ever. One important feature of the market is the presence of women in large numbers who take active part in every phase of transaction. Some walk into the market just for the taste of sweets, cheap refreshments and tea but a large number of men and women do not miss a leaf-cup of liquor from the vendor who makes a brisk business towards the closing hours.

Land Reforms and other measures influencing economic life

23. During the Durbar regime, land revenue was being collected from the tenants through the intermediaries who used to receive commission on the amount collected. There were intermediaries at two levels. There was a Pradhan at the village level who was responsible for collection of the entire demand for his village on the basis of the tenantwise demand register or Ekpadia furnished to him. He used to get 10 per cent of the collection as his commission. There were Sardars at the level of Pirh, a group of villages. The commission of the Sardar was 10 per cent on the total collection for his Pirh. Thus for each Rs. 100 collected, Rs. 19 used to go to the Pradhan and the Sardar towards their commissions and the balance of Rs. 81 to the then State exchequer. Land revenue was being paid in cash in three instalments, i.e., in January, April and October. In the first instalment 50 per cent of the demand was being paid and the rest in two equal instalments. The Padhani system of collection of land revenue was abolished in 1965-66 and in its place, the work was taken over by salaried employees of the State Government. A Revenue Inspector of the Baripada Tahasil had his headquarters at Rangamatia and was directly in charge of collection of land revenue of this and a group of neighbouring villages.

24. In the early part of this century the entire ex-State of Mayurbhanj was surveyed and the record-of-rights was prepared, copies of which were supplied to the tenants. Rent was fixed on different classes of lands. Under Mayurbhanj Tenancy Act the tenants got rayati rights over their lands. Besides rayati tenure some jagir lands or service tenures, viz., Dehuri Jagir and Chatia Jagir were created for each village and rent on such lands was fixed much lower than the usual rate. Dehuri Jagirs were granted to the village priests (not Brahmins) who were engaged in worshipping the village deities. Chatia Jagir-holders were required to assist the Pradhans for collection of land revenue. The Jagir lands have since been settled with the Jagir-holders.

25. The unit of measurement in vogue in this area is a Mana which is equal to 0·69 acre. Rent on land has been assessed on each Mana of different classes of land. The rate per standard acre as converted is given in the Table below. This classification and the rates of assessment are continued even after merger.

Class of land		Rate of rant per acre
1		2
1. Kala		.. Rs 2·50
2. Ashu Aul	(1st class)	.. Rs. 1.00
3. Ashu Doyam	(2nd class)	.. Rs. 0.75
4. Ashu Soyam	(3rd class)	.. Rs. 0.50
5. Jal Aul	(1st class)	.. Rs. 3.12
6. Jal Doyam	(2nd class)	.. Rs. 1.87
7. Jal Soyam	(3rd class)	.. Rs. 1.25
8. Dahi		.. Rs. 0.37

26. Movable and immovable property in a joint family is partitioned when the size of the family becomes large and unwieldy or when bitter quarrel or dissension breaks out among its members. Usually the village elders and relatives intervene and give their decision on the share of each member. The concerned parties invariably honour their decision.

27. Nearly all the communities in the village follow the Hindu laws of succession. The deceased is succeeded by his sons, in whose absence those to follow in order of precedence are his widow, unmarried daughters and married daughters.

28. The system of Bethi and Begari (bondage labour) did not exist during the ex-State rule. But a system of forced labour on payment of daily wages was introduced during occasions of royal marriage or Shikar.

29. Domestic servants are engaged by some households for agricultural work. Such servants are paid 2 to 3 putties (1 putti= 3 maunds) of paddy each per year besides food and clothing.

30. Both the barbers in the village are each in charge of some households. They charge 3 Gounis (30 standard seers) of paddy per married person per annum in each family. For service rendered during marriage or death rituals additional payment is made. This amount varies according to the economic condition of the households concerned.

31. The Bindhanis like barbers have also divided the households in the village among themselves for the purpose of rendering service. They repair agricultural implements and charge 2 to 3 Gounis of paddy per annum per plough or a pair of draught animals. These emoluments for the services are paid soon after the harvest. Besides this, the Bindhanis also prepare new agricultural implements which are sold in cash.

There is, however, no such division of households among the Brahmin priests who render services on cash payment whenever requisitioned by the villagers.

Village organization

32. During the Durbar regime, the village organization was headed by the Pradhan assisted by the Chatia. They were responsible for collection of land revenue and for the maintenance of law and order in the village. The Pradhan, besides these functions, very often, with the assistance of some village elders used to decide petty disputes relating to property and matters affecting the caste rules and relationship. With the abolition of Padhani system, the power and influence of the Pradhan has waved considerably who no more discharges the official functions. But he joins the council of village elders to resolve the village disputes. Besides this organization, there is no other caste panchayat in the village, formal or otherwise to look to social disputes.

33. The Bhumij people, however, have started a social movement. A caste welfare organization named Mundari Samaj Sudhar Samiti has been established with all the Bhumij in the area in its fold. This council sits annually and the sittings are said to be fairly regular during the past 6 years. The objective of the council is the social, economic and developmental uplift of the caste as a whole. An attempt is being made to record the caste rules and reform them wherever proper. Though the council has started with sound objectives, not much seems to have been achieved. It was, however, claimed that as a result of this movement, the exhorbitant bride price among the Bhumij which ranged from Rs. 60 to Rs. 100 has come down in cases to as low an amount as a rupee or two. There prevailed a custom that when the bride and the groom reached the latter's village, women received them with songs, the contents of which were tinged with a vulgar note. This is claimed to have been stopped by the social reforms movement.

Administrative organisation

34. As narrated earlier, the village Pradhan and the Chatia are the two village officers. The former is without any powers after the authority to collect revenue has been withdrawn from him. Rangamatia is now the headquarters of a Revenue Inspector's circle under the Baripada Tahasil and a Revenue Inspector is stationed at this village.

35. Rangamatia is the headquarters of Rangamatia Grama Panchayat which comprises about 36 villages and has 25 elected members. Of this, 12 members belong to the Bhumij tribe including the Sarpanch and the Naib-Sarpanch. A Bhumij has also been elected to the Shymakhunta Panchayat Samiti from this village. In the proposal for setting up smaller Panchayats, it has been proposed to spilt up Rangamatia Panchayat into two Panchayats with headquarters at Rangamatia and Kendua.

