

CENSUS OF INDIA 1961

VOLUME X

MAHARASHTRA

PART V-B

SCHEDULED TRIBES IN MAHARASHTRA

ETHNOGRAPHIC NOTES

Prepared by

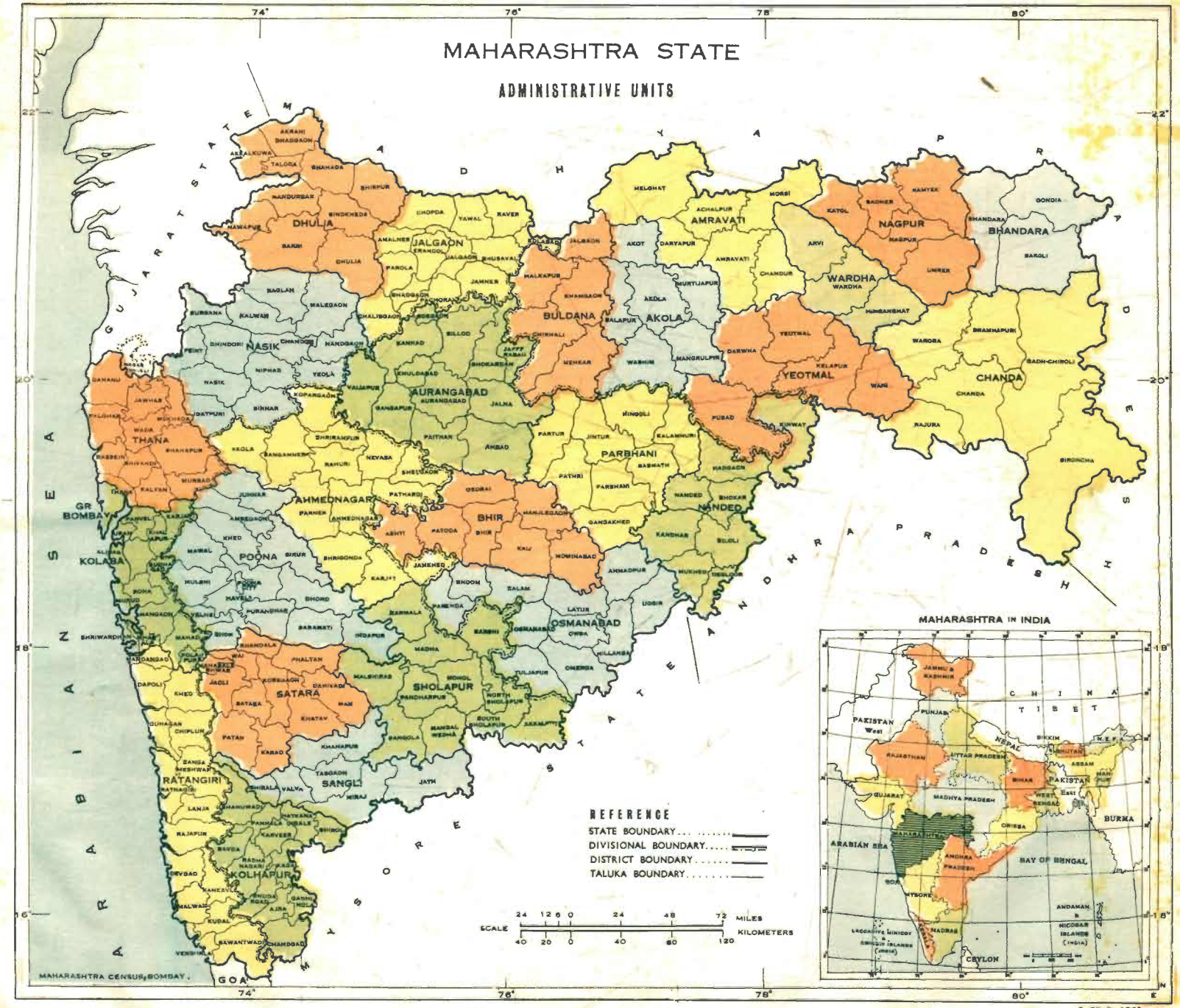
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MAHARASHTRA STATE
ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS
74°
76°
78°
80°
22°
20°
18°
16°
GUJARAT STATE
MADHYA PRADESH
ANDHRA PRADESH
KARNATAKA STATE
ARABIAN SEA
DHULIA
JALGAON
AMRAVATI
NAGPUR
BHANDARA
WARDHA
BULDANA
AKOLA
NASIK
AURANGABAD
YEOTMAL
CHANDA
THANA
PARBHANI
AHMEDNAGAR
NANDED
GR BOMBAY
BHIR
POONA
OSMANABAD
KOLABA
SATARA
SHOLAPUR
RATANGIRI
SANGLI
KOLHAPUR
GOA
REFERENCE
STATE BOUNDARY
DIVISIONAL BOUNDARY
DISTRICT BOUNDARY
TALUKA BOUNDARY
SCALE
24 12 6 0 24 48 72 MILES
40 20 0 40 80 120 KILOMETERS
MAHARASHTRA CENSUS, BOMBAY.
MAHARASHTRA IN INDIA
CHINA
TIBET
PAKISTAN West
PUNJAB
NEPAL
BIKKIM
BHUTAN
N.E.F.
RAJASTHAN
UTTAR PRADESH
ASSAM
BIHAR
PAKISTAN East
GUJARAT
MADHYA PRADESH
WEST BENGAL
BURMA
ORISSA
MAHARASHTRA
ANDHRA PRADESH
BAY OF BENGAL
GOA
MYSORE
ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS (INDIA)
MADRAS
CEYLON
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CENSUS OF INDIA 1961

Central Government Publications

Census Report, Volume X—Maharashtra, is published in the following Parts :—

I-A and B	...	General Report
I-C	...	Subsidiary Tables
II-A	...	General Population Tables
II-B (i)	...	General Economic Tables—Industrial Classification
II-B (ii)	...	General Economic Tables—Occupational Classification
II-C (i)	...	*Social and Cultural Tables*
II-C (ii)	...	Migration Tables
III	...	Household Economic Tables
IV	...	Report on Housing and Establishments
V-A	...	Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Maharashtra—Tables
V-B	...	Scheduled Tribes in Maharashtra—Ethnographic Notes [*Present volume*]
VI	...	Village Surveys
VII-A	...	Handicrafts in Maharashtra
VII-B	...	Fairs and Festivals in Maharashtra
VII-C	...	Weekly Markets in Maharashtra
VIII-A	...	Administration Report—Enumeration (For official use only)
VIII-B	...	Administration Report—Tabulation (For official use only)
IX	...	Census Atlas of Maharashtra
X(1-12)	...	Cities of Maharashtra (15 Volumes—Four Volumes on Greater Bombay and one each on other eleven cities)

State Government Publications

25 Volumes of District Census Handbooks in English

25 Volumes of District Census Handbooks in Marathi

Alphabetical List of Villages and Towns in Maharashtra in Marathi)

ABOUT THIS VOLUME

According to the 1961 census publications programme, material on scheduled castes and scheduled tribes was to be published in Parts V-A and V-B. Part V-A published in 1964, presented 13 statistical tables with an introduction which covered the total population of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and its distribution by sex, age, marital status, educational levels, religion, mother-tongue and economic activity. Part V-B, the present volume, presents ethnographic notes on scheduled tribes in Maharashtra, prepared on the basis of 1961 census data and interpreted in the light of information available from earlier published sources (including earlier census reports) and the special field studies conducted by trained field workers of this office for getting an insight into current developments.

There are 22 numerically important tribes in Maharashtra and 18 minor tribes whose population was less than 1,000 in 1961. Some of these tribes, though considered minor by their numbers inside Maharashtra are, no doubt, major and important in the neighbouring states. The treatment of major tribes in this volume will be found to be generally exhaustive. As the minor tribes in Maharashtra would have already been dealt with exhaustively in similar volumes brought out by other states where they are found in larger numbers, only limited aspects of their lives have been brought out in this volume.

A number of changes had to be made in the frame-work and scope of the field studies undertaken by the office in the light of the experience gained during the course of the project and the advice of the Registrar-General, India. The final frame-work adopted in the presentation of the ethnographic studies included in this volume is as follows :—

(1) Name and identity of the tribe, (2) Area where found, (3) Origin and history, (4) Demography, (5) Physical characteristics, (6) Family, clan and kinship, (7) Dwelling, dress and food (ornaments and other material objects distinctive of the tribe), (8) Hygiene and sanitation, (9) Language, (10) Literacy, (11) Economic life, (12) Life cycle (birth, marriage and death), (13) Religion, (14) Leisure and recreation, (15) Relations among different segments of the tribe, (16) Inter-community relationship, and (17) Structure of social control and leadership.

The distribution of workers in nine broad categories of economic activity for the entire scheduled tribe population is given on page 11.

Subsequent tables on this subject in relation to each tribe show the categories by the same roman numbers assigned to them in the main table.

A glossary of frequently occurring non-English words and terms is included. There is a comparative table of months according to the Gregorian and Indian calendars. Names of important festivals are brought together. A short note on "the bhagat—medicine man" of a tribe, will be found on page 287.

References with bibliographic details are given at the end of each study. Page references to the published works are given within brackets in the body of the study. Decimal figures within brackets where they immediately follow another figure represent that figure as a percentage of the concerned main figure like the total population of the tribe, the number of workers therein, etc. For detailed statistical data on any one of the tribes, the reader may refer to the Report Part V-A—"Scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in Maharashtra—Tables".

This volume is the result of a joint effort by members of the office of the Director of Census Operations, Maharashtra. Field studies on tribes were undertaken by Sarvashri L. P. Pande and K. K. Akolkar under the guidance of Shri V. B. Sawant, Deputy Superintendent of Census Operations. Shri Pande took considerable pains in attending to details and in making the notes as exhaustive as possible. The ethnographic notes were scrutinised by Dr. B. K. Roy Burman, Officer on Special Duty, and Shri N. G. Nag, Research Officer of the Office of the Registrar-General, India, New Delhi. I am grateful to them for their valuable suggestions.

The studies were planned and put through by Shri B. A. Kulkarni, I.A.S., Superintendent of Census Operations, Maharashtra (1959-1965), and Shri D. V. Rangnekar, Deputy Superintendent of Census Operations, Maharashtra. The maps, diagrams and sketches were drawn by Shri S. Y. Pradhan. Printing of this volume has been looked after by Shri C. M. Kane.

I am grateful to Dr. P. R. Sirsalkar, Chief Research Officer of the Tribal Welfare Institute, Poona, and the Director of Publicity, Government of Maharashtra, for permitting us to include some photographs from their collections.

I am indebted to Shri S. A. Sapre, Manager, Government Central Press, Bombay, and his staff for the printing of this volume.

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Ashada Ekadasi/22 July 1972 R. B. CHARI

CONTENTS

	PAGE
About this volume	
Introduction	1
SAHYADRI GROUP—	
Koli Mahadev or Mahadev Koli	15
Varli	30
Kokna	47
Thakur	61
Kathodi or Katkari	76
Koli Malhar	85
Koli Dhor	100
Dubla	109
Dhodia	119
SATPUDA GROUP—	
Bhil	131
Gamit, Gamta or Gavit	154
Korku	163
Dhanka	169
Pardhi	177
Nayaka	183
Rathawa	189
GONDVANA GROUP—	
Gonds	195
Andh	219
Kolam	226
Pardhan	235
Halba	249
Kawar	259
18 MINOR TRIBES—	
(1) Thoti, (2) Vitolia, (3) Birhul or Birhor, (4) Barda, (5) Bavacha or Bamcha, (6) Dhanwar, (7) Bhunjia, (8) Oraon, (9) Bhattra, (10) Bhaina, (11) Koya, (12) Chodhara, (13) Binjhwar, (14) Pomla, (15) Nagesia or Nagasia, (16) Kol, (17) Khairwar, (18) Patelia.	267-286
A note on the Bhagat	287
Some important festivals and religious observances	288
Glossary.	289

PAGE

SKETCHES—

1. A Varli smoking a chillim ... 31
2. Goddess Himai of Varlis ... 46
3. Vir and Supli goddesses of Varlis, Thakurs and Koknas ... 60
4. Storing grain in a bin (Dholi) ... 75
5. Hirva god ... 84
6. A Thoti playing the Kingri ... 99
7. Yettya Bokka—a water bag of Madia Gond (Chandrapur) ... 108
8. Tendur—a musical instrument of Madia Gond (Chandrapur) ... 118
9. A Thakur girl from Kolaba ... 127
10. Kamarpatta—a metal belt worn round the waist by Gond women of Nagpur ... 128
11. A Bhil from Dhulia ... 134
12. Grain store of Bhils ... 134
13. Household utensils and farm instruments ... 168
14. A Raj Gond temple in Kinwat (Nanded) ... 176
15. A Phanse Pardhi of Poona ... 182
16. Tarpa—a tribal musical instrument ... 191
17. A Pawara Bhil playing Tarpa ... 191
18. A Gond from Chandrapur ... 202
19. Tobacco containers ... 202
20. A Pawara playing the Bori ... 203
21. A Kokana girl from Nasik ... 234
22. Some musical instruments ... 248
23. Some tribal ornaments ... 273-276

A ceremonial head dress Bisonhorn worn by Gonds facing 198

Head gear worn by Raj Gonds while dancing facing 198

A Madia hut in Chanda facing 199

MAPS—

Map showing villages surveyed for Sahyadri groups of tribes ... 14

Map showing villages surveyed for Satpuda groups of tribes ... 130

Map showing villages surveyed for Gondavana groups of tribes ... 194

(Uplands and hilly areas are printed yellow and red in the maps.)

IN BETWEEN PAGES

PHOTO PLATES—

1. A Varli family from Thana 34-35
2. A Varli with fishing net 34-35
3. Varli women grinding corn 34-35
4. A Kokna family from Thana 34-35
5. A Ka Thakur family from Thana 82-83
6. A Katkari family from Kolaba 82-83
7. A Katkari woman from Kolaba 82-83
8. A Koli Dhor woman from Thana 82-83
9. A Bhil family from Dhulia 148-149
10. A Pawara Bhil thatching his hut (Dhulia) 148-149
11. A Bhil girl from Dhulia 148-149
12. A Korku family from Amravati 148-149
13. Kawars with fishing traps and nets (Chanda) 198-199
14. A Dholi for storing grain 198-199
15. Kolam houses (Yeotmal) 198-199
16. Kolam women by the side of a bin for storing grains (Yeotmal) . . . 198-199
17. A Gond woman from Nagpur 214-215
18. Madia Gond girls from Chanda 214-215
19. Graveyard stones of Madia Gonds (Chanda) 214-215
20. A Madia from Chanda 214-215
21. A Madia hut (Chanda) 214-215
22. Madia girls with their ornaments (Chanda) 214-215

INTRODUCTION

The constitution of India defines the scheduled tribes as "such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under article 342 to be scheduled tribes for the purposes of this constitution" (clause 25 of article 366).

Statutory provisions pertaining to the scheduled tribes in Maharashtra are the preamble and articles 15, 16, 38, 46, 244, 275, 330, 332, 334, 335, 338, 339, 342 and 366 of the constitution of India, the orders issued by the President from time to time under article 342 pertaining to scheduled tribes and under paragraph 6(1) of the fifth schedule pertaining to the scheduled areas and acts of Parliament amending those orders.

The President has, under article 342 of the constitution, declared certain tribes or tribal communities as scheduled tribes. Their population in Maharashtra according to the 1961 census was 23·97 lakhs, which was slightly more than six per cent of the total population of the State and eight per cent of the total population of scheduled tribes in India.

The first order under article 342 was issued in 1950. Three parts of its schedules applied to the three erstwhile states of Bombay, Madhya Pradesh and Hyderabad. The 1950 order was modified by the Scheduled castes and scheduled tribes orders (amendment) act, 1956. This amending act made the following changes in the 1950 list of scheduled tribes as far as Maharashtra was concerned :—

(*i*) Addition of three new tehsils (Wani, Kelapur and Yeotmal) of Yeotmal district to the three tehsils—Melghat in Amravati district and Gadchiroli and Sironcha in Chanda district, notified earlier, for which the entire list of scheduled tribes of the Nagpur division was declared as such.

(*ii*) Addition of three scheduled tribes—Khairwar, Koli Malhar and Vitolia—to the list.

(*iii*) Inclusion of names of sub-tribes or synonyms against most of the declared scheduled tribes.

(*iv*) Deletion from the 1950 list of four independent scheduled tribes—Mavchi, Pawra, Vasava and Valvi—and their inclusion as sub-tribes against Bhil or Gamit or Dhanka.

(*v*) Restriction of the notified area for two scheduled tribes, Koli Mahadev and Thakur, to a few tehsils of Thana, Kolaba, Nasik, Ahmadnagar and Poona districts in place of the entire Bombay and Poona divisions declared under the 1950 order.

List of scheduled tribes

Consequent upon the reorganisation of the States in 1956, the lists as amended by the 1956 act were notified in a revised form as applicable to the new States. Two scheduled tribes—Chenchus and hill Reddis from the Hyderabad list—were deleted from the list applicable to Aurangabad division. For Maharashtra and Gujarat States, that revised order was again amended through section 27 of the Bombay reoranisation act, 1960.

Part VII-A—'Maharashtra' in the eighth schedule appended to the Bombay reorganisation act, 1960 is thus the declared list of scheduled tribes in Maharashtra in force at the moment (*see* v. X, part V-A of the Maharashtra census report, 1961, pp. 213-214).

Scheduled tribes not reported in 1961 census

The following scheduled tribes were not returned by any one in the respective specified areas in the 1961 census :—

(1) Baiga.
(2) Bharia-Bhumia or Bhuinhar-Bhumia including Pando.
(3) Gadaba or Gadba,
(4) Kamar.
(5) Kharia.
(6) Kondh or Khond or Kandh.
(7) Korwa, including Kodaku.
(8) Majhwar.
(9) Munda.
(10) Parja.
(11) Saonta or Saunta.
(12) Sawar or Sawara.

All these names are from the regional list applicable to the districts of Nagpur division. No one belonging to those tribes was reported in the six specifically notified tehsils during the enumeration period.

Owing to the area restrictions notified for all scheduled tribes, none of the 40 scheduled tribes is

recognised as such in all areas of Maharashtra. Area restriction is, therefore, a basic limitation to be always remembered while using the figures for population or other characteristics of scheduled tribes. When the tables present scheduled tribes figures for the State, division or a district it is always implied that the presentation is only for the restricted areas notified against each scheduled tribe.

The restricted areas notified for each of those 40 scheduled tribes are shown below. The scheduled tribes are arranged in alphabetical order, the restricted areas are shown with symbols as follows :—

Symbols	*Areas*
(*a*)	I. All districts in Bombay division, *viz.* : (1) Greater Bombay. (5) Nasik. (2) Thana. (6) Dhulia. (3) Kolaba. (7) Jalgaon. (4) Ratanagiri. II. All districts in Poona division *viz.* : (1) Ahmadnagar. (4) Sangli. (2) Poona. (5) Sholapur. (3) Satara. (6) Kolhapur.
(*b*)	I. All districts in Aurangabad division, *viz.* : (1) Aurangabad. (4) Nanded. (2) Parbhani. (5) Osmanabad. (3) Bhir. II. Rajura tehsil of Chanda district.
(*c*)	I. Melghat tehsil of Amravati district. II. Kelapur, Wani and Yeotmal tehsils of Yeotmal district. III. Gadhchiroli and Sironcha tehsils of Chanda district.

Name of the scheduled tribe	Area for which declared as a scheduled tribe
1. Andh	(*b*)+(*c*)
2. Barda	(*a*)
3. Bavacha	(*a*)
4. Bhaina	(*c*)
5. Bhattra	(*c*)
6. Bhil	(*a*)+(*b*)+(*c*)
7. Bhunjia	(*c*)
8. Binjhwar	(*c*)
9. Birhul	(*c*)
10. Chodhara	(*a*)
11. Dhanka	(*a*)
12. Dhanwar	(*c*)
13. Dhodia	(*a*)
14. Dubla	(*a*)
15. Gamit	(*a*)
16. Gond	(*a*)+(*b*)+(*c*)
17. Halba	(*c*)
18. Kathodi	(*a*)
19. Kawar	(*c*)
20. Khairwar	(*c*)
21. Kokna	(*a*)
22. Koi	(*c*)
23. Kolam	(*b*)+(*c*)
24. Koli Dhor	(*a*)
25. Koli Mahadev	(*i*) Akola, Rahuri and Sangamner tehsils of Ahmadnagar district. (*ii*) Karjat, Khalapur, Alibag, Mahad and Sudhagad tehsils of Kolaba district. (*iii*) Nasik, Niphad, Sinnar, Chandor, Baglan, Igatpuri, Dindori, Kalwan, Surgana and Peint tehsils of Nasik district. (*iv*) Ambegaon, Junnar, Khed, Maval, Mulshi and Velhe tehsils of Poona district. (*v*) Thana, Murbad, Bhivandi, Bassein, Vada, Shahapur, Dahanu, Palghar, Jawhar and Mokhada tehsils of Thana district.
26. Koli Malhar	Thana district.
27. Korku	(*c*)
28. Koya	(*b*)
29. Nagesia	(*c*)
30. Naikda	(*a*)
31. Oraon	(*c*)
32. Pardhan	(*b*)+(*c*)
33. Pardhi	(*a*)+(*c*)
34. Pateha	(*a*)
35. Pomla	(*a*)
36. Rathawa	(*a*)
37. Thakur	(*i*) Akola, Rahuri and Sangamner tehsils of Ahmadnagar district. (*ii*) Karjat, Khalapur, Pen, Panvel and Sudhaga tehsils and Matheran of Kolaba district. (*iii*) Igatpuri, Nasik and Sinnar tehsils of Nasik district. (*iv*) Ambegaon, Junnar, Khed and Maval tehsils of Poona district. (*v*) Thana, Kalyan, Murbad, Bhivandi, Bassein, Vada, Shahapur, Palghar, Jawhar and Mokhada tehsils of Thana district.
38. Thoti	(*b*)
39. Varli	(*a*)
40. Vitolia	(*a*)

Regional grouping

As described earlier, the list of scheduled tribes has been declared separately for three regions based on the erstwhile States from which the respective areas have come to Maharashtra. The grouping based on those administrative units does not, however, facilitate understanding of location or ethnic and other characteristics of the scheduled tribes in Maharashtra.

They can be more conveniently classified in the following groups :—

(i) Sahyadri group—

(1) Koli Mahadev, (2) Varli, (3) Kokna, (4) Thakur, (5) Kathodi, (6) Koli Malhar, (7) Koli Dhor, (8) Dubla, (9) Dhodia ;

(ii) Satpuda group—

(1) Bhil, (2) Gamit, (3) Korku, (4) Dhanka, (5) Pardhi, (6) Naikda, (7) Rathawa ;

(iii) Gondvana group—

(1) Gond, (2) Andh, (3) Kolam, (4) Pardhan, (5) Halba, (6) Kawar.

The 1961 population of these three groups of scheduled tribes was as follows :—

	Population	Proportion to total scheduled tribe population
(*i*) Sahyadri group ...	1,161,279	48·44
(*ii*) Satpuda group ...	811,733	33·86
(*iii*) Gondvana group ...	417,195	17·40

This alternative scheme of grouping of scheduled tribes in Maharashtra is advantageous in many respects. We have followed it in these ethnographic notes and tried to explain common or different features for the groups or individual scheduled tribes included in them.

1961 census findings

A few salient points observed from the 1961 census material presented in the special tables on scheduled tribes in part V-A of the Maharashtra census report may be recalled here.

The limitations of the population figures and other material presented in the tables may be reiterated. The total scheduled tribe population shown here is not the entire tribal population of the State. It includes only those tribes which are declared as scheduled tribes. For the scheduled tribes which are declared as such for specified areas (not extending to the whole State) the population figures represent their population enumerated in those specified areas alone and do not include their population which may be residing in the State but outside those specified areas. The case of Gonds will illustrate the position. The Gonds are declared as a scheduled tribe in all the districts of Bombay, Poona and Aurangabad divisions and in only seven tehsils (including Rajura of Nagpur division). The Gonds do exist in the other tehsils of Nagpur division also, but that Gond population is not included in the State total shown in the tables because they (the Gonds) are not declared as a scheduled tribe in those remaining tehsils.

Size and distribution

The 1961 population of scheduled tribes in Maharashtra was 2,397,159, which was 6·06 per cent of the total population of the State. The total population, scheduled tribe population and its proportion for India, Maharashtra and 14 other States according to the 1961 census is shown below :—

	Total population	Scheduled tribe population	Proportion of scheduled tribe population to total population
INDIA ..	**439,234,771**	**30,130,184**	**6·86**
Andhra Pradesh ..	35,983,447	1,324,368	3·68
Assam ..	11,872,772	2,064,816	17·39
Bihar ..	46,455,610	4,204,770	9·05
Gujarat ..	20,633,350	2,754,446	13·35
Jammu and Kashmir ..	3,560,976	*Nil*	*Nil*
Kerala ..	16,903,715	212,762	1·26
Madhya Pradesh ..	32,372,408	6,678,410	20·63
Madras ..	33,686,953	251,991	0·75
MAHARASHTRA ..	**39,553,718**	**2,397,159**	**6·06**
Mysore ..	23,586,772	192,096	0·81
Orissa ..	17,548,846	4,223,757	24·07
Punjab ..	20,306,812	14,132	0·07
Rajasthan ..	20,155,602	2,309,447	11·46
Uttar Pradesh ..	73,746,401	*Nil*	*Nil*
West Bengal ..	34,926,279	2,054,081	5·88
All Union Territories ..	7,941,110	1,447,949	18·23

By size of the scheduled tribe population, Maharashtra ranks fifth in India. By proportion of scheduled tribe population to total population, Maharashtra however, ranks seventh. The scheduled tribe population of Maharashtra was 7·96 per cent of the total scheduled tribe population in India in 1961.

There are no scheduled tribes in five districts, *viz.*, Buldhana, Akola, Wardha, Nagpur and Bhandara. Even in the three remaining districts of Nagpur division, *viz.*, Amravati, Yeotmal and Chanda, there are scheduled tribes only in 7 tehsils, *viz.*, Melghat (Amravati), Wani, Kelapur and Yeotmal (Yeotmal) and Rajura, Gadhchiroli and Sironcha (Chanda). The scheduled tribe population shown against those three districts is, therefore, from those respective tehsils only, though the corresponding total population is shown for the entire district.

Unlike the scheduled castes, the scheduled tribes have large local concentrations. The eight tehsils having more than 80 per cent population belonging to scheduled tribes are Talasari, Mokhada and Jawhar in Thana district, Surgana and Peint in Nasik district and Akrani, Akalkuva and Nawapur in Dhulia District.

Districtwise distribution

The distribution of scheduled tribe population by administrative divisions and districts is shown in the table below :—

State/Division/District	Total population	Scheduled tribe population	Percentage of scheduled tribe population to total population	Distribution of 100 members of scheduled tribes in the State among divisions/districts
1	2	3	4	5
MAHARASHTRA	**39,553,718**	**2,397,159**	**6.06**	**100.00**
BOMBAY DIVISION	**13,662,321**	**1,687,229**	**12.35**	**70.39**
1 Greater Bombay	4,152,056	22,455	0.54	0.94
2 Thana	1,652,678	500,558	30.29	20.88
3 Kolaba	1,058,855	95,354	9.01	3.98
4 Ratnagiri	1,827,203	3,101	0.17	0.13
5 Nasik	1,855,246	453,707	24.45	18.93
6 Dhulia	1,351,236	513,344	37.99	21.41
7 Jalgaon	1,765,047	98,710	5.59	4.12
POONA DIVISION	**10,360,282**	**213,359**	**2.06**	**8.90**
8 Ahmadnagar	1,775,969	109,827	6.18	4.58
9 Poona	2,466,880	89,913	3.64	3.75
10 Satara	1,430,105	2,417	0.17	0.10
11 Sangli	1,230,716	595	0.05	0.02
12 Sholapur	1,860,119	9,089	0.49	0.38
13 Kolhapur	1,596,493	1,518	0.10	0.07
AURANGABAD DIVISION	**6,297,373**	**102,650**	**1.63**	**4.28**
14 Aurangabad	1,532,341	24,455	1.60	1.02
15 Parbhani	1,206,236	34,838	2.89	1.45
16 Bhir	1,001,466	2,367	0.24	0.10
17 Nanded	1,079,674	40,597	3.76	1.69
18 Osmanabad	1,477,656	393	0.03	0.02
NAGPUR DIVISION	**9,233,742**	**393,921**	**4.27**	**16.43**
19 Buldhana	1,059,698	No Scheduled Tribes		
20 Akola	1,189.354	No Scheduled Tribes		
21 Amravati	1,232,780	54,881	4.45	2.29
22 Yeotmal	1,098,470	155,609	14.17	6.49
23 Wardha	634,277	No Scheduled Tribes		
24 Nagpur	1,512,807	No Scheduled Tribes		
25 Bhandara	1,268,286	No Scheduled Tribes		
26 Chanda	1,238,070	183,431	14.82	7.65

The total population, scheduled tribe population and the percentage of scheduled tribe population to total population for all those 34 tehsils which had more than 20 per cent population belonging to scheduled tribes in 1961 are shown in statement on page 5. Presentation of the tehsils in the order of the proportion of scheduled tribes.

The total 1961 scheduled tribe population in these 34 tehsils was 1,707,288 which is 71·22 per cent of the total scheduled tribe population in the State. Out of the remaining 195 tehsils 37 did not have any scheduled tribe population and 158 tehsils and Greater Bombay together had 689,871 or 28·78 per cent of the scheduled tribe population of the State.

Statement showing tehsils with more than 20 per cent population belonging to Schedule tribes

Tehsil	District	Total population	Scheduled tribe population	Percentage of scheduled tribe population to total population
1	2	3	4	5
(1) Akrani	Dhulia	34,967	33,354	95·39
(2) Surgana	Nasik	58,247	55,452	95·20
(3) Talasari	Thana	42,945	40,410	94·10
(4) Mokhada	Thana	47,140	43,057	91·34
(5) Jawhar	Thana	82,361	73,781	89·58
(6) Akalkuva	Dhulia	57,357	51,134	89·15
(7) Nawapur	Dhulia	105,728	93,101	88·06
(8) Peint	Nasik	68,425	60,185	87·96
(9) Melghat	Amravati	72,779	54,881	75·41
(10) Taloda	Dhulia	63,720	42,403	66·55
(11) Dahanu	Thana	159,325	96,707	60·70
(12) Sironcha	Chanda	108,994	59,140	54·26
(13) Vada	Thana	70,372	37,945	53·92
(14) Dindori	Nasik	112,110	56,654	50·53
(15) Kalwan	Nasik	99,593	48,403	48·60
(16) Akola	Ahmadnagar	117,795	54,716	46·45
(17) Sakri	Dhulia	185,417	85,351	46·03
(18) Shahada	Dhulia	155,472	63,853	41·07
(19) Igatpuri	Nasik	113,251	45,637	40·30
(20) Nandurbar	Dhulia	152,927	60,399	39·50
(21) Palghar	Thana	178,285	66,927	37·54
(22) Gadhchiroli	Chanda	277,398	99,708	35·94
(23) Shahapur	Thana	112,855	38,619	34·22
(24) Kelapur	Yeotmal	197,270	61,826	31·34
(25) Baglan	Nasik	153,470	44,755	29·16
(26) Rajura	Chanda	89,624	24,583	27·43
(27) Khalapur	Kolaba	53,376	13,547	25·38
(28) Sirpur	Dhulia	123,780	30,892	24·96
(29) Yeotmal	Yeotmal	207,366	51,767	24·96
(30) Murbad	Thana	84,334	20,660	24·50
(31) Wani	Yeotmal	173,669	42,016	24·19
(32) Karjat	Kolaba	87,288	20,405	23·38
(33) Kinwat	Nanded	117,137	26,532	22·65
(34) Sudhagad	Kolaba	41,794	8,488	20·31

The concentration of population of scheduled tribes described above does not, however, mean that each scheduled tribe lives in isolation from all other scheduled tribes. In fact, in all the tehsils having large concentrations of tribal population, at least half a dozen scheduled tribes are found living side by side. In Palghar (Thana), Varli, Kathodi, Koli Mahadev and Koli Malhar are found living side by side. Varli, Kokna, Thakur, Kathodi and Koli Mahadev are similarly found together in Mokhada. Within the village, however, each scheduled tribe has its own "pada" (hamlet) or a separate locality.

Among the major scheduled tribes like Bhils and Gonds, some sub-tribes are more concentrated in certain areas. Mavchi Bhils live mainly in the north-western tehsils of Dhulia district, Pawra Bhils in Akrani, Barda Bhils in the northern tehsils of Jalgaon district, Madia Gond in Bhamargad area of Sironcha and so on.

The statement on page 6 shows individual schedule tribes arranged in the order of their 1961 population in the State.

Rank	Name of scheduled tribe	Population	Percentage to total scheduled tribe population
1	Bhil ..	575,022	23·99
2	Koli Mahadev ..	274,244	11·44
3	Gond ..	272,564	11·37
4	Varli ..	243,980	10·18
5	Kokna ..	212,836	8·88
6	Thakur ..	159,372	6·65
7	Kathodi ..	140,672	5·87
8	Gamit ..	102,321	4·27
9	Koli Malhar ..	89,047	3·71
10	Andh ..	60,261	2·51
11	Korku ..	50,279	2·10
12	Dhanka ..	48,089	2·01
13	Kolam ..	43,788	1·83
14	Pardhan ..	32,237	1·34
15	Pardhi ..	21,417	0·89
16	Koli Dhor ..	15,461	0·64
17	Dubla ..	13,630	0·57
18	Dhodia ..	12,037	0 50
19	Naikda ..	11,731	0·49
20	Halba ..	5,430	0·23
21	Kawar ..	2,915	0·12
22	Rathawa ..	2,874	0 12
23	Barda ..	918	N
24	Vitolia ..	898	N
25	Khairwar ..	275	N
26	Pomla ..	263	N
27	Patelia ..	180	N
28	Chodhara ..	157	N
29	Thoti ..	109	N
30	Bavacha ..	94	N
31	Kol ..	53	N
32	Dhanwar ..	40	N
33	Koya ..	33	N
34	Nagesia ..	28	N
35	Binjhwar ..	24	N
36	Birhul ..	22	N
37	Bhaina ..	12	N
38	Bhunjia ..	6	N
39	Bhattra ..	3	N
40	Oraon ..	1	N
41	Unclassified ..	3,836	0·16
	Total ..	2,397,159	100·00

N=Negligible

Bhil is the most numerous scheduled tribe and constitutes nearly 24 per cent of the total scheduled tribe population in the State. Koli Mahadev, Gond, Varli and Kokna have over two lakhs population each. Thakur, Kathodi and Gamit have over one lakh population each. These eight scheduled tribes having more than one lakh population each together make 82·64 per cent of the total scheduled tribe population in the State.

The last eighteen scheduled tribes have less than one thousand population each and their combined population is 3,116 or only 0·13 per cent of the total scheduled tribe population of the State.

Variation in population of scheduled tribes

With due adjustments for the changed boundaries of the State, its 1951 scheduled tribe population was estimated at 14·94 lakhs. In 1961, the scheduled tribe population had increased to 23·97 lakhs or by 60·44 per cent over the 1951 population. The following three factors have contributed to this apparently tremendous growth :—

(*i*) changes made in the President's order in 1956 ;

(*ii*) natural growth ; and

(*iii*) better enumeration of scheduled tribes in 1961.