Co-operative Society

36. A Grain Gola Co-operative Society has been organised in the village which had 550 members at the time of survey. The members belong to different villages under the Rangamatia Grama Panchayat. The value of each share is 20 seers of paddy and Re. 1. The share capital has multiplied to 300 maunds of paddy and Rs. 800. Paddy and cash are lent to the members at reasonable rate of interest.

37. Not much seems to have been done for the welfare of this village except the village road and the Grain Gola Co-operative Society. The C. D. Block to which it belonged was at its infancy in the Stage I phase and it may be that developmental benefits may be taken advantage of at a later stage of growth of the Block.

CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE

Birth customs

In the Bhumij family birth takes place in the main house as no separate arrangement is made for lying-in. The services of a local midwife belonging to the Ghasi caste are requisitioned. She cuts the umbilical cord with the sharp blade of an arrow and buries both the cord and the placenta in the hole dug by the father of the newborn under the eaves. The baby is bathed in tepid water. A heap of fire is arranged within the room to keep the mother and the newborn warm.

2. The period of pollution continues for 9 days. During the period, the touch of the mother, the baby and even the Dai pollutes others and it is prohibited for the members of the household to participate in any religious festivals or social functions. They are not also allowed to worship the village deities.

3. The end of the period of pollution is observed as Narta by the Bhumij. On this day, a barber woman pares the nails of the mother who goes to the stream or tank with some elderly women, rubs turmeric paste with oil and takes her bath. The child is bathed in tepid water in the house. The mother wears a new Sari with red border and paints her feet with red dye. The father of the newborn also wears a new cloth after taking bath. Other male members of the family also shave as per social custom. The worship of Dharam Devata which is done at a place well cleaned within the compound of the house marks the most important feature associated with naming of the child. According to tradition an elderly woman performs the worship in the manner described below. The woman pours water on a brass plate and keeps a few leaf blades of Duba (dog grass) in it. She utters the name of his deceased paternal grandfather in case it is a male child and drops a grain of rice into the water. If the rice falls on the grass then it is believed that the child's grandfather is born again and the child is accordingly named after him. If this fails, the ritual is repeated with the names of the other ancestors till a suitable name is struck. In case of a female child, the same procedure is adopted but with the names of female ancestors starting with the grandmother. It is noticed that in spite of this custom followed for the name-giving function, the children now-a-days are mostly given Hindu names. The traditional names are gradually losing favour.

4. Another function relating to child birth is the piercing of the ears which is held on the 3rd day of the Makar Parba after the child attains the age of three. The ears are pierced with a silver or iron pin by the maternal uncle or an elderly male member of the family or some other person skilled in this work. A feast is given in the evening to the caste people.

5. The Bhumij people do not impose much of restrictions on a pregnant woman. She takes her usual diet and attends to all kinds of household duties involving outdoor physical labour. There are some superstitions associated with pregnancy and child birth. A pregnant woman should not tie knots during solar or lunar eclipse. She keeps the Sila and Silpa (grinding stone) near her to ward off all evil effects. An expectant mother takes care not to jump over a stick lying on her way or to plug a hole. She should not

kill an animal however insignificant. In case of delayed or difficult delivery, the husband of the parturient woman cuts a rope of the thatch. This is believed to ease the process. During the period of pollution, all the members of the household are considered defiled and the village also is supposed to receive the touch of pollution for which worship of the village deities is postponed till the purification is over.

Customs relating to puberty

6. No special ceremony is associated with the attainment of puberty by a girl. She moves freely, touches the cooking utensils and does all sorts of work although she is considered ceremonially impure. The matter is kept a secret and only her sister-in-law and female intimates are informed. The girl does not touch flower or fruit bearing trees during the period. She is prohibited from removing the cowdung from the cowshed. No restriction of any kind whatsoever is imposed during subsequent menstruations.

Marriage customs

7. The survey brings to light an important fact that the Bhumij in the village marries rather late in life. None in the age-group of 0—14 is married and the number of never married persons in the village as a whole and particularly in the age-group of 15—24 is pretty large compared to the total population. Majority of the married persons belong to the age-group of 25—49 years. This social phenomenon is attributed mainly to the financial implications of marriage. The Pana or the bride price and the over-all expenditure in a marriage are too heavy for a Bhumij to bear and demands of him years of saving and patient preparation. It revealed during survey that the bride price which was only Rs. 12 up to 1949 or 1950 had gone up in recent years to Rs. 80 and even Rs. 90. Similarly, it was held obligatory that the bridegroom should kill at least 3 goats for the marriage feast. It was gathered that a social reform movement with some educated youngsters in its forefront has started recently with a view to reducing the bride price and the burdens of marriage.

8. There are four forms of marriage, viz., (i) the usual type arranged through negotiation, (ii) Daw dopa or love marriage, (iii) Sinduri gesa or marriage by compulsion and (iv) Apartipi or marriage by capture. Customs and rituals relating to each type of marriage are narrated below.

9. In the first form of marriage, little rests on the marrying partners whereas in the remaining forms, the choice is exclusively one of the partners.

General type marriage

10. In this form of marriage, the negotiation is initiated by the father or the guardian of the boy. A Dutamdar or mediator who is usually drawn from the tribe is employed by him to assess the suitability of the match. If the stars prove favourable, the mediator pays a visit to the girl's parents to determine their views. The bride's father, at his end consults his kinsmen, and if all goes well, conveys his consent. On receipt of the message from the Dutamdar, the father of the boy accompanied by one or two of his relatives, pays a visit to the house of the bride's father where they are received with respect. The bride washes the feet of the guests and then they are entertained with Handia. A formal Kanyadekha ceremony is arranged. The bride well clad and decorated with ornaments is presented before the guests by a female. The guests are entertained to a feast with rice, fowl and vegetable curries and sweets. The visit is returned some days later by the bride's father and some of his relations. The party is taken round the threshing floor and cowshed of the groom with a

view to assessing the latter's financial position and to estimate the demand of bride price. After enjoying a feast the party returns to their village and convey their message regarding the quantum of bride price through the Dutamdar. The bride's father is then invited for final settlement of the bride price on a certain date. On the appointed day, the bride's father arrives with some of his relatives. They are received with great respect and hospitality. A meeting is then arranged of members of both the parties when the maternal uncles of the bride and the groom enter a witty duel. The bride's father hands over a Sal-leaf packet containing goat dung. If the packet is large and heavy (perhaps symbolic of the exacting bride price) the groom's father removes a part of the content and returns it. After initial fun and pleasantries, the meeting turns to take up serious discussions. The bride's father places his demand for the bride price which is considered by the members of the community present and finally, an amount acceptable to both is arrived at. Besides cash which may range from Rs. 40 to Rs. 100 or more, the bride price includes 5 to 6 Saris one each for the bride, her mother and other relations. It is on payment of the bride price that the final date for marriage is fixed up.