1956 changes in the list of scheduled tribes

The changes made in 1956 in the President's 1950 orders have been referred to. The most important change was the extension of the Madhya Pradesh declared list to three more tehsils (Wani, Kelapur and Yeotmal) of Yeotmal district in addition to the formerly notified three tehsils of Melghat in Amravati district and Gadhchiroli and Sironcha in Chanda district These three newly added tehsils of Yeotmal district have returned a scheduled tribe population of 1·56 lakhs in 1961. This change accounted for 10·42 per cent of the decade growth in the scheduled tribe population of the State.

The other important change made in 1956 was the addition to the declared list of three scheduled tribes, *viz.*, Koli Malhar, Khairwar and Vitolia, whose populations in 1961 was 89,047, 275 and 898, respectively. This addition of three new scheduled tribes to the list thus added 90,220 to the scheduled tribe population of the State in 1961 and accounted for 6·04 per cent of the decade growth.

Another major change made in 1956 in the list of scheduled tribes was that names of some sub-tribes or synonyms not mentioned in the 1950 order were shown against most of the scheduled tribes. The addition of as many as 38 names of sub-tribes against Gond appears to have brought in many more people in the Gond group because there is otherwise no apparent reason why the scheduled tribe population in Chanda district should increase by 40·35 per cent during the decade while the general population in rural areas there had increased only by 19·43 per cent. I·

is, however difficult to estimate the exact contribution this factor may have made towards the 1951-61 decade growth.

Koli Mahadev and Thakur had been declared as scheduled tribes for the entire area of the erstwhile Bombay state (Bombay and Poona divisions as far as Maharashtra is concerned). In 1956, the areas of their declaration as scheduled tribes were reduced to certain specified tehsils from Thana, Kolaba, Nasik, Ahmadnagar and Poona districts. It is difficult to say if this restriction of areas has reduced the scheduled tribe population. Both the scheduled tribes are known to be concentrated in the notified areas and the change may not have made any appreciable difference in the 1961 scheduled tribe population in the State.

The 1950 list had Mavchi, Pawra, Valvi and Vasava as independent scheduled tribes. In the 1956 list, they have been included under Bhil, Dhanka or Gamit as sub-tribes. This change also may not have made any difference to the total scheduled tribe population.

We have seen that the changes in the declared list accounted for 16·46 per cent of the increase in population. Thus, the net increase due to the other two causes is reduced to 6·57 lakhs or 44 per cent over the 1951 population.

Some of the predominantly tribal areas showed very high decade rates of growth. Akrani in Dhulia district which had 95·39 per cent of its population belonging to scheduled tribes had the highest decade rate of growth in Maharashtra (55·3 per cent). Other tehsils which had large proportions of tribal population and showed high per cent rates of growth were Talasari (29·5) and Vada (27·5) in Thana district, Khalapur (28·3) in Kolaba district, Surgana (32·9), Peint (32·1) and Dindori (28·3) in Nasik district, Akalkuva (33·5), Nawapur (30·0) and Sakri (41·0) in Dhulia district and Melghat (39·0) in Amravati district.

The following statement shows districtwise percentage variations in scheduled tribe population during the decade 1951-61. Percentage variation in general population in rural areas of each district is also shown for facility of comparison :—

State/Division/District	Scheduled tribe population		Variation in scheduled tribe population 1951-61	Percentage variation in scheduled tribe Variation population	Percentage variation in total rural population 1951-61
	1951	1961			
1	2	3	4	5	6
MAHARASHTRA STATE	**1,494,127**	**2,397,159**	**+903,032**	**+60·44**	**+24·51**
BOMBAY DIVISION	*1,098,692*	*1,687,229*	*+588,537*	*+53·57*	*+22·73*
Greater Bombay	17,012	22,455	+5,443	+32·00	....
Thana	284,949	500,558	+215,609	+75·67	+27·57
Kolaba	92,584	95,354	+2,770	+2·99	+17 11
Ratnagiri	3,553	3,101	—452	—12·72	+6·63
Nasik	240, 587	453,707	+213,120	+88·58	+30·22
Dhulia	395,521	513,344	+117,823	+29·79	+31·29
Jalgaon	64,486	98,710	+34,224	+53·07	+36·25
POONA DIVISION	*150,433*	*213,359*	*+62,926*	*+41·83*	*+31·91*
Ahmadnagar	80,149	109,827	+29,678	+37·03	+32·83
Poona	57,623	89,913	+32,290	+56·04	+36·79
Satara	2,536	2,417	—119	—4·69	+25·08
Sangli	611	595	—16	—2·62	+45·93
Sholapur	8,993	9,089	+96	+1·07	+29·48
Kolhapur	521	1,518	+997	+191·36	+25·05
AURANGABAD DIVISION	*79,269*	*102,650*	*+23,381*	*+29·50*	*+24·93*
Aurangabad	17,236	24,455	+7,219	+41·88	+29·90
Parbhani	25,505	34,838	+9,333	+36 59	+21·36
Bhir	1,482	2,367	+885	+59·72	+22·08
Nanded	34,895	40,597	+5,702	+16·34	+23·96
Osmanabad	151	393	+242	+160·26	+25·73
NAGPUR DIVISION	*165,733*	*393,921*	*+228,188*	*+137·68*	*+18·59*
Buldhana	No Scheduled Tribes				+21·70
Akola	No Scheduled Tribes				+25·08
Amravati	35,039	54,881	+19,842	+56·63	+21·70
Yeotmal	....	155,609	....	....	+17·03
Wardha	No Scheduled Tribes				+17·24
Nagpur	No Scheduled Tribes				+10·38
Bhandara	No Scheduled Tribes				+15 55
Chanda	130,694	183,431	+52,737	+40·35	+19·43

Rural-urban distribution

Of the 1961 scheduled tribe population, 96·25 per cent was found in rural areas and only 3·75 per cent in urban areas. The corresponding proportions for the general population were 71·78 per cent and 28·22 per cent respectively. Only 26 out of the 266 towns in Maharashtra had more than 5 per cent population belonging to scheduled tribes.

Out of the 19 numerically important scheduled tribes having more than ten thousand population each, Dubla, Dhodia, Koli Dhor, Pardhi and Naikda had comparatively larger proportions of their population in urban areas. Percentages of their populations in urban areas were 51·0, 49·9, 24·7, 15·7 and 12·1 respectively.

The scheduled tribes are thus very largely a rural people. Even in the rural areas, they are concentrated in hilly and forest tracts not yet fully opened by rail or road communications.

Sex ratio

The 1961 sex ratios (*i.e.* the number of females per 1,000 males) for scheduled tribe population and the general population of Maharashtra for total, rural and urban areas were as follows:—

	1961 Sex ratios		
	Total	Rural	Urban
General population ..	936	995	801
Scheduled tribe population ..	978	981	911

On the whole there are comparatively more females among the scheduled tribes than among the general population. It may be partly due to the large non-tribal male population coming to Bombay and other urban areas from outside the State. In the rural areas, however, there are comparatively more females in the general population than among the scheduled tribes. This again is due to the large non-tribal male population migrating from rural to urban areas. As far as urban areas are concerned, the scheduled tribes are found only in small towns which do not have as much deficiency of females as cities and large towns have. The above differences in the sex ratios are thus the result of migration and differences in the rural-urban distribution of scheduled tribes and the general population.

The 1951 and 1961 sex ratios for the scheduled tribe population and the general population were as follows :—

	Sex ratios	
	1951	1961
General population ..	941	936
Scheduled tribe population ..	943	978

The sex ratio for scheduled tribes had improved by 35 points from 943 in 1951 to 978 in 1961. For the general population it had gone down by five points from 941 in 1951 to 936 in 1961.

The 1961 sex ratios for 14 numerically largest scheduled tribes were as follows :—

	1961 Sex ratio
1. Bhil	985
2. Koli Mahadev	969
3. Gond	1,006
4. Varli	977
5. Kokna	970
6. Thakur	954
7. Kathodi	974
8. Gamit	975
9. Koli Malhar	957
10. Andh	998
11. Korku	979
12. Dhanka	984
13. Kolam	1,043
14. Pardhan	1,001
All remaining scheduled tribes	932
All scheduled tribes combined	978

It will be seen that none of the 14 major scheduled tribes had a sex ratio lower than or approximating to the reported average of 943 for the scheduled tribe population in 1951.

Age composition

The 1961 proportions of the three age-groups for scheduled tribe population and for the general population of the State were as follows :—

	Proportion of population in age-groups to total population		
	0—14	15—44	45+
General population (Rural areas only).	42·09	41·90	16·01
Scheduled tribe population (Rural and Urban combined).	43·40	42·88	13·72

The age composition of the scheduled tribe population was not much different from that of the general population of rural areas. The proportion of age-group 45+ was, however, significantly lower in the scheduled tribe population. The slightly higher proportions in the age-groups 0—14 and 15—44 and the lower proportion in the age-group 45+ indicate high death rates among scheduled tribes.

The proportions of population in the three age-groups to the total population for 14 numerically important scheduled tribes were as follows :—

	Proportion of population in age-groups			
	Total	0—14	15—44	45+
All Scheduled Tribes ..	**100**	**43·40**	**42·88**	**13·72**
(1) Bhil ..	100	44·32	42·80	12·88
(2) Koli Mahadev ..	100	41·64	42·54	15·82
(3) Gond ..	100	40·30	44·20	15·50
(4) Varli ..	100	42·56	43·03	14·41
(5) Kokna ..	100	44·79	41·95	13·26
(6) Thakur ..	100	41·64	42·86	15·50
(7) Kathodi ..	100	44·91	45·55	9·54
(8) Gamit ..	100	46·93	41·08	11·99
(9) Koli Malhar ..	100	45·88	39·94	14·18
(10) Andh ..	100	44·80	42·91	12·29
(11) Korku ..	100	45·78	41·51	12·71
(12) Dhanka ..	100	46·34	41·96	11·70
(13) Kolam ..	100	41·26	43·64	15·10
(14) Pardhan ..	100	40·32	44·75	14·93
Above 14 scheduled tribes combined.	100	43·38	42·87	13·75
All other scheduled tribes	100	43·72	43·16	13·12

Marital status

The distribution of the scheduled tribe population and the general population in the State for males and females of all ages is as follows :—

	Total	Never married	Married	Widowed	Divorced
General population—					
Males ..	100	53·34	43·11	3·13	0·42
Females ..	100	42·20	45·69	11·49	0·62
Scheduled tribe population—					
Males ..	100	51·89	44·90	2·62	0·59
Females ..	100	43·77	47·32	8·22	0·69

Literacy and education

The following table shows the literacy percentages for total, males and females of the general population and of the scheduled tribes for Maharashtra and its four administrative divisions :—

State/Division	Percentage literacy for general population			Percentage literacy for scheduled tribe population		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
MAHARASHTRA	**29·82**	**42·04**	**16·76**	**7·21**	**12·55**	**1·75**
Bombay Division	37·75	49·61	24·41	7·13	12·31	2·37
Poona Division	29·30	42·03	16·09	9·46	16·00	2·79
Aurangabad Division	16·29	26·44	5·75	4·90	9·30	0·55
Nagpur Division	27·88	41·06	14·12	6·91	12·55	1·28

The 1961 literacy rates for 19 major scheduled tribes (having over 10,000 population) for total, males and females were as follows :—

	Percentage of literates to total population		
	Persons	Males	Females
All Scheduled Tribes ..	**7·21**	**12·55**	**1·75**
(1) Bhil	6·48	11·55	1·33
(2) Koli Mahadev ..	10·66	17·99	3·09
(3) Gond	6·67	12·20	1·18
(4) Varli	4·72	7·73	1.62
(5) Kokna	9·52	16·24	2·59
(6) Thakur	4·37	7·81	0·75
(7) Kathodi	2·38	3·58	1·15
(8) Gamit	11·23	19·05	3·20
(9) Koli Malhar	7·76	13·84	1·22
(10) Andh	5·55	10·69	0·39
(11) Korku	6·13	10·86	1·30
(12) Dhanka	11·71	20·45	2·83
(13) Kolam	2·62	4·89	0·45
(14) Pardhan	13·59	23·51	3·68
(15) Pardhi	10·44	17·17	3·64
(16) Dubla	11·04	16·33	4·68
(17) Koli Dhor	13·90	21·82	5·09
(18) Dhodia	12·40	20·28	3·75
(19) Naikda	8·91	15·66	2·18

Educational levels

Out of the total 1961 scheduled tribe population of 23·97 lakhs, 45,910 or 1·92 per cent had completed primary education and 705 had attained matriculation or higher level. Thus, not only a vast majority of the scheduled tribe population (92·8 per cent) was illiterate, but out of those who were literate, only 26·58 per cent had completed the primary stage of education and only 0·4 per cent had attained matriculation or higher level.

The distribution of matriculate or higher level men among individual scheduled tribes was as follows :—

Koli Mahadev	124
Bhil	122
Gond	99
Koli Dhor	62
Kokna	49
Varli	36
Other Scheduled Tribes	176

The distribution of matriculate or higher level women among individual scheduled tribes was as follows :—

Varli	15
Koli Mahadev	5
Dhanka	3
Koli Dhor	3
Koli Malhar	3
Gond	2
Bhil	1
Dubla	1
Gamit	1
Thakur	1
Unclassified scheduled tribes	2

Religion

The 1961 distribution of the scheduled tribe population in the State by religions was as follows :—

Religion	Scheduled tribe population	Percentage of population of each religion to total scheduled tribe population
(1) Buddhists	15	Negligible
(2) Christians	2,694	0·11
(3) Hindus	2,372,552	98·97
(4) Muslims	21,882	0·92
(5) Sikhs	7	Negligible
(6) Jains	1	Negligible
(7) Religion not stated	8	Negligible
All Religions	2,397,159	100·00

23·72 lakhs or 98·97 per cent of the scheduled tribes returned "Hindu" as their religion, scheduled tribes professing all other religions made a combined total of 24,607 or 1·03 per cent of the total scheduled tribe population in the State. 26 out of the 40 scheduled tribes had their entire population belonging to "Hindu" religion.

Out of the scheduled tribe population of 21,882 returning "Muslim" as their religion, 17,676 were from Bhils and 4,185 from Dhankas. They belong to a sub-tribe known as Tadvi Bhil. Their entire population should be in Bhil. But some of them have been wrongly included under Dhanka because the sub-tribe is itself shown in the President's order both under Bhil and Dhanka. They are concentrated in Jalgaon district which alone accounts for 20,861 persons among them. The 1931 and 1941 census reports show 8,172 and 2,462 as population of Muslim Bhils for Bombay province. The 1951 census did not show scheduled tribe population by religions. The 1961 population is not inconsistent with that of 1931 but the 1941 figure was perhaps wrong.

No person from among the scheduled tribes in the State had in 1961 returned his religion as Tribal or as Animist.

Mother-tongues

The 1961 Census returned 74 mother-tongues spoken by the scheduled tribes in Maharashtra.

1,585,030 persons or 66·12 per cent of the total scheduled tribe population in the State spoke Marathi as mother-tongue. This was exclusive of the large numbers of people who either returned the names of their tribes in reply to the mother-tongue question or returned mother-tongues which are only local dialects of Marathi. Ahirani (28,064), Halabi (1,795), Kathodi (571), Katkari (3,857), Kokna/Kokni/Kukna (37,007), Thakri (4,170) and Varli (94) are a few such examples. 5·12 per cent of the scheduled tribe population spoke Marathi as a subsidiary language.

The second numerically important mother-tongue of the scheduled tribes is "Bhili" and is spoken by Bhil, Gamit, Naikda and Dhanka. Among the Bhils, the 1961 proportion of speakers of Marathi as mother-tongue was 49·89 per cent, for Bhili 37·00 per cent, for Pawri 6·64 per cent, for Ahirani 4·42 per cent and for Urdu 0·95 per cent.

Economic activity

Distribution of scheduled tribe population by workers and non-workers is shown below. Workers are further divided into nine broad industrial categories.

		Persons	Males	Females
	Total Population ..	2,397,159	1,211,605	1,185,554
I	Cultivators ..	723,683	386,486	340,197
II	Agricultural labourers ..	539,064	261,735	277,329
III	In Mining, quarrying livestock, forestry fishing etc.	52,419	34,893	17,526
IV	In household industry	9,513	7,021	2,492
V	In manufacturing other than household industry	15,640	11,957	3,683
VI	In construction ..	6,126	4,542	1,584
VII	In trade and commerce	7,542	4,072	3,470
VIII	In transport, storage and communication.	6,288	5,717	571
IX	In other services ..	44,250	29,158	15,092
X	Non-workers ..	1,407,525	745,581	661,944
	Total workers (I-IX) ..	989,634	466,024	523,610

The proportions of workers for total, rural and urban areas for males and females among the scheduled tribe population and the general population were as follows in 1961 :—

	Total	Rural	Urban
Scheduled tribe population—			
Males	61·54	61·74	56·49
Females	55·83	56·63	34·71
General population—			
Males	57·09	58·07	54·84
Females	38·10	46·74	13·45

Labour participation rates (proportion of workers to total population) both for males and females among the scheduled tribes were higher than the corresponding rates for the general population. For females particularly they were very much higher. These differences are due to the predominance of agriculture in and comparative backwardness of the tribal economy.

Proportions of workers to total population (rural-urban combined) for males and females of 14 numerically important scheduled tribes were as follows :—

Name of scheduled tribe	Percentage of workers to total population	
	Males	Females
All scheduled tribes .. .	61·54	55·83
(1) Bhil	60·18	54·39
(2) Koli Mahadev	61·37	55·04
(3) Gond	65·09	59·27
(4) Varli	62·35	57·40
(5) Kokna	60·74	56·39
(6) Thakur	63·80	56·46
(7) Kathodi	60·09	53·42
(8) Gamit	59·50	57·60
(9) Koli Malhar	61·41	56·38
(10) Andh	63·45	55·70
(11) Korku	60·74	55·32
(12) Dhanka	59·71	57·60
(13) Kolam	66·64	64·26
(14) Pardhan	61·82	59·60

The 1961 distribution of workers in nine broad categories of economic activity is shown below for males and females for total scheduled tribe population (rural-urban combined) and for general population of the State in rural areas only :—

Workers	Scheduled tribe population rural-urban combined		General population rural only	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
categories—	100·00	100·00	100·00	100·00
I Cultivator ..	51·84	51·39	55·74	59·16
II Agricultural labourer	35·10	41·90	24·46	34·55
III Mining, quarrying, livestock, forestry, etc.	4·68	2·65	3·38	0·75
IV Household industry ..	0·94	0·38	5·06	2·66
V Manufacturing other than household industry.	1·60	0·56	1·86	0·29
VI Construction ..	0·61	0·24	1·22	0·36
VII Trade and commerce.	0·55	0·52	2·19	0·51
VIII Transport, storage and communications.	0·77	0·08	0·81	0·0
IX Other services ..	3·91	2.28	5.28	1·69

The scheduled tribes depend upon agriculture more than the general rural population in the State. The combined proportion for cultivators and agricultural labourers for males in 86·94 against 80·20 for the general population in rural areas. For females, however, the combined proportions are more or less the same.

A significant departure, however, is in the higher proportions of agricultural labour both for males and females. The participation of scheduled tribes in agriculture is thus more as agricultural labourers.

The four scheduled tribes which had high proportions of agricultural labourers were Bhil, Kolam, Pardhan and Kathodi. Kathodi is known as a tribe of landless labourers. Kolam and Pardhan appear to be holding more or less the same position in the Gondvana group. It is, however, significant that the numerically largest scheduled tribe "Bhil" had the highest proportion of workers (males 58·09 and females 68·74) in category II.

Size of cultivation holdings

Distribution of cultivating households for scheduled tribes and for the general population by interest in land is as follows :—

Interest in land	General households	Scheduled tribe households
(*a*) Entirely owned ..	78·5	69·1
(*b*) Entirely leased in ..	7·3	21·6
(*c*) Partly owned and partly leased in.	14·2	9·3
Total ..	100·00	100·00

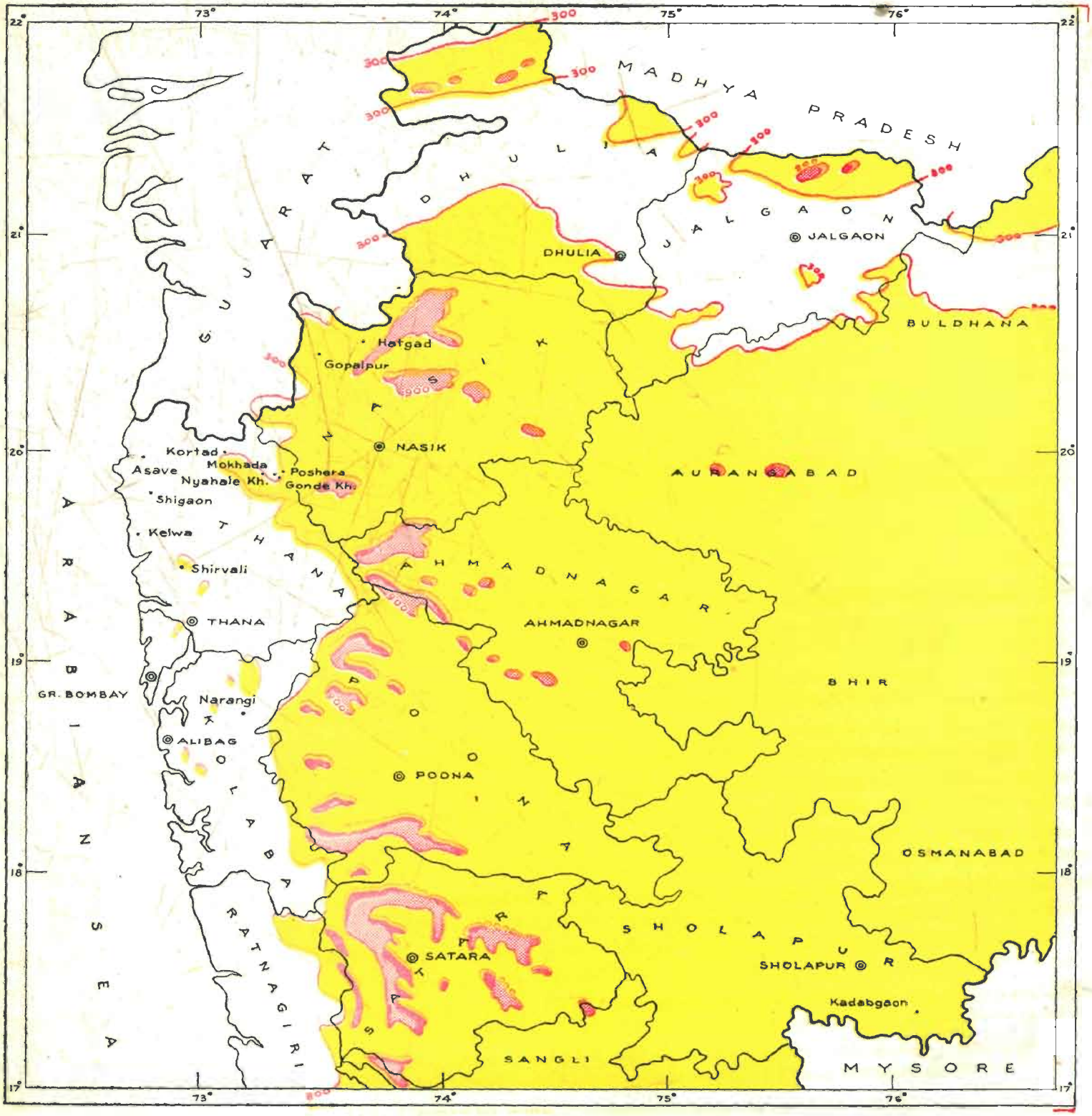
This shows that even among the 'Cultivator' category, scheduled tribes participate a little less as owners and three times more as tenants.

Distribution of 1,000 cultivating households by size of land cultivated is as follows :—

Size of holding in acres	General households	Scheduled tribe households
(1) Less than 1 acre ..	48·93	34·29
(2) 1·0—2·4 ..	157·77	162·00
(3) 2·5—4·9 ..	166·88	185·14
(4) 5·0—7·4 ..	137·35	159·35
(5) 7·5—9·9 ..	77·02	89·25
(6) 10·0—12·4 ..	92·68	105·96
(7) 12·5—14·9 ..	38·61	36·56
(8) 15·0—29·9 ..	74·75	168·16
(9) 30·0—49·9 ..	67·84	39·62
(10) 50 and above ..	32·70	9·65
(11) Unspecified size ..	5·47	10·02

The disparities of the distribution of land are, however, not wholly reflected in the above statement, as soil value and the facilities of irrigation are not accounted for in it. Lands in tribal areas are hilly and fit only for growing inferior foodgrains.

SAHYADRI GROUP



Villages surveyed in connection with the study of Western Maharashtra tribes are shown in this map.
District headquarters towns are also marked.
Altitude in metres. Contours are approximate.

KOLI MAHADEV OR MAHADEV KOLI

The Koli Mahadev are an advanced scheduled tribe in Maharashtra whose higher position is accepted by most of the scheduled tribes of the region. Numerically, they rank second after the Bhils in Maharashtra. In the President's order, 1960, they are referred to as "Koli Mahadeo or Dongar Koli". Field investigations conducted at Nyahale Khurd in Jawhar tehsil, Gonde Khurd and Poshera (Pawar pada) in Mokhada tehsil of Thana district and Gopalpur in the Surgana tehsil of Nasik district show that members of the tribe living at these places call themselves as Mahadev Kolis and the other people of the region also know them by the same name. They are generally not familiar with the name 'Dongar Koli' mentioned in the President's order, and do not know whether it is a synonym of Mahadev Koli or refers to a section of the same. According to the Mahadev Kolis of Nyahale, a village five miles from Jawhar, the Mahadev Kolis are also called Raj Kolis as the ruler of Jawhar belonged to the Mahadev Koli tribe (*see*, also Enthoven 245). The Mahadev Kolis living in the other investigated villages do not know who Raj Kolis are but, according to them, the possibility of some persons among the tribe, especially the kinsmen of the former ruling house of Jawhar State, calling themselves Raj Kolis cannot be ruled out. According to Sirajul Hassan, their name is derived from the god Mahadev (334). A few tribesmen from the villages surveyed agree with this view and say that in the distant past their forefathers held Mahadev in great honour. But now they do not keep the image of Mahadev in their houses.

The Mahadev Kolis admit they are Kolis, but they do not show any affinity with the Koli caste or with any other Koli group such as Malhar Koli or Son Koli. Son Kolis are recognised as fishermen whereas Mahadev Kolis are known as husbandsmen. The Mahadev Kolis and the Malhar Kolis both accept the designation of Koli, but treat themselves as distinct from each other. In the caste frame of reference, the Mahadev Kolis regard themselves as superior to the Malhar Kolis.

According to Mackintosh, the Mahadev Kolis are divided into 24 kuls (clans) most of which were founded by individual leaders belonging to the higher classes who for certain reasons had left their own people and taken to the hills. It, however, seems more probable that the Kadams, Pavars, Chavans, Bhosles, and other Koli clans with Rajput names are of part-Rajput origin (Gazetteer 169). The Mahadev Kolis from the villages surveyed have no knowledge of their Rajput origin but they do not rule it out. In matters of eating and drinking, they are treated on a level with the Kunbis as pointed out by Mackintosh and enjoy the same social status and position in the region. Enthoven connects them with the Kolis and says that they are a division of the Kolis of the Deccan and Konkan (245). The Mahadev Kolis do not know whether they originated from the Koli caste. According to one tradition, Valmiki, the first Sanskrit poet and author of the *Ramayana*, is represented as their ancestor. Ghurye feels that their supposed connection with Valmiki rests on occupational and not on racial identity.

The Mahadev Kolis are now found concentrated in the districts of Nasik, Poona, Ahmadnagar and Thana. Mackintosh thinks that their original home was in the Mahadev and Balaghat hills, the western boundary of the then Nizam's country (Ahmadnagar gaz. 194). They came west many centuries ago and settled first in the valley of the Ghoda river in Poona and from there moved north and west into the Konkan. The story of the eastern origin of the Mahadev Kolis is supported by the fact that in former days they were lingayats and had their marriage and funeral ceremonies conducted by Raval Gosavis. The Kolis switched over to Brahmanism during the Peshwa period. The best known Kolis in Thana history are Mahadev Kolis, a Deccan tribe who apparently entered the Konkan at the close of the thirteenth century perhaps in consequence of the Muslim invasion of the Deccan. According to their own story, the Mahadev Kolis did not pass into the Konkan till the beginning of the fourteenth century, when a Koli leader, Panperah, was advised by a holy man in the Deccan to go to the Konkan, capture Jawhar and become its chief. Jawhar was then ruled over by a Varli Panperah. He went to Gujarat, wandered there for some years and then went to Jawhar and requested its chief to grant him a piece of land that would be covered by a bullock's hide. On the Varli chief agreeing to this, he made many strips of a bullock's hide and encircled the Varli chief's fort with it. The Varli chief admired Panperah's cleverness and granted him the country around Gambirghad. Thus the Mahadev Kolis settled in the Konkan. When the Muslims invaded parts of the Deccan. Panperah became their loyal friend and the Muslim sovereign granted him 22 forts and a territory yielding Rs. 9 lakhs a year (Thana gaz. 166-9). Ghurye is of the view that the original habitat of the Mahadev Kolis and their dispersal in specific localities are not ascertainable

at this stage. He says that according to the tradition current among them, the Mahadev Kolis of Ahmadnagar and those of Nasik, who had arrived there from Junnar in Poona still look back to Junnar as their place of origin. He quotes the historical fact recorded in the middle of the fourteenth century that the Sarnaik (captain) of the Mahadev Kolis who were spread over " fifty-two villages " or " Bavan mahals ", each with its own naik, was stationed at Junnar. According to the same historical source the last Sarnaik of the Mahadev Kolis was Muhammad Latif (c. 1670). It is possible that Junnar was then chosen as the headquarters by the Bahamani kings for their representative or nominee called Sarnaik. According to Ghurye, the claim of the Mahadev Kolis that Junnar was their original homeland thus seems to be based on their military connections with Junnar rather than a reality of ethnic history. He also points out that many of the sacred places associated with their traditional connection with Valmiki and Sri Rama are located in Ahmadnagar and Nasik districts and not in Poona (2-3). The Mahadev Kolis from the villages studied are not aware of their reported connections with Balaghat or Mahadev hills and Junnar and do not know when and from where their forefathers came into their present settlements.

Distribution of population

The Koli Mahadev or Dongar Kolis are notified a scheduled tribe only in the following tehsils of five districts from Western Maharashtra :

1. Ahmadnagar : Akola, Rahuri and Sangamner.
2. Kolaba : Karjat, Khalapur, Alibag, Mahad and Sudhagad.
3. Nasik : Nasik, Niphad, Sinnar, Chandor, Baglan, Igatpuri, Dindori, Kalwan, Surgana and Peint.
4. Poona : Ambegaon, Junnar, Khed, Mawal, Mulshi and Velhe.
5. Thana : Thana, Murbad, Bhivandi, Bassein, Wada, Sholapur, Dahanu, Palghar, Jawhar and Mokhada.

During the 1961 census, the Mahadev Koli returned a population of 274,244 persons (139,286 males and 134,958 females) from these areas out of whom 264,565 (96·47) were returned from rural areas and 9,679 (3·53) from urban. Nasik (143,974), Poona (56,930), Ahmadnagar (45,968) and Thana (22,953) together accounted for 98·39 per cent of their total population in the State. In Nasik they had heavy concentrations in Dindori (35,172), Nasik (27,004), Igatpuri (22,494) and Surgana (15,811). In Poona, they were concentrated in Junnar (21,155) and Ambegaon (19,349). Akola in Ahmadnagar had the largest concentration of the tribe of all the tehsils wherein it is notified as a scheduled tribe. The sex ratio for the total population of Mahadev Kolis was 969. It was 969 for the rural population and 980 for the urban.

The age composition of their population in 1961 was not significantly different from that of the general population. Out of 274,244 returned during the 1961 census, 114,152 (41·62) were in the age group of 0-14 ; 116,606 (42·52) in the age group of 15-44 and 43,375 (15·82) in the age group of 45 and above. The 1961 percentages for the above three age groups for the general population were 40·66, 44·02 and 15·32 respectively.

Family and kinship

The family among the Mahadev Kolis is patrilocal with a patronymic designation. A study of 988 Koli Mahadev households from Thana, Nasik and Ahmadnagar districts showed that 515 households consisted of father, mother, unmarried sons and daughters ; in 198 households married sons were found living with their parents. Other relatives were found living in 62 households. Most of these relatives comprised widowed sister, elder brother's widow, father's brother and father's widowed sister. Among the same 988 households, 644 had 1 to 5 members, 300 had 6 to 10 members and 44 households had more than ten members. The average number of persons per household was 4·97. The maximum size of household observed was 16 in a family where married sons and other relatives were staying with the parents. The male was generally the head of a household. Out of the above 988 households, only 81 households were found to have female heads of households. Most of these female heads of households were of ages 40 and above. A Koli Mahadev family is thus one consisting of four to five members ; in a majority of cases, it includes father, mother, unmarried sons and daughters.

Sons and unmarried daughters acquire the kul of their father, but after marriage the daughter acquires the kul of her husband. If a widow or a divorced woman remarries, she acquires the kul of her new husband, but the kul of her children by her first husband remains the same as before. The sons inherit the property of their father in equal shares. In case they want separation during the life-time of their father, the property is divided equally between the sons and the father. After the death of the father the sons get his share in equal proportions. Married or unmarried daughters have no right over the father's property.

Some of the exogamous units (kuls) found during the survey were named Bodhere, Bhangare, Bendkoli, Bhoir, Badade, Burange, Dandekar, Dhangar, Gaikwad, Gode, Gumbale, Gawari, Hamre, Hambare,

Jadhav, Korde, Khadhe, Merivdhe, Nawale, Pardhi, Satpute, Salkar, Vagh, Yele and Zinjurde. Clan names like Pardhi and Dhangar occur in different areas of the State as distinct caste names. Gaikwad, Jadhav, Patil are popular clan names among Marathas. Pawar, Bhoir and Vagh are common among Kunbis, Koli Malhar and Varlis, respectively. Like the other scheduled tribes of the region, the Mahadev Kolis always use kul names as their surnames.

Kin on the mother's side have ritual and social roles to play during marriage and child birth. The maternal uncle has to shave the first hair of a child. During marriage, the maternal uncles of the boy and of the girl stand behind the couple. Relatives are expected to give some presents to the boy or the girl as the case may be. During death rites also, all the relatives of the deceased are expected to give some gifts or presents of clothes to the chief mourner.

Dwelling and dress

Most of the Mahadev Kolis in the State live in villages along with the other castes and tribes of the region. The villages investigated for this study are situated in the forest areas near agricultural lands. The forests offer good jobs to a number of landless persons of these villages, especially in the agricultural off season. The villages are composed of a number of hamlets (padas). There are no good roads between these hamlets ; they are connected with each other by foot-paths and cart tracks. Poshera has 13 hamlets including the main village : in 1961, it had about 118 households of Koli Mahadev, 72 households of Varlis, 55 of Ma and Ka Thakurs, 49 of Katkaris, 16 of Koknas, eight of Mahars and six of Muslims. Most of the Mahadev Kolis of this place were found living in the main village, Pawar pada and Vakharicha pada. Other hamlets of the village were inhabited mostly by Varlis, Thakurs and Katkaris. Gonde has only one hamlet apart from the main village. In 1961 it had 40 households of Koli Mahadev, 25 households of Varlis and 20 households of Koli Dhor. The other communities of the village included Sutar (5), Mahar (2), Sonar (1) and Katkari (1). All the Mahadev Kolis of Gonde lived in the main village. Nyahale has six hamlets in addition to the main village. In 1961, it had about 247 Ka Thakur households, 39 Varli, 17 Koli Mahadev, 6 Mahar, 5 Katkari and 4 Muslim. Most of the Mahadev Kolis there, were living in the main village with the Varlis. Other hamlets of the village were inhabited mostly by Ka Thakurs. The caste composition of Gopalpur was not found to be very different from that of the three villages described. The houses of all these castes and tribes were in most cases detached from each other.

The house of an average Mahadev Koli family consists of two or three rooms with a door or two, but no windows. It is either rectangular or square in shape. The walls are of karvi reeds plastered with mud and cow dung on both sides. The roofs are either thatched with grass or have tiles. In case it is a single-room structure, a partition of karvi reeds divides the room into two parts ; the rear one is used as a kitchen and the front one for all other purposes. Such a house has in many cases only one door at the front. A bigger house has two or three rooms including a separate kitchen with two or three doors but no windows. In poorer houses, the door is made of bamboo or reeds. In some houses, wooden doors are also found. Most of the houses have no verandah or an enclosure around. The houses of well-to-do Mahadev Kolis have a separate shed for cattle.

At Nyahale all the 13 houses studied were made of karvi reeds. Excepting one house which had only one room, the rest had two or three rooms each. Seven were roofed with country tiles, three with thatch and three with factory tiles. Seven houses had one door each, six had two doors and one house had more than two doors. None had a window.

At Poshera all the 20 houses studied had separate sheds for cattle. Sixteen were made of karvi reeds, four had brick walls. Of these, three were double storeyed and one had a latrine. Out of 40 houses from Gonde, 28 were roofed with thatch and twelve with factory tiles. Six houses had brick walls, three were double-storeyed and 28 had separate sheds for cattle.

The materials required for constructing a house are obtained locally or from the neighbouring forests. Bricks are brought either from Mokhada or from Jawhar and tiles from Dahanu and Jawhar. At times the villagers themselves prepare the bricks and tiles.

The dress of the Mahadev Kolis is generally similar to that of the Kunbis or Marathas of the region. Old men still wear a langoti and a kopri (waistcoat). The younger generation wears a dhotar (dhoti), khamij (shirt) and a white topi (cap). Trousers and bush-shirts are also worn by some young persons. On ceremonial occasions, men wear a dhoti, a shirt or a kopri and a feta (turban), young persons wear a dhoti, a shirt and a cap. School-going boys wear shirts and shorts. Quite a number of them wear white caps.

Women wear a lugade (sari), choli (bodice) and fadki. The fadki is a piece of red cloth having black or white stars on it. It is worn on the shoulders to cover the upper part of the body. At ceremonies, they wear saris and bodices of a better quality. Girls

commonly put on a parkar (long skirt) and a polke (frock). Both men and women use country chappals (sandals), especially when they go out for field work.

Men and women dress their hair with oil. Men shave their beards. Women do their hair by parting it in the middle and tying it behind in a knot. Men are not fond of ornaments. A few well-to-do persons wear a silver or golden ring (anguti) on the finger and a bali made of brass in the ears. The ornaments worn by Koli women are similar to those worn by the women of the other castes and tribes of the region. These are generally made of gold, silver, brass, pearls, beads and glass. They wear a nath (nose ring) or a fuli in the nose, ful, kudagi or mugadya in the ears, and jodave, masolya or firavi (toe-rings). Among necklaces, putalya, garsoli, and vajratik are popular. They also wear a vela, bajiband or a waki (armlets) round the arms and bangadya, got and kankan (bracelets) around the wrists. Excepting a few glass bangles, garsoli, mithal, fuli and jodave which they wear in their daily life, the other ornaments are used by them on occasions. Girls generally have a few glass bangles, ful in the ears and turachi on their feet.

At Nyahale and Poshera, a few women were found having a dot, a cross or a flower tattooed on their foreheads and a representation of a chariot or their husbands' names on the forearm.

Food

The staple food of the Mahadev Kolis consists of rice and nagli and varai. They take vegetables whenever available. These include onions, brinjals, pumpkin and val. A few of them take mango pickle especially when vegetables are not available. Those who own milch cattle take milk and milk products occasionally. These are taken especially on festival days or whenever there are some guests in the house. Generally they take two meals a day. The first is at noon. It includes bhakri and besan. Sometimes they take tur or urid dal in place of besan. The second meal is taken in the evening. It consists of rice, dal and vegetable, if available. This is the principal meal. When any meat is available, it is generally reserved for this meal. They eat mutton and fowl, fish and eggs but abstain from beef. Tea is taken with or without milk and with gur. Some take country liquor in the evening.

Their cooking utensils are made of brass, nickel, iron and clay. A few families also use crockery like cups and saucers and dishes. They keep buckets, baskets, soops, lanterns or wall lamps and wooden cots. A jate, a stone or wooden ukhal and a long musal are found in some families. A few well-to-do families had a petromax lantern, a harmonium, torches, a bicycle, a wrist-watch, an umbrella and furniture like a table; a bench, a stool and an almirah. In case the household has some land for cultivation, it keeps a pair of bullocks, a goat or two and some fowl in addition to agricultural implements.

Sanitation, hygiene and health

Most of the Mahadev Kolis live in kachcha houses having no windows for ventilation. Every house has generally some open space, if not all round at least in front of it. It is always kept clean by throwing the garbage at a distant place or in a pit. Some families clean the open space in front of their houses by sprinkling water mixed with cow dung. However, during rains the surroundings of their houses become insanitary owing to mud. When the rains are heavy, the floors of houses often get wet and they have to sit, sleep, cook food and eat on these wet floors. The water in kachcha wells is also sometimes responsible for stomach ailments. Though they do not regularly clean the wells in their settlements by removing the mud, many of them have started using potassium permanganate to disinfect the water. They throw this powder into the wells especially during the rainy season. It is supplied to them free of cost by the village panchayat or the block development authorities. The floors of their houses are always kept clean and tidy by regular application of cow dung.

They clean their teeth daily in the morning and take a bath, apply oil to the hair and wash their clothes frequently. The use of toilet and washing soaps has become common in some families. In personal cleanliness, they appear to be equal to the people of higher castes in the locality in every respect.

For treatment of diseases some persons still approach a bhagat of their community. Others often consult a doctor of the locality. Now-a-days they co-operate readily with malaria officers who often visit their settlements for spraying and also get themselves inoculated in large numbers at the time of epidemics like cholera and small-pox. In delivery cases they seek the advice of a midwife from the nearest maternity centre in case it is necessary.

Language and literacy

The Mahadev Kolis are a predominantly Marathi-speaking scheduled tribe in Maharashtra. In the 1961 census, they returned eight mother-tongues in the State out of which Marathi was spoken as a mother-tongue by 273,929 persons. The other seven languages returned as mother-tongues were Telugu (114), Gujrati (96), Kannada (53), Hindi (36), Konkani (12), Marwari (2), the Urdu (2). Telugo speakers were more in

Thana, Nasik and Poona districts and Gujrati speakers in Nasik and Thana districts. Kannada and Hindi had the largest number of speakers in Thana and Nasik districts. Konkani and Marwari were spoken only in Nasik district. There were 2,340 persons who reported knowledge of two major subsidiary languages—Hindi (2,012) and English (186). Some males from Nasik district reported Punjabi as a subsidiary language. In the investigated villages, they speak in Marathi among themselves as well as with outsiders. They say that Marathi is their ancestral language ; they understand Hindi but cannot speak it.

The 1961 census showed only 29,231 (10·66) Mahadev Kolis as literate out of their total population of 274,244. In the rural areas, the percentage of literacy was more or less the same (10·17). Out of 264,565 individuals, only 26,896 were literates. In urban areas, the percentage was significantly higher. Out of 9,679 individuals, 2,335 (24·12) were literates.

Table A on page 20 shows the break up of the 1961 Koli Mahadev population by educational standards. Only six persons were found to have studied above matriculation. Out of them, two (one male and one female) were non-technical diploma holders and four (male) were university or post-graduate degree holders. Of the remaining literates, 123 persons had attained matriculation or higher secondary level, 8,579 had reached the primary or junior basic stage of education and 20,523 were literate without any educational level.

In the investigated villages, Koli children of school-going age were not attending schools in a good number as on many occasions they had to assist their parents in their work. They are an advanced tribe in all respects and know the value of education. But inspite of their strong desire, they are unable to send their children to school as they often want them to go for out-door work. They are not much in favour of girls' education, as they may not get equally educated boys among the community for their girls.

Economic life

The Thana gazetteer says the Mahadev Kolis are cultivators who grow the finest rice, the coarser hill grains, pulses and sugarcane (p. 170). The Ahmednagar gazetteer describes them as hereditary husbandsmen, cattle-keepers and labourers (p. 199). Enthoven says their original occupation was infantry soldiers though they now work as husbandsmen, cattle-keepers and labourers. In some places, they are boatmen and ferry passengers across rivers and streams during the rainy season. Some are also reported to be hereditary ministrants at Mahadev temples (p. 256). Ghurye mentions breeding of cattle, trading in milk and milk products and keeping of poultry as the other principal occupations of the tribe and running of bullock carts for hire, collecting hay and firewood from the jungle and selling it in the market as their important subsidiary occupations (p. 26).

In the investigated villages, cultivation and agricultural labour were reported to be their hereditary occupations which they looked upon as their principal means of livelihood. Owing to poorer soils, traditional methods of farming, inadequate rainfall and lack of funds, their income is inadequate. Consequently, they have to look for other suitable work to make both ends meet. Some of them ply carts, a few collect forest produce such as wild fruits and forest wood and sell it in the market, some work as labourers with the forest contractors while some rear in cattle. Though the income from these subsidiary occupations is limited and uncertain, it is still very useful.

According to the 1961 census returns on occupation, 159,751 persons (58·25) of the tribe out of its total population of 274,244 were workers. The sex-wise break-up of workers showed that 85,474 (61·37) out of 139,286 males and 74,277 (55·04) out of 134,958 females formed the working force of the community. In rural areas, the proportions of workers for males and females were 61·67 and 56·16 as against 52·94 and 24·45 in urban areas. Labour participation rates were higher in rural areas, both for males and females, than in urban areas.

Table B on page 20 shows the occupational classification of the workers of the tribe as found during the 1961 census.

Nearly 93 per cent of the workers of the tribe had agriculture as their main activity. Their participation in this sector was more as cultivators (67·5) than as agricultural labourers (25·5). A study of 9,909 Mahadev Koli households from Thana, Nasik and Ahmadnagar districts showed that 8,013 of them owned or held land from government, 516 households cultivated others' lands on lease and 1,380 households did not possess any land for cultivation. Of the 516 households which cultivated others' lands, 482 households cultivated it on cash payment and 34 on a crop share. Among the 8,013 landholders 254 households had land less than one acre, 2,067 households had land between one acre and 4·9 acres, 2,341 households held land from 5 acres to 9·9 acres and 1,383 households owned land from 10 to 14·9 acres. There were 1,235 households who held land varying from 15 acres to 24·9 acres and 733 households had land 25 acres and above. Among the land-holders, there were

TABLE A

Distribution of population by sex and educational levels for rural and urban areas

Area	Educational levels								
	Illiterate			Literate without educational level			Primary or junior basic		
	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Rural	237,669	111,226	126,443	19,429	16,304	3,125	7,387	6,791	596
Urban	7,344	3,001	4,343	1,094	818	276	1,192	1,022	170
Total	245,013	114,227	130,786	20,523	17,122	3,401	8,579	7,813	766

Area	Educational levels						Total		
	Matriculation or higher secondary			Above matriculation					
	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F
1	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Rural	80	76	4	..	..	..	264,565	134,397	130,168
Urban .. .	43	43	.	6	5	1	9,679	4,889	4,790
Total .. .	123	119	4	6	5	1	274,244	139,286	134,958

TABLE B

Industrial classification of persons at work by sex for rural and urban areas

Category	Total			Rural			Urban		
	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I ..	107,787 (67.47)	56,720 (66.36)	51,067 (68.75)	107,583 (68.97)	56,585 (68.27)	50,998 (69.76)	204 (5.43)	135 (5.22)	69 (5.89)
II ..	40,772 (25.52)	20,057 (23.47)	20,715 (27.89)	40,160 (25.75)	19,771 (23.85)	20,389 (27.89)	612 (16.28)	286 (11.05)	326 (27.84)
III ..	3,055 (1.91)	2,350 (2.75)	705 (0.95)	2,892 (1.85)	2,199 (2.65)	693 (0.95)	163 (4.34)	151 (5.83)	12 (1.03)
IV ..	634 (0.40)	512 (0.60)	122 (0.17)	584 (0.37)	480 (0.58)	104 (0.14)	50 (1.33)	32 (1.24)	18 (1.54)
V ..	1,071 (0.67)	942 (1.10)	129 (0.17)	352 (0.23)	325 (0.39)	27 (0.04)	719 (19.13)	617 (23.84)	102 (8.71)
VI ..	802 (0.50)	683 (0.80)	119 (0.16)	615 (0.39)	545 (0.66)	70 (0.09)	187 (4.97)	138 (5.33)	49 (4.18)
VII ..	630 (0.40)	402 (0.47)	228 (0.31)	333 (0.21)	254 (0.31)	79 (0.11)	297 (7.90)	148 (5.72)	149 (12.72)
VIII ..	825 (0.52)	786 (0.92)	39 (0.05)	404 (0.26)	396 (0.48)	8 (0.01)	421 (11.20)	390 (15.07)	31 (2.65)
IX ..	4,175 (2.61)	3,022 (3.53)	1,153 (1.55)	3,069 (1.97)	2,331 (2.81)	738 (1.01)	1,106 (29.42)	691 (26.70)	415 (35.44)
Total workers (I to IX)	159,751 (100.00)	85,474 (100.00)	74,277 (100.00)	155,992 (100.00)	82,886 (100.00)	73,106 (100.00)	3,759 (100.00)	2,588 (100.00)	1,171 (100.00)

eight households which leased out their entire land to others; while 55 households cultivated a part of their lands and leased out the rest to others; 589 households cultivated their own land and also took others' land on lease. A lease holder paid 4 to 6 times the land revenue as rent besides bearing all the expenses of cultivation.

In the villages investigated in 1961, they grew paddy, nagli and varai as the chief crops and tur, urid, mug, khurasani and kulith as minor crops. Kulith and khurasani were grown mostly for raising cash while tur, urid and mug were grown to meet the food requirements of the family. The soil of their lands was red and black. At some places they were hilly, uneven and slopy. It was more suitable for growing coarse grains like nagli and varai. Their implements were nagar (wooden plough), kudal (digging), alwat (levelling), datal (for breaking up lumps), kurhad (axe) and koyata and vila (sickle). A few of them were spraying dusting powder and using improved varieties of seeds and fertilisers like ammonium sulphate and superphosphate but most of them appeared to be content with only compost manure. They had not taken to the iron plough, bunding and fencing.

In the summer months of April and May, leaves and grass are burnt on the land. This is called rab (burning the land) and it is completed before the rains set in. Rab is done in the case of paddy, nagli and varai cultivation. It is not undertaken for crops like tur, urid or mug. Ploughing (nagarani) is done with a pair of bullocks and is generally over by the second week of June. If the household has more land it may engage two pairs of bullocks or more so as to complete the ploughing in time. During sowing (perani) the seed is carefully broadcast over a small patch of the burnt land by hand. Then that patch of land is ploughed not too deep. The soil lumps are broken by means of wooden or bamboo sticks and the soil spread evenly over the seed whereby the seed goes a little deep in the soil and is not exposed to birds. During transplanting, paddy seedlings are planted in the ground by hand whereas nagli and varai are simply thrown on the land. These operations are done in mid-July or earlier and are over within a couple of days. When the seedlings take root, the grass has to be removed frequently with sickles. This benani (weeding) has to be done throughout August and sometimes in September too. The standing crops are then cut with sickles and tied into bundles. Kapani (cutting) takes place in October in the case of early varieties and in November in the case of late varieties. The last operation is called zodani (threshing). It takes place in November in case of the early variety and in December in case of the late variety. After threshing, the unhusked grain is carried home and stored in kangas (cylindrical containers of thick bamboo matting).

Food crops like paddy, nagli, tur, urid and mug are utilised mostly for domestic consumption. A part is kept in reserve as seed and the surplus, if any, is sold to shopkeepers or petty consumers in the village. If the stock is more, it is carried to the neighbouring market place where it may fetch higher prices. At times it is sold to merchants who occasionally visit the villages for the purpose. After keeping some part for consumption, crops like varai, khurasani and kulith are mostly sold for raising cash to meet the family expenditure. If the crops are poor the stock normally required for domestic consumption has also to be sold for raising cash. The marketing season for agricultural produce is December, January and February.

A large number of cultivators work personally in their fields along with other members of their family and engage out side labour only when necessary. To pay labourers' wages and for purchase of seeds, manure and other agricultural requirements they sell their surplus stocks and also approach a moneylender or borrow money from a co-operative society or from government in the form of tagai loans by mortgaging their land, cattle and jewells or against personal credit. Sometimes they are financed by a few well-to-do cultivators of the community if the amount asked for is within their means. Besides agricultural requirements, they have also to borrow money from private moneylenders in case there is a puja, marriage or death. The rate of interest charged by private moneylenders on such occasions is considerably more than ten per cent.

Persons engaged in the non-agricultural sector formed only 7 per cent of the 1961 working population of the tribe. Excepting livestock, forestry, fishing, hunting, plantations and other allied activities where 1·91 per cent of the workers were working and other services where 2·61 per cent of the workers were engaged, the percentage of workers engaged in each of the remaining non-agricultural activities was less than one per cent. Among the workers engaged in other services, a few literate persons were working as village level workers, village panchayat secretaries, talatis, clerks and teachers.

Among the 114,493 non-workers, 15,272 (13·34) were full-time students or children attending schools, 140 were seeking employment for the first time, 82 were employed before but were then out of employment and seeking work and 98,999 (86·47) were 'others'. These included housewives, small children and old and sick persons not in a position to go out and earn money.

A study of the income and expenditure of five Mahadev Koli households from Gopalpur showed that 65 per cent of their total income was spent on food, 15 per cent on clothing, three per cent on house repairs, two per cent on education, five per cent as interest on loans and 10 per cent on miscellaneous items such as smoking, drink and travelling. The income of these households varied from Rs. 600 to Rs. 1,500 per annum. Agriculture was the chief source of their income and no change in the traditional occupation (agriculture) was observed in any of the households studied. Three households were found doing subsidiary occupations such as rearing cattle, plying carts and selling milk. Two households had incurred debts to the extent of Rs. 100 at the end of the year. Most of the Mahadev Kolis do not maintain accounts.

Life cycle

Mahadev Koli women have no puberty rites. A girl who was come of age observes four or five days of menstruation and is deemed purified on the fourth or fifth day after taking a bath. She is not permitted to fetch water, cook food or do other household work during those days. There is no ceremony when a married woman conceives for the first time. She takes her usual diet and attends to her routine work. Delivery takes place at the husband's house. She can however go to her father's house in case he invites her. Usually an experienced dai or suin (midwife) of any caste available then in the village is employed. At Nyahale and Poshera, they mostly engage a dai of a Varli tribe for such purposes whereas at Gonde Khurd and Gopalpur, a Mhadev Koli dai is called in. In difficult cases, a trained midwife is brought from the nearest maternity centre. The midwife cuts the nal (umbilical cord) of the child with a sickle, thread or an arrow-head and buries it in the house in a pit near the bathing place and keeps a stone over it. She pats the head and the nose of the newborn child so as to give them proper shape and gives a hot water bath to mother and child. The midwife serves them for five days and is paid from Rs. 2 to Rs. 5 and some corn. The mother is held unclean for 12 days after childbirth and is deemed to be purified on the twelfth day after taking a bath. On this occasion, she takes a bath, goes to a well, bows before it and fetches water in a pot after which she is purified. She has a restricted diet, preferably a bhagar or a pej (gruel) of varai for the first five days. She resumes her work after three or four weeks but does not go for outdoor work till she regains her normal strength.

The first ceremoney after child birth is panchami (fifth day). On this occasion the midwife worships the picture of a female drawn on some rice grains spread on winnowing fan and the stone on the pit where the nal was buried. Neighbouring women and children are generally fed on this occasion and if circumstances permit friends and castemen are also feasted. The Mahadev Kolis of Poshera and Gonde name their children on any convenient day without any rite. Those from Nyahale consult a Brahman priest 12 days after child-birth and name their children on an auspicious day recommended by him. At Gonde and Poshera, Keshav, Anil, Govind, Balvant, Shantaram, Madhu, Arun, Subhash, Manohar, Yeshvant, Bhaskar, Prabhakar, Vasant and Dinkar are some names of their male children as against the names of old men like Kondu, Anaji, Mahadu, Hiru, Bhika, Pilaji, Fakira, Shiva, Dhondu and Kashiram. Similarly Padma, Manda, Kunda, Usha, Kamal, Baby, Vimal, Malati, Shakuntala, Suman, Indira, Tara and Manjula are some names of their female children as against the names of old women like Kusi, Maini, Rahi, Bhagi, Mathi, Umi, Champi, Girji, Bhuri, Ayali and Sai. The lower lobes of the ears of both male and female children are pierced four or six months after birth. They go to a goldsmith of the area for the purpose. The child's first hair (jawal) is cut four or six months from its birth. At Poshera, it is removed on any suitable day preferably in Asvin following childbirth. The childs maternal uncle cuts a few locks with scissors and presents some money to the child. The rest of the hair is shaved by a barber who is specially invited for the purpose.

When the child is growing up, care is taken to protect it from witches and spirits. The mother and the child avoid contacts with suspected witches and do not go near place believed to be haunted.

The Mahadev Koli do not approve of pre-marital sex relations within or outside the tribe since they apprehend that such relations may affect the social status of the tribe. A fair or a weekly bazar, a river or a public well or the nearby forest, where they go for collecting wild fruits, provide occasions for boys and girls getting to know each other. Where premarital sex relations occur, the persons concerned are mostly made to marry each other. If one of the two persons happens to be of a lower caste the person at fault is excommunicated from the tribe.

Marriage

Enthoven says Mahadev Koli girls were generally married between five and ten and boys between twelve and fifteen (p. 225). Capt. Mackintosh writing more than 100 years ago, said that the age of marriage then was six to ten. The Thana gazetteer gives the same age, (p 172). The Ahmadnagar gazetteer states that while

boys were married before 25, girls were married between 12 and 16 (p. 203). Ghurye's observation was that among the Mahadev Kolis as a whole the tendency was for girls to be married between the ages eight and fourteen and for boys between eleven and fourteen (pp. 108, 114). Field investigations in 1961 showed that boys were married between 16 and 18, and girls between 14 and 15. During the 1961 census, 1,143 (1·98) males out of 57,653 and 5,243 (9·28) females out of 56,499 in the age group 0 to 14 were returned as married among them. A study of 1,032 married couples of the tribe from Thana, Nasik and Ahmadnagar districts in 1961 showed that the husband was always older than the wife by 6 to 8 years. Among 339 married couples, the husband was found to be older than his wife by 1 to 5 years. In 462 cases, the difference varied from 6 to 10 years and in 230 cases it was more than 10 years. In one case the husband was found to be younger than his wife by three years. In his case, the husband's age was 42 and that of the wife 45. The maximum difference was found to be of 35 years. It was observed in four cases. In all these cases, the husband's ages were 70 and above.

Marriage with father's sister's or mother's sister's daughter is not allowed among the Mahadev Kolis. Marriage with mother's brother's daughter is permitted as also marriage with wife's sister. Usually marriages are settled by negotiations between parents on both the sides. The marriage takes place at the girl's house at sunset on any convenient day in Magh, Falgun or Vaishakh, preferably in the first two months. At Nyahale and Gopalpur, they celebrate the marriage on an auspicious day fixed by a brahman priest. The service of marriage is conducted either by a brahman priest (at Nyahale and Gopalpur) or by a caste priest, called medinga (at Gonde Khurd and Poshera). A brahman priest is paid from Rs. 5 to 10 while a medinga receives Rs. 2 or so. Monogamy is practised, but there is no objection to polygyny.

Marriage negotiations start from the boy's side. The boy's father with a few relatives and tribesmen goes to the girl's father with his proposal. If he receives a favourable reply, he entertains the guests with tea. This ceremony is called bolghada (asking for a girl) at Nyahale. After having a formal discussion on dej (bride price) which normally includes cash, corn and clothes, the day for betrothal is fixed. The betrothal, called sakharpuda or kunku lavane, takes place at the girl's residence. On this occasion the boy's father, his mother and any five suvasinis go to the girl's place, with a sari and a bodice as presents. Some elderly relatives and important men of the tribe in the village also accompany. On reaching there, the boy's mother applies kumkum on the forehead of the girl and presents her a sari, bodice and a fadki. After distributing sugar to all, guests from both the sides are entertained to tea.

After betrothal a few persons from the boy's side visit the girl's place on any convenient day to pay dej to her father. At Nyhale, it is Rs. 101 and two maunds of rice. At Poshera (Pawar pada), it consists of Rs. 300 and a bag of rice ; at Gonde and Gopalpur it is Rs. 101 or more. The cash and corn paid at these places as dej are not fixed. The boy's father has also to present at least two or three saris and bodies to the girl. Sometimes the girl's mother claims a sari. It is also not uncommon to offer a dhoti to her brother and a shela to her maternal uncle. After paying the dej, a few persons from both the sides meet together for the basta—purchasing clothes for the marriage. They go to a nearby market place and purchase saris, bodices and marriage coronets (bashing).

A few days prior to the day of marriage, three rites take place—halad, mandav and devadevi. On the day of halad, the boy and the girl are rubbed with turmeric paste at their houses. The paste has to be first applied by suvasinis then by the male and female members in the family and next by the tribesmen in the hamlet. The Mahadav Kolis of Nyahale perform this rite on any auspicious day as advised by a brahman priest. On the next day they erect a marriage booth (mandav) in the front yard of the house with the help of tribesmen in the hamlet or village invited for the purpose. Men erecting the mandav are then feasted by the boy's father. Family deities are worshipped on the same day. This ceremony is called devadevi. At the girl's place the mandav is erected on the day of marriage.

On the day of marriage, the boy goes to the girl's place for the ceremony either in a bullock cart or on horse-back in a procession. He has a katyar (dagger) in his right hand and wears a dhoti, shirt, pagote (white turban) and shoes or chappals. A marriage coronet (bashing) is tied to his forehead. The procession is headed by musicians. On reaching the bride's place, persons from the bridegroom's party go to a temple. In case there is no temple in the village, they rest at the site where usually the Holi is kindled. A few persons from the bridegroom's side go to the bride's house to offer her a sari, a bodice, a fadki, a garsoli, a bashing and feravi (toe-rings). The bride's parents, their relatives, guests and the villagers then go in a procession to the halting place of the bridegroom's party to bring the bridegroom for the marriage. On arrival there, the bride's father places a pagote

(headwear) on the boy's head and later requests him and his guests to proceed to his house for the marriage. As the bridegroom approaches the mandav the bride's mother waves an arati (a lighted lamp) before him. The next person to follow her is the bride's aunt. The bridegroom stands on a pat below the toran (bunting tied at the entrance). The bride is brought there and made to stand on another pat, facing the bridegroom. They hold each other's hands as directed by the priest. A curtain of cloth (jamnik) is held between them by two men of the tribe, preferably those related to the bride and the bridegroom. Their maternal uncles stand behind them. The priest recites the mangalashtaka or marriage verses. The curtain is removed, persons assembled shower akshata over the bride and bridegroom and musicians play. The pair is now declared as husband and wife. In well-to-do families betel leaves and arecanuts are distributed among the guests although it is not a general practice. Later on, the pair with hands still interlocked exchange their seats after moving five times around the same. The bride's maternal uncle unlocks the hands of the pair.

The bride and bridegroom are now brought into the mandav for the homa (sacred fire) ceremony and made to sit on pats The priest ties their garments into a knot. Some sticks of umbar, jambhul, mango and rui are kept in front of them and lighted by the priest as the homa. The priest recites verses and directs the bridegroom to put kumkum, haldi powder and a few drops of ghee in the homa. The pair moves five times around the homa and later bow down to the family deities. The priest then unties the knot of their garments.

The fal ceremony consists of offering gifts to the bride and bridegroom by their relatives. The bride and bridegroom sit in the mandav on two pats surrounded by their kinsmen to accept gifts of cash, utensils and clothes. When this is over, all the guests are entertained to a feast at the bride's place. After dinner, they spend the night in drinking, singing and dancing. Well-to-do families arrange a tamasha or entertainment programme. On the next day, the bridegroom and his party go to his village along with the bride. On their arrival the villagers are entertained to a feast at the bridegroom's place and in some cases a procession of the bride and bridegroom is also arranged. If the family is well-to-do, persons from other castes and tribes are invited for the feast. The ceremony ends on the following day after removing the coronets.

Expenses for the boy's marriage in case of an average family come to Rs. 500. Bride price, food, clothes and ornaments form the major part of this expenditure. The girl's father has to spend much less as the dej covers most of his expenses. His expenses, therefore, do not go beyond Rs. 100.

Widow re-marriage, called motur, is allowed by the tribe. A widow is permitted to marry a man of her own choice. She is however not allowed to marry the younger brother of her deceased husband. The re-marriage generally takes place at the widow's residence, preferably in the evening. At Nyahale, they celebrate it at about 4-00 a.m. A person desirous of marrying a widow has to pay some money to her parents or guardians as dej. At Gonde, he pays Rs. 51 ; at Nyahale he pays according to the contract between the two parties while at Poshera no dej is paid in such a marriage. A brahman priest or a medinga presides over this marriage. At Nyahale, a widow wears a new sari and a garsoli (necklace of black glass beads) and sits on a pat. Her intending husband sits along with the other persons assembled. A priest repeats verses and marks the forehead of the widow with vermilion. Thereafter the widow places a pagote on the head of her new husband. The priest then ties the ends of their garments into a knot, the couple bows before the elders present and the marriage is over. At Gonde and Poshera (Pawar pada) a widow and her new husband sit on pats opposite to each other, the preist recites some marriage songs and the marriage is over. The widow and her childern by re-marriage have no claim in the property of the first husband after re-marriage.

According to the Ahmadnagar gazetteer a widow bride has to take care that no married woman sees her until three days after re-marriage.

In case a boy is poor and is unable to spend money on his marriage, he serves his would be father-in-law for a period of five years after which he is married to the girl at the expense of her father. He has to pay no dej. After marriage, he may stay with his father-in-law or set up separately. In case the father desires his daughter to stay with him after her marriage, she is married to the boy who is willing to stay with her father as his ghar-jawai after he gets married with that girl. In such a case, the boy has to pay no dej and the expenses of his marriage are met by the girl's father.

Divorce

Divorce (dava) is permitted but not encouraged. During the 1961 census, there were 812 (0·58) divorced males and 123 (0·91) divorced females among the Mahadev Kolis. Ghurye says there was no tradition of

divorce among them, but nowadays they are taking place (p. 155). Enthoven mentions that divorces are allowed and practised by the tribe (p. 255).

Death rites

Among the Mahadev Kolis, burial is the traditional method of disposing of the dead. But nowadays cremation also is in vogue. At Poshera burial is the common practice whereas at Nyahale they prefer cremation. At the other two villages, the dead are either burnt or buried. The preliminaries include purchase of a new cloth for covering the body, making of a bier for carrying it and arrangement of fire-wood at the cremation ground if the body is to be cremated. The body is washed with warm water, haldi is applied, a silver or copper coin is placed in its mouth, it is then placed on a bier of bamboo (madha), and covered with a piece of new cloth. Gulal (red powder) is sprinkled on this cloth as well as on the forehead of the deceased. In a few families a garland of tulsi leaves and flowers is tied round the neck. At Gonde, a copper coin is waved round the face. In case the deceased leaves a wife behind, her bangles are broken, the kumkum on her forehead is wiped off and the garsoli worn by her since her marriage is removed from her neck before the body is shifted from the house. The body is carried on the madha to the burial or cremation ground in a sleeping position by any four men related to the deceased. If he has no relatives, it is carried by any four men of the tribe. A few persons from Gonde, however, carry the corpse on their hands or arms instead of on a bier. The chief mourner, often the eldest son of the deceased, walks in front with an earthen pot in hand in which is kept a burning dung cake. The funeral is attended by relatives, friends and all the other tribesmen in the locality except women.

When the procession reaches the visava (half-way resting place), the corpse is lowered down for a while. A dung cake is kept there and, after keeping a dahali or a branch of a mango tree and a copper coin on it, the bier is carried to its destination for disposal by the same four men after they change places. On reaching the cremation ground, the corpse is lifted from the bier and placed on the pyre with its head towards the south. Relatives place some cooked food on its lips and pour a few drops of water into its mouth with a mango leaf. The corpse is covered with faggots and set on fire by the chief mourner who thereafter moves round it five times and dashes the earthen pot on the ground, breaking it into pieces. Persons attending the funeral wait there till the corpse is completely burnt. Afterwards they take a bath at the nearest water place and go to the house of the deceased. After an hour or so, a few persons go to the place of cremation keep some grains of varai at the place where the corpse was burnt and return. In case of burial, a pit of a suitable size is dug north-south and the corpse is laid in it with its head towards the south and its feet towards the north. Some cooked rice is placed on its lips and a few drops of water put into its mouth. Persons assembled there throw handfuls of earth into the pit and fill it carefully. The chief mourner moves round the pit five times with an earthen pot in hand and dashes the pot on the ground near the deceased's feet, breaking it into pieces. In the evening, rice flour is spread on the spot where the deceased breathed his last. A pot of cooked rice, one of milk, one of water and one of cow's urine are kept on the rice flour and all these are covered with a big pot or a bamboo basket. Next morning, the covering is removed from its place so as to ascertain if there are any foot-prints or figures of a man, woman, animal or bird on the flour. It is believed that from that the family can get an idea about the deceased's next birth.

At Nyahale, on the day after death, men who carried the corpse on their shoulders take three bhakris of rice or nagli flour and four tubes of eranda (castor-oil plant) filled with cow's urine and milk and go to the place of visava and of cremation. They lay a bhakri with two tubes filled with cow's urine and milk at the place of visava on the same dung cake which was kept there on the previous day and keep the other two tubes and bhakris on the cremation ground at the place where the deceased was cremated. Of these, a bhakri and a tube of cow's urine are kept at the feet of the deceased and a bhakri and a tube of milk at the head of the deceased. When this is over they collect the ashes with jambhul twigs, keep the same there and return. On reaching the deceased's house, a coconut is divided into two parts, one of which is given to the chief mourner and the other to the four khandakaris who carried the corpse. The chief mourner waves the piece of coconut given to him around his face and body and throws it on the floor on a leaf. The khandakaris divide the piece of coconut given to them into four parts, distribute the same among themselves and repeat the same action. The chief mourner then collects all these pieces and throws them outside the house for the crows to eat. Post-death impurity is observed for ten days at Nyahale, and for twelve days at Poshera (Pawar pada) and Gonde. At Nyahale for unmarried persons it is limited to five days.