11. On the preceding day of marriage, a Vedi (marriage pandal) about 5 feet square and 6 inches high is constructed within the premises of the bride's house. For this two unmarried sisters of the bride fetch earth in baskets. The husband of the bride's sister plants four Sal twigs at four corners of the Vedi with a Mahul or bamboo twig at the centre. Chains of mango leaves decorate the pandal. A similar Vedi is constructed also at the groom's house by the husband of the groom's sister. Two new pitchers are kept beside the pandal.

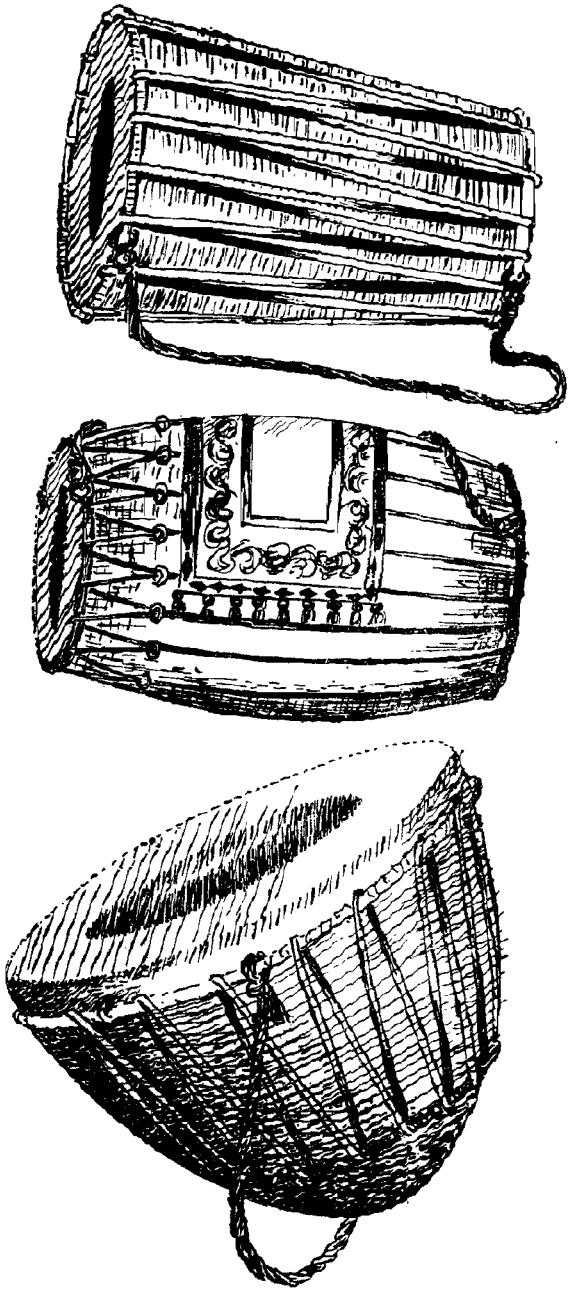
12. The rituals of marriage are narrated below :

The groom takes a new thread thrice round the rim of the new pitchers and tearing the thread hands over both the pitchers to two unmarried girls. With bow and arrow in hand, and accompanied by other women of the tribe they proceed to the village pond or river singing for fetching water. They offer worships at the water source to goddesses Nagera—the seven sisters believed to be inhabiting the water source with vermilion, arecanuts, rice, etc. Much importance is attached to the manner of fetching the water in pitchers which is done simultaneously by both the girls which is ceremoniously received by the mother of the groom and placed on the marriage pandal on paddy heaps.

13. The groom is then taken to the village pond by the wife of his eldest brother. His parents also accompany him. The groom takes his bath in the lap of his mother and returns for other rituals on the marriage pandal.

14. The procession to the bride's place is headed by drummers and musicians. Drums called Dumand, Dhumsa and Dhola and stringed instruments called Tulia and the bamboo flute called Rutu are used by the Bhumij on such processions. In the outskirts of the village, the young boys and girls of the bride's village receive the party with songs. The party stops at a convenient place near the bride's house which is generally the house of the village headman. Here the members are entertained with tobacco powder and Bidis (smoke). The procession is resumed amidst beating of kettle drums and blowing of horns and conch shells and Hulahuli (a shrill sound produced by women by rapid movement of the tongue). On reaching the bride's place the mother of the bride washes the feet of the groom. Members of the party are seated on charpoys or mats spread round the marriage pandal. The groom is seated on a low wooden stool. The bride then escorted is seated on the right side of the groom on another wooden stool.

The remaining rituals of marriage are then gone through in broadly the Vedic style. A feast then follows after which the groom returns to his village with the bride and his friends.



MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS
1. Dunand, 2. Dhumsa, 3. Dhola

15. Marriage takes place in the house of the bride. A Brahmin priest officiates in the marriage who utters incantations and performs libations. The Vedic rituals are taken recourse to. A grand feast then follows.

Daw dopa marriage

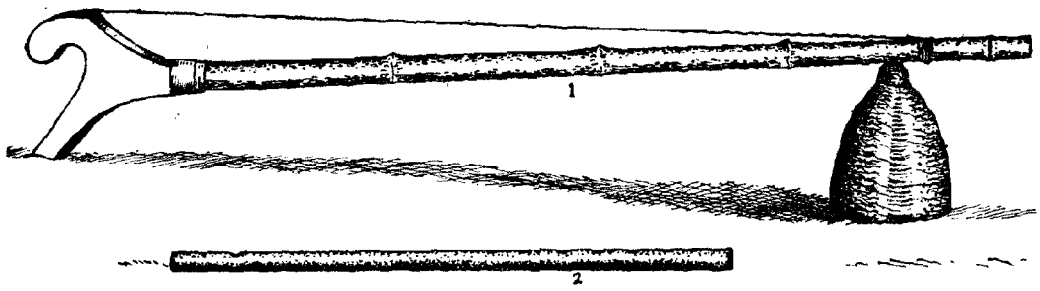
16. When a boy and girl are in love and their desire to stay as married partners is opposed by their parents, both of them run away to return home two to three days after. The boy and the girl stay in the house of the former thatafter and are accepted by the society as husband and wife. Both the parties agree to the marriage and the bride price is paid at a higher rate. A feast is arranged for the members of the tribe to regularise the marriage.

Sinduri gesa (marriage by force)

17. When a boy makes up his mind to marry a particular girl but cannot marry her either due to the opposition of her parents or due to lack of reciprocity from the girl herself, he seeks an opportunity to own her by putting a vermilion mark on her forehead. This act in itself is deemed adequate to prevent the girl from marrying elsewhere. The parents of the boy and the girl meet and finalise details of the bride price. A formal caste feast is arranged and the marriage is recognised.

Apartipi (marriage by capture)

18. Apartipi is marriage by capture where a young man with the help of his friends carries the girl he intends to marry forcibly away. To accomplish this, the young man keeps a close watch over the movements of the girl and takes his chance when she is alone. Later, on payment of bride price the marriage is regularised.



MORE MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS
1. Tulia, 2. Rutu

Divorce

19. Divorce is permissible in Bhumij society but the divorced woman cannot remarry until the approval of the village elders is obtained by the parents of both parties. The aggrieved party demands for compensation. The amount realised as compensation is generally spent on a feast by the persons attending the Panchayat. The divorced woman returns the iron bangle (Mened Sakom) to her former husband in the Panchayat and after this she becomes formally eligible for remarriage.

Widow remarriage

20. A widow generally marries the unmarried younger brother of the deceased or his cousin if he has no brother. In such cases, no formal wedding rituals are gone through. If the widow remarries outside the household of her deceased husband, she usually severes all relations with the members of that household.

21. Polygyny is practised among the Bhumij. In cases of adultery, the man at fault is compelled to accept the woman as his wife if her husband does not wish to retain her. Girls conceiving before marriage are given on marriage to the delinquents concerned. All seems to go well if the marrying partners belong to the Bhumij community. The penal provision is heavy if either of the parties belongs to a different community. The person at fault is usually ex-communicated. In case one of them belongs to a higher caste or to a caste of the same rank then the couple and their children are absorbed into the community.

Death customs

22. The Bhumij generally bury the dead and in rare cases only the dead body is burnt. On the death of a Bhumij, the headman and other elderly villagers gather in the house of the deceased. The dead body is washed in cold water and covered with a cloth, it is placed on a charpoy to which it is tied securely with a rope. A handful of paddy is thrust into the palm of the corpse and is subsequently removed. The process is repeated thrice and the paddy thus collected is mixed with the stock of paddy in the house under the belief that the dead man does not take away the fortune of the family. The bier is carried by four persons related to the deceased amidst shouts of Haribol and wailing of family members and relatives. The spot where death takes place is washed with cowdung water and some paddy is also sprinkled over it. There is no graveyard or burial ground in the village under survey. The dead are buried in their fields or in waste lands beside the stream. A four feet deep pit is dug and some paddy,

rice and flowers are sprinkled into it. The dead body is lowered into it. Paddy, rice, oil, goat dung, cow dung, some old utensils and clothes of the deceased and some cash are also placed in the pit. A small pot of Handia is also put at a corner which symbolises the last drink offered to the deceased. The pit is filled up with earth and a slab of stone is placed on the pit to guard against desecration. In case the dead body is burnt, fire is set to the pyre by the eldest son or male member of the deceased's family who carries the fire in a straw rope. A human figure made with boiled paddy is worshipped with green gram cooked near the crematorium. Some ash is carried home in an earthen pot and is buried in a pit near the house.

23. Mourning continues for a period of ten days during which the family members do not apply oil on their bodies and the men do not shave. All the members refrain from taking non-vegetarian food and none takes food or drink in the house of outsiders. The widow of the deceased throws away the Mened sakom (iron bangle) which was presented to her when she first crossed the threshold of her husband. She is also not allowed to use vermilion.

24. On the 10th day, all the male members shave their head, moustache and beard, whereas, the women pare their nails. All the kith and kin of the deceased also shave on this day. After this, they take their bath and wear new clothes. The women anoint oil and turmeric paste on their bodies before the bath. The Brahmin priest, barber, washerman, and the pall-bearers are offered new clothes on this day. A community feast follows where non-vegetarian dishes are served.

Structure of the family

25. The average size of a family comprises 4 to 6 members. Out of 157 households, 84 are simple families, 32 intermediate families, 19 joint families and 22 are of the mixed type. A simple family consists of the married couple and their unmarried children. An intermediate family comprises the married couple, their unmarried children, unmarried brothers and sisters and one of the parents. The joint family consists of husband and wife with married sons or daughters and married brothers or sisters, whereas, the mixed family is a combination of the aforementioned types of families.

26. The majority of the households live in simple families. It was learnt during enquiry that the minors, the old and the infirm are looked after by earning adults. Growth of the families through marriage, etc., leads to breaking up the joint families.

27. The custom relating to partition of property is that the paternal property is divided equally among all the sons but the share of the eldest is usually a little higher than the others. Old parents and unmarried sisters are either maintained by the sons in turn or the liability is shared by consent. If one of the sons takes the sole responsibility of maintaining the old parents or unmarried sisters, he is given an additional share of the property. A widow gets right of succession only if there is no son. Daughters also inherit property if there are no sons. None of the villagers during the enquiry supported the idea of daughters inheriting property equally with the sons.