On the tenth day after death the dasakriya (tenth day ceremony) is done. On this occasion, the mourners go to the bank of a river, a pond

or a stream, shave their heads and faces, take a bath, prepare five pindas (balls) of rice flour and worship them. These pindas are then kept on a palas leaf for the crows to eat. At Nyahale, they engage a brahman priest for this rite and worship the pindas according to his directions. At Poshera (Pawar pada) and Gonde, a medinga presides over the ceremony. Sometimes any other man of the tribe who knows the rites officiates as a priest. According to Ghurye, the Mahadev Kolis of Poona district employ a Raval priest for this rite while in other areas they engage a brahman. He states further that recently Koli priests have also begun to figure occasionally on such occasions (p. 88).

The main obsequies, called divas, are performed on the thirteenth day after death. Relatives and friends of the deceased, including all the other tribesmen in the locality, are feasted in honour of the dead person. The food cooked on this day is first offered to the crows in the name of the deceased and then all the guests take their meals. After dinner the persons assembled there sit together for the dukhavata ceremony. The main item is the presentation of a new pagote to the chief mourner. A shela (a piece of cloth to be worn on the shoulders) is also presented nowadays. They do not observe shraddha or death anniversary in memory of the dead but offer cooked food to crows every year on Pitar Amavasya.

Generally no rites are performed for dead children : but for the rest all the rites described as above are observed by them in the same manner in case of burial as well as cremation. At Nyahale dukhavata is not held nor are pindas offered to crows for those who die unmarried. They also do not shave and perform divas for such persons, but feed five boys on the fifth day in the name of the dead person.

Religion

According to the Thana gazetteer, the Mahadev Kolis were lingayats in former days. Their marriage and funeral ceremonies were conducted by Raval Gosavis. In course of time, the Kolis were converted to brahmanism by priests sent from Poona during the supremacy of the Peshwas (pp. 168-169). Enthoven however mentions that among the Mahadev Kolis of Thana, the death ceremonies were conducted by Raval Gosavis. He also states that following the example of the Marathas, Sonars and others, they had lately begun to exclude brahmans and to employ members of their own tribe as priests (p. 254). Ghurye says that the complex of religious beliefs and practices current among the Mahadev Kolis is fundamentally the same as among the Kunbis, with the addition of a few gods and goddesses whom they have in common with the scheduled tribes of Maharashtra and one or two peculiar to them alone (p. 39).

During the 1961 census all the Mahadev Kolis returned in the State reported Hinduism as their religion. They worship tribal as well as Hindu gods. Hirva, represented by a bunch of peacock feathers in which is inserted a silver 'tak', is the first tribal god. Next is Chavata. His symbol is a piece of wood on which two small figures are shown. Among the Hindu gods they revere are Khandoba, Bhairav, Devi and Bhavani. The last two are female deities. The images of all these deities are carved on silver plates. They are kept in a basket or a wooden box (devara). Most of the Mahadev Kolis do not keep these images at their houses. They are found with the senior or the main branch of the family where other members of that family go for celebration. They can however bring them to their houses when required and return them after the worship is over. All these deities, including Hirva, receive annual, seasonal or occasional worship, especially on festival days, at the time of marriages or when there is any outbreak of epidemic or a member of the family falls ill. These deities are expected to protect them from witches, spirits, diseases, illness. Sometimes vows are made to them and a goat or a fowl is sacrificed. While worshipping the deities, they apply kumkum and haldi to the images, keep flowers on them, burn incense and offer them a coconut, sugar or gur like caste Hindus. Sometimes they believe that any illness which they or their cattle contract is the result of some god who is annoyed because his worship has been neglected. In such a case, they try to please him on the lines advised by the bhagat by making vows and sacrificing goats or fowls.

Even though a few members of the tribe say that in very old times their forefathers worshipped god Mahadev, and hence were known as Mahadev Kolis, it was found in the villages surveyed that they neither kept images of Mahadev in their houses nor considered him to be their household deity. At Nyahale an image of Mahadev is found in the open space of the village and is worshipped by the Mahadev Kolis on any one or two Mondays in Shravan and on any Monday during the nine days preceding Dasara. In the same village and also at Gopalpur there is a temple of god Maruti whom they worship occasionally, particularly on any Saturday and place coconut before him. At Poshera, there is a Gaodevi. She receives occasional worship. Mahadev, Maruti and the Gaodevi are reported to be the village deities and as such common to all the communities living in these villages. It is also learnt that Sri Krishna's birthday

is celebrated nowadays in a few Mahadev Koli families, especially at Nyahale.

The tribe believes in a number of spirits among whom Munjya, Khavis, Rauai and Mauli or Maulya may be mentioned. The first two are males and the rest are females. In case a person falls ill and all the usual medicines fail to give relief, the illness is attributed to the wrath of some unfriendly spirit. On such occasions, they approach a bhagat for magical treatment as they regard him to be their spiritual guide. They also believe in sorcery and witchcraft and dread the evil powers of a witch. If any witch starts her activities, an experienced bhagat is at once called for to prescribe a remedy.

Their beliefs and ideas about dreams and eclipses are more or less the same as those of the other castes of the region. They do not worship trees, but certain trees like mango, umber and tulsi are considered as sacred. The sun, the moon and the sky are considered as divine. According to them every one has to be born again and the life in the next birth depends upon the merit or sin that one has acquired during the present life.

Festivals

Shimga or Holi is the most important community festival which they celebrate collectively along with all the other tribes and castes of the hamlet. Pola is also important. They also observe Padva, Akshaya Tritiya, Naga Panchami, Dasara and Divali. These are leading Hindu festivals and they observe them more or less on the same lines as caste Hindus.

Padva falls on the first day of Chaitra. Like the caste Hindu communities of the region, a few persons of the tribe erect a gudhi at the front side of the house, quite close to the roof, apply kumkum and haldi, tie a garland of flowers and a few mango leaves and worship all the household deities. The gudhi is a long pole with a round pot and a piece of new cloth tied to its upper end. Most of the Mahadev Kolis do not erect a gudhi and observe any rite on this occasion, but they observe the day as a holiday, do not go for outdoor work and give complete rest to the cattle.

Akshaya Tritiya falls on the third day of the bright half of Vaishakh. A week prior to the day, seeds of rice, nagli, varai, kulith, khurasani and other grains are sown in a basket filled with earth and watered regularly. These seedlings are worshipped on this day and later on kept in the devara. The earth in the basket is thrown near a well or a tank. Some girls and married women stick these seedlings in their hair. Household deities are worshipped on this occasion. Among the Koknas, Varlis and Koli Dhors, this festival is known as Akhaja or Akhaji. Their way of celebration is however the same.

Naga Panchami is celebrated on the fifth day of the bright half of Shravan. On this occasion the picture of a nag (snake) is drawn on the wall of the house or on a pat and is worshipped by the head of the household. Among some families, the head of the household observes a fast during the day and takes his meals in the evening. The chief idea in observing this festival is that snakes may not do any harm to the family.

Pola is a festival of bullocks celebrated on the last day of Shravan. On this occasion, the bullocks are washed with water and decorated. Their horns are painted. In the evening, all the bullocks are assembled in the open ground of the village and later on taken to their masters' house where they are worshipped and given cooked food to eat. No work is taken from them on that day. Persons having no bullocks and those who are not associated with agriculture also observe the day as a holiday without performing any rites.

Dasara falls on the tenth day of the bright half of Ashvin. It is not so much important to the Mahadev Kolis as it is to caste Hindus. In the villages surveyed, most of the Mahadev Kolis do not observe this festival, but they abstain from outdoor work on this day. They worship their household deities. A few persons of the tribe however exchange apta leaves with elderly relatives and friends as a mark of respect.

Divali falls on the last day of Asvin and on the first day of Kartik. Like Dasara, this festival is also observed by the Mahadev Kolis only as a holiday, except offering worship to household deities. In a few well-to-do families, houses and huts are sometimes decorated. Boys and girls wear new clothes and enjoy fireworks. Outdoor work is mostly avoided and cattle are also given complete rest. Eating and drinking which form an integral part of the celebration are the only important programmes of the festival.

The festival of Mahibij is celebrated on the second day of the bright half of Magh. On this occasion, the Mahadev Kolis of Nyahale worship their household deities by offering a mixture prepared from small pieces of guava, sugarcane, coconut, gur and rice flour. This mixture is distributed as prasad. The Mahadev Kolis of Poshera prepare five lamps of rice flour and keep them burning in a straight line before the family deities. A bhakri freshly prepared from rice flour is then placed on the middle lamp. Next, all the male members in the family touch this bhakri by keeping

their hands on it and make off all the lamps kept there burning in a line.

Holi is the most important festival of Mahadev Kolis. All the communities in the hamlet come together, celebrate the festival collectively and make merry for a couple of days. It is also an important festival of all the scheduled tribes in the State. It falls on the full moon day of Falgun and is celebrated in every hamlet. A fire is lit at the common place in the hamlet and worshipped as a Holi. Five coconuts, called Vatya and five bhakris of rice flour called papadya are tied to the top of a pole. The firewood kept around the pole is then lighted and the fire is worshipped as Holi by a man who enjoys the hereditary right of doing so. Persons assembled around the Holi then throw pieces of firewood and dung cakes into it and worship it. A few persons of the tribe also take five rounds around the Holi. Generally each household in the hamlet is expected to tie at least five papadyas of rice flour to the pole on this occasion. Generally, Holi is lit in the evening after sun-set and is kept burning throughout the night. After offering worship to Holi, those who are given to drinking take liquor liberally till late at night. Family deities are also worshipped on this occasion. On the next day, they mostly indulge in taking liquor and throwing coloured water at each other.

Leisure and recreation

Drinking country liquor, chewing tobacco and smoking bidis are the chief recreational activities of men and singing folk songs that of the women folk. In the busy season, men get leisure only between 12 noon and 2-00 p.m. and after 8-00 p.m. Many a time after dinner in evening, they sit in groups at a common place of the hamlet gossiping. Those who are accustomed to drinking take country liquor. Being agriculturists, they have more leisure during the summer months. This leisure is enjoyed by them by arranging bhajans very frequently. At Gonde, they have organised one dramatic club. It stages entertainment programmes especially during summer either in the village or in the neighbourhood. It is said that they often stage plays on the life of Umaji Naik, Sant Kanhopatra and Madhavrao Peshwa. Besides this ' Khedegaon ', ' Mazi Jamin ' and 'Gokulcha Chor ' are some performances staged by them so far. Women do not participate in these programmes, consequently males play female roles as well in all their performances.

A radio receiver has nowadays been supplied to some villages by the state government. It is set up either in the village panchayat office or in the school building or in the house of the sarpanch. Cinema films are exhibited in their areas by the block development authorities. Women do not generally listen to the radio programmes. The cinema show is however attended by a large number of men and women.

Educated members of the tribe, old and experienced persons among them and those who are financially well-off do not form a separate group in the society or the community. On the contrary they look upon others as equal in all matters and try to render every possible help to them as and when occasion arises. Those who are extremely addicted to drinks and are known for bad morals are however regarded as lower in the social scale and marital relations with such a family are as far as possible avoided. Women are given due respect by men and are treated as equals in every walk of life. They manage all domestic affairs and also go out for work along with the menfolk. They are consulted at the time of marriages and their advice especially at the time of the partition of property is many a time valued and honoured.

Inter-community relationship

Ritually, Mahadev Kolis do not suffer any social disability. They receive traditional services from the dhobi (washerman), the nhavi (barber) and the brahman priest. They fetch water from public wells along with caste Hindus. They have free access to the temples in the locality. Their entry into the houses of caste Hindus is also not restricted in any way. Caste Hindus attend their marriage ceremonies and also visit their houses as and when occasion arises.

The Mahadev Kolis enjoy a fairly high social position among all the other scheduled tribes and scheduled castes of the region. They regard themselves as superior to the Koknas, Koli Malhars, Thakurs, Varlis, Pardhis, Gavits, Bhils, Koli Dhors, Katkaris and all the other scheduled tribes, as well as the scheduled castes of the region. They do not accept food from any of them. All these tribes and castes also accept this ranking and consider the Mahadev Kolis to be of a higher status. In terms of a caste frame of reference, the Mahadev Kolis are considered to be lower in status than Marathas, Kunbis, Wanis, and such other castes of the region They also accept this ranking. But they claim superiority to castes like Son Kolis. It is doubtful whether the latter accepts this ranking.

Social control and leadership

Panchas regulate the affairs of the community. Their chief responsibility is to guard the social prestige of the community and see that its status is in no

way lowered because of the antisocial activities of a few. These panchas keep a watch on all such activities and, if found necessary, punish the offender. They also settle quarrels between different members of the community mostly by offering advice to the parties concerned. If no compromise is arrived at, the party at fault is fined.

Disputes within the family or among relatives are generally settled by elderly members of that family, but disputes involving other members of the community are referred to the panchas. If persons belonging to different hamlets or villages are involved in any issue, panchas of these hamlets or villages meet together and settle the issue. In the investigated villages, each hamlet had separate panchas. The panchas are not formally elected or appointed. Generally elderly persons who command respect and carry some influence, because of their age, experience, character, wealth or any other reason are looked upon or treated as the panchas of the community. If any of them fails to retain the confidence of the members of the community another suitable candidate is substituted for the purpose. These panchas mostly deal with social disputes relating to marriage, divorce, adultery, food and drink. Offenders are fined in case no compromise is arrived at between the parties concerned. The amount of fine varies from Rs. 5 to Rs. 15 and is spent on drinks or caste feasts. In case the amount is more it is utilised for some useful purpose such as repairs to a well or a road in the village. According to the customary laws of the tribe inter-caste marriages are mostly prohibited by them Consequently any person taking a bride or a boy from any other tribes is declared an outcaste. In one of the villages studied, there was a case of a boy taking a Varli wife. He was pronounced an outcaste and left the village. In the investigated villages, these panchas had no chief to supervise and regulate their meetings. On such occasions, all the panchas of the tribe were expected to come together and organise the meeting for the settlement of the issue. At Poshera and Gonde, such issues were generally disposed of on the occasion of a death ceremony in the hamlet when most of the leading members or panchas of the tribe from neighouring villages would gather. Such a gathering of panchas during a death ceremony is called a bhandara. Important cases are however disposed of by arranging special meetings. Ghurye mentions that even when there is no such standing arrangement of a caste panchayat, the divas of any Mahadev Koli is invariably a day for them when all outstanding complaints are brought before the gathering (p. 59). The proceedings of the meeting are oral and its procedure is very simple. The parties concerned are summoned to present their cases before the panchas. After examining both the parties, the panchas think over the issue for a while and arrive at a unanimous decision which is later on communicated to both the parties. Women do not take part or attend such meetings unless she has to tender evidence, in which case a man of the tribe is specially sent to summon her.

According to the Thana gazetteer the Mahadev Kolis had in former times a tribunal named gotarni or family council for settling social disputes and punishing breaches of morals and social rules. It had six members including a president, a deputy and a constable. These officers were hereditary and the holders acted under the authority of the chief Koli naik who formerly lived at Junnar. The president, after consulting the chief naik, ordered the trial of any one accused of a breach of the rules and no one was taken back into the caste till he had eaten from the same dish from which the president had eaten. The deputy helped the president and acted for him when he was away (pp. 172-3). No such tribunal or institution was observed in the villages studied in 1961.

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VARLI

The Varlis rank fourth among the 40 scheduled tribes in Maharashtra by size of their population. Wilson thinks the word comes from 'Varal', a small patch of cultivated land, and means an uplander. It is connected by others with 'Varalat', the sixth of the ancient seven Konkans (Enthoven III 445). Rajwade, V. K., the well-known historian—derives the word from 'Varud' as mentioned in Katyayana's Vartikas thus: Varud—Varudaki—Varulai and Varuli and finally Varli (Save, p. 485). Enthoven describes Varlis as a sub-division of the Bhils (1-156). Wilson says Varlis and Thakurs are off-shoots of the Koli tribe (Enthoven II 244). A legend current among the Varlis says God once wanted to distribute certain gifts among men. One man got a book and so he became a brahman. Another got a spade, so he was named a gardener. A third received a bamboo; he was called a Dhed as he made baskets out of the bamboo. A fourth got bellows and became a blacksmith. A Varli was given a plough and therefore he became a kulambi, meaning a farmer.

At present, the Varlis do not show any affinity with Bhils, Thakurs or Kolis. On the other hand, they regard themselves to be socially superior to Bhils and Thakurs.

The tribesmen believe they are called Varlis because they used to spread 'varal' (brushwood) for rab (Save, p. 6). In Asave (Dahanu) and Poshera (Mokhada), the tribe is referred to as Varli by members of its own community as well as by other inhabitants of the region. The members of the tribe living there, however, do not know as to why they are called Varlis.

According to the Thana gazetteer the Varlis have three divisions — Murdes, Davars and Nihirs. The first two eat and drink together and inter-marry; but they neither eat, drink, nor marry with the Nihirs (p. 183). The 1911 census of India added one more division—Shuddha or Pure (VII, Bombay, part I, 310). The tribesmen add some more sections. According to them there are also Dongar Varlis, Ghat Varlis, Pathar Varlis, Malhar Varlis, Kokni Varlis, Zanjare Varlis and Pavar Varlis. They are however unable to explain as to why they are so designated. These names would suggest close association with particular areas such as Dongar (hill), Ghat (hill ranges) and Pathar (plain). The Koli Malhar and the Koknas do not recognise any such sections like Malhar Varlis or Kokni Varlis. The Shuddha Varlis say they are socially superior to the other groups of the community. The Nihir Varlis consider themselves superior to all the other sections of the tribe, including the Shuddha Varlis. Consequently, intermarriages among the various groups are mostly avoided although they are not prohibited.

The extent of Gujarati influence on the Varli language would seem to show that they moved towards the south from the north. Many Varlis claim that their original home was in Nagar Haveli in the Daman territory. They say that they came down either from Dharampur or Daman territory (Save 5). According to the Varlis in Poshera their forefathers originally belonged to Dharampur from where they migrated to Poshera in search of livelihood. They say they are now living in the village for four or five generations.

While the Varlis are also found in the adjoining States of Gujarat (97,710) and in Dadra and Nagar Haveli (32,994), Maharashtra has the highest population of the tribe among all the States in India where it is declared as a scheduled tribe.

In Maharashtra, they are notified as a scheduled tribe in all the 13 districts of the Bombay and Poona divisions. During the 1961 census, they returned a population of 243,980 persons (123,380 males and 120,600 females) from 10 out of the 13 districts. Of these, 231,525 (95·00) were returned from rural areas and 12,455 (5·00) from urban.

Thana accounts for 215,851 (88·00) of their total population in the State. Nasik has 22,240 (9·00). Greater Bombay had 5,458. In each of the remaining seven districts, their population was less than 350. Three districts, Satara, Sangli and Ratnagiri, did not report any Varli population in 1961. Within Thana, they were concentrated in Dahanu (58,686), Talasari (35,488), Jawhar (35,079) and Palghar (19,090).

The figures on page 32 show that the population of the tribe has been increasing from 1891. The slight fall in Thana in 1921 may have been due to the influenza epidemic of 1918.



A Varli smoking a chillim

Census year	Population of Varlis	
	Maharashtra	Thana district
1891 ..	....	79,031
1901 ..	....	89,313
1911 ..	146,972	111,864
1921 ..	169,491	107,630
1931 ..	....	118,849
1941 ..	....	124,847
1961 ..	243,980	215,851

The 1961 sex ratio for the tribe was 977. The 1961 returns showed they had 103,823 (42·55) persons in the age-group 0-14; 104,949 (43·02) in the age-group 15-44 and 35,151 (14·41) in the age-group 45 plus.

Kinship

The Varli family is patrilocal with a patronymic designation. A girl goes to stay with her husband on marriage. A study of 2,059 Varli households from Thana and Nasik districts showed that 1,050 (51·00) of them consisted of father, mother, unmarried sons and daughters. Married sons were found staying with their parents in only 178 households (8·00). Other relatives were found living in 231 households (11·00). These included father's or mother's widowed sisters, mother's widowed mother, father's brothers, and married daughters with their husbands. Of the same 2,059 households, 787 (38·00) had 1 to 4 members, 918 (45·00) had 5 to 7 members, 278 (13·00) had 8 to 10 members and 76 (4·00) had more than ten members. Only 79 out of the 2,059 households were found to have female heads of households. In the absence of the father, his widow looks after the property and the management of the household till her children come of age. Sons inherit the property of their father in equal shares. In case the sons want a separation during the life-time of their father, the property is divided equally between the sons and the father after making some provision for the marriage of unmarried sons and daughters. After the death of the father, each of the sons gets an equal portion of the father's share. In case the widowed mother desires to live separately from her sons, a piece of land is given to her for her maintenance.

The following kuls were found among the Varlis during the 1961 survey: Achari, Budhar, Bhowar, Chothe, Darode, Douda, Dongarkar, Dhodi, Dhangada, Fupane, Garel, Gawate, Ghatal, Hadal, Kamdi, Khutade, Kharpade, Kolha, Karpat, Mashi, Mor, Metha, Rade, Tumda, Valvi, Viskadya, Vartha, Vangad, Vagh, and Zingade. The following clans were also recorded by them in different areas of the State during the 1961 census: Barat, Bamhane, Babar, Bhurkund, Chavan, Dodaka, Gavari, Gavare, Girandhala, Gadag, Jadhav, Nadga, Nankar, Pavar, Pardhi, Raut, Sapta, Tare, Thalekar, Thakaria, Vaijal and Vajavada.

Dhodi and Pardhi are the names of distinct tribes in the region. Valvi is the name of a sub-tribe of Dhanka as well as Gamit. Jadhav and Chavan are common among Marathas. Jadhav is also common among the Koknas, the Koli Mahadev and the Koli Malhar. Babar, Bhawar, Dorgarkar, Dhangada, Gadag, Govari, Ghatal, Hadal and Vartha are found among the Koli Malhar. Some are either names of animals such as Vagh (tiger), Kolha (jackal), and Nadag (bear), or names of birds such as Mor (peacock), or names of fruits such as Dodaka. A few names like Dongarkar and Thalekar are local.

Every kul forms an exogamous division with others. In case a boy is adopted by a man belonging to a different kul, he acquires the kul of his new father and is prohibited from marrying a girl from his real father's kul as well as from that of his new father. Adoption is not popular among the Varlis. In case his wife is barren, a man can marry another. No case of a boy given in adoption was noticed in the villages studied.

Kin on the mother's side play important ritual and social roles. The maternal uncle has to cut the first hair of a newly born child. At marriage the maternal uncles of the boy and the girl stand behind the couple. The girl's father's sister is not assigned any social role during marriage. But she has a right to a sari from the boy's father.

Dwelling

Poshera village has one main gaothan and 12 hamlets. The gaothan had 55 households of Mahadev Kolis and six of Muslims in 1961. Of the 12 hamlets, one was inhabited exclusively by Varli households (30), one by Katkaris (36), one by Mahars (8), and one by Ka Thakurs. The remaining eight hamlets were inhabited by Katkaris (13), Varlis (57), Mahadev Kolis (63), Ma Thakurs (39) and Koknas (16). The village lies in a hilly and forest area at about six miles from Mokhada, the headquarters of the tehsil, and is connected with it by a kachcha road.

The population of Asave resides in nine localities. The gaothan had 20 households of Varlis in 1961, two of Dublas and two of Dhodias, in addition to

a few households of caste Hindus. Two hamlets were inhabited exclusively by Varli households (45). The remaining six hamlets were inhabited mostly by Varlis; a few households of Dhodia (12), Kumbhar (10), Dubla (4), Mangela (3), Ghati (2), Brahman (2) and Maratha (1) were also living there. The village is situated in a forest area on the Dahanu-Jawhar road at a distance of about four miles from Dahanu, the tehsil headquarters, and is connected with it by a good road. The forests, agricultural lands, saw mills, timber depots and fruit gardens in the area provide the people of the region good jobs throughout the year, especially at the time when they are free from their major activity. As a result the Varlis living in these villages now lead a settled life and do not show any wandering or shifting habits as reported by the Thana gazetteer in 1882.

Dwelling and dress

The house of an average Varli family is often a square or a rectangular single-room structure on an earth foundation with a partition inside dividing the area into two compartments. The front portion is the living area and the rear one is used as a kitchen. The walls of the hut are of karvi reeds and plastered with mud and cow dung. The roofs are sloping and have grass or tiles. The hut has one or two doors but no windows. Cattle and goats are often kept in one corner of the main room. Every house has some open space either in the front or at the rear. A few households grow val, chilli or pumpkin in the open space. A stone kept outside the hut is used as a bathing place. Well-to-do Varlis, however, live in houses having three or four rooms, a separate kitchen, a cattle-shed, a verandah in front and an enclosure around. Even these houses have no windows. Some designs drawn by hand were observed on the front walls of some houses. It was said these were drawn on Nava day when the new crop was worshipped and eaten. A study of all the 30 Varli houses in Radyacha pada of Poshera showed that barring one storeyed house with brick walls all the other houses in the hamlet had walls of karvi reeds; eleven houses had thatched roofs and 19 had tiled roofs; eleven houses had separate sheds for cattle, two houses had stone foundations and five houses had an enclosure or a fence around. All the houses had one or two doors but no windows.

Varli men wear a langoti, a kopri or bandi, and a pagote (turban). Young men wear a dhotar, a kamij and a topi. Varli women wear a lugade, a choli and a fadki. The sari is worn round the loins and is taken tightly between the two thig. to cover the parts of the body from the waist down to the knees. It is taken round the left shoulder and the end brought to the waist from the back. There is no special dress for ceremonial occasions for men or women.

Men keep short hair and moustaches, but shave the beard. At Asave, a head of a cultivating family does not shave his beard and head from the period the paddy is sown till transplantation is over. Women do their hair by parting it in the middle and tie it behind in a knot.

The ornaments worn by Varli men and women are made of silver, copper, brass, glass and beads, A few well-to-do Varlis use gold ornaments also. Varli man does not usually wear any ornament. Those in good circumstances wear a kargota or sakhali round the waist, pagare or kadi in the ears, a locket called peti around the neck and an anguti. Women wear bangadya, gajare and kankan around the wrists and vela and bajiband around the arms. Necklaces include gathi or garsoli, saree, mithali and putalya. They also wear fuli on the nose, lavanga in the ears and jodavi or masolya on the toes. Barring a few glass bangles, necklaces and toe-rings, the other ornaments are worn by them on occasions. Unmarried girls wear ear-rings and one or two necklaces of beads.

Some women of Radyacha pada had a flower tattooed on their forehead and a picture of a Gavalan (milk-maid) and a chariot on their forearms.

Food and drink

Rice, bhakri of nagli and dal or besan preferably of urid is the staple food of Varlis. Sometimes they cook pumpkin, chavali, val, brinjal and onion. When the stock of foodgrains is exhausted, they cook the roots and leaves of some wild trees as vegetables and also eat a number of wild fruits such as kadukand, umbar, jambhul, karvand and avala. The Varlis take mutton, fowl and eggs but abstain from beef. Usually they take two meals a day — one at about 12 noon and the other at about 8 p.m. with a light breakfast in the morning consisting of a nagli bhakri and a chutni of onion and chilli. Sometimes they take fish curry, mutton, or vegetables in place of dal. Very few have milch cattle and so milk and milk preparations have no place in their usual diet.

Country liquor is taken by a large number of Varlis, including women. They take it whenever they find leisure, preferably in the evening before going to bed. Tea is taken in the morning or in the

evening after returning from the day's labour. Gur is added but not milk. Some Varlis take nagli gruel in the morning before going out for field work.

Their kitchen utensils are made of brass, aluminium, nickel, iron or clay. A jate, a musal and ukhal a lantern or wall lamp, a soop and a few baskets are the other possessions. A cultivating household will have a few cattle, some fowls, and some implements. Foodgrains are stored in big earthern pots or in baskets or in kangas or dholis made of bamboo chips. None of the households studied had a chair, a table, a watch, a clock or a dry cell torch light.

Hygiene and sanitation

The yard near a Varli hut is usually dirty with rubbish and cow dung lying around. The floor of the hut is often dirtied by fowls and goats. In the absence of windows, there is not enough free air and light. In the rainy season almost every open place of a hamlet gets muddy. The floor gets wet and the water used for cooking and drinking often gets dirty as it invariably gets mixed with mud. The Varlis do not bathe or wash their clothes regularly. Women do not apply oil to their hair for months together. It is mostly on the occasion of a marriage or a festival that they tie their hair and look better dressed.

The Varlis often attribute any illness to some unfriendly spirit or neighbour. They first consult a bhagat and take a serious or difficult case to the nearest hospital if the bhagat directs them to do so. A bhagat has no objection to a patient going to a medical aid centre or a private doctor, nor does he feel that his position is lowered or his authority challenged by such an act. Treatment by a bhagat does not cost them much; they also get it on the spot. In fact it is the only medical aid available to them in their villages. They have to walk long distances on foot to go to a dispensary and sometimes have to wait there for hours if the doctor is busy or has gone out. Treatment by a private doctor is not within their means. A large number of Varlis nowadays get themselves inoculated at the time of epidemics like cholera and small-pox breaking out.

Language and literacy

Earlier writers have expressed different views about the language spoken by the Varlis. The Thana gazetteer states that their speech differed little from that of the Kunbis. They always speak Marathi except in the extreme north where Gujarati is spoken (p. 183). Grierson included Varli in the Marathi dialects of the Konkani group. He held that the Varlis of Thana were also Bhils and their language must originally have been of the same kind as other Bhil dialects and Khandeshi. In course of time it had been so largely influenced by Marathi that it must now be classed as a dialect of that language except in the extreme north where it is stated to be a form of Gujarati. K. P. Kulkarni says that the Varli dialect has been influenced by Gujarati as perhaps these people came down to the Konkan from Gujarat. Save holds that the Varli dialect is not only influenced by Gujarati and Marathi (including Konkani) but it has also some peculiarities of its own (pp. 187-189).

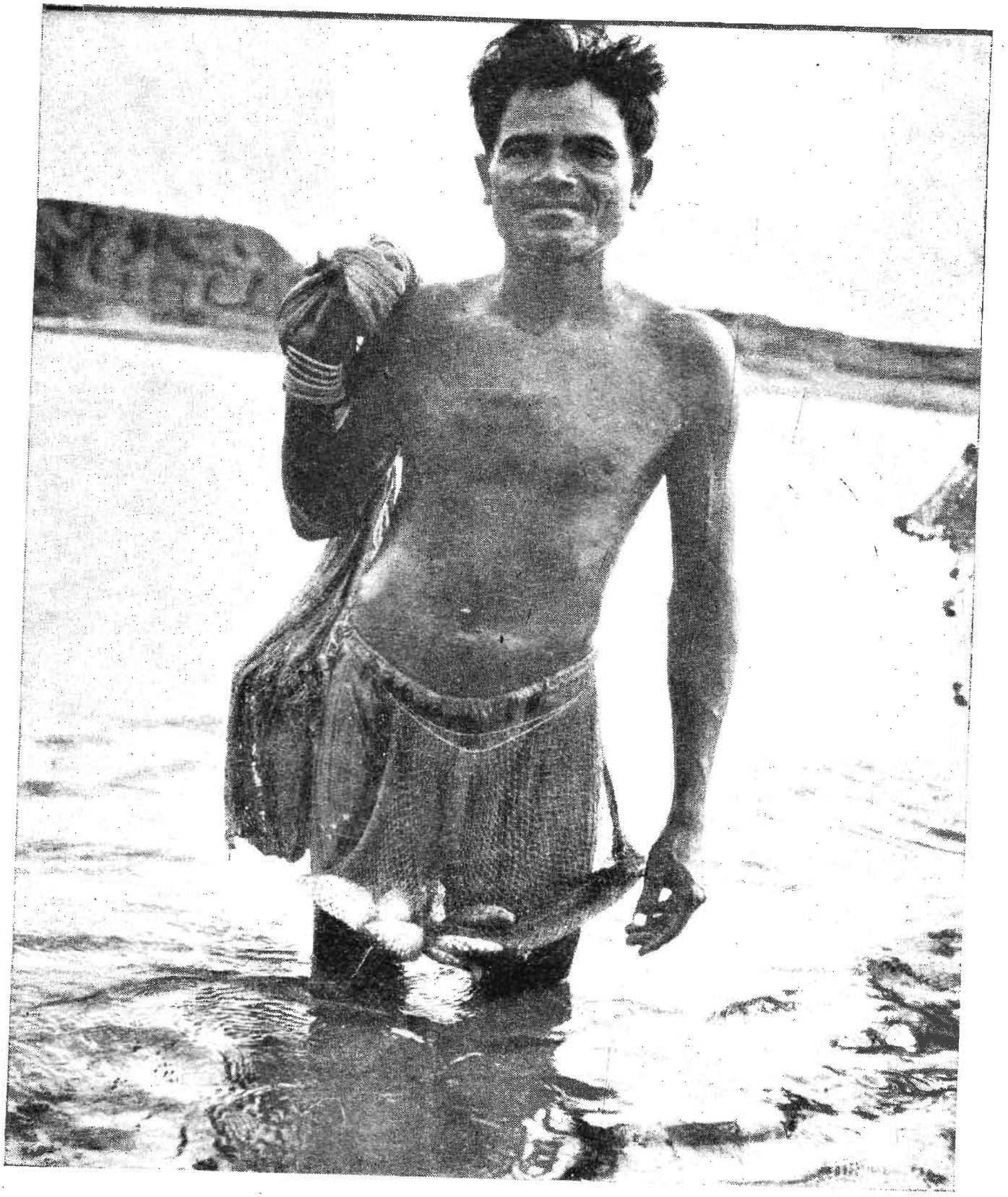
During the 1961 census, the Varlis in Maharashtra returned ten mother-tongues out of which Marathi was reported to be spoken by 242,744 persons (99·00). Gujarati with 1,071 speakers was the second numerically important mother-tongue of the tribe and next to that was Varli. The speakers of Varli were only 94. Speakers of Marathi were comparatively more in Thana district and that of Gujarati in Greater Bombay district whereas all the 94 speakers of Varli were returned from Nasik district. Subsidiary languages spoken in addition to the mother-tongue included Gujarati (1,213), Hindi (727), Marathi (189), Kannada (103), English (50), Telugu (6), and Bengali (1). In the investigated villages the Varlis spoke Marathi among themselves as well as with outsiders.