Literacy and Education

28. Table X in the Appendix deals with the position regarding literacy and education in the village. The villagers do not seem to have taken desired interest in education in spite of available facilities. Only 96 persons, 73 males and 23 females constituting 12·58 per cent of the total population in the village are literate. This is rather low

compared to the corresponding figure for the rural area of Mayurbhanj district which stands at 13·28. On a sexwise break-up, it appears that the percentage of literacy for the males is 19·3 and for the females 5·9 against the corresponding district figures of 22·6 per cent and 3·9 per cent respectively for the rural areas. The level of education among the literates may be examined. Of the 96 literates, only 7 males and 1 female have studied up to primary standard. The remaining 66 males and 22 females are mere literates without any educational standard. It will be seen that majority of the literates numbering 47 are from the age-group of 0—14 years. The percentage of literacy in this age-group works out to 13·8. The percentage of literacy in the second, third and fourth age-groups are 17·4, 10·1 and 5·4 respectively.

29. The following is a communitywise analysis of literacy : 58 males and 9 females are Bhumij. 9 males and 13 females are Brahmins, 5 males and 1 female are Mundas and 1 male is a Khandayat. Not a single person from the remaining communities, viz., Bindhani, Ghasi, Bhandari, Mahali and Patratanti is literate.

30. The existing educational facilities in the village may now be taken stock of. A Lower Primary School was established in the village in 1947. The school was upgraded to an Upper Primary School in 1953. An ex-M.L.A. of the area alongwith a few other enthusiasts started a Middle English School in the village in 1960. This school is now run and managed privately out of donations and subscriptions. There are 298 pupils in the U. P. School, 213 boys and 85 girls of which 34 boys and 8 girls belong to this village. The number of pupils on the rolls of the M. E. School was reported to be 50 out of which only one girl belonged to Rangamatia.

31. The village has 340 boys and girls in the age-group of 0—14 years. Of this, a considerable number are eligible for admission into the schools. But against this, the enrolment of 43 students only from this village is rather too low. The village, of course, had only 10 literates in 1961. The position has undoubtedly improved during the decade though the pace of growth appears sluggish in the face of the facilities available in the village since 1947.

32. Table XI in the Appendix shows the general awareness of the adults in the village. Of the 157 persons interviewed, only 12 persons could not name the headquarters of Grama Panchayat, Thana, Tahsil, District and the important rivers. This can be attributed to the nearness of the village to Baripada, the district headquarters.

Social legislation and reforms

33. The Ghasis are considered as untouchables by members of other communities. The awareness of the villagers that practice of untouchability is punishable under law has not improved matters. During enquiry, it revealed that nothing unpleasant has ever occurred in the village on this score.

34. Not a single case of early marriage or inter-caste marriage could be ascertained during survey. In spite of the movement of the educated Bhumij for reforms, some dose of rigidity in attitude was evinced during enquiry to inter-caste marriage. The more the number of children, the merrier seemed to be the attitude of persons interviewed though marrying late might mean for them less number of children.

35. The economic factors might prompt members to marry late but none of those interviewed agreed to the suggestion that economic considerations should be equally compelling to beget fewer issues. Ignorant of the principles of family planning, they firmly believe that births and deaths are

purely divine creations and that human limits can at best go up to killing another and causing abortion but controlling births is a power which is beyond human beings. The villagers are not aware of the provisions in other social legislations like inheritance, succession, adoption, widow marriage and dowry, etc.

Religious Institutions

36. Sing Bonga is the Supreme being of the Bhumij. So also is Marang Buru. Besides this each sept of the tribe worships its own Buru Bonga. For the welfare of the cattle wealth, they offer community worship to goddess Kali, but this apart, each member in his cattle shed worships the god as prescribed by his sept. Gora Mahadev, Baguti, Gana Utar, Gana Hankar and Gana Mahara are some of the gods worshipped. During Bandana festival, Badam, the god of the forests is worshipped. Halam Budhi is worshipped in almost all festivals. In the village under survey, the Lord Mahadev is also worshipped by many Bhumij under a thatched shed. Bhumij, like the Santals offer their worships in the holy grove near the village called Jahira.

37. The Mundas who are Christians observe all Christian festivals. As there is no church in the village, they go to Baripada at times. The Sunday prayers are conducted in a private house.

Beliefs and practices

38. Some beliefs and superstitions of the Bhumij and other tribes in the region are slowly fading under long and constant contact with the caste-population. A few of the current omens of the Bhumij are narrated below. A Bhumij will not proceed in his journey concerning a marriage negotiation if he comes across a man easing himself or if he finds a branch falling from a tree or a dog barking. Sight of oil is considered inauspicious. If per chance, one comes across oil or oilman on the way, he will return home, wash his face and feet and start some time after.

Community festivals

39. Festivals are important not only because of the religious bias attached to its observance but because of the happy change they bring into the otherwise drudgery of the daily routine of village life. These are occasions of community mirth and delight. The festival usually means a holiday when all appear in their best and on occasions with new cloths. Apart from traditional worship of the deities and ancestors, good food, drinking of Handia, singing and dancing are the high-lights of almost all the festivals. Some of the important festivals observed in this village are discussed in the following paras.

40. Makar Parba is by far the most important festival for the Bhumij and with this their new year starts. This festival is observed in the month of Pousa (December-January). New utensils, clothes, earthen pots, pitchers, baskets, ploughs, yokes, carts, etc., are kept ready for use during the new year. All the houses are cleaned, plastered with mud and cowdung. Old farm servants are paid their dues fully and new servants are employed, if necessary. The first day of the Parba is called Baundi. It is observed on the last day of Pousa. This is the day of preparation for the festival. The second day is called Sankrat. On this day all the adult members of the family take their bath before sunrise. Sundried rice, flowers, sandal paste, vermilion, etc., are offered to Marang Bonga. After the worship they wear new clothes. Makar Chaul is prepared with rice, milk and jaggery and is taken by all the members. Castrated goats and fowls are sacrificed to the family ancestors in the kitchen. Cakes are prepared and Handia is specially brewed for the occasion.

44. After midday meal, as per custom heated pointed ends of sickles are seared on the abdomens of all the children below three years with the belief that the practice is a prevention and cure against bowel troubles.

42. In the evening, Halam Budhi Bonga is worshipped in the kitchen which is kept clean for the purpose by washing with mud and cowdung. Flowers, sweets, ripe plantains and milk are offered to the ancestors in the kitchens. In the night after taking their hearty meal and Handia, men and women participate in community dance and singing and enjoy the whole night together.

43. On the third day, Kanfora (piercing of ears) ceremony is observed. Relatives and neighbours are invited for the occasion who arrive by noon time. An elderly man of the family pierces the ears of all the children of the family who are aged above three years with a pointed iron nail. The family members and the guests enjoy a feast consisting of rice, mutton curry, cakes and Handia.

44. The day is considered auspicious by those who possess land. On this day, the first ploughing of the land with new ploughs must be done before sunset. The cultivators go to their fields and plough at least three lines as a token of commencement of the ploughing operation for the year. The following night is spent in dancing, singing and merrymaking.

45. The fourth and final day of the festival is observed by worshipping Magha Bonga in each household. On this occasion, two bachelor members of the family fetch two twigs of Karama tree and pitch them under a tree outside their houses. Rice, ripe plantains, sweets, milk, flowers, sandal paste and vermilion are offered near the Karama twigs to all the deities. After this worship, community dancing and singing follows which continues for hours.

Salui Puja

46. Baha or Salui Puja is observed on Dol Purnima day (February-March). The aim of this festival is to celebrate the advent of spring when Sal, Palas and Mohua flowers blossom.

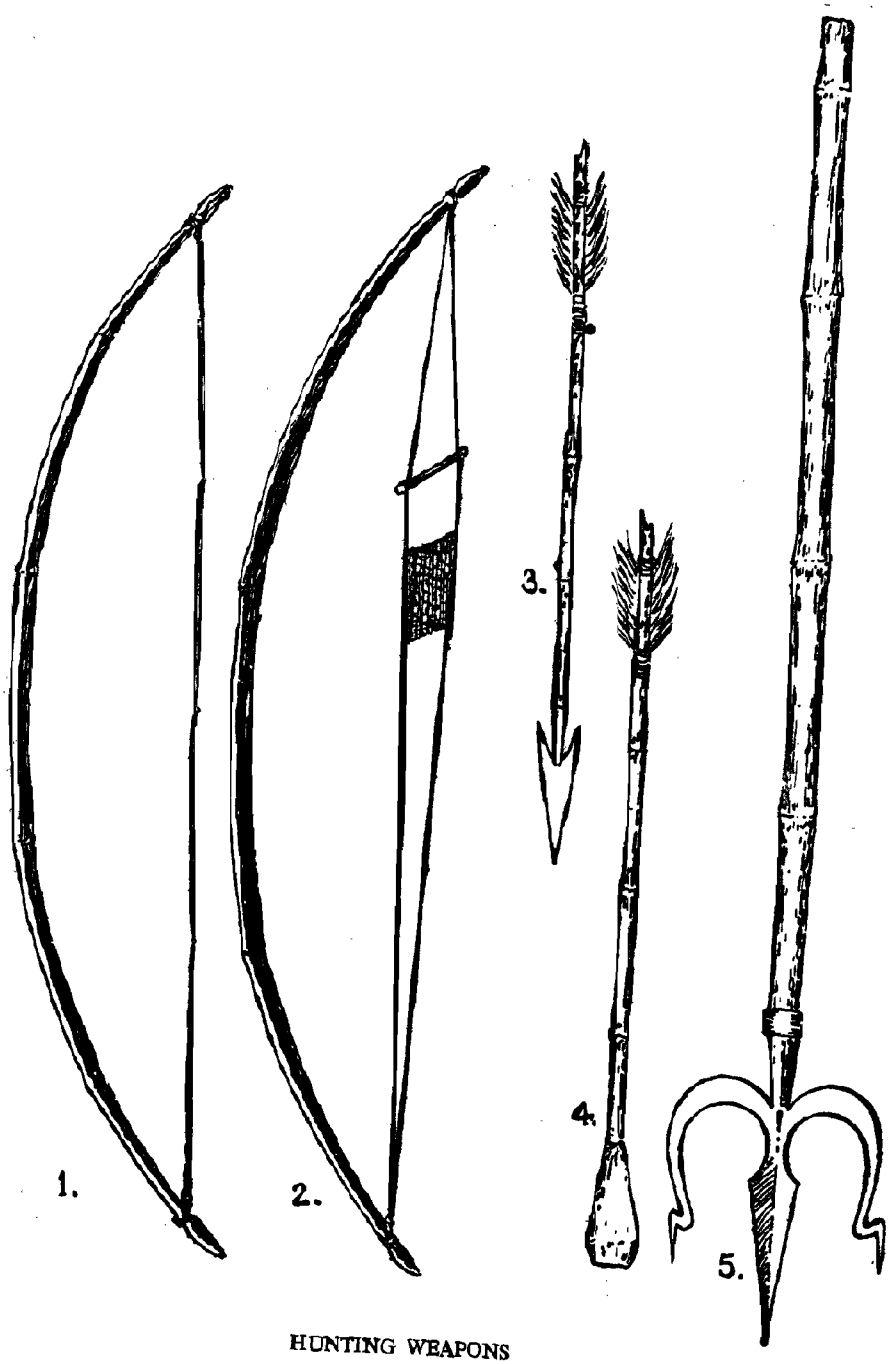
47. In the morning the villagers gather near a 'Sal' tree laden with blossoms and offer plantains, milk, honey and flowers to the Bongas. Some young men then cut small branches containing the blossoms which are taken home and fixed on the thresholds. Crescent moons are painted at the entrance door with vermilion and oil.

48. After this the water festival follows. Coloured water is thrown on all men and women, young or old which resembles very much the Holi festival. All those participating in the festival take their bath before the evening. They all drink Handia and spend the moonlit night in dancing and singing.

Uda Parba

49. The festival synchronises with the Hindu festival of Pana Sankranti and is observed for two days in the month of April. In the morning of the first day, sweets, milk, sandal paste, vermilion and flowers are offered near the Tulsi plant planted within the compounds. Fowls are sacrificed in the evening and a sumptous dinner is enjoyed with fowl curry and Handia. Community dance and singing continues till late in the night.

50. The day following is set apart for Akhan or a communal hunting. All able-bodied men including children go out for the ceremonial hunting amidst beating of drums and blowing of horns. Failure to bag games



HUNTING WEAPONS

1. Aa, 2. Batula, 3. Mayek, 4. Thotery, 5. Barlam

on this day brings forebodings of failures all the year round. This makes everybody alert. Each is armed with one or other type of shooting implement as none can take a risk on such occasions. Wild buffaloes, deer and boars are the most prized kills. Occasionally leopards and panthers are also killed. Small animals and birds swell the spoil. The hunting party returns with the trophies amidst beat of drums, sounding of horns and wild cries. None has guns in the village. Animal hunting is done with bows, arrows, axes and barlams (spears). Birds and some small animals are shot with bows, arrows and bolts or with a batula, a type of bow with which earthen pellets are used. The earthen pellets are held tightly at the centre of the strings and are discharged like arrows.