The 1961 literacy rate for Varlis was 4·72 as against 0·55 in 1931. The following table shows their educational level in 1961 :—

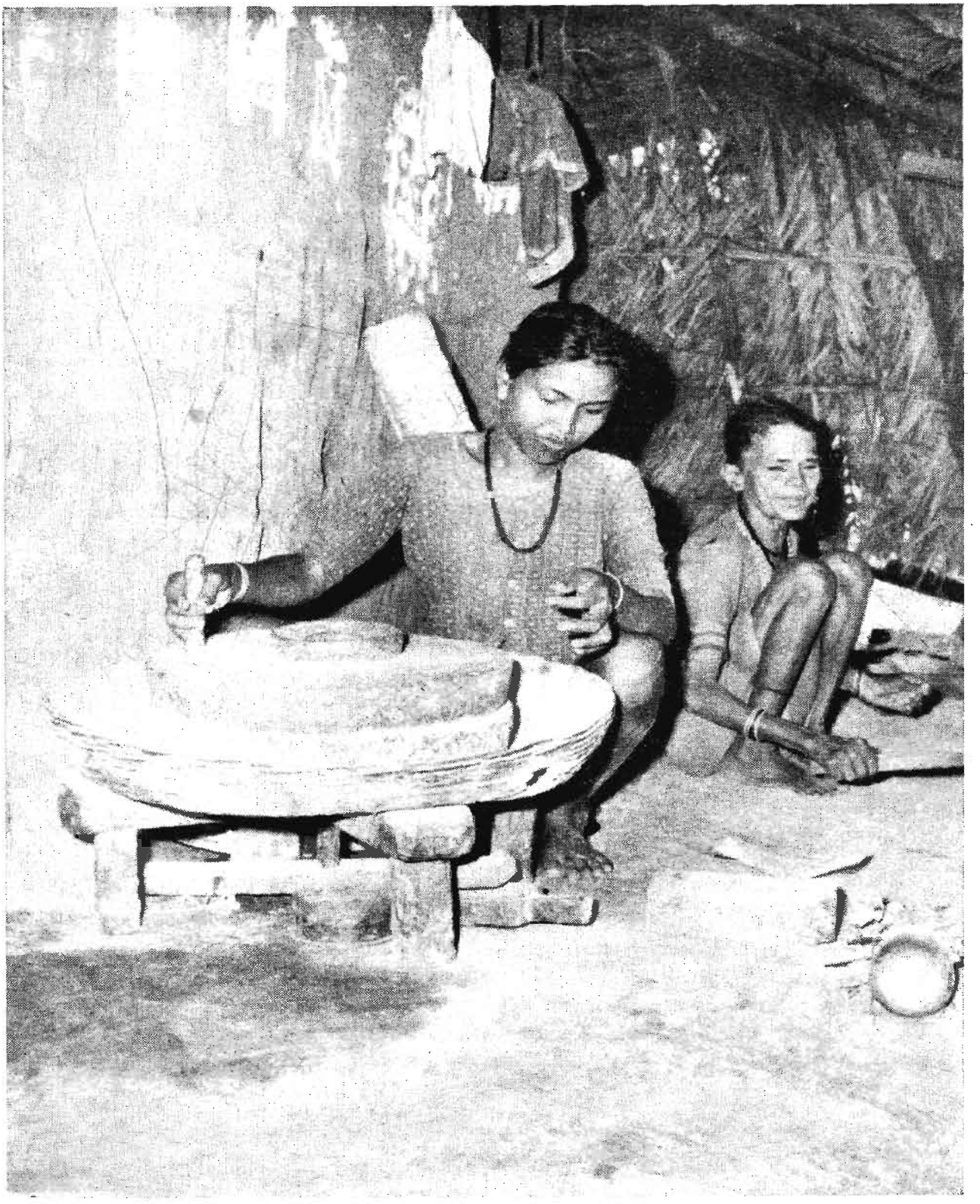
Educational standard	Males	Females	Persons
Illiterate ..	113,833 (92·26)	118,642 (98·38)	232,475 (95·29)
Literate without educational standard.	7,564 (6·13)	1,805 (1·50)	9,369 (3·84)
Primary or junior basic ..	1,947 (1·58)	138 (0·11)	2,085 (0·85)
Matriculation or higher standard.	35 (0·03)	15 (0·01)	50 (0·02)
Above matriculation or higher standard.	1 (0·00)	Nil	1 (0·00)
	123,380 (100·00)	120,600 (100·00)	243,980 (100·00)



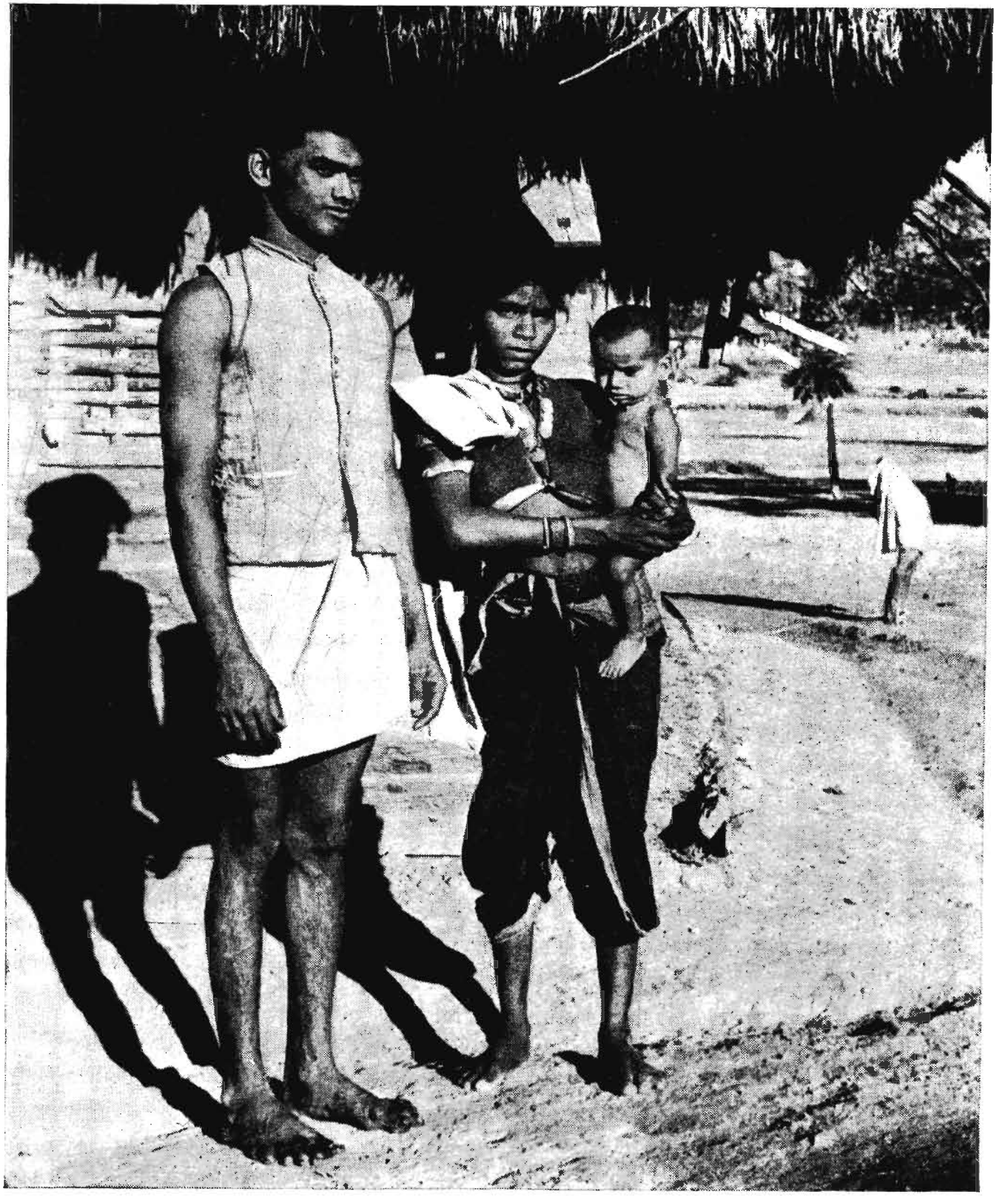
A Varli family from Thana



A Varli with fishing net (Thana)



Varli women grinding corn



A Kokna family from Thana

Thus only 2,085 Varlis (0·85) had completed primary education as against 1·92 per cent among the scheduled tribes population of Maharashtra. The percentage of full time students to the total population was 1·22 among the Varlis as against 11·85 among the general population and 3·60 among the scheduled tribes population in the State.

The sex-wise break-up shows that among the Varlis the 1961 literacy percentages were 4·72 for the total, 7·73 for males and 1·62 for females as against 7·21 for the total, 12·55 for males, and 1·75 for females among the entire scheduled tribes population of Maharashtra. Important neighbouring tribes like Koli Malhar (7·76), Koli Mahadev (10·66) and Kokna (9·52) had higher literacy rates for the total than the Varlis.

Economic life

The Thana gazetteer said that in the 1880s the Varlis did not follow a regular craft or calling. None of them was found in the army, in the police, or in any branch of government service except in the forest department. Those who had pledged their land and whose assessment was not paid by a money-lender, were employed during the rainy season in tillage, and during fine weather, in gathering and selling grass and fire-wood to pay their assessment. Some were the born servants of some rich money-lender or kunbi to whom they had pledged their labour or had been pledged by their father for 12 or 15 years in consideration of having their marriage expenses paid (pp. 183-84). The 1911 census of India (VII, Bombay, part I, 310) reported that the Varlis generally made their living by collecting and selling grass and fire-wood and by hunting and that a few were employed in tillage during the rains. Save observes that there is not a family among the Varlis which is not directly or indirectly connected with some sort of farming (p. 203). The 1961 field study of the tribe revealed that agriculture was the main economic activity of the tribe and most of them nowadays made their living either as cultivators or as agricultural labourers.

During the 1961 census, 146,148 persons (59·90) of the total population of the tribe were returned as workers. Out of 123,380 males, 76,929 (62·35) were workers and out of 120,600 females, 69,219 (57·40) were workers. The industrial classification of these workers as found during the 1961 census was as follows :—

Category	Total			Rural			Urban		
	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I	91,723 (62·76)	46,570 (60·54)	45,153 (65·23)	91,208	46,287	44,921	515	283	232
II	40,521 (27·73)	20,669 (26·87)	19,852 (28·68)	39,421	20,058	19,363	1,100	611	489
III	4,370 (2·99)	2,903 (3·77)	1,467 (2·12)	3,746	2,486	1,260	624	417	207
IV	515 (0·35)	371 (0·48)	144 (0·21)	496	357	139	19	14	5
V	1,862 (1·28)	1,579 (2·05)	283 (0·41)	1,063	915	148	799	664	135
VI	371 (0·25)	326 (0·42)	45 (0·06)	276	251	25	95	75	20
VII	704 (0·48)	420 (0·55)	284 (0·41)	355	197	158	349	223	126
VIII	1,026 (0·70)	874 (1·14)	152 (0·22)	404	381	23	622	493	129
IX	5,056 (3·46)	3,217 (4·18)	1,839 (2·66)	3,350	2,181	1,169	1,706	1,036	670
Total No. of workers	146,148 (100·00)	76,929 (100·00)	69,219 (100·00)	140,319	73,113	67,206	5,829	3,816	2,013

For nearly 90 per cent of the total workers, agriculture was the chief source of their income. Of them, 62 per cent worked as cultivators and 27 per cent as agricultural labourers. Yet a large number of cultivators did not possess land of their own for cultivation. A study of 20,047 Varli households from Thana showed that 4,224 (21·07) owned or held land from government for cultivation, 10,280 households (51·28) cultivated others' lands on lease or contract either on cash payment or on a crop share and 5,543 households (27·65) did not possess any land for cultivation. Scrutiny of the 4,224 landholders indicated that 241 households (8·07) had land less than one acre, 3,499 households (82·83) had land between 1 acre and 9·9 acres, 205 households (4·85) held land from 10 to 14·9 acres and 106 households (2·50) held land raising from 15 acres to 24·9 acres. There were 73 households holding land 25 acres and above. Among the same 4,224 landholders, there were 1,253 households who cultivated their own land and also took some land on lease. Twenty-two households cultivated a part of their land and leased out the rest to others, one household leased out its entire land to others and three households cultivated a part of their land, leased out the rest of their land to others and also took some land on lease from others.

Of those engaged in the non-agricultural sector, 4,370 persons (2·99) were in mining, quarrying, livestock and forestry; 1,862 persons (1·28) in manufacturing other than household industry and 5,056 persons (3·46) in other services.

Among the 97,832 persons returned as non-workers 5,416 were full-time students or children attending school, 53 were seeking employment for the first time, 105 were employed before but were then out of employment and seeking work, and 92,258 were dependants.

In the investigated villages most of the Varlis followed their hereditary occupation of agriculture and agricultural labour. Paddy, nagli, and varai are the chief crops. Urid and tur occupy secondary places with khurasani and kulith following in that order. A few Varlis also grow vegetables which consist mainly like pumpkin, onion, brinjals, val and chavali around their houses for home consumption. Most of these vegetables are seasonal and available during the late monsoon weeks and in spring. They raise food crops only for domestic and local consumption. Cash crops do not as a rule, find a place in their economy. The soil is fit for paddy and nagli and the rain is the only source of water supply for cultivation. The crop pattern has not, therefore, undergone any change for years.

During April and May, small patches of land are covered with dry leaves of trees, paddy husk and dry cow dung and all these are set on fire. Meanwhile, all the plots are ploughed once, seed is cleaned, implements are repaired. Ploughing starts with the first good showers of the season in the second week of June. Paddy is sown in the burnt patches and the seedlings are transplanted after three weeks to the fields. This takes place in July. Weeding is done in August, cutting in October in case of the early variety or in November in case of the late variety. After threshing, the grain is carried home and stored in kangis. The Varlis seem to attach little importance to manuring though government agencies in recent times have been giving demonstrations.

Transplantation and harvesting are the two items of work to which a cultivator pays great attention. Other field work is not done as diligently. In all these activities, women work as much as men.

The marketing season for paddy and other crops starts from November. Many Varlis do not raise good crops from their lands. The small size of their holdings, the poor quality of the soil and the traditional methods of cultivation are chiefly responsible for low agricultural yield. Even in good year, the yield lasts them for about 8 to 10 months only. Agricultural production is usually supplemented by rearing cattle and poultry farming. A cultivating family generally has a few cattle, one or two goats and some fowls. A sale of a goat and some fowls would give them extra money to spend on some necessaries of life. A few Varlis ply carts and collect forest produce. Some work as forest labourers. Even small cultivators also work as forest or agricultural labourers in addition to their own cultivation to supplement their income. An agricultural labourer gets one paili of paddy or nagli or Rs. 1·50 in addition to a bhakri in the afternoon. During the harvest season, he gets paddy worth Rs. 1·25 in addition to a meal in the afternoon and a little tobacco.

While discussing their indebtedness, Boswell says that in old days the cost of their weddings enslaved the Varlis for life. To raise the necessary 40 rupees, a Varli had to pledge himself to work for the lender, living in his creditor's village and doing work for four or five rupees a year, that is, paying a debt of Rs. 40 by the labour of ten years. Besides the sum credited to him, the bondsman, while working for his creditor, used to get about a maund of rice a month. The debtor could live in this way so long as he had no family, but the addition of

a child meant more debt on him. If instead of pledging themselves to work off the debt they pledged themselves to pay it in cash, compound interest at 25 per cent a year was often charged (Thana gazetteer, p. 189). According to Save, indebtedness among the tribe is strikingly abnormal and a majority of the debtors are so poor that all their property, if sold, would not be sufficient to pay off their debts.

Their present state is not much better than what it was a hundred years ago. Their income is sufficient just for about ten months even in a good year; there is usually a period of two or three months before harvest when they are forced to depend on the traders and the moneylenders. The rate of interest charged to them varies from 25 to 50 per cent. Loan transactions take place both in kind and in cash and the loans are drawn against personal credit, by offering personal service, or by mortgaging land, cattle or ornaments. In the case of loans advanced to agricultural labourers, the repayment is generally in the shape of service to be rendered to the moneylender who is also a landlord. In other cases, it is paid by giving paddy or nagli or an equivalent amount. Those who sell their paddy repay the loan in cash. A marriage may cost Rs. 500 to 700 nowadays. Most of the families incur loans on such occasions as they are not in a position to save such a large amount through their earnings.

Life cycle

A Varli girl who has come of age is held impure for four days during menstruation and does not attend to household work. No ceremony is held when a married woman conceives for the first time. A pregnant woman has no special diet. She attends to all routine work, including outdoor work, till the last hour. She will not cut or eat anything during an eclipse. She also avoids contacts with suspected witches.

The first delivery of a woman takes place at the house of her parents in case her father invites her for the purpose. But custom does not require that she should go there for her first delivery. A professional midwife of the tribe is engaged. In case she is not available, a midwife of any other caste is engaged. In serious cases, a trained midwife from the nearest maternity centre is also called in to assist. The midwife cuts the nal of the child by a sharp boru chip or an arrow-head and buries the nal in a pit outside the house with some salt. A small stone is kept over the pit. The mother is held unclean for 12 days. On the 12th day she takes a bath, worships a well, fetches water in a pot and after that she is deemed to be purified. She has a restricted diet for a week or so when she takes light food, preferably rice pej. Then she is given rice and dal. This continues for a couple of days after which she is allowed to have her usual food. Infants that have lost their mother are fed on cow's or goat's milk. The mother resumes her normal duties after 12 days but does not cook food or go out for field work till she regains her normal health. The midwife serves the mother and the child for the first five days and receives two rupees and some corn.

Panchami or Sati puja is observed on the fifth day from the child-birth. The midwife worships two human figures which she draws on a winnowing fan with rice, after keeping therein a blank sheet of paper and a pen or boru. She worships the stone kept on the pit in which the nal was buried. The child is placed in a cloth cradle (Zoli) and swung for a few minutes before the winnowing fan by any two small boys of the tribe, preferably relatives of the child. Female relatives and other women attend this function. Gur or sugar is distributed and liquor or tea is served to all; if in good circumstances, women and children are also fed. At Asave, this ceremony is performed on the third day in case of a female child and on the fourth day if the child is a male.

The child is named on the 5th or 6th day or on any convenient day without any rite. A few Varlis from Poshera consult a medinga. No particular method or practice is however followed by them for choosing a name. Amrut, Ananta, Bhalchandra, Govind, Ganpati, Jayavant, Lakshman, Mahadev, Madhu, Moreshvar, Narayan, Prabhakar, Ramkrishna, Ramesh, Rama, Shantaram, Shankar, Sitaram, Suresh, Vishnu and Yeshvant are a few names of their male children as against the names of old men like Barakya, Bhiva, Bhavandu, Bhika, Chaitya, Devaji, Dhaklya, Dhavaji, Dhavalu, Gondya, Jivya, Kakadya, Mahadu, Posu, Ravaji and Somji. Similarly Anusaya, Baby, Changuna, Janaki, Kusum, Malati, Manjula, Saguna, Shevanti, Shakuntala, Suman, Sumati, Savitri, Tulsi, Vimal and Yamuna are a few names of their female children as against the names of old women like Baji, Bhiki, Bhimi, Bhagabai, Bani, Chafi, Dhanibai, Dasami, Giraji, Gunibai, Kakadi, Sukari and Thaki.

Six months or so after birth, a goldsmith pierces the lower lobes of the ears of children. The first hair of a child is shaved by its maternal uncle when

it is about six months old. The hair is thrown into running water. No rites are performed on this occasion or when its ears are pierced.

Pre-marital sex-life is not allowed by the tribe. If pre-marital sex relations have taken place, the boy and the girl are made to marry each other. Pre-marital sex relations outside the tribe are, however, strictly prohibited.

A Varli boy is married when he is 16 to 18 and a girl between the ages 12 and 14. In the 1961 census, 410 (0·79) males of the tribe out of 52,042 and 1,399 (2·70) females out of 51,731 were returned as married in the age-group 0—14. A husband is older than his wife by one to five years.

Marriage within the same clan is prohibited. Marriage with mother's brother's daughter, father's sister's daughter, mother's sister's daughter, father's brother's daughter or with one's own sister's daughter is also not permitted. In Radyacha pada marriage with mother's brother's daughter is reported to be allowed though it is disallowed at Asave. The marriage takes place at the girl's residence in Vaisakh, Magh or Falgun (mostly in Falgun) on any convenient day, excepting Monday and Saturday, in the evening preferably at the time of sunset. The ceremony is conducted by a female priestess of the tribe (Dhavaleri) or a male priest of the tribe (Medinga). Most of the Varlis from Asave engage a dhavaleri whereas in Radyacha pada they employ a medinga. Marriages are settled by negotiations. Monogamy is generally observed but they have no serious objection to polygamy. The boy's father pays dej to the bride's father. At Asave, it consists of Rs. 21·25 and four maunds of paddy. In Radyacha pada, it is Rs. 101·00 and two and a half maunds of corn. Besides the dej, a few persons of honour from the bride's side have to be given presents or gifts by the boy's father. The chief among them are the bride's mother, grand-mother, brother, sister, father's sister, Patel of the village and Kothya (village servant). At Asave, a sum of Rs. 12·50 is paid to the villagers for drinks.

The offer of marriage comes from the boy's father. He goes to the girl's father along with his relatives and important tribesmen. If the proposal is accepted, the guests from both the sides are served with liquor or tea at the expense of the boy's father. A date is fixed for the betrothal called sakharpuda or bol.

On the day of bol, the mother of the bridegroom applies kumkum on the forehead of the bride and offers her a rupee and two small pieces of coconut, called vatya. Sugar is distributed and tea served. Mothi bol (big bol) is then fixed. On the day of mothi bol, the bride is offered a sari, a bodice, a fadki and mithai. The guests from both the sides are entertained to tea or liquor. The marriage is then finally fixed. Sometimes both the bols are performed at one and the same time. The expenses of both the bols are met by the boy's father.

Dej is generally paid a few days prior to the day of marriage by the bridegroom's kinsmen to the bride's father. When the date for making purchases of cloth and marriage coronets is fixed, a few men from both the sides go to the nearest market and make these purchases jointly. This is called basta.

Marriage rites are spread over two or three days. In Radyacha pada, halad is performed a few days prior to the marriage. On this occasion, the chief man in the family worships the family deities. Any married man of the tribe and his wife then apply haldi to a post in the house, to the images of family deities, and after that, to the boy. Later, all the married persons assembled in the house apply haldi to the boy. It is performed on any day excepting Monday and Saturday. The same rite is performed at the girl's place also.

On the day of halad, a mandav is erected in the front yard of the hut with the help of all the tribesmen in the hamlet who are specially invited for the purpose. In Radyacha pada, at least five posts of the mandav are of umbar branches. Five mango leaves are tied to each of the posts. At Asave, the marriage booth has 13 posts, of which the one at the centre is of umbar. Twelve posts of any tree are fixed first and a mandav is erected thereon. The umbar post is fixed last. Before that, any married man of the tribe goes to the nearby forest from where he brings the umbar branch called med. While coming from the forest, he keeps this med at a short distance from the mandav. Persons gathered in the mandav go there, meet him and follow him upto the entrance of the mandav. Music is played on this occasion. At the entrance, two suvasinis apply sindur to the med and wave a ghee or oil lamp before it. The married man with the umbar branch in hand then makes his way to the mandav. In the meanwhile, the bridegroom is made to sit on a pat kept in front of the hole dug at the central place for fixing the umber branch. A suvasini puts some akshata and a copper coin in his hand. The married man then gives the boy the umbar branch which the boy moves towards the four directions and fixes finally in the central hole. A suvasini draws a chouk (a square) of rice flour on suitable spot of the wall

of the house and within this chouk she draws a picture of a bride, a bridegroom, a horse, a rider, and the sun and the moon by means of rice flour. The chouk is later on covered with a curtain. On the ground below this spot, a bhagat draws another chouk with rice flour. Next, he draws some lines there and keeps on it five arecanuts, five khariks, five pieces of haldi and five betel leaves. He worships this chouk and invokes all the family and tribal gods. When this is over, he pulls aside the curtain spread over the chouk drawn on the wall and applies sindur to the forehead of the bridegroom. At the girl's place, the mandav is erected on the day of marriage and the same rites which are performed at the boy's place on this occasion are performed there also. The mandav at the girl's place has, however, ten posts of which one at the centre is of umbar.

On the evening of the same day, the Varlis of Radyacha pada observe tlvan. On this occasion, a suvasini takes a dish of sweet oil and an arrow with five mango leaves in her hand. Four other suvasinis keep their hands on her arm for a while. The suvasini then sprinkles a few drops of the oil on the ukirda (the garbage heap) from the dish held in her hand with the mango leaves tied to the arrow. Later, she sprinkles some oil on a toran (bunting) tied to the mandav on the umber post, on the door of the house, and lastly on the bride groom. The rite is performed at the girl's house also.

At Asave, the married man who brought the umbar branch the previous day, his wife (the former is called umbarya and the latter umbari), the kareli (the bridegroom's sister), three dhavaleris, two suvasinis and some girls go to the neighbouring forest on the next morning in a procession accompanied by music. The suvasinis worship the umbar tree and apply sindur to it. The married man then climbs the tree, cuts a few twigs and throws them in the sari of his wife. These twigs are brought to the mandav in a procession with music. On arrival, the umbari, the kareli, the suvasinis and the musicians move five times around the central pole of the mandav. Next a suvasini takes a pot with water and moves five times round the pole. While moving round, she goes on pouring water from the pot so as to form a circle round the pole. Thereafter, the bridegroom covers his whole body with a dhoti excepting his eyes and goes five times around the same pole. A suvasini draws a few lines with haldi and kumkum in front of that pole; she later keeps a pat on the lines. The bridegroom sits on this pat. The umbari gives him the umbar branches brought by her from the forest. The bridegroom moves these branches towards the four directions and keeps them by the side of the central pole of the mandav. Later, the bridegroom takes his bath and a suvasini applies sweet oil to his body. The suvasini then applies haldi to the bridegroom's father, to his mother, to the umbarya, to the umbari and lastly to the bridegroom.

The bridegroom's party now starts preparations for going to the bride's place for the ceremony. The boy wears a dhoti, a shirt and a cap or pagote and keeps a pen-knife or a dagger in his right hand. An arecanut is tied to his right wrist and a marriage coronet (bashing) with wreaths of rui flowers, called mundavalya, is tied to his forehead. He also wears a garland (janave) around his neck, this is made of a piece of cloth to which are attached seven knots separately. One of these knots contains val, another contains five coins and the third one has two coins. The fourth knot has a little haldi and the fifth has some khariks. The sixth contains salt and the seventh has some erandi seeds. Before starting for the bride's place, the Varlis of Asave observe Aher (giving of gifts). On this occasion, the bridegroom sits on a pat in front of the chouk drawn on the wall of the house and his relatives and friends offer him gifts in the form of clothes, utensils or coins. From the gifts collected by way of coins, Rs. 5 or 10 are given to the villagers for drinks. In Radyacha pada, this rite is performed after the marriage.

The bridegroom and his party now start for the bride's place so as to reach there a few hours before the scheduled time. The bridegroom goes in a bullock cart while the others follow him in a procession. Music is played. On reaching the bride's place, the bridegroom bows before the place of Holi and then goes to his temporary residence. In the meanwhile, the maternal uncle of the bride goes there and offers a shela and pagote to the bridegroom. The boy gives him a coconut in return. The musicians then go to the bride's house, playing on their musical instruments; this is taken as a request to the villagers to assemble in the mandav.

When the boy arrives at the bride's house the girl's mother washes his feet with water. He is led to the mandav and made to stand on a pat in front of the central umbar pole on the lines drawn with haldi, kumkum and rice flour. The bride is brought here and made to stand on another pat facing him. A cloth curtain (jamnuk) is held between them by any two men of the tribe. A dhavaleri then ties a garland of thread around their marriage coronets. Later, she knocks the coronet worn by the bridegroom on that which is worn by the bride and places

a few grains of rice and some coins on their hands, The bride and the bridegroom then hold each other's hands. Next, three dhavaleris sing 21 marriage songs and at the end of each song, guests assembled in the mandav throw akshatas on the heads of the boy and the girl. These songs are called ghadya. At the end of the last song, the dhavaleris clap with their hands. This is taken as a sign that the marriage is solemnised. The cloth held between the two is removed, the thread tied around their coronets is laid aside and the musicians play on their instruments. The bride and the bridegroom exchange seats, the bridegroom ties a gathi (a string of black beads) around the neck of the bride and thereafter both go into the house and unhusk some rice there.

In Radyacha pada where a medinga conducts the ceremony, the bride's mother waves a lamp before the bridegroom and receives a rupee from him in return when the later enters the mandav. The bride and the bridegroom stand on pats kept under the toran of the mandav, facing each other, with a jamnuk held between them. The bridegroom takes the bride's hands in his own. A thread, called pavitra, is then tied around them. The maternal uncles of the bride and the bridegroom take positions behind them and the medinga starts singing. At the end of the last song, he claps his hands, the guests throw akshata on the heads of the bride and the bridegroom and the musicians play on their instruments. The bride and the bridegroom then exchange seats after moving five times around the pats on which they were standing. The medinga repeats some verses before them. The bride's maternal uncle and his wife then take out the bride's hanlls from those of the bridegroom's. When this is over, the bridegroom's mother offers a sari, a bodice and a fadki to the bride who later on wears this dress and sits on a pat by the side of the bridegroom. In the meanwhile, a round pot (tambya) containing water and to which are tied a few mango leaves is kept before them. Kumkum is applied to this pot and it is later worshipped by the medinga. Five suvasinis then wave a lamp before the bride and the bridegroom. The fathers of the bride and the bridegroom offer presents of cloths to their kinsmen. This is called man. It is followed by aher when gifts of cloth, utensils or coins are made to the bride and the bridegroom by their relatives and friends. Those assembled in the mandav then take their meals with their hosts. In Radyacha pada, guests from both the sides are feasted at the girl's place whereas at Asave each side arranges its own dinner. The bridegroom however takes his meal at the bride's residence. When meals are over, the Varlis of Asave collect twelve coins, nine from the bridegroom's father and three from the bride's father, take 12 mango leaves and keep one coin on each leaf. They distribute these 12 vidas among the 12 important persons of the community. These include the bride, the bridegroom, dhavaleri, suvasini, karbhari (headman of the tribe), patel, katya (village servant) and five other important men of the tribe. The bridegroom's father then presents a coconut, a piece of cloth for a bodice, a rupee, a bundle of tobacco leaves, and a hen to the patel of the bride's village. Those interested then drink liquor, dance and make merry till late at night. The guests from the boy's side go to their village along with the newly married couple either the same night or on the next morning.

At Asave, the bride and the bridegroom first bow before the image of god Mahadev and then before any five important men of the tribe in the hamlet as soon as they reach the village. The marriage coronets tied round their heads are removed. This is the last function of the marriage. Among the Varlis of Radyacha pada, the bride and the bridegroom stand near the door of the boy's house when they return from the bride's village. The bridegroom's mother waves a lamp before them. The brother and the sister of the bridegroom then demand a present from them and do not allow them to step in unless the latter promise to give it to them at their earliest convenience. The bridegroom stands there for a few minutes. Meanwhile the bride goes into the house and bows before a pestle. Later, she takes the pestle in her hand and passes it on to someone else. Next, she bows before a kersuni (a broom), takes the kersuni in her hand and passes it on to some one else. Then she bows before a basket and repeats the same action. Lastly she bows before an oven in the kitchen and thereafter she is given a new name. She then goes out and passes the night in the mandav. The bridegroom also passess that night in the mandav outside the house. The ceremony ends on the morning of the next day when the marriage coronets are removed from the heads of the bride and bridegroom.

The expenses for a boy's marriage amount to Rs. 500 in the case of an average family ; a major part of it is spent on clothing, dej and corn. A sizeable amount is also spent on liquor. The bride's father has to spend not more than Rs. 100.

A boy can serve the father of the girl whom he proposes to marry for a period of five years or so and be married to the girl with full marriage rites

at the expenses of her father. The boy is then free to take his wife to his own house. He can also stay with his father-in-law in case the latter desires so. Sometimes a boy is married to the girl on the understanding that he should stay with the girl's father as a ghar-jawai. In such a case the boy pays no dej and the expenses of the marriage are met by the girl's father. Sometimes a boy and a girl take a fancy for each other. The girl goes to the house of the boy and stays there as his wife without actual marriage. In such cases, the girl is afterwards married to the boy with full marriage rites at the expenses of the boy's father. The boy also pays dej to the girl's father. On certain occasions, it happens that a girl takes a fancy for a boy against the wishes of her parents. If the parents insist on their own choice and proceed further in the matter, the girl is forcibly taken away by the boy whom she desires to marry. The girl then stays with that boy as his wife and later is married to him with all rites. The expenses of the marriage are met by the boy's father. He also pays dej to the girl's father.

Widow re-marriage

Widow re-marriage, called pat or motur, is permitted by the tribe. The ceremony is held in the evening or at night at the widow's residence at the expense of the new husband without any rites. No priest presides. In Radyacha pada, a widow is free to remarry any man of her choice excepting the younger brother of her deceased husband and her parents or guardians do not claim the usual dej in this marriage. The widow wears a new sari and a bodice given to her by her new husband. The intending husband applies kumkum on her forehead and ties a garsoli of black beads round her neck. The widow and her new husband then bow before the elders. The guests are served tea and the marriage is over. At Asave, a widow is at liberty to marry any man of her choice including the younger brother of her deceased husband and the intending husband pays half of the dej to the widow's parents or guardians. The ceremony takes place under a savari tree. On this occasion, the widow and her new husband sit on pats under the tree The intending husband applies kumkum on the widow's forehead and ties a gathi around her neck. Then both apply sindur, to the savari tree. Tea is served and the marriage is over.

Divorce

Divorce, called dava or farqat, is permitted by the Varlis. Either the husband or the wife can ask for a divorce. Taking another man's wife, having sexual relations with another man, quarrelsome nature of the man or woman, careless management of the household and excessive drinking on the part of the man are some of the causes for which a divorce is asked for and granted. It is also granted if a man is impotent or suffers from an incurable disease. If a woman asks for a divorce, she is neither fined nor required to pay any compensation. In case she has a lover or she marries another man, her lover or the new husband has to pay a part of the marriage expenses to her old husband as advised by the panchas. On the other hand if a man asks for a divorce, he does not get any compensation from the woman. At the time of granting a divorce, the old and new husbands take cups of palas leaves filled with tea into their hand. A stick is kept on these cups which is later broken in the middle by the chief of the panchas. The old and the new husband bow before the panchas. A divorce deed, called fraquatnama is executed by both the parties. The Varlis in Radyacha pada do not break a stick, but grant a divorce simply on getting a divorce deed executed. The father has a right over the children born of his wife when the latter is divorced. A divorced woman is free to marry again if she desires so according to the widow re-marriage form.

Death

Cremation is more common among the Varlis. Burial is practised by only those who cannot afford to spend money on cremation. Otherwise burial is restricted to children. Persons dying of small pox are buried in the first instance. The body is exhumed after a year or so and burnt. In case a pregnant woman dies, the foetus is taken out and thereafter the body is burnt. The foetus is buried separately.

When a person dies, the body is washed with warm water, kept on a bamboo bier, called madha or khatra, in a sleeping position and covered with a new piece of cloth to which are tied a few grains of rice and a coin. Gulal is sprinkled on the forehead and on the cloth and some flowers are also thrown on it. The corpse is carried by four men of the tribe, preferably relatives. The eldest son of the deceased, or his nearest relative, walks in front carrying an earthen pot with a burning dung cake. He also has a winnowing fan containing some rice which he sprinkles on the way upto the visava.

At visava, the bier is lowered for a while. A copper coin is kept there under the shade of a tree with an empty earthen pot over it. The body is carried five times round the pot. The women bow before it take a bath at the nearest water place and return.

In case the deceased has a wife, her bangles are broken, the kumkum on her forehead is wiped off and the garsoli tied around her neck at the time of her marriage is removed before the women leave the place for bath. In Radyacha pada, a stone with a mango twig on it is kept on the ground near the feet of the deceased. Persons assembled there wave coins before the face of the deceased and later on throw them by the side of the stone. The corpse is then lifted and carried to the cremation ground for disposal. While going, the khandkaris (bearers) change their places.