Herpuna

51. The Bhumij observe the festival in April for sowing of seeds. It synchronises with the Akshayatritiya day when Hindus also sow seeds. All the households collect rice and white fowls for offer and sacrifice to the Dharam Debata in the Jahira. The Dehuri (priest) sacrifices the white fowls, offers rice and Handia to the gods and sanctifies the seed paddy meant for sowing. Rice and mutton curry prepared there are enjoyed with Handia. The seed paddy is then distributed among all the subscribing cultivators who hasten to their fields and sow the seeds before sunset. As usual, the night is enjoyed with dancing and singing.

Gamha Parba

52. Gamha Parba is observed on the full-moon day of the month of Sraban (August-September). On this day cows are bathed and their horns are rubbed with oil in the morning and they are fed with rice, Mahua and salt. Ancestors are propitiated with sacrifices of he-goats, cocks and offerings of Handia. Those who can afford wear new clothes. Brahmins and Baishnabs present sacred threads and cocoanuts to the elderly males and get suitable rewards in return. The day is spent in eating delicacies and drinking of Handia and the night in dancing and singing.

Karama Parba

53. The festival is observed in the month of Bhadrav (September-October). Two branches of 'Karama' tree are fetched by three maidens who pitch them in an open space. Handia is offered to the deities near these branches. Children and women dance around the branches to the rhythmic beating of drums. Feast, drinking of Handia and community dancing occupy the greater part of the day and night.

Saharai

54. Another very important festival of the Bhumij is Saharai when members of the tribe enjoy considerable freedom in revelry and merrymaking. The festival is observed for four days in the month of November.

55. The first day is more or less preparatory when the houses are cleaned and the clothes are washed. Food stuff, goats, fowls and sweets are arranged and Handia is specially brewn for the occasion.

56. On the second day, the gods are worshipped in the Jahira. The Dehuri (village priest) sacrifices goats, fowls and offers Handia to Sing Bonga, Marang Buru and Deswali in the Jahira. In every house offerings are made to the spirits of the ancestors. At noon, he-goats and cocks are offered to Kalimata who is believed to be the presiding goddess of the cowshed. All the agricultural implements are ceremonially washed and rubbed with rice powder and vermilion. In the evening after taking food

and Handia, men and women irrespective of age throng at a place for dance and songs which continue throughout the night.

57. The third day is devoted to sports. A space is cleared at one end of the village and a thin layer of rice is spread in a small circle on the ground. An egg is placed at the centre. From the other end of the village road, all the cattle of the village are driven. All watch keenly as to whose cattle touch or break the egg. It is believed that good fortune is in store for those during the year whose cattle touch or break the egg.

58. The festival concludes on the fourth day. On the final day, the dancing party moves from door to door in the village and collects rice and money which is spent for a dinner on some other day.

59. Besides these, Sasabonga is observed in the month of Margasira (November-December) when Bishnu and Laxmi are worshipped as a protection against the loss of crops due to natural calamities. Roa Puna and En Puna are other festivals closely connected with the stages of agricultural operations.

Leisure and recreation

60. There are no recreational centres worth the name in the village. However, the schools offer opportunities to the students for out-door games. Small children not attending schools spend their time in the fields or along the stream. There are no community organizations for utilizing leisure or enjoyment except the festivals. There is no village forest either within the village boundary and rules restricting hunting in the forests provide little scope for occasional games. The only exception is the ceremonial hunting in April. There are no clubs or libraries in the village.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

An attempt has been made in the preceding chapters to present a few bare facts about the socio-economic life of this village with Bhumij as the predominating community. The village was originally selected because of its nearness to an urban centre. But the survey revealed that the rate of change has not been as fast as expected and a sluggish pace of change marks the study at every stage. The Community Development Block in the area supposed to approach the villagers for a change in attitude and to create an urge for better living has yet to accomplish anything perceptible.

2. In spite of this disheartening note, the fact remains that the village offers ample expectations for the future. With the bridging of river Budhabalang the village is well communicated with the district headquarters all the year round. The M. E. School since upgraded to High School will no doubt offer better opportunities for higher education. With the full-fledged functioning of the Community Development Block, the pattern of agriculture may change for the better with the available irrigation facilities. The urge noticed in some educated Bhumij youths for a reform movement to shake off the old and dying customs may so result when it gathers momentum. The study reveals clearly that the thaw has set in and time only will determine the rate of acceleration.

APPENDIX

TABLE I

SETTLEMENT HISTORY OF HOUSEHOLDS

Caste/Community	Total number of households	Number of households settled				
		Earlier than 5 generations	Between 5 to 4 generations	Between 3 to 2 generations	1 generation ago	Present generation
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Bhumij ..	128	1	123	1	..	3
Bindhani ..	7	..	7	..	..	...
Ghasi ..	7	..	6	..	..	1
Brahmin ..	6	..	1	4	..	1
Munda ..	4	..	3	..	..	1
Bhandari ..	2	..	1	1	..	..
Mahali ..	1	..	..	..	..	1
Khandayat ..	1	..	..	..	..	1
Patratanti ..	1	..	1	..	..	..

TABLE II

CULTIVATED LAND HELD BY CASTE/COMMUNITY

Caste/Community	No. of households having no land	Number of households having land	
		No. of households	Area of the land held (in acre)
Bhumij ..	13	115	519·23
Bindhani ..	4	3	3·10
Ghasi ..	7	..	..
Brahmin ..	3	3	10·50
Munda ..	2	2	12·50
Bhandari ..	1	1	3·25
Mahali ..	..	1	1·40
Khandayat ..	1	..	..
Patratanti ..	1	..	..

TABLE III

LIVESTOCK

Caste/Community	Cows, bullocks and buffaloes		Draught animals		Milch cows and buffaloes	
	No. of house-holds owning	No. of livestock	No. of households owning	No. of livestock	No. of households owning	No. of livestock
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Bhumij ..	98	340	91	281	..	..
Bindhani ..	1	2	1	2	..	..
Ghasi ..	2	3	..	..	..	..
Brahmin ..	3	12	3	10	1	1
Munda ..	3	5	2	4	..	..
Bhandari ..	1	3	1	3	..	..
Mahali ..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Khandayat ..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Patratanti ..	1	4	1	2	..	..

TABLE III—*concld.*

Goats and sheep		Pig		Fowl		Others	
No. of households owning	No. of livestock	No. of households owning	No. of livestock	No. of households owning	No .of livestock	No. of households owning	No. of livestock
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
62	280	..	..	100	720	..	..
2	8	..	..	2	12	..	..
1	6	..	..	3	10	..	..
6	38	..	..	..	..	1	1 (peacock)
..	..	..	..		8	..	
..	..	..	..	1	4	..	..
..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
1	4	..	..	1	4	..	..

TABLE IV

WORKERS CLASSIFIED BY SEX, BROAD AGE-GROUPS AND OCCUPATIONS

(All workers are divided into 9 occupation groups, namely, Occupation group No. 1 : Cultivator, No. II : Agricultural labourer, No. III : Workers in mining, quarrying, livestock, forestry, fishing, hunting, etc., No. IV : Household industries, No. V : Manufacturing other than household industry, No. VI : Construction, No. VII : Trade and Commerce, No. VIII : Transport, storage and communications, No. IX : Other services)

Age-groups	Total workers			Occupation No. I (Cultivator)			Occupation No. II (Agricultural labourer)			Occupation No. III (Workers in forestry, etc.)		
	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)
All ages	481	249	232	244	113	131	183	94	89	9	4	5
0—14 years	104	52	52	58	23	35	35	22	13	6	4	2
15—59 years	362	187	175	177	82	95	143	71	72	3	..	3
60 and above	15	10	5	9	8	1	5	1	4	..	..	..

TABLE IV—*concld.*

Occupation No. IV (Household Industries)			Occupation No. VII (Trade)			Occupation No. VIII (Transport)			Occupation No. IX (Other Services)			The remaining occupations Nos. V & VI		
P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F
(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)	(20)	(21)	(22)	(23)	(24)	(25)	(26)	(27)	(28)
16	9	7	2	2	..	14	14	..	13	13	..	..	..	..
3	1	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	2	..	..	..	..
12	7	5	2	2	..	14	14	..	11	11	..	.	..	..
1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

TABLE V

NON-WORKERS BY SEX, AGE-GROUPS AND NATURE OF ACTIVITY

(All non-workers are divided into 4 groups : Group (*i*) Full-time students or children attending school, Group (*ii*) Persons engaged only in household duties, Group (*iii*) Dependants such as infants and children not attending school and persons permanently disabled, Group (*iv*) Retired persons not re-employed, retired persons living on agricultural or non-agricultural royalty, rent or dividend, beggars, vagrants, persons seeking employment, persons having unspecified source of existence)

Age-groups	Total non-workers			(i) Students		(ii) Persons engaged in household duties		(iii) Dependants		(iv) Retired persons not re-employed, retired persons living on agricultural or non-agricultural royalty, etc.	
	P	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
All ages	282	129	153	34	9	..	46	95	98	..	..
0—14 years	236	124	112	29	9	..	5	95	98	..	..
15—59 years	24	5	19	5	..	..	19	..	..	..	..
60 and above	22	..	22	..	..	..	22	..	..	..	..

THBLE VI

MONTHLY INCOME PER HOUSEHOLD BY OCCUPATION GROUPS

Sl. No.	Occupation	Number of households in the monthly income groups of				
		Rs. 0—Rs. 25	Rs. 26—Rs. 50	Rs. 51—Rs. 75	Rs. 76—Rs. 100	Rs. 101 and above
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
1	Cultivation	..	21	28	6	15
2	Agricultural labour	16	36	9	2	..
3	Household Industry	..	3	1	1	..
4	Trade and Commerce	..	..	..	..	2
5	Transport	..	4	4	2	..
6	Other Services	..	1	5	1	..

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TABLE VII

AVERAGE MONTHLY EXPENDITURE PER HOUSEHOLD BY INCOME GROUP AND OCCUPATION

	Occupation	Income Groups: Rs. 0—Rs. 25			Rs. 26—Rs. 50		
		Expenditure			Expenditure		
		No. of H. H.	Food	Others	No. of H. H.	Food	Others
	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
1	Cultivation	..	..	..	21	29.00	13.00
2	Agricultural labour	16	14.00	5.00	36	26.00	10.00
3	Household Industry	..	..	..	3	29.00	10.00
4	Trade and Commerce	—	..	..	..	..	..
5	Transport	..	..	..	4	32.00	11.00
6	Other Services	..	..	..	1	26.00	15.00

TABLE VII—*concld.*

Income Groups: Rs. 51—Rs. 75			Rs. 76—Rs. 100			Rs. 101 and above		
Expenditure			Expenditure			Expenditure		
No. of H. H.	Food	Others	No. of H. H.	Food	Others	No. of H. H.	Food	Others
(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)
28	39.00	23.00	6	53.00	27.00	15	82.00	52.00
9	43.00	16.00	2	64.00	17.00	..	—	..
1	47.00	12.00	1	60.00	18.00	..	..	..
..	—	—	—	..	..	2	67.00	51.00
4	46.00	15.00	2	60.00	20.00	—	..	—
5	42.00	24.00	1	59.00	24.00	..	..	—

TABLE VIII

INDEBTEDNESS

Sl. No.	Monthly income group	No. of households in the group	No. of households in debt	Average amount of debt per household	Reason for debt	Source of credit
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
1	Rs. 51—Rs .75	47	1	Rs. 200.00	Purchase of bullock	Government Agriculture loan 7 per cent Interest

TABLE IX

AGE AND MARITAL STATUS

Age-groups	Total population			Never married		Married		Widowed		Divorced or separated	
	P	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
All ages ..	763	378	385	226	195	137	137	15	53	..	..
0—14 years ..	340	176	164	176	164	..	..	..	..	..	..
15—24 years ..	109	51	58	36	17	15	41	..	..	..	..
25—59 years ..	277	141	136	14	13	116	94	11	29	..	..
60 and over ..	37	10	27	..	1	6	2				

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