At the cremation ground the corpse is placed on a pyre with its head to the south. A few coins are placed in its hands and in its mouth. Some cooked rice and drops of water are placed in its mouth The corpse is covered with faggots and set on fire by the chief mourner at the two ends. He takes an earthen pot, fills it with water, makes a hole in it and moves with it five times around the pyre and then dashes it on the ground. Persons attending the funeral wait there till the corpse is completely burnt. They bathe at the nearest water place and return to the house of the deceased. They bring some harali (green grass) from the water place. At Asave, they first clean the spot where the deceased was cremated, keep some cooked rice and a bidi in two cups made of palas leaves, some water in broken sherds, take a bath and return.

On their arrival, persons who have attended the funeral step on wet cow dung kept in front of the deceased's house, take the harali which they have brought with them, dip it in water, and throw it on the roof of the house. Then all pour a few drops of liquor on the place where the deceased breathed his last and retire. In the evening, they spread some nagli flour on the same place, keep there a few dishes filled with milk, water, liquor and pej and cover these dishes with a big basket. The next morning they remove the basket and see whether there are any marks on the flour spread on the spot where the deceased breathed his last.

In Radyacha pada, post-death impurity is observed for five days and obsequies are performed on the tenth day. On the fifth day, they shave their heads and faces and keep some portion of the cooked food on the roof of the house for the crows to eat. On the tenth day, relatives and tribesmen are feasted and after that kinsmen offer a pagote or some money to the chief mourner. The Varlis of Asave observe post-death impurity for 12 days and perform obsequies (barava) on the 12th day with the help of a bhagat. On this occasion, they offer cooked food to the crows in the name of the deceased and entertain the tribesmen to a feast. In the evening a bhagat plays on a nagara and sings some songs relating to the family deities and the deceased throughout the night. Three other bhagats assist him by playing on tal. The next morning the bhagat worships the family deities. The spirit of the deceased then enters the body of one of the bhagats present there who later on shows the belongings of the deceased kept by him underground or at such other secret places during his life-time. Persons gathered there then meet him and offer him some coins according to their means.

Religion

At the 1961 census, 242,833 (99·00) Varlis returned Hinduism as their religion and 1,147 persons reported Christianity. Among all the scheduled tribes in the State 2,694 persons returned Christianity, out of whom 42 per cent were Varlis. The other scheduled tribes such as Gamit (640), Dhanka (439), Bhil (200), Koli Dhor (80), Naikada (67), Kathodi (66) and Koli Malhar (7) had comparatively fewer Christians.

The Varlis do not worship Hindu gods in their daily life, nor visit Hindu temples regularly. They offer occasional worship to a few tribal gods. They stand in great awe of spirits. If anyone falls ill or any tragic incident happens, they attribute it to the wrath of some god or to the act of a spirit or a witch. A bhagat performs certain rites by which he tries to divine the cause of the illness. Sometimes he gets possessed by a spirit and tells the cause of the illness and the means of curing it.

The Varlis worship Vaghya, Hirva, Narayandev, Himai, Vir and Kansari. Vaghya is the god of the cowherds and is believed to protect the cattle grazing in the woods. He is represented by a tiger carved on a piece of wood or stone and is found near the village boundary or under a tree. Every year in Kartik or Margashirsha, a ceremony is held in his honour. He is also considered a village deity and is supposed to guard the interests of the people living in the village. Hirva is the household god of the Varlis. He is worshipped at intervals, especially when some one in the family falls ill. Narayandev is the god of the whole tribe. He is ordinarily worshipped at every religious ceremony. Kansari is the corn goddess. She is worshipped when the new crop is brought home. Himai is not assigned any specific function, she is a female deity. Vir is the ancestor god. All the deities receive worship on festival days, at the time of a marriage or when

someone falls ill in the family. The Varlis believe that these deities do harm to them if they are not propitiated. So when anyone falls ill they take a vow before them that they would make offerings to them if the person gets well.

Hirva is represented by a bundle of peacock feathers with a silver cap inserted in it. Narayandev is a small stone or an arecanut smeared with sindur. The images of the other deities are silver or brass plates on which a picture of a man or a woman is carved. Excepting that of Vaghya and Hirva, the images of all the other deities are kept in a basket half-filled with rice. This basket is covered with another basket and kept on a kangi (grainbin) or hung on a wall. Hirva is kept separately. The basket is taken out from the place only when the deities are required for worship; otherwise it remains at its place for months together. Many Varlis do not keep these images in their houses. They are generally found with the senior branch of the family. Other members of the family go there for worship or bring the deities to their house and return them after worship. Those who have no images of deities light a ghee or an oil lamp in their names, keep a handful of rice before it and worship it with kumkum, haldi and flowers. The images are however required to be brought home on the occasion of a marriage.

Among the Hindu gods worshipped by the Varlis, Khanderao and Bhairav are more popular. They keep silver images of these gods in the same basket in which the images of the tribal gods are kept and worship them at the same time. The other Hindu gods with whom they are particularly familiar are Rama, Lakshmana, Hanuman and Siva. They, however, do not keep their images in their houses nor visit their temples regularly.

Khais, Cheda, Vetal and Hedoli are some of the evil spirits whom the Varlis fear much. A witch (bhutalin) is believed to possess an evil power by which she can put a person to death instantly. The usual procedure is to approach a bhagat who is supposed to know all the evil charms equally well and can undo any harm which a witch has caused.

The sun and the moon are regarded by them as gods. The earth is regarded as a goddess. The cloud, lightning, the sea are considered divine. If there is a dry spell they pray to Meghdev for seven days and nights. The cow is held in reverence. A person killing a cow is excommunicated from the tribe and re-admitted into the community only after a purificatory rite. They do not worship trees but consider certain trees and plants like pimpal, umbar and tulsi as sacred. They believe in re-birth either in a human or animal form, but have no clear idea of heaven or hell.

Festivals

Though the Varlis do not worship Hindu gods and goddesses regularly, they observe most of the leading Hindu festivals more or less on the same lines as caste Hindus.

On Naga Panchami, they worship a varul (ant hill) with an offering of milk and eggs. Some draw picture of a serpent on a wall and worship it with an offering of milk. Pola is celebrated by those who own bullocks. Those who do not possess bullocks observe the day as a holiday. Pitar Amavasya is observed in memory of all the dead ancestors in the family. They offer cooked food to the crows in the name of their ancestors and put a portion of the food into the kitchen chula for the same purpose. On Dasara they worship household deities; in the evening they distribute apta leaves among elders and friends. They also worship a cheda and offer him a coconut on this occasion.

Varlis celebrate Divali on the last day of Ashvin and the first day of Kartik. They take a bath, apply oil to the hair, put on new clothes if possible, worship household deities with an offering of chavali, cucumber and such other vegetables, drink liquor liberally, dance and make merry. Women also dance on these occasions. Dancing continues for a couple of days following Divali. Mahibij is observed on the first or second day of the bright half of Magh by worshipping household deities with an offering of sweet balls of rice flour called hunde. The hundes are then eaten by all members of the family as prasad. On the day of Makar Sankranti, they put a few grains of til in their bathing water and distribute sweet balls of til and gur among elders and relatives.

A week prior to Akhaja which is on the third day of the bright half of Vaisakh they sow seeds of grains such as rice, nagli, varai, maize, tur, urid and khurasani in a basket filled with earth and water it regularly. The seedlings are worshipped on the day of the festival. After the worship the earth in the basket is thrown near a well and the seedlings are cut and kept in another basket in which the images of the household deities are kept. A few seedlings are, however, kept aside for being used by women. For a couple of days following the festival, women and girls decorate their hair with these seedlings.

Holi is observed by all the castes and tribes collectively as community festival. A bamboo pole is erected in an open place in the hamlet. Faggots, dung cakes, grass and dried leaves of trees are heaped around it. Five papadya (cakes) of rice flour and a garland of some pieces of coconut are tied to the pole. The pole is worshipped and the heap is set on fire as Holi. Any person who wishes to worship Holi then throws a coconut into this fire, lights an incense-stick, takes out the half-backed coconut and distributes its kernel as prasad to the persons assembled there. A newly married couple are excepted to celebrate their first Holi at the house of the girl's father. On this occasion, the boy and the girl take coconuts in their hands, move round the Holi and throw the coconuts into the fire. The bonfire continues for a couple of days. Fresh mango is also offered to the holi on this occasion. When worship of Holi is over, those interested take liquor, dance and make merry. On the next day, they splash coloured water on each other and dance. They collect post and spend that money on drinks. Household deities are worshipped either on the day of holi or on the following day.

In addition to the above festivals the Varlis observe Nava on any suitable day after the new crop is harvested. On this occasion they offer the new crop to the household deities and then cook it. They do not eat the new crop unless it is first offered to the household deities on the day of this festival.

Leisure and recreation

The Varlis are very fond of smoking bidis. They carry smoking material and make their own bidi with a dried apta leaf and tobacco. Old women of the tribe also smoke bidi, but they do not carry the smoking material with them like the men. Even young boys smoke, but not in the presence of the elders. Both men and women drink country liquor; on many occasions they get intoxicated. They like to pay frequent visits to the weekly markets held in the locality. They do this for purchase of household requirements as well as for merry-making. In these markets they go to hotels, drink liquor and make merry till late in the day. Boys and girls also attend these markets in large numbers mainly for merry-making.

Hunting small game provides a form of amusement to a few Varlis. Those interested go hunting in the nearby forests during the summer months.

Music and dancing are their other recreational activities. The most popular musical instruments are tarpa, dhol, kahali, nadga and tur. The tarpa and dhol are played during Divali and Holi festivals respectively while the kahali, nadga and tur are played during marriages. The dhol is also played at marriages. They play on the Zanz, as funeral music. The Kamadi dance is generally staged on any convenient day following Mahibij in Magh. At this dance, men clap their hands and dance. Women do not dance, but sing songs. The dhol dance is enjoyed by them mostly during Holi. This dance is restricted to men only. One man plays on the dhol and the others dance to its beat. The tarpa dance during Divali is enjoyed by males and females. In this dance, one man plays on the tarpa and those interested dance to its tune. The Varlis also dance at the time of marriage ceremonies. On such occasions, some men play on the instruments and women dance to the tune. Young girls and even grown up women take much pleasure in singing folk songs.

Relations inside the community

The Varlis have four broad groups known as Shuddha (pure), Murde, Davar and Nihir which are endogamous, geographical or local in character in addition to several other groups such as Dongar Varlis, Ghat Varlis, Pathar Varlis, Malhar Varlis, Kokni Varlis, Zamjare Varlis and Pavar Varlis which are primarily based on their association with certain places or their desire to enjoy a superior status in the social set-up of the tribe. As each of these groups thinks that it is socially superior to the others, intermarriages between various groups are mostly avoided although they are not strictly prohibited. In addition, the Varlis have a number of exogamous clans (kuls) into which they are divided. In matters of interdining and intermarrying, all these exogamous groups are regarded by them as equal.

The bhagat is an influential person owing to the valuable services he renders to the tribesmen. There is not a ceremony, ritual or social function to which he is not invited. No Varli marriage can be performed without the presence of a dhavaleri. She may be a widow or a married woman of the tribe.

Women play a secondary role in the family. They are not entitled to a share in the ancestral property according to custom. Women are no doubt consulted on every important issue; but they do not have the final word in any matter. They do not figure in the community panchayat unless required to do so as witnesses. Purchase and sale of property, disposal of agricultural produce and the like are all done exclusively by men.

Inter-Community relationship

The Varlis do not suffer from any social disability. They fetch water from public wells along with caste Hindus and enter the temples managed by the caste Hindus without any restriction. Barbers and washermen who serve other castes also serve them without any distinctions. Caste Hindu communities invite them to their houses and attend their marriages and other ceremonies. But caste Hindu communities like Maratha, Kunbi, Wani and Kumbhar do not accept food at the Varlis' houses or in their company. The Varlis also accept this ranking.

The Varlis consider the Koli Mahadev as superior to them, the Koknas and the Koli Malhar as equal and the Thakurs, Dhodias, Dublas, Bhils, Koli Dhor and Katkaris as lower than them. Consequently they accept food from the first three tribes and also from Thakurs but not from the remaining tribes. The Mahadev Kolis, Koli Malhar, Dhodias and Dublas do not accept food from them. The Thakurs take food at a Varli house. As the Bhils, Koli Dhor and Katkaris accept the superiority of the Varlis they also take food at Varlis house or in their company.

Their relations with scheduled caste communities like Mahars and Chambhars are friendly and cooperative. However, they do not accept water from any of the scheduled castes of the region nor allow them entry into their houses. Similarly they do not invite the scheduled castes to their pujas or marriages.

Structure of social control

To settle their social disputes, the Varlis have panchas. Disputes within the family are settled by the old men of that family. Sometimes distant kin also act as middlemen and help the family in such matters. Disputes between different members of the tribe are referred to the panchas of the tribe. If persons belonging to two different villages or hamlets are involved in any issue, the panchas of these villages or hamlets meet together and settle the issue. Generally in each village or hamlet they have a few panchas to look after the enforcement of the caste rules and settle the disputes arising from them. These panchas are self-elected persons and hold their office so long as they command respect from the members of the tribe. The leader of these panchas is called a pudhari. His office is also not hereditary like that of the panchas. He is an old and experienced man of the tribe whom most of the tribesmen living in the hamlet or village respect. The chief functions of the panchas are to hear social disputes and settle them by effecting a compromise or imposing a fine. They also see that the caste rules are observed by all and the social prestige of the tribe is not lowered in the eyes of the other castes of the region because of the anti-social activities on the part of some tribesmen. In case the tribesmen are found involved in such activities, they are fined by the panchas. In certain serious cases they are excommunicated from the tribe. Divorce, adultery, breaches of marriages and food rules are the main complaints which are referred to the panchas for settlement. On receipt of a complaint the complainant, the accused and the panchas meet together at a time and place as directed by the pudhari. On occasions the panchas take the initiative and convene a meeting when they hear about some offence. The complainant narrates his case and produces evidence. If the accused admits his guilt, the panchas try to solve the issue through compromise. In case he denies the charge, witnesses are heard in support of the accused. The panchas discuss the case between themselves and give the verdict unanimously. A person found guilty is fined from Rs. 5 to Rs. 15 or even more depending on the nature of the offence. The amount is spent on drinks or caste feasts. At Asave a part of the fine is spent on community puja and part is given to needy and deserving persons of the tribe as loans in times of difficulties.

Sometimes it happens that the panchas of two different villages do not agree with each other. In such cases, the question is either taken before a court of law or referred to the panchas of two other villages. In certain cases, persons are excommunicated from the tribe and are readmitted after a purificatory ceremony which consists in the offender cooking food and serving it to some respected tribesmen from the surrounding villages. This happens in the case of a boy or girl marrying a girl or boy of a lower castes. On the occasion of a purificatory ceremony, the person concerned is given a panchagavya by the panchas and then readmitted to the tribe. Or they may invite a few tribesmen from about ten surrounding villages. The offender cooks rice and mutton and serves these persons; after that he is readmitted to the tribe. At Poshera, complaints regarding breaches of caste rules are disposed of mostly at the time of a death ceremony in the village when important castemen from neighbouring villages assemble there. This assembly of tribesmen is known as bhandara.

According to the Varlis from the villages studied, they have no higher court or authority beyond the village limits for going in appeal against an order

passed by the panchas. Similarly they have no community organisation for a group of villages for administering justice in matters of social disputes. So in case the verdict given by the panchas is not acceptable to either of the parties, the party concerned is at liberty to approach a court of law. But since the decisions given by the panchas are supported and honoured by a large majority of the tribesmen they are generally obeyed by both the parties. In case there is any disobedience the persons concerned are socially boycotted by the whole community. Nowadays there is a growing tendency to refer their quarrels and disputes to the police patel who is a government official. Being the village headman, the police patel enjoys an important position in the village. The statutory village panchayat does not interfere in the social disputes of the tribe. On the other hand, it always helps the panchas in arriving at a compromise.

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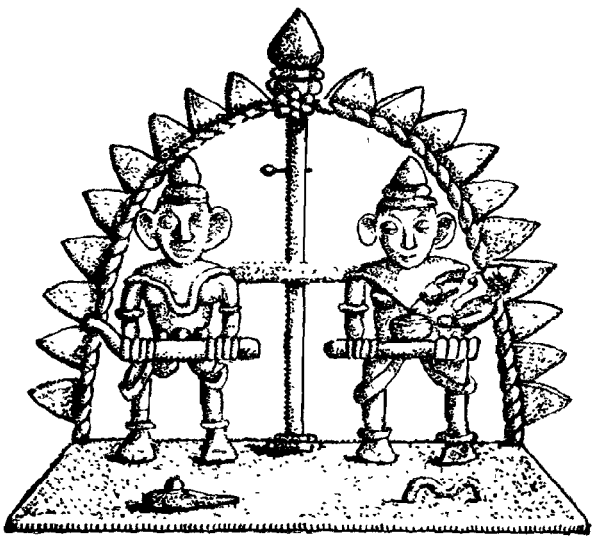
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Goddess Himai of Varlis

The Kokna, also known as Kokni or Kukna, are mentioned without any synonym in the Constitution (Scheduled tribes) order, 1960. The names Kokni and Kukna appearing in the president's order, 1960, were added to the name Kokna under the amendment act of 1956. The tribe does not claim to have any sub-tribe or section. The names Kokni and Kukna, therefore, appear to be synonyms although they are not so familiar either to the tribe or to other persons in the locality where the tribe is found.

Hatgad village in Surgana (Nasik district) and Poshera and Kortad villages in Mokhada (Thana district) were selected for this study.

The name "Kokna" is said to be derived from Konkan, the western coastal strip extending from the Damanganga in Surat district in the north to the Kalinadi in Kanara district in the south. The area said to be the original home of the Koknas lies between the coastline and the Sahyadri; it is spread over the districts of Greater Bombay, Thana, Kolaba and Ratnagiri. A few Koknas found in the villages surveyed style themselves as 'Kokna Kunbis' presumably because of their desire to enjoy the social status of the Kunbis, a section of the local population or because both are engaged in agriculture. But the Koknas generally regard themselves as socially inferior to and distinct from the Kunbis. The ethnographic study on the Kokna also indicates that they form a distinct tribe.

Enthoven says they are a tribe from Konkan from where they were driven towards the north during the 1396-1408 Durga famine (p. 265). There is a tradition that their forefathers were brought from Ratnagiri to garrison the hill fort of Gambhirgad and they occasionally visited Konkan to renew their ties. (Gazetteers : Thana, p. 174 and Nasik, p. 47). Although these go some way to establish Konkan as their original place, our survey could not confirm this view. Most of them have no idea as to where their forefathers came from.

The Koknas are also notified as a scheduled tribe in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Mysore States and in the Union territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli. In the 1961 census, they were returned in their largest number from Maharashtra 212,836. Next was Gujarat 110,054. These two States account for 97·69 per cent of the total Kokna population of 330,508 in India. Rajasthan did not report any Kokna while Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Mysore returned 7,611 and 7, respectively. In Maharashtra, they are treated as a scheduled tribe in the 13 districts of the Bombay and Poona divisions out of the 26 districts of the State. According to 1961 census, a population of 212,836 persons—108,013 males and 104,823 females—was returned from ten out of the thirteen notified districts with the largest concentration noticed in Nasik 133,116, Dhulia 51,209 and Thana 27,957. These three districts absorb 99·74 per cent of the Kokna population in Maharashtra. Kolaba, Sholapur and Kolhapur did not return any Kokna. In general, the Kokuas are found in substantial number in the tract extending from Jawhar tehsil in Thana district to Nandurbar of Dhulia district. The other tehsils in the tract are Peint, Surgana, Dindori, Kalwan and Baglan in Nasik and Sakri and Nawapur in Dhulia district. In Nasik, which has more than 50 per cent population of the Koknas, they are concentrated in Surgana 33,101 and Peint 31,264. In Dhulia they are concentrated in Sakri 35,093. Large areas of these tehsils are under forest and land suitable for agriculture is limited owing to the ruggedness of terrain. A major part of the area under cultivation is on slopes and terraces with poor soil. Inferior paddy and coarse cereals like nagli and vari are grown. The bulk of the population of these tehsils (64·40) is of scheduled tribes, among whom the Koknas, the Koli Mahadev and the Varlis predominate.

The Koknas are essentially a rural tribe as hardly 1,741 (0·82) from among them were found residing in urban areas in the State. Their 1961 sex ratio was 970, slightly lower than that of the general population in rural areas of Maharashtra which was 995. The 1961 age composition of the Koknas did not differ much from that of the general population in the rural areas. Of the 212,836 Koknas, 95,305 (44·78) made up of 46,870 males and 48,435 females fell in the age group of 0-14. There were 89,271 (41·94) made up of 44,873 males and 44,398 females in the age group of 15-44 and 28,220 (13·26) made up of 16,247 males and 11,973 females in the age group of 45 and above. The percentage of the three age groups for the general population in rural areas of the State were 42·09, 41·90 and 16·01, respectively.

The Kokna family is patrilocal with a patronymic designation. After marriage, the girl leaves her parents to stay with her spouse. Generally they stay in a separate house put up by the husband after marriage. In rare cases, they live with the husband's parents.

Extended families where married brothers along with their families live together and pool their incomes are rare. A study of 479 Kokna households from Surgana (Nasik) showed that 173 of them comprised father, mother, unmarried sons and daughters ; in 14 households, married sons were staying with their parents along with children. Other relatives (married brothers, widowed sisters, brothers' widows) were found staying only in eight households. The remaining 284 households mostly consisted of married persons who were living separately from their parents. Of these 479 households, 288 had 1 to 5 members in them, 181 were composed of six to ten members and ten had more than ten members. The average size of the household was 5·1. The male as a rule is the head of a family in almost all age groups.

The Koknas are divided into a number of exogamous kuls. Some of the kuls found in the villages studied are Bagul, Borsa, Bhoye, Bhusara, Choudhari, Dalvi, Doke, Gavit, Ghegad, Gavandha, Gavli, Gaikvad, Khambayat, Kavar, Khrari, Kambdi, Khotra, Kadu, Lahare, Mahale, Mahalu, Malve, Pavar, Padvi, Raut and Vaghera. Besides these, the following kuls are also observed in other areas of the State. Ahire, Chavre, Deshmukh, Gangurde, Jadhav, Jagtap, Kakode, Megha, Muda, Suryavanshi, Surve, Thakare, and Thum. Clan names like Gavit, Gavli, Kavar and Padvi occur as caste names as well. Names like Gaikvad, Deshmukh, Jadhav and Jagtap are well-known Maratha clan names. Choudhari, Pavar, Raut and Thakare are clan names among the Kunbis. Dalvi, Kambdi and Bhoye are clan names among the Malhar Kolis and Jadhav, Kadu and Pavar among the Varlis. The Koknas have no separate surnames ; they use their kul names instead. The same clan may be found in different regions and the families may have no other connection except the kul name. Sons and unmarried daughters acquire the kul of their father. After marriage, the girl acquires the kul of her husband. If a widow remarries, she acquires the kul of her new husband but the kul of her children by the first husband continues to be the same Property, inheritance and reckoning of descent is along the male line. Property is equally distributed among the sons. Married or unmarried daughters have no right to a share. In case the sons want separation during the life-time of their father, the property is equaliy distributed between the sons and the father. After the death of the father his share is again distributed equally among his sons. A widow can stay with any of her sons ; but if she desires to stay separately, some part of the land is left to her for her maintenance which is again equally distributed among her sons after her death. The family deities in the house generally come into the possession of the eldest son at partition.

Kin on the mother's and the father's side have ritual and social roles to play. The maternal uncle cuts the first hair of a newly-born child. He has to bring an umbar branch from the nearby forest for one of the poles of the marriage mandav. During marriage, the boy and the girl are usually escorted by their maternal uncles who also hold a cloth curtain between them during the ceremony. The father's sister applies haldi to the boy and the girl at halad. The maternal uncle's daughter and the father's sister's daughter receive first preference during selection of a match for the boy. At marriage and other functions, they invite all the relatives, immediate as well as distant, who in return are required to offer some gift or present to help the host defray the expenses. Similarly, during death rites all the relatives of the deceased are required to give monetary gifts or presents to the chief mourner according to their means. If any one fails to attend it owing to some reason, he has to visit the deceased's house and give his gift on some other day.

Dwelling

In the investigated villages, the Koknas were living in different padas (hamlets) along with different castes and tribes. Most of the hamlets are situated near the fields to facilitate close attention to agricultural operations. Some of the hamlets are cut off from each other except for footpaths and cart-tracks. Houses are generally detached from one another. Hatgad (Nasik) is situated in a hilly and forest tract about 15 miles from the tehsil headquarters and is connected with it by a road. There are five hamlets in the village ; two are exclusively occupied by the Koknas ; in the remaining three hamlets, other communities like Koli Dhor and Koli Mahadev are also found. In the gaothan (village site) besides the Koknas, families of Koli Dhor, Brahman, Teli, Wani and Sonar are also found. The number of households of the Koknas in this village was 43 in 1961. Poshera and Kortad (Thana) are at a distance of four miles and 28 miles, respectively from Mokhada, the tehsil headquarters. Poshera is connected with Mokhada by a kachcha road and Kortad by a road of 25 miles. Poshera has 13 hamlets but the Koknas reside in only one hamlet (Dabhanicha pada) where a few families of Varlis and Mahadev Kolis also stay. The other 12 hamlets are inhabited by Mahadev Kolis, Varlis, Katkaris, Thakurs and Mahars. Kortad has seven hamlets, apart from the gaothan. Five of the hamlets were exclusively occupied by 44 Kokna households in 1961.

A Kokna house is generally a big rectangular or square shaped single room structure on a simple earth foundation or, in a few cases, on a stone platform, with a partition inside. Usually it has no verandah

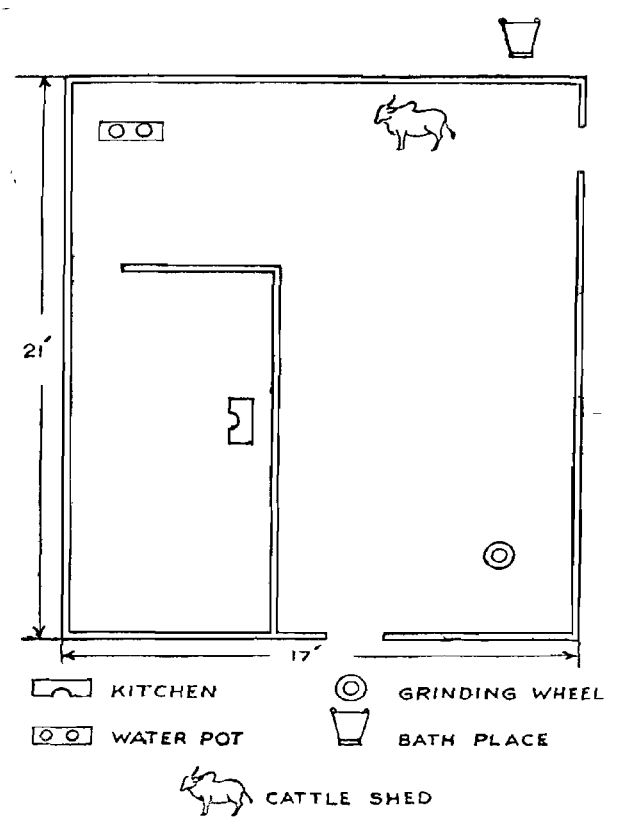
or enclosure. The walls are made of karvi reeds plastered on both sides with cow dung and earth. The roofs are sloping and have tiles. Houses with thatched roofs are also found. A house has two or three doors, but no windows. Doors are made of wood or karvi reeds. The earthern flooring is always kept clean by use of cow dung. Cattle and goats are tethered in one corner of the living room which is used for all purposes. Well-to-do households having a large number of cattle keep them in separate sheds built close to their houses. Every house has some open space either in front or at the back. Some households grow vegetables therein. The Kokna bathe in the river or at the well. Women take their bath on a stone slab kept near the house. The community development block in Mokhada has built one public bath-room and a latrine at Kortad for the use of the villagers, but it appears to be rarely used by the Koknas.

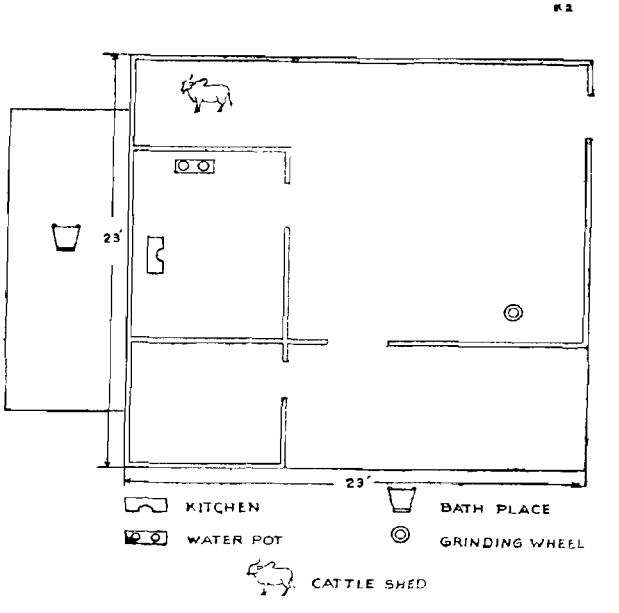
The Kokna house has a partition or two inside, dividing it into two or three compartments. The front portion is used for all purposes. The middle section is used for eating and storing and the rear portion is used as a kitchen. Big houses which are very few have 3 to 4 rooms, a separate kitchen, a cattle shed, a verandah in front and an enclosure. Such houses have 3 to 4 doors, but no windows. In Kortad, there is a two-storeyed house built on a stone foundation and having brick walls and a tiled roof; it belongs to a well-to-do Kokna who is a sarpanch of the village panchayat and chairman of the co-operative society.

It is the Kokna practice to worship a pole with an offering of a coconut at the time of commencement of construction and to worship the chula (hearth) in the kitchen after its completion. Houses are constructed or repaired in March or April which is a slack season for agriculture. Construction materials like karvi reeds, wood, earth and stones are obtained locally. The manual labour is provided by members of the household itself. In case more labourers are needed, they are hired locally.

Two typical houses belonging to Koknas in Kortad are sketched below. The walls are of karvi reeds plastered with cow dung on both sides. The roof is of tiles.

The second one has a bigger floor area (23′×23′) and is built on a plinth of 1½′. The material of walls and roof is the same. The second house has more doors but no windows. The important difference is that the place for bathing and the place for storing fuel is enclosed by a karvi reed partition.





Dress and ornaments

A kokna woman's dress, comprises an eight yard lugade, a choli and a fadki. The sari is divided into two parts ; one is worn below waist and the other is worn on the next day when the first one is washed. The fadki covers the body above the waist. It is a piece of red cloth about 2½ yards in length, having black or white marks on it. Women generally have no special ceremonial dress. On such occasions they wear saris and cholis of a better quality. Girls below 12 wear a parkar and a polka or an angi. Those over 12 wear saris, cholis and fadkis.

The men's dress consists of a lungi, a langoti or sorang (loin cloth), a bandi or kopri (waist-cloth) and a pagote, preferably of a red colour. While working on the fields, they usually wear a langoti and a kopri and cover their head with a piece of white cloth called rumal. In their leisure time, they wear a langoti and at times a kopri. Younger people wear a dhoti, a sadara (shirt) and a topi. They also wear pyjamas and bush shirts. On festive occasions their dress remains the same, but it is clean and the cloth is of a better quality. School-going children wear chaddi (shorts), half-arm shirts and a cap. About 50 to 60 per cent of men and 10 per cent of women are in the habit of using chappals called paitan which are very strong, thick and durable. Its price varies from Rs. 3 to Rs. 4.

Men shave their hair and moustaches. Except old men nobody keeps a shendi (pigtail). The common practice among them is to shave off the beard and trim the moustaches in the western style. Women do their hair by parting it in the middle and tie it behind in a knot.

Kokna women wear ornaments made of copper, brass, silver and gold. They wear balis, kap or fulya on the ears, nath or fuli on the nose and jodave or masolya on the toes. The more common necklaces are putalya, rupyacha-har, mithali, garsoli and gathi. Bracelets and bangles like patalya, goth, bangadya and kade are worn on the wrists ; velas and bajiband are worn on arms. Many of these ornaments have, however, gone out of fashion and worn only by a few elderly women. The Kokna woman nowadays wears a few glass bangles, one or two necklaces of glass beads and ear and nose rings. Other ornaments are worn on occasions.

Wearing of ornaments is not common among men. At Hatgad and Poshera, a few old men were found wearing silver ornaments like peri and pagare (ear-rings) a kade (wrist ornament) and a kargota (a silver chain) round the waist.

Food and household utensils

Rice and coarse cereals like nagli and varai constitute the staple food of Koknas, these being the chief crops grown in their village. Urid is the more common pulse, tur and grams being consumed as a change. They eat mutton and fowl, but abjure beef and pork. Fish and eggs are consumed occasionally. Dry fish is more popular among the Koknas of Kortad. The daily meals of these people include pulses and bhakris of nagli or varai. Sometimes they take vegetables like brinjals, onions, potatoes, val, chavali and pumpkin. Only occasionally they can afford meat and fish. During marriages and festivals, sweet dishes like shira, khir and vegetables are prepared. Food is generally prepared in khurasani oil in a metal pot on a chula. Those who are very poor cook their food in an earthen pot. The wood of non-fruit-bearing trees is generally used as fuel along with cow dung cake. None of the households studied was found using kerosene or charcoal for cooking.

Tea drinking is common in some families. Most of them take it without milk. Drinking of country liquor and bidi smokings are common among males. Women chew tobacco.

The utensils of the Koknas are made of copper, brass, electroplated nickel, silver and iron. Crockery was noticed in a few families. These are purchased from weekly markets held in the locality. A jate, an ukhal, a soop, buckets and baskets are the common equipments. Of the 44 Kokna households of Kortad, five had wooden cots and stools, and battery torches ; eight households had wooden chairs, ten had lanterns and 22 had mirrors. Food-grain is stored in big cylindrical containers 2 to 3 feet in height and 2 to 3 feet in diameter made of bamboo chips and plastered with cow dung from the inside. They are covered over with dry grass or leaves with a coating of cow dung at the top. Whenever grain is required to be taken out, the coating is removed and closed again and besmeared with cow dung.

Hygiene and sanitation

Most of the Kokna families live in kachcha houses. Though their settlements fall within the jurisdiction of village panchayat, no conservancy staff is employed for street cleaning or removal of garbage. They go along the village boundary for defecation, more frequently, in the neighbouring fields, and throw the garbage and refuse just outside their huts. During rains, the area becomes dirty and insanitary. Rain water accumulates in pools everywhere and every open space in the settlement is muddy and dirty. Mosquitoes and other insects breed there. The water in the

kachcha wells is often responsible for ailments like indigestion and diarrhoea. In contrast the interior of their houses and cattle sheds is kept clean and tidy by use of cow dung.

The Koknas clean their teeth regularly in the morning with ash, burnt tobacco, neem or babul twigs; bathe either in the morning or in the evening on returning from the field, apply coconut oil to the hair and wash their clothes occasionally, though not daily. Out of the 44 Kokna households of Kortad, 42 were found using washing soap and 13 were found using toilet soap. The utensils used for cooking, eating and drinking are washed regularly with earth or ash, morning and evening.

For treatment of illness the Koknas depend on the bhagat of the community. Even in cases of epidemic or serious illness, they first approach the bhagat. They attribute illness of any kind to divine wrath or to a witch.

Language and literacy

The language of the Koknas is said to have been Kokni in the past; at present, most of them speak Marathi among themselves as well as with outsiders. This Kokni classified as Kokna/Kukni is different from the Konkani spoken in the coastal areas of Ratnagiri and Goa. People of the older generation speak Kokni among themselves and in Marathi with outsiders. In the 1961 census, Koknas in Maharashtra returned 14 mother-tounges, of which Marathi was spoken by 174,485 persons (81·98). Kokni was spoken by 37,111 (17·44). Only 2,451 persons (1·15) reported knowledge of other languages in addition to their mother-togues. Of these, 93 persons reported English as a subsidiary language. The principal subsidiary languages spoken were Marathi 1,102 and Hindi 1,091.

The 1961 percentage of literacy for the Koknas was 9·52 against 29·82 for the State. Their literacy rate was higher than that of the neighboruing tribes like Bhils (6·48), Varlis (4·72) and Thakurs (4·37) and lower than that of the Koli Mahadev (10·66). Among the literate Koknas, as many as 14,300 persons (70·60) were literate without any educational level. Only 49 males were matriculates.

A table showing the 1961 educational break-up of the Kokna population is given below :—

Area	Illiterate		Literate without educational level		Primary or junior basic		Matriculation or higher secondary		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Rural ..	89,926	101,450	11,971	2,161	5,128	431	28	....	107,053	104,042
Urban ..	548	657	118	50	273	74	21	....	960	781
Total ..	90,474	102,107	12,089	2,211	5,401	505	49	....	108,013	104,823

Quite a large number of children of school-going age were not attending school even though there was a school in their village, and those attending it, were not regular. These children had either to look after the household or attend to outside work to supplement the family income. If a Kokna has only one son, he expects him to take up his traditional occupation. In case he has more sons he has no objection if some of them attend school, but he cannot spare them for long periods. He admits that education is a great asset, but circumstances compel him to care more for the present than for the future.

Economic life

According to the 1961 census, 124,715 (58·60) of the 212,836 Koknas in the State, were workers. A sex-wise break-up of workers showed that 65,603 out of 108,013 males (60·74) and 59,112 out of 104,823 females (56·39) were workers. In rural areas the percentages of workers among Koknas for males and females were 60·90 and 56·62, respectively, as against 42·81 and 26·50 in urban areas. Labour participation rates were much higher in rural areas, both for males and females than in urban areas. Out of 88,121 persons returned as non-workers, 12,293—9,291 males and 3,002 females—were full-time students or children attending school while the rest were either engaged in household work or were dependants.

The 1961 distribution of workers among the Koknas according to broad economic categories was as given on page 52.

Economic category	Total workers	Males	Females
I. Cultivator ..	106,090 (85.07)	55,224 (84.18)	50,866 (86.05)
II. Agricultural labourer	14,557 (11.67)	7,062 (10.76)	7,495 (12.68)
III. Mining, quarrying, livestock, forestry, fishing, hunting, plantations, orchards and allied activities.	1,911 (1 53)	1,629 (2.48)	282 (0 48)
IV. Household industry ..	479 (0.38)	432 (0.66)	47 (0 08)
V. Manufacturing other than household industry.	245 (0.20)	202 (0.31)	43 (0.07)
VI. Construction ..	141 (0.11)	119 (0.18)	22 (0 04)
VII. Trade and commerce	164 (0 13)	112 (0 17)	52 (0 09)
VIII. Transport, storage and communication.	56 (0 04)	48 (0 07)	8 (0.01)
IX. Other services ..	1,072 (0.86)	775 (1.18)	297 (0.50)
Total ..	124.715 (100.00)	65,603 (100.00)	59,112 (100 00)

A study of 8,552 households from Thana, Nasik and Dhulia districts revealed that 6,595 (77·11) of them owned or held land for cultivation, 879 (10·28) cultivated land taken on lease from others and the remaining 1,078 households (12·61) did not hold any land for cultivation. Of the 879 households who cultivated land taken on lease, 831 cultivated it on cash payment and 48 on a crop share basis. Among the 6,595 landholders, 63 owned land less than one acre, 4,114 had 1 to 14·9 acres, 1,479 had 15 to 24·9 acres and only 739 landholders held 25 acres and above. The average size of the owned holding in 1961 was 12·7 acres. Leaseholders have to pay 4 to 6 times the land revenue as rent and bear all expenses of cultivation. In the investigated villages, the Koknas grow rice, nagli and varai as chief crops. Pulses like tur, urid and mug are also grown for consumption. The poor soil is more suitable for growing coarse cereals like nagli and varai.

Agricultural operations begin in April. Before the advent of the monsoon, the land is prepared through rab, if paddy, nagli or varai is to be sown and not in the case of tur, urid and mug. Ploughing is done with a wooden plough and a pair of bullocks. In a few cases, he-buffaloes are also used. Seed is broadcast by hand over the small patches of the burnt land. Sowing is generally completed by the end of June except in the case of kulith which is sown in August. The seedlings are then plucked and transplanted in the fields which have been ploughed previously. In the case of paddy, the seedlings are planted in the ground by hand whereas in the case of nagli and varai, they are simply thrown on the pond. Transplanting is done for paddy, nagli and varai only. It is followed by weeding in August. Harvesting takes place in October in the case of the early veriety and in November in the case of the late variety. Threshing is carried out in November. The un-husked grain is carried home and stored in kangas.

The Koknas use traditional implements like nangar, alvat, datal, kurhad and vila or koyata. These five tools satisfy most of their needs. The alvat levels the ploughed land, the datal makes the soil slushy and soft for sowing. A wooden plough costs Rs. 5 to Rs. 6 including the cost of a dusar and iron shear which forms part of the plough. The price of the alvat varies from Rs. 1·50 to Rs. 2·00 and that of the datal from Re. 0·50 to Re. 1. An axe is available for Rs. 3·50 to Rs. 4·50 and a sickle for Rs. 2. At Kortad, except the sickle, the axe and the fal which have to be purchased at the neighbouring market, all other implements are prepared locally by the three carpenters of the tribe. These three men are engaged in carpentry as a subsidiary occupation, the main one being agriculture. Except old and sick persons all other cultivators work in their fields personally along with all the adult members in their families and engage outside labour only when necessary. For paying cash wages and for purchase of seed, manure and other requirements they approach the village money lenders or borrow money from the co-operative society or from Government in the form of tagai loans by mortgaging land, cattle, ornaments or against personal credit. At times they are financed by a few well-to-do cultivators of the community. The rate of interest charged by a private money-lender is more than 10 per cent. Labourers engaged at the time of agricultural operations at Kortad are given one rupee a day (both males and females), bhakri in the afternoon and tobacco.

Most of the food crops like paddy, nagli, tur, urid and mug are utilised for home consumption after setting some quantity aside as seed ; the surplus, if any, is sold to the shop-keeper and petty consumers of the village or taken to the neighbouring market or is sold to merchants who occasionally visit the village for the purpose. Minor crops like varai, khurasani and kulith, are mostly sold for raising cash to meet family expenditure. The marketing season for agricultural produce is December to February.

The number of workers among the Koknas engaged in non-agricultural activities is negligible. They constituted 3·25 per cent of the total working population

in 1961. Among them, some were working as forest labourers while some were engaged in road construction. Educated persons were working as talatis, teachers, peons, forest guards and policemen. A few were found in small business like tailoring and grocery, a few were engaged in cattle rearing.

Collecting forest produce like wild fruits, roots, honey, cutting wood for fuel, plying carts, forest labour, cutting and selling grass for cattle fodder and transport of forest produce are subsidiary occupations of the Koknas during the off season. Fishing in ponds and rivers provides a supplementary food to some of them. As forest labourers, they earn Rs. 1·50 a day. A few keep poultry, goats and cattle but the income derived from these pursuits is uncertain and meagre. At Hatgad, a few go to the neighbouring Gujarat State for seasonal work as agricultural and forest labourers.

The Koknas do not maintain accounts of income and expenditure as most of them are illiterate. A rough estimate of income and expenditure of a Kokna household of eight members based on information collected during an interview is given below :—

Income (annual)	Rs.	Expenditure (annual)	Rs.
1. From cultivation of paddy, nagli, varai, khurasani and urid.	510 00	1. Cost of grains required for home consumption	415 00
2. From labour	110 00	2. Kerosene	10·00
3. From poultry	25 00	3. Sweet oil	15·00
		4. Kirana	50·00
Total income	645 00	5. Tobacco	20·00
		6. Religious activity	15 00
		7. Education	10 00
		8. Clothes	75 00
		9. Medicine	30·00
		10. Payment of debt	25·00
		11. Expenses on cultivation.	85·00
		Total expenditure ..	750 00
		Deficit ..	105·00

Life cycle

The Koknas do not observe any ceremony when a married woman conceives for the first time, A pregnant woman takes her usual food and attends to all her normal work till the time of confinement. Delivery takes place at her husband's house. In case her parents are well-to-do, they might bring their daughter home for the first delivery. A Kokna soyarin or suin is engaged. In case she is not available, a midwife of any other caste available at the moment is engaged. In serious cases a trained midwife from the nearest maternity centre is also called in to assist the soyarin. As soon as the child is born, the midwife cuts the nal with an arrow-head or a sickle and buries the nal along with five kinds of grain in a pit in the house or in the cattle shed and keeps a stone over it. The mother and the child receive a hot water bath on the same stone. The midwife serves the mother and the child for five days and is paid a rupee or two along with some grain. In the case of a male child, she is paid more. The mother and the child are held unclean for 12 days and are deemed purified after taking a bath on the 12th day. On this occasion her clothes are washed, the house is smeared with cow dung and cow's urine is sprinkled in every room of the house. The mother then goes to a well, bows before it and fetches water in a pot after which she is supposed to be clean. She has a restricted diet, rice or nagli pej for a week or so after delivery. The child is fed on the mother's milk. Infants who have lost their mother are fed on goat's or cow's milk. The mother resumes her duties after 12 days but does not go for out-door work till she regains her normal health.

On the fifth day after birth, the pachavi, panchami or pachora is observed. The midwife worships the stone kept on the pit in which the nal was buried. At Hatgad, the midwife places five heaps of grain on a soop and worships them. At Poshera and Kortad, she draws a female figure on rice or nagli grain in a soop and worships it. The child is then brought in front of this figure in a zoli. At Kortad, the midwife keeps a brass pot filled with rice on an earthen pot, ties garlands of thread around them and worships them. She then breaks a cocount and distributes it among the women and children present. Circumstances permitting, neighbouring women and children are fed ; sugar or gur is distributed in the locality.

The child is named on any convenient day in consultation with a brahman priest. No rites are performed. The lower lobes of its ears are pierced after an year on any convenient day without any ceremony. For this purpose, the parents go to a goldsmith and pay him 50 paise. The hair of a child is cut for the first time when it is six months old. The maternal uncle cuts it with a pair of scissors and throws it in running water. Only family members take part in this ceremony. The Koknas of Hatgad observe this ceremony on the second day of the first Holi after childbirth. On this occasion, they take the child to the Maruti temple where the maternal uncle cuts the hair of the child in front of the shrine and receives an uparana (a piece of cloth) as a present.

As the Koknas believe in the evil powers of witches and spirits, the mother and the child generally avoid contacts with witches and do not visit places said to be haunted. In certain cases, the bhagat ties a thread around the wrist of the child or a tait around its neck to ward off evil. Any number of children are welcomed by Koknas. A child either male or female is viewed as a gift of god and it is not considered proper to go against his wishes.

The Koknas frown on pre-marital sex relations within or outside the community. However, they appear to be somewhat liberal in the case of such relations within the community ; the persons concerned are simply made to marry each other. In case one of these two persons belongs to a higher caste (i.e., Kunbi or Maratha) they are also married to each other but if one of the two persons happens to be of a lower caste like Varli, Thakur, Katkari or Koli Dhor, the offender is excommunicated.

Marriage

A boy among the Koknas of Hatgad usually marries at the age of 14-16 and a girl at the age of 12-14. Among the Koknas of Poshera, the marriageable age is 16-18 years for a boy and 15-16 years for a girl. During the 1961 census, 603 males out of 46,870 and 2,340 females out of 48,435 in the age group 0-14 years were returned as married among the Kokna population in the State. A study of 940 married couples from Thana, Nasik and Dhulia districts showed that as a rule the husband was older than the wife, the difference being 1 to 5 years. The ages were found to be the same in one case. With two couples, the husband was found to be younger than his wife by two years.

A Kokna does not marry within the same kul. He is also not permitted to marry his father's sister's daughter, mother's sister's daughter, father's brother's daughter, own sister's daughter and the widow of his elder brother. He can marry his maternal uncle's daughter or his wife's younger sister. Marriage with father's sister's daughter is reported to be allowed at Poshera and Kortad though it is reported to be prohibited at Hatgad. Monogamy is generally observed, but there is no objection to polygyny.

Marriage negotiations generally open from the boy's side. The boy's father goes to the girl's father with his proposal, along with his relatives and friends. Kumkum is applied on the forehead of the girl and the guests are treated to liquor or tea. Sugar or gur is distributed to the community elders and relatives. The fathers or guardians of the boy and the girl and those assembled finalise the proposal. In some cases the girl is presented with a sari, a choli and a fadki. This ceremony—bol pen—takes place a few days or months prior to the marriage. The date for the mothi pen (betrothal) is fixed and the boy's party returns to its village. At Hatgad, the date for mothi pen is fixed in consultation with a brahman priest.

For mothi pen, the relatives of the bridegroom, including his parents and community elders visit the bride's house. The boy's father applies kumkum to the girl and offers her a sari, a choli and a fadki. Sugar or gur is distributed. Dej is paid to the bride's father either in full or in part ; the remaining part will have to be paid on the day of marriage. Mothi pen is treated as an agreement by which the marriage contract is entered into by both the parties. Some Koknas perform both the 'pens' at one time. At Hatgad dej consists of Rs. 120 plus ten pailis of grain. At Poshera, it is Rs. 51 plus two and a half maunds of grains ; at Kortad it is Rs. 21 plus five maunds of paddy and four pailis of tur and urid. Besides this, the boy's father pays some cash or presents clothes to persons of honour from the girl's side and the police patel and the village kotwal.

Mothi pen is followed by ghana and basta. Ghana consists of offering grain to the girl's father by the boy's relatives. On the day of basta, persons from both the sides visit the market place together to purchase cloth and other articles required for the ceremony.

The marriage takes place at the girl's house generally in the evening on any auspicious day as advised by a brahman priest in Magh, Falgun or Vaisakh, preference being given to Falgun. The service is conducted by a brahman priest. Some Koknas of Kortad, however, engage a priest from their own tribe.

Marriage rites are usually spread over three or four days. The first day is spent in constructing a marriage mandav amidst sirging (gondhal). One pole of the mandav is of umbar brought by the maternal uncles of the boy and the girl to be married. This branch is fixed in a hole along with five kinds of grains, a copper coin, arecanut, haldi and kumkum. A ranjan (big earthen pot) filled with water is kept near this pole and over the ranjan is kept a ghada (small earthen pot) filled with water. The next morning, family deities are worshiped and the boy and the girl are rubbed with haldi at their respective places by relatives. On the third day, while worshipping family deities the Koknas of Poshera keep some grains of rice and the images of family deities in a parat (a flat plate) which is afterwards kept on a kamble (a rough blanket) spread on the floor. This plate is then lifted five times by all the assembled persons, including the male and female members of the family and the tribe.

The fourth day is the day of the marriage. The bridegroom, with a katyar in his right hand and a bashing on his forehead, goes in a procession either seated in a cart or on horse-back or on foot or is carried on the shoulders of others to the bride's house to the accompaniment of music. The procession first goes to the temple in the village. Some women from the bride's side visit the temple and offer the bridegroom a dhoti, a shirt and a pagote for wearing. Similarly some women from the bridegroom's side go to the bride's place and offer her a sari, a bodice and a fadki. At the bride's place, the bride and the bridegroom are made to stand on pats face to face with garlands of thread around their necks and a jamnuk held between them by their maternal uncles or any two male relatives. At Poshera, the maternal uncles of the bride and the bridegroom stand behind on pats. After the chanting of marriage verses, the jamnuk is removed and the persons assembled shower akshata over their heads. The priest ties the ends of their garments into a knot and asks them move around their seats five times after which the knot is untied and the marriage is complete. They perform two minor rites called paydhuni (washing of feet) and fal (presentation). At the end of these rites, all the assembled guests are treated to a feast by the bride's father. Next day, the boy's party leaves the bride's place for its village along with the bride. On reaching there, the bashings tied on the foreheads of the bride and the bridegroom are removed and the ceremony ends with a feast to the tribesmen and influential persons of other castes in the village. A brahman priest is paid from Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 while a priest of the tribe is paid Rs. 5.

Expenses for a boy's marriage in the case of an average family amount to Rs. 450. In the case of a rich family, the expenses may be Rs. 600 or more. Since these expenses are not within the reach of an average family, the boy's father has often to incur debt. The girl's father spends much less from his own pocket since he gets the dej and grain. In the case of average families, the expenditure is as under :—

		Rs.
1.	Dej and grain to be given	150
2.	Food ...	100
3.	Clothes ...	100
4.	Ornaments ...	50
5.	Miscellaneous ...	50
	Total ...	450

In certain cases the boy renders personal service to the girl's father for five years or so towards the payment of dej if he is poor and unable to spend on his marriage. After the stipulated period is over, he is married to the girl with full marriage rites at the expenses of the girl's father. He has not to pay any dej in this marriage and, after the marriage is over, he is free to take his wife to his home. In case his father-in-law desires him to stay with him, he can do so but it is not binding on him. This form of marriage is called khandadia (marriage by service). In certain cases a boy stays with his father-in-law as a ghar-jawai In such cases also, no dej is to be paid and all the expenses of marriage are borne by the girl's father.

Re-marriage

Widow re-marriage is allowed. At Kortad, a widow is not allowed to marry the younger brother of her deceased husband while at Hatgad and Poshera she is not permitted to marry any of the brothers, younger or elder, of her deceased husband. This re-marriage is performed in the evening or at night at the residence of the widow or of her intending husband in the presence of community elders and relatives without the usual rites. In the three investigated villages, the

re-marriage is performed in three different ways. At Poshera, the widow wears a new sari and a bodice given to her by her spouse who applies kumkum on her forehead and ties a garsoli around her neck. The assembled guests are served with liquor or tea. At Kortad, the widow takes a plate containing burning lamp in her hands. Her spouse and any three community elders touch this plate with their hands, while doing this, the other elders assembled there offer their blessings by saying " Lead a peaceful and happy life ". At Hatgad, the widow and her intending husband sit on pats. A brahman priest recites some verses. At the end of the last verse, he knocks their heads together and ties their garments into a knot. The ceremony is over after entertaining the guests to liquor or tea At Poshera and Kortad, no dej is paid at re-marriage while at Hatgad the intending husband has to pay from Rs. 50 to Rs. 100 to the guardian of the widow. This re-marriage is called pat or gandharva.

Divorce is permitted by the Koknas. During the 1961 census 755 men (1·68) and 426 women (0·96) in the age-group 15-44 were returned as divorced and separated. Divorce is permitted on the grounds of adultery on the part of husband or wife, ill-treatment and incompatibility of temperament and incurable diseases such as leprosy. A woman can seek a divorce if her husband is impotent. Divorce is termed as dava or farkat and is allowed only with the consent of the tribal panchayat. At the time of divorce, the husband tears off of piece of his dhoti and the wife tears off a piece of her sari. At Kortad, a stick is broken in the presence of community elders. A divorce deed called farkatnama is executed in writing. If a woman leaves her husband and marries another man, the latter has to pay the marriage expenses to her first husband. The divorced man and woman are allowed to re-marry. This re-marriage is done in the same manner at that of a widow re-marriage.

Death

Dead persons are mostly buried. The body is washed with warm water, haldi is applied, a copper coin is placed in his mouth and another copper coin is tied to its shroud along with some cooked rice. It is then covered with a piece of white cloth and carried on a bamboo bier called vakati or khatala in a sleeping position, legs in front, by any four men related to the deceased. The chief mourner, preferably the eldest son, walks in front with an earthen pot containing a burning cow dung cake, in his hands. When the procession reaches the visava, the body is lowered and the party rests for a while. Three stones and some mango twigs are kept there to identify the place ; the persons assembled wave a copper coin round the face of the deceased and throw it between the three stones. The copper coin and the cooked rice tied to the shroud are taken out and also thrown between the stones. Women accompanying the procession return to their houses after taking a bath at the nearest water place. In case the deceased has a wife, her bangles are broken at the visava and the garsoli and the kumkum on her forehead are removed. At Hatgad, the bangles of the deceased's wife are not broken, but the necklace is removed from her neck and kept on the bier when the body is taken out from the house.

At the burial ground, a pit is dug north-south and the body is laid in it with its head to the south. Some drops of water are put into its mouth, the assembled persons throw handfuls of earth into the pit and fill it carefully. The bamboo bier on which the body was carried is placed over the pit along with some thorn and stones. The chief mourner takes an earthen pot in his hand, moves five times round the pit and dashes the pot on the ground towards the side of the deceased's feet at the end of the fifth round.

When the body is to be burnt, the body is placed on the pyre with head to the south. The chief mourner and relatives keep a coin and some cooked rice on its lips and pour some water over it. The pyre is lit by the chief mourner who moves round it five times with an earthen pot in hand. At Kortad instead of the chief mourner, any two relatives light the pyre at the head and feet of the deceased. All those assembled take a bath at the nearest water place and go to the house of the deceased where a cow dung cake is kept burning. Persons attending the funeral sprinkle water over this cake as also on the roof of the house. On the same night, the Koknas of Poshera and Kortad keep some flour of rice or nagli and a vessel filled with water at the place where the deceased breathed his last. The flour is covered with a basket over which is kept a big stone. The next morning they remove the basket to see whether some figure can be discovered. In case the figure of a man, animal or bird is seen, it is believed that the deceased is likely to born again as a man, animal or bird. Absence of any figure is an indication that the dead person might not be reborn.

Pollution after death is observed for ten days. For children and unmarried persons it is observed for three days. At Poshera on the third day after death, two tubes of bamboo filled with milk and cow's urine are kept at the place of visava along with the old clothes of the deceased and a basket containing rice flour. Another two tubes are kept at the burial ground. On returning home, the four khandkaris sit around a palas leaf containing cooked rice and vegetable for a while and then they offer this food to a cow in the name of the deceased. On the tenth day, they

shave their heads and faces, smear the house with cow dung and sprinkle cow's urine on the floors and walls. after which they are deemed to be pure. Funeral rites are observed on the same day. The Koknas of Poshera cook some rice and prepare 13 pindas (balls) of rice flour, 12 of small size and one of large size, on the bank of a river. After chanting of mantras by a brahman priest and worship of the pindas and cooked rice, the large pinda is thrown in the river and the rest of the pinda and cooked rice are left for the crows to eat. On the 13th day after death, relatives and tribesmen are fed. On this occasion, the relatives of the deceased offer a shela or a pagote to the chief mourner. After a year or so, they prepare a vir and keep it with the family deities in the house. The vir is a small silver or gold plate on which a figure of a man or woman is drawn to represent the deceased.

One and a half years after death, the Koknas observe a ceremony known as avasar on any convenient Wednesday, Friday or Sunday. On this day, they invite five or six bhagats of the community and two or three ghumare (those who dance and get possessed) who chant throughout the night and next day up to the afternoon. At about 3-00 p.m. some member of the family keeps an earthen pot filled with water in a booth which is specially erected for the occasion. He then takes the vir in his hand, ties mango leaves to it with a thread and puts in the earthen pot which is afterwards covered with a small piece of cloth. Two or three ghumare then get possessed. One of them takes out the vir from the pot and keeps it in his hand for worship. A goat or hen is killed and its blood is applied to the vir by one ghumare. A married woman from the family comes with a plate containing haldi and kumkum and two other women of whom one is married and the other un-married, apply haldi and kumkum to the vir. Then all the assembled persons are treated to a feast. No shraddha is performed in memory of the dead person but they offer food to their deceased ancestors every year on the day of Pitar Amavasya, by keeping a portion of the cooked food in the compound or on the roof of the house for the crows to eat. Some portion of this food is also put into the chula

No rites are performed for small children or for unmarried persons. At Poshera, the rites which are performed on the third day after death are however observed for unmarried males and females.

Religion and festivals

According to the 1961 census, 21,818 Koknas declared their religion as Hindu. Two persons were returned as Muslims and 16 as Christians.

The Hindu Koknas in the three investigated villages have a number of household deities. Khanderao, Bhavani and Mahadev are commonly worshipped. Hirva and Chitoba or Chita are household deities of the Koknas of Poshera and Kortad. The Koknas of Poshera also worship Himai, Gori Laxmi, Kali Laxmi, Musalkhambi and Brahma. The Koknas of Kortad worship Baharam and the Koknas of Hatgad regard Bhairav and Mayarani as their chief household deities. Hirva is represented by a bunch of peacock feathers and Chitoba or Chita by a silver ring; all the other deities are carved on copper, brass or silver plates. The Koknas look to their deities to protect them from witches, spirits, ghosts, illness and other misfortunes. The deities are offered coconut, fowl or goat at marriages and festivals or when there is an outbreak of epidemic or a member of the family falls ill or when any misfortune befalls them. The images are kept in a covered basket or a small wooden box called devara with the main branch of the family where members of the other branches go for celebration and worship. They can bring them to their own house and return them after worship. In case they are unable to go to the main branch or bring the deities to their house, they prepare five balls of rice flour called punjya and worship them in the name of the deities. In certain cases, an earthen lamp is lit and worshipped. It is, however, binding on them to bring these deities to their house when there is a marriage in the family.

The Koknas of Poshera and Kortad honour Kana sari on all the occasions described above. This corn deity is said to bring them good harvests. The Koknas of Kortad worship Kortoba (a stone god smeared with sindur) for ensuring a good harvest and warding off diseases. The other deities worshipped by the Koknas of Hatgad are Dongar Maouli, Vaghdev, Mari aai Mhasoba, Maruti, Gaodevi and Vetal. Dongar Maouli is a hill god who protects them and brings them good harvests. He is worshipped once in five years on any suitable day before the full moon of Margashirsha or Paush. Vaghdev (Tiger god) protects them and their cattle from tigers and is worshipped every year on the 12th day of the dark half of Ashvin with an offering of a goat, hen or coconut. He is found on the village boundary in the form of a stone on which the figure of a tiger is carved. Gaodevi, Mhasoba and Mari aai protect them from diseases and epidemics and are worshipped at the time of an outbreak of small-pox in the village. Gaodevi and Mhasoba also receive worship on Dasara and Mari aai on the second day of Holi. These deities are found anywhere in the village in the form of stones smeared with sindur. They regard Hanuman as the controlling god of the village who protects them from all miseries and sufferings. He is worshipped especially on Saturdays. Vetal, who

is found anywhere in the village in the form of a stone, protects them from ghosts and spirits and is worshipped on Dasara or when anybody is possessed by a spirit.

The Koknas observe most of the important Hindu festivals—Padva, Akhati or Akhaja, Teri Avas, Naga Panchami, Pola, Dasara, Divali and Holi. They celebrate these festivals on the same dates as caste Hindus of the region If however, any festival falls on Monday, the Koknas of Poshera celebrate it on the next day as they do not observe any festival on Mondays. Except Pola which is celebrated in honour of draught animals all the other festivals have a religious significance. Holi is observed as a community festival and is celebrated collectively along with other castes.

Padva is celebrated by the Koknas of Hatgad and Poshera by hoisting a gudi in front of the house and worshipping it with haldi and kumkum. All the household deities are worshipped on this occasion and sweet dishes are consumed.

Akhati or Akhaja is observed especially by the Koknas of Hatgad and Poshera who sow seeds of rice, nagli, varai, maize and khurasani in a basket filled with earth some days prior to the day of celebration and water it every day so that the seedlings spront on the festival day. These seedlings are worshipped on this day and later on thrown near a well or a temple. Family deities are also worshipped. Women sing songs and dance. A few Koknas of Kortad are reported to offer cooked food to crows in memory of their ancestors.

Teri Avas is celebrated on Ashadhi Amavasya. It is principally observed by the Koknas of Hatgad who offer leaves of the teri plant to their family deities that day. The leaves are cooked as vegetable, offered to the deities and eaten as prasad by family members.

On Naga Panchami the Naga image is worshipped in the morning by the head of the household or any elderly man in the family who has to observe a fast during the day and take his meal after doing the second worship in the evening.

Pola is held in honour of the bullocks as a token of gratitude for their services.

The Koknas of Hatgad celebrate Dasara by worshipping family deities in the morning and exchanging apta leaves between elders, relatives and friends in the evening as token of affection and respect. They also worship Gaodevi, Mhasoba and Vetal on this occasion. The Koknas of Poshera do not exhange apta leaves, but a few of them observe a fast for nine days and break it after worshipping the family deities on the day of Dasara, by consuming non-vegetarian dishes, specially meat. The Koknas of Kortad do not perform any rites on this day.

Divali is celebrated for two days on the last day of Ashvin and the first day of Kartik. On the last day of Ashvin, family deities are worshipped, cows and bullocks are decorated and worshipped. Boys and girls get up early in the morning, take an oil bath, wear new clothes, eat sweets and lit off crakers. Some well-to-do people decorate their houses and light earthen oil lamps in the evening. Drinking liquor liberally, singing songs and dancing to the tarpa (a musical instrument) by men and women, are other important items.

Holi is an important festival of the Koknas as of the other tribal and non-tribal population in the region. All the communities living in a hamlet have a common holi. On the next day, the Koknas and other indulge in throwing coloured water at each other and dance to the accompaniment of dhol (a drum). Only men take part in these dances.

The Koknas observe Pitar Amavasya on the last day of Bhadrapad in memory of their ancestors. On this occasion, they offer cooked food to crows in the name of all the dead persons in the family.

The Koknas of Kortad have two more community festivals—Khadicha-deo and Sathicha-deo—which they celebrate along with the Varlis, Thakurs and Katkaris in the villlage. Khadicha-deo is celebrated on any convenient day in June before the commencement of sowing operations with the object of protecting the new year's crop. On this occation they worship the village god Kortoba and some grains of rice and nagli. Three or four bhagats belonging to the Varli tribe meet together in the temple of Kortoba and pray. While doing so, they get possessed and distribute some grains of rice and nagli among the assembled persons who then throw them into their fields in the belief that by doing so they will get a good crop that year. Sathicha-deo is observed by the Koknas of Kortad along with the Varlis, Thakurs and Katkaris in the village on the full moon day of Margasirsh by worshipping the village god Kortoba for the protection of the crops in the fields.

The Koknas do not worship trees but certain trees like mango and umber are considered as sacred by them. The cow is also held in reverence. The sun, the moon and the sky are considered divine. They believe in re-birth in human or any other form, but have no clear idea where the soul of a person goes after death. It is generally believed that if a person's wishes are not fulfilled during his life-time, his soul may take the form of a spirit and trouble his relatives until his wishes are fulfilled. In case this is not done, it is feared that some member of the family may fall ill or die.

Leisure and recreation

March, April and May are the leisure months of these agricultural people. They enjoy this leisure by playing on musical instruments and dancing. At times, bhajans are organised. They meet in groups in the morning before lunch and in the evening after dinner at the common place of the hamlet or at some house and pass time in chewing tobacco, smoking bidis and gossiping. The main topics discussed during such meetings are connected with agriculture, village affairs, development activities and personal difficulties. In the afternoon, they take rest after lunch. In the busy season, they get leisure in the afternoon between 12 and 2 and in the evening after 8. They spend festival days by playing on musical instruments and dancing. The tarpa and the dhol are the popular musical instruments. The tarpa is made of dudhi and has the shape of the English letter ' L ', one end of the tarpa is kept in the mouth while playing on it. The tarpa dance is a mixed dance of males and females and is staged during Divali. One man plays on the tarpa and the others sing songs and dance to its tune. The dhol or peran dance is restricted to males only and is done mostly at Holi.

Inter-community relationship

A few Koknas take pride and pleasure in referring to themselves as Kokna Kunbis. They however do not claim the status of Kunbis. Ritually they hardly suffer any social disability. They receive the usual services from washermen, barbers and brahman priests. They fetch water from the public wells along with others without hindrance on ground of ritual purity. They are freely admitted to all caste Hindu temples and hotels situated in the locality. The other scheduled tribes Thakur, Varli, Koli Dhor, Bhil and Katkari consider the Kokna to be of higher status. In the caste frame they are considered to be lower in status than Brahmans, Marathas, Kunbis, Telis and Wanis though they are allowed free access to their houses. All these castes attend Kokna marriages, pujas and similar functions and ceremonies. Though the Koknas regard Koli Mahadev as equal in status, the latter do not always accept this position.

The Koknas have a traditional panchayat of their own to deal with disputes and conflicts between members of the community. Disputes within the family are usually settled by the elders. Sometimes relatives and other persons who are closely associated with the family are called upon to help settle such conflicts. In case no compromise is arrived at, the matter is referred to the tribal panchayat. Disputes between different members of the community are also referred to this panchayat. If the persons involved in the quarrel belong to two different villages or hamlets, panchas of these villages or hamlets meet together to settle the matter. Generally elders of the tribe who carry influence and command the respect and confidence of the community by virtue of their age, experience, knowledge and character, act as panchas. When occasion arises, they meet together to settle the issue amicably by way of compromise as far as possible. They are neither elected members nor is their office hereditary. They are regarded as panchas so long as they enjoy the confidence of the tribesmen. The head of this panchayat is called a karbhari. His office is also not hereditary.

Ordinarily, the caste panchayat deals with all caste problems arising within its jurisdiction. Questions of marriage customs and breaches of marriage laws are the most important matters coming within its purview. On receipt of a complaint, intimation is given to all the panchas, to the parties concerned and to the villagers to assemble at a fixed place and at a fixed time. Both the parties are heard in this meeting and, if the accused admits his guilt, the panchas give their verdict which is generally by way of settling the issue through compromise. If the charge is denied, witnesses are heard in support of the accusation and in defence and after that, there is a decision. The punishment is usually in the form of a fine which is mostly utilised in serving liquor to the meeting. The proceedings of these meetings are almost oral. There is no legal machinery to execute the punishment. But since the decisions of the panchas are supported by the tribesmen, they are generally obeyed by both the parties. In case the parties do not agree, they are asked to approach a court of law. These panchayats also arrange for the partition of property among members of families which have decided to separate; enforce fulfilment of promises of marriage and determine the maintenance to be given to divorced women.

At Poshera, each hamlet of the village has separate panchas with no headman for the settlement of disputes. If the parties concerned are not satisfied with the decision of the panchas of the hamlet, it is referred to the higher panchayat which consists of panchas from five neighbouring villages. The chief of this panchayat is called gotarne ; his office is not hereditary. At Kortad, a well-to-do member of the tribe who is the sarpanch of the village panchayat and also chairman of the co-operative society commands high respect and confidence. There is, therefore, a general tendency among the members of the tribe in the village to refer their quarrels and disputes to him for compromise or settlement. Quarrels between brothers over partition of the property, disputes between individuals over ownership of land, petty thefts and such other matters

are first referred to him for settlement. In case no compromise is arrived at the parties concerned are asked to approach a court of law. Matters involving breaches of caste rules are also referred to him first and then to the caste panchayat.

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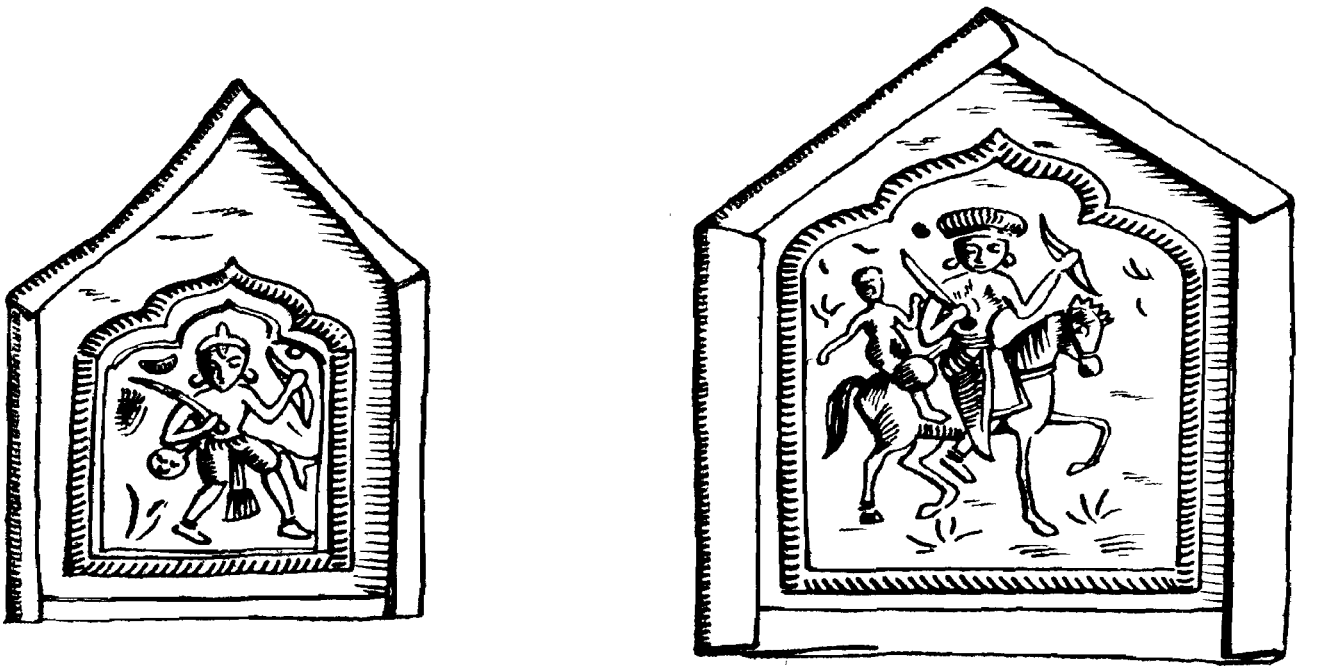
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Vir and Supli. goddesses Varlis, Thakurs and Koknas

THAKUR

The Thakurs form one of the largest tribal groups found exclusively in Maharashtra and that too in a few tehsils. In the President's order, 1960, they are designated as "Thakur or Thakar, including Ka Thakur, Ka Thakar, Ma Thakur and Ma Thakar". Ka Thakur and Ma Thakur are the endogamous divisions of the Thakurs; Thakar, Ka Thakar and Ma Thakar are synonyms of Thakur, Ka Thakur and Ma Thakur respectively, with a slight variation in spelling. Enthoven says the words Thakur and Thakar were considered in the past to designate a title of some Rajput tribes and were applied to tribes of different origin. According to him the term Thakur is applied in Nasik district to Brahmakshatri writers and to a class of carpenters from Gujarat, whereas in Satara district it is applied to a caste by name Thakur which is closely connected with the Maratha Bhats (p. 376). Rajwade derives the word from taskara-thakkara-thakara-thakura (page 84). 'Taskara' means a thief and the term probably denoted a criminal tribe. The possible explanation for the prefixes 'ka' and 'ma' is that ka stands for kadu (bastard) and ma for Maratha. According to some, Ka Thakur stands for Koli Thakur and Ma Thakur for Maratha Thakurs. Save (page 258), interprets Ma as mother (big) and Ka as kanistha (low). N. G. Chapekar of Badlapur records that the 'Ma' are said to be those who have come from Mahaldesh—a province popular in Indian folklore whereas the Ka are said to have migrated from the Konkan. Chapekar suggests that it is the recurrence of the two letters of the alphabet 'ma' and 'ka' in their respective modes of speech that has earned these names for them (pp. 4-5). The basic name of the tribe appears to be Thakur and in course of time, names differentiated by prefixes were used as alternate names. When and how these different names came into existence is not clear.

The Thakurs interviewed at Poshera (Mordhyacha pada and Vijapalicha pada), Mokhada (Thakurwadi) and Kortad in Mokhada tehsil of Thana district for this study refer to themselves as Ka Thakurs and Ma Thakurs. The people of the region also know them by the same names. They are not able to explain why they are called Thakurs and how the prefixes got associated with their tribe's name. They do not show any affinity with Brahmakshatri writers or Maratha Bhats or with Kolis or Marathas. They reject the idea of any such possible identity or association.

The 1911 census report, says that Thakur or Thakar is a title enjoyed by petty Rajput chiefs and it is believed by some on this account that the tribe contains a strain of Rajput blood. This view, says the census report, appears to be corroborated by a copper plate inscription found in possession of a Thakur at Igatpuri in Nasik in which the word Thakur is used as a caste name (page 305). The Thakurs living in the investigated villages do not disagree with the view that there may be a strain of Rajput blood in them even though they do not show any affinity towards them.

Chapekar thinks the original habitat of the tribe was in the hilly western parts of Nasik district. To support this view, he states that the Thakurs living in other areas know their original places of residence which are situated in Nasik district and in the marriage songs they offer prayers to deities from places like Nasik, Trimbakeshvar, Borli, Talegaon and Ajneri, all from this region. Further evidence according to him to support this view is that the Thakurs walked down the Thal pass from Borli where a big fair is held annually on the new moon day of Paush. It is possible that the emigrants might have left Borli on that day, centuries ago. The inscription in the possession of a Thakur of Igatpuri indicates that a grant of a village Belegram in the district of Goparashtra (Nasik), in the first quarter of the seventh century was made to one Balamma Thakur for the worship of the deity Kapaleshvara, by a Chalukya ruler. These places, however, have not been located definitely in Nasik district.

Distribution

In Maharashtra, the Thakurs or Thakars including Ka Thakur, Ka Thakar, Ma Thakur and Ma Thakar are declared as a scheduled tribe in 26 tehsils of five districts—Thana, Kolaba, Nasik, Poona and Ahmadnagar, as shown below :—

(i) Ahmadnagar—Akola, Rahuri and Sangamner tehsils.

(ii) Kolaba—Karjat, Khalapur, Pen, Panvel and Sudhagad tehsils and Matheran hill station.

(iii) Nasik—Igatpuri, Nasik and Sinnar tehsils.

(iv) Poona—Ambegaon, Junnar, Khed and Maval tehsils.

(v) Thana—Thana, Kalyan, Murbad, Bhivandi, Bassein, Wada, Shahapur, Palghar, Jawhar and Mokhada tehsils.

According to the 1961 census, the Thakurs had a population of 159,372 persons (81,580 males and 77,792 females), in these areas. Of these, 99·08 per cent were returned from rural areas and only 1,470 persons (0·92) from urban areas. Though the five districts where they are notified as a scheduled tribe from a contiguous area, their main concentration is found in Thana (66,576), Kolaba (29,532) and Nasik (26,267), districts which together accounted for 75 per cent of their 1961 population.

Of the 1961 population, 66,320 persons (41·61), fell in the age group 0-14, 68,262 persons (42·83) in the age group 15-44 and 24,684 (15·49) in the age group 45 and above. The 1961 sex ratio for the tribe worked out to 954. Thakur males exceeded females both in rural and urban areas, though the difference was marked in urban areas (854).

Family and kinship

The Thakurs living in the investigated villages are of medium height, possess good stamina and engage in hard work.

The Thakurs observe patrilineal descent so that all who have the same name are in all probability the descendants of a common forefather. Family among the Thakurs is patrilocal with patronymic designation. A married girl goes to stay with her husband, leaving her parents as soon as she gets married. The newly married couple may stay with the husband's parents or have a separate household. A Thakur family usually comprises a man, who is generally the head of the family, his wife and children. A study of 364 Thakur households from Thana district showed that 150 (41·00) consisted of father, mother, unmarried sons and daughters. Married sons staying with their parents were found only in 35 households (9·00). Other relatives were found living in 31 households (8·00). These included father's or mother's, widowed sisters, mother's widowed mother, father's brothers, married daughters and sons-in-law. A scrutiny of the same 364 households indicated that 235 (64·00) comprised 1 to 5 members, 108 (29·00) consisted of 6 to 10 members and 21 had eleven or more members. The average number of persons per household came to 5·07. Of the 364 households, only 14 were found to have female heads of households. Six of these 14 women were of ages varying from 25 to 49, seven were between 50 and 64 and one was aged 70. Most of the male heads of households were of ages 25 and above.

The father has all authority in a Thakur family. He manages the property, looks after cultivation, makes purchases, arranges for the marriage of his children when they come of age. The raising and paying of loans, distribution of money realised by the sale of produce, transactions with outsiders, worship of the gods, marriage and death rites, construction of a house or repairs to it are all attended to by him. Next in importance is the mother who is in charge of the internal management of the house including the kitchen and rearing of children. Cash is often entrusted to her for household expenditure. She is generally a good housewife who looks after the house and children, cooks food, fetches water, washes clothes and attends to all household work. Besides, she makes petty purchases and sometimes goes out for out-door work. Sometimes, when necessary, she takes up field jobs. Unmarried girls and boys also share in household work. Some of them look after the small children when the parents go to the field for work, others collect manure, fuel, fruits and honey from forests and tend the cattle. The rest are busy in the field. Thus every member of the family plays some part and as each of them works, nobody is considered as a burden to the family. When the father grows old, authority passes on to his eldest son. In case of premature death and if his sons are young, his widow takes up management till the sons come of age. Unmarried brothers live with their elder brothers amicably, after marriage, they either continue to do so or set up separately. Manure, seed, farm implements or a pair of bullocks are often exchanged and supplied to each other as and when required. Bachelors, widows and widowers having no children generally live with some of their near relatives.

Sons inherit the property of their father in equal shares. In the absence of sons, it may go to his brother. Those related to the deceased through a daughter, sister or wife have no right over the property. As women are not eligible for a share, a daughter too gets no share.

Both the Ma and Ka Thakurs have a number of exogamous kuls. The following were come across during the survey.—

Ma Thakurs—Avali, Bhasma, Bangara, Dholya, Daravada, Ghugre, Gire, Kamli, Kavate, Katvara, Kevari, Lachaka, Malak, Nirguda, Pingla, Pardhi, Sid, Songal, Sutak, Valha, Vara and Vagh.

Ka Thakurs—Bhogade, Bhore, Dangate, Daravane, Dhingha, Govind, Ghumal, Ghugashya, Gavate, Jangali, Jadhav, Khutade, Murthade, Mali, Meragh, Morgha, Nadga, Padher, Pavar, Sunad, Taral, Tumda, Vajya, Vishya, Vartha and Vayal.

Pardhi is the name of a tribe and Mali is the name of a caste. Bhore and Pavar are common among Kunbis and Jadhav is a popular surname among Marathas. Gavate, Khutade, Tumda, Vartha, Vagh and Nadga are common clan names among the Varlis. Ma and Ka divisions of Thakurs do not appear to have common kuls or names among them. Vagh means a tiger, Daravada means a decoity, Malak means an owner, Bhasma means a white powder and Sutak means post-death impurity. Gavate appears to have been taken from the word gavat which means grass and Varatha from Varathi which means a washerman. Jangali is derived from jangal which means a forest. Excepting these, most of the clan names do not have any specific meaning. The Thakurs use clan names as their surnames as they do not have separate surnames.

Kin on both the mother's and the father's side play important roles in their ceremonies. The maternal uncle cuts the first hair of a newly born child. On this occasion the child is seated on the lap of its father's sister (fui). During marriage, it is the father's sister who has the right to accompany the bridegroom when he goes to an umbar tree and moves five times round it. At the time of construction of a mandav, the maternal uncle keeps five muthi (balls of varai flour) on a pat in front of the umbar pole of the booth. The maternal uncle also ties a bashing around the head of the bridegroom when the latter starts for the bride's place for the marriage.

Dwelling

The Thakurs generally live in small hamlets situated near agricultural fields in or near the fringes of the forests, on plains or by the side of hills. Though a few Thakurs prefer to live in separate hamlet, in many places they are seen living side by side with other tribes and also allow members of other communities in settlements where they are found in a majority. The Thakurs of Poshera reside in 13 localities out of which one is the gaothan and the other are its hamlets (padas). The main site consists of 55 households of Mahadev Kolis in addition to six households of Muslims. Of the 12 hamlets, one is inhabited exclusively by Ka Thakur households (20), the other one by Varlis (30), the third one by Katkaris (36), and the fourth by Mahars (8). The remaining eight hamlets are inhabited by Ma Thakurs (39), Mahadev Kolis (63), Varlis (57), Koknis (16) and Katkaris (13). Each of these eight hamlets has two or more tribes. Of the 39 households of Ma Thakurs, 14 live in Vijapadicha pada with Varlis (10), 17 in Fanaspada with Katkaris (3) and Mahadev Koli (1), and eight in Thakur pada with Varlis (4) and Mahadev Kolis (6). Poshera is about five miles from Mokhada, the tehsil headquarters, and is connected with it by a kachcha road. The population of Kortad village resides in seven localities, one of which is the main gaothan where 31 households of Ka Thakur reside along with Varli (5), Katkari (2), Maratha (1) and Wadwal (1) households. Of the six hamlets, one consists of eleven households of Ka Thakur in addition to one household of Varli. The other five are inhabited exclusively by Koknas. Kortad is 28 miles from Mokhada and is connected with it by a road. Numerically, Ka Thakurs are the second important tribe in the village with Varlis and Katkaris as their neighbours. The caste composition of Mokhada village is not very different from that of the other two villages. Its population resides in 12 localities out of which Thakurwadi or Ambepani consists of 35 households of Ka Thakur in addition to seven households of Dhor Kolis. The other localities are inhabited by Varlis, Mahadev Kolis and caste Hindus. All the three villages are situated in hilly and forest tracts. The agricultural lands, forests, saw mills and timber and coal depots in the area provide opportunities of work throughout the year. Thakurs in these villages rarely go to adjoining districts or States for seasonal work.

Most of the Thakurs live in small huts built on an earthen foundation with walls of karvi reeds plastered with clay and cow dung on both sides and roofs of tiles or grass. Out of the 14 huts of Ma Thakur in Vijapadicha pada of Poshera, nine have roofs of factory tiles, three have ordinary tiles and two have grass roofs. Of the 20 huts of Ka Thakur in Morthyacha pada of Poshera, four have roofs of factory tiles and the remaining 16 have grass roofs. Out of the 35 huts of Ka Thakur in Thakurwadi of Mokhada, 14 have roofs of factory tiles and the remaining 21 have grass roofs. All these huts are either square or rectangular in shape and have walls of karvi reeds with one or two doors but no windows. Their earthen flooring is always kept clean by use of cow dung. Every hut has some open space either at the front or at the back, but this area is rarely cleaned with cow dung. A few households grow vegetables in this open space. Poultry and goats are kept here. In the majority of cases, the huts have no varandah in the front or an enclosure around. Cattle are kept within the hut itself or in one of the partitioned rooms of the hut. A stone slab kept in the open space serves as a place for bathing. Only two houses with brick walls were seen at Kortad out of the three villages visited.

One or two rooms with a partition to divide the room into separate compartments constitute the hut of an average Thakur. Of these compartments, that which is at the back is used as a kitchen whereas the rests are used for all other purposes. A portion of

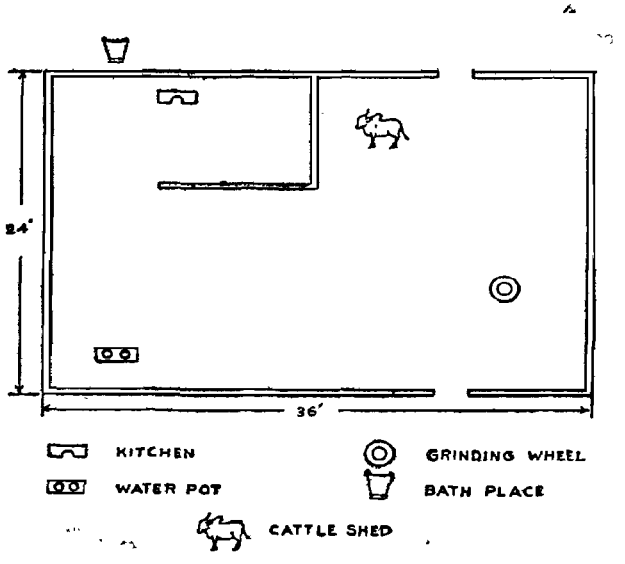
the side wall is reserved for tethering cattle, if there are any. The house of a well-to-do Thakur has two or three rooms with two or three doors, a separate kitchen, a shed for cattle, a verandah in the front and an enclosure around. Such houses are, however, very few. Of the two brick houses at Kortad, one has six rooms, 12 doors, seven windows and a verandah on the ground floor and four rooms with five doors, eleven windows and a balcony on the first floor. It is constructed on a foundation under the ground level and a plinth on the ground. The roof is of factory tiles. The house has a sanitary block also.

Labourers engaged on the construction were paid one rupee a day. Women were paid 75 paise a day. The carpenter and the mason were engaged on Rs. 3·50 and Rs. 5·00 a day, respectively. Bricks were brought from Dahanu (54 miles), at the rate of Rs. 70 per 1,000 bricks, including transport. Lime was brought from Jawhar (14 miles), at the rate of Rs. 13 a bag and tiles from Dahanu at the rate of Rs. 300 per 1,000 tiles, including transport. The approximate cost of the house was Rs. 21,000. Its owner is a well-to-do cultivator and the police patil of the village. Besides, he has a multipurpose shop in the village.

The materials required for constructing huts—karvi reeds, wood, earth and stones—are obtained locally. The manual labour required is provided by members of the household. In case more labourers are required they are hired locally.

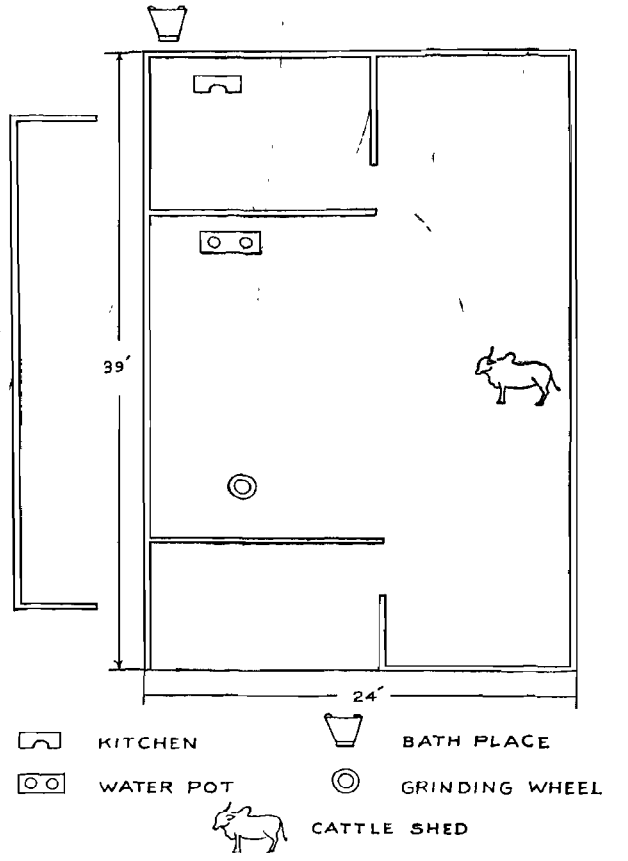
The plans of two Thakur huts at Kortad are given below :—

Diagram I.



The hut which is rectangular in shape consists of a room with a partition of karvi reeds set inside, dividing it into two portions, of which one is used as a kitchen and the other for all other purposes. The walls of the hut are made of karvi reeds and the roof is of factory tiles. The hut has two doors, but no windows. Cattle are kept in the hut itself.

Diagram II.



The hut is rectangular in shape and has only one room with an open verandas in front. The room is divided into three segments by two karvi partitions. The one at the back is used as a kitchen, that which is to the north is used for tethering cattle and the third is used for all other purposes. Walls of the room are made of karvi reeds and the roof is of factory tiles. The hut has only one door used both by the household and cattle. It has only one window to the east. Cattle are kept in the hut itself. The hut has one padavi (side room) to the south which is used for keeping fuel and poultry.

The housing pattern in the other two villages does not differ much. In a majority of houses, a small room is partitioned off on one side for use as a kitchen and, along the other side, some area is reserved for keeping cattle. The small hut has generally one entrance and an average size hut has two. One of the entrances opens into the place where the cattle are kept as shown in diagram I. During the construction of the house, ceremonies like worship of the main pole are held. Before occupying the house, a coconut is broken and distributed among those present. Sometimes, cooked rice is offered and a fowl is sacrificed.

Dress

A langoti, a kopari or bandi and a pheta or shela is the traditional dress of a grown-up Thakur. When he goes out for field work, he wears a langoti and bandi and covers his head with a white rumal. During leisure time or when he is at home, he wears a langoti and at times a kopari when the weather is cold. When he visits a government office or attends a festival, he wears a dhoti in place of a langoti and puts on a kopri and pheta or a shela. Young men wear a dhotar (dhoti), a kamij and a topi. School-going boys frequently wear chaddis, shirts and topis. They wear langotis at home. Women wear a lugade, a choli (bodice) and a fadki. A sari of eight yards is cut into two equal parts, one of which is worn below the waist. The other part is worn on the next day when the first one is washed. The sari is lightly wound round the waist leaving the legs from knees to ankles bare. The end of the sari is tucked in at the waist and never drawn over the head or passed over the shoulder. The fadki covers the upper part of the body from the waist. At marriages and other ceremonies, they wear saris of a better quality. Bright colours generally appeal to their tastes. Girls wear chaddis, frocks, polkas and parkars.

The ornaments worn by Ma and Ka Thakurs differ to some extent in value than in design. Ma Thakurs generally wear silver ornaments. A few of them also have gold ornaments. The ornaments worn by Ka Thakurs are mostly made of copper or brass. A few Ka Thakurs can afford to use silver ornaments, but hardly any uses gold ornaments. Men do not generally put on any ornament. Only a few old men have kade on their wrists and kargotas around the waist. A few Ka men and a few Ma men wear kuduk and pagare (ear ornaments), respectively. Women of both Ma and Ka Thakurs wear a number of ornaments. Among these are bangadya, goth and patalya around the wrists and vela and bajiband around the arms; fuli on the nose, balya, kap or daka on the ears and jodavi or masolya on the toes. Mithali, zure and saree are more common among the Ka women, whereas putali, gathali and sakhali are popular among Ma women. The garsoli is worn by married women. The garsoli, bangadya, kap and jodave are worn daily, the rest only on occasions. Girls generally wear ear-rings and a necklace of glass beads.

Tattooing is more common among women than among men. Men get their own name or the picture of Hanuman or Krishna tattooed on the forearm and a flower or a twig of a tree on the forehead. Women have tattoo marks on the forehead and the forearm. The design preferred by them are a flower on the forehead and chariot, a bashing or a tree on the forearm.

Food and drink

Rice and nagli constitute the staple food of the Thakurs, these being the chief crops grown by them. Among the pulses, urid is more common. Next to that is tur with kulith and gram following in that order. Of the vegetables which they grow at home, onions, brinjals, val, chavali and pumpkin are eaten. They also eat mutton, fowl, eggs and fish, but not beef. Two meals a day with a light breakfast in the morning is the usual practice. The first meal is taken at noon between two shifts of the day's work. The other is taken in the evening on returning from the day's work, preferably before sunset so as to avoid taking food in the dark as many Thakurs cannot afford to keep a lamp burning in their houses. For breakfast which they take before going for work, they eat nagli bhakri and chutni prepared from onions, garlic, salt and chillis. Sometimes, coconut or dried fish is an additional item. The afternoon meal consists of nagli bhakri with dal and besan. The latter is prepared from the flour of urid, kulith or gram. At times, they take vegetables also. The evening meal consists of rice, dal or besan and sometimes dry fish or fish curry. Mutton is cooked once or twice in a month or when there are guests in the house. Fowl and eggs are eaten when available. Dry fish is eaten frequently. Ghee, milk and milk preparations are not in common use. Only a few well-to-do having milch cattle can afford to have these occasionally. Pickles are also not in common use. When there is scarcity of food or when the stock of food-grains in the house is exhausted as usually happens during the monsoon period with the extremely poor, they take to roots and leaves of some wild trees as vegetables or eat wild fruits, popular among which are kadukand, karvand, avala, umber, jambhul, bor, chinch and kouth.

At Kortad, eight out of 42 households of Thakurs were found drinking tea. They use gur for preparing tea and no milk. Drinking liquor is a common habit. They drink it in the evening before going to bed.

A small hut, some fishing tackle, a goat or two, some fowls, a few ornaments and a few metal pots constitute

the property of an average Thakur. A cultivating household has a few farm implements, some weights for measuring foodgrains and kangas for storing the produce, a pair of bullocks, one or two cows and, occasionally, a buffalo. If the head of the household is labourer, he keeps some implements such as a digging stick, an axe, a sickle, a clod breaker and a hoe. Those interested in music have a few musical instruments. Metal as well as earthen pots are used. The former are made of brass, aluminium and iron. A few well-to-do families keep crockery. A grinding wheel, a stone or wooden mortar, a long wooden pestle, one or two soops and a few bamboo baskets are also seen. Hardly few have furniture. At Kortad, out of the 42 Thakur households, eleven keep a mirror, six use hurricane lanterns, five have wooden cots, two have dry-cell torches and wrist watches and one has a chair, a table, a bench, a almirah, a bicycle, a sewing machine and a radio set. Many families do not use a mirror or burn a lantern, or sleep on a cot.

Hygiene and sanitation

Most of the Thakurs live in kachcha huts having no windows. The space around their huts is not always kept clean. Garbage is not removed for days together. During rains, the floors in these huts get damp. In a majority of houses, cattle are found tied in the room where the family eats and sleeps. The floor in the hut is often made dirty by fowls and goats. As there are no service latrines in their settlements, they go to the surrounding fields for defecation. Most of them draw water from kachcha wells. Serpents come near their huts in search of frogs, especially during rains. Scorpions are found every now and then. As regards personal cleanliness, every Trakur cleans his teeth every morning with burnt tobacco or charcoal powder and takes a bath regularly. He shaves his face and washes his clothes frequently. At Kortad, out of the 42 households of Thakurs, eleven were found using toilet soap and 39 were found using washing soap. In most of their villages, there are no allopathic doctors, hakims or vaidyas. Public dispensaries are very few. The only medical aid readily available to them is that of the bhagat, the medicine man and spiritual guide of the tribe. In the investigated villages, some Thakurs, especially those from Mokhada and Kortad nowadays go to the nearest medical aid centre for treatment and also seek the services of a trained mid-wife from the maternity home centre in the neighbourhood. A good number of Thakurs get themselves inoculated against small-pox and cholera and take their children to a vaccinator when the latter visits their places. Many Thakurs get their houses sprayed with insecticides when officers of the malaria department visit their villages for spraying. This may show that the Thakurs, specially those living near medical aid centres, take advantage of the medical facilities, provided there.

Language and literacy

The Thana gazetteer as far back as in 1882, recorded Marathi as the home tongue of the tribe (p. 178). Today also most of the Thakurs speak Marathi as their mother-tongue. In the 1961 census, 154,680 Thakurs (97·00), reported their mother-tongue as Marathi. Of the nine mother-tongues returned by them in 1961, Thakri (4,170), occupies the second place, with Banjari (471), Hindi (42), Gujarati (3), Nepali (2), Telugu (2), Garhwali (1) and Malayalam (1). All those who returned Banjari as their mother-tongue are from Kolaba district and most of the speakers of Thakri (3,519), are also from Kolaba. The speakers of Garhwali, Nepali and Telugu are all from Thana district. Similarly, a majority of Hindi and Gujarati speakers are from Thana. The speakers of Marathi among Thakurs are, however, well spread in each of the five districts wherein, the community is declared as a scheduled tribe.

The Thakurs living in the investigated villages, speak Marathi among themselves as well as with outsiders. Marathi is their ancestral language as well as the language of their dominant neighbours in the region. They understand Hindi though they can not speak it. A few Thakurs (1,239), also know some subsidiary languages. These include Marathi (1,004), Hindi (183), English (41) and Gujarati (11).

In the 1961 census, only 6,958 Thakurs (4·37) out of their total population of 159.372, were returned as literate. This percentage is lower than 10·66 for Koli Mahadev, 9·52 for Koknas, 7·76 for Koli Malhar, and 4·72 for Varlis. It is also much lower than the average literacy rate (7·21), for all the scheduled tribes in the State. The break-up of their population by educational standards is given on page 67.

Only five Thakurs have attained matriculation or higher secondary level : as many as 5,678 are literate without any educational level. Among women, only 584 out of 77,792 are literate, which means literacy among them is less than one per cent.

Most of the Thakurs, do not send their boys and girls to schools even though there is a school in their village. When a child is old enough to go to school, the Thakur is faced with a dilemma whether he should send his ward to the school or use the ward's services in the house or in the field. At Kortad, out of a population of 225 persons (107 males and 118 females), only nine (three males and six females), are literate of whom two (one male and one female), have studied upto the primary stage and seven (two males and five females), are literate without educational level.

Statement showing distribution of population by educational standards.

Educational Standard	Total			Rural			Urban		
	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Illiterate	152,414 (95·64)	75,206 (92·19)	77,208 (99·25)	151,150 (95 73)	74,585 (92·32)	76,565 (99 29)	1,264 (85·99)	621 (78·31)	643 (94·58)
Literate without educational level ..	5,678 (3 56)	5,146 (6·31)	532 (0·68)	5,579 (3·53)	5,066 (6 27)	513 (0·66)	99 (6·73)	80 (10·09)	19 (2·81)
Primary or junior basic ..	1,275 (0·80)	1,224 (1·50)	51 (0·07)	1,173 (0·74)	1,136 (1 41)	37 (0 05)	102 (6 94)	88 (11·10)	14 (2·06)
Matriculation or higher secondary	5 (0·00)	4 (0·00)	1 (0 00)	..	..	..	5 (0·34)	4 (0·50)	1 (0·15)
Above matriculation or higher secondary.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..		
Total ..	159,372 (100·00)	81,580 (100 00)	77,792 (100·00)	157,902 (100 00)	80,787 (100 00)	77,115 (100 00)	1,470 (100 00)	793 (100·00)	677 (100·00)

Out of the 62 children (30 boys and 32 girls) of age group 5 to 14, only five girls are full-time students. The remaining 30 boys and 27 girls do not attend any school though there is a school in the village. These children assist their parents in household work and a few of them also work in the field to supplement the family income. The position is more or less the same in other villages.

Economic life

The Thana gazetteer of 1882 describes the Thakurs as husbandmen who work in the fields during the hot, rainy and early cold weather and at other times find stray jobs, gathering firewood for sale and wild fruits and roots for their own consumption. In the 1961 census 95,970 Thakurs, 60·22 per cent of their total population in the State, were returned as workers. Among males 52,046 (63·80) out of 81,580 were workers ; among females 43,924 (56 46) out of 77,792 were workers. The 1961 industrial classification of these workers was as follows :—

Category	Total			Rural			Urban		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I ..	67,334	35,522	32,012	67,471	35,436	31,981	117	86	31
	70·37	68·25	72·88	70·78	68·75	73·19	16·09	17·20	13.66
II ..	22,421	12,480	9,941	22,358	12,441	9,917	63	39	24
	23·36	23·98	22·63	23·48	24·14	22·69	8·67	7·80	10·57
III ..	2,769	1,626	1,143	2,564	1,556	1,008	205	70	135
	2·89	3·12	2·60	2·69	3·02	2·31	28·20	14·00	59·47
IV ..	530	383	147	528	382	146	2	1	1
	0·55	0·74	0·34	0·55	0·74	0·38	0·27	0·20	0·44
V ..	252	228	24	204	183	21	48	45	3
	0·26	0·44	0·06	0·21	0·35	0·05	6·60	9·00	1·32
VI ..	251	223	28	246	219	27	5	4	1
	0·26	0·43	0·06	0·26	0·42	0·06	0·69	0·80	0·44
VII ..	483	235	248	430	191	239	53	44	9
	0·50	0·45	0·56	0·45	0·37	0·55	7·29	8·80	3·17
VIII ..	592	583	9	519	510	9	73	73	....
	0·62	1·12	0·02	0·55	0·99	0·02	10·04	14·60	
IX ..	1,138	766	372	977	628	349	161	138	23
	1·19	1·47	0 85	1·03	1·22	0·80	22·15	27·60	10·13
Total Workers (I—IX). ..	95,970	52,046	43,924	95,243	51,546	43,697	727	500	227
	100·00	100·00	100·00	100·00	100·00	100·00	100 00	100 00	100·00

A large number of Thakurs (93·00) thus earned their livelihood either as cultivators or as agricultural labourers. Their participation in this sector was more as cultivators (70·00) than as an agricultural labourers as most of them owned or held land from Government for cultivation. A study of 5,445 Thakur households from Thana and Ahmadnagar districts revealed that 3,323 (61·00) households were owner-cultivators (they either owned or held land from Government for cultivation), 1,250 households (23·00) cultivated lands taken on lease or on contract basis from others and 872 households (16·00) did not possess any land for cultivation. Among the 3,323 owner-cultivators, 314 households (9·45) held land less than one acre, 2,376 households (71·50) held land between 1 and 9·9 acres, 297 households (8·94) held land from 10 to 14·9 acres and 218 households (6·56) held land raising form 15 acres to 24·9 acres. There were 118 households holding land 25 acres and above. Among the same 3,323 landholders there were 26 who cultivated a part of their land and leased out the rest of the land to others. There were 523 who cultivated their own land and also took some land on lease from others. As leaseholders they paid 4 to 6 times the land revenue in addition to the expenses they incurred on cultivation. Small cultivators possessing land from 1 acre to 9·9 acres worked as agricultural labourers in off seasons or when they were free from their major activity. A few ply carts, maintain poultry, rear cattle, collect and sell forest produce. Forests situated in the neighbourhood also provide them opportunities of labour when they have no other work to do.

We do not find many Thakurs in trade, commerce, industries, transport and communications. Excepting 2,769 persons (2·89) reported to be working in mining, quarrying, livestock, forestry and such other allied activities and 1,138 persons (1·19) engaged in "other services", those working in the other non-agricultural sectors were negligible in numbers. Persons working in each of these activities did not add upto even one per cent of the total working population of the tribe in the State.

Out of 63,402 non-workers, 3,692 were full-time students or children attending school, 71 were seeking employment for the first time, 15 were employed before but were out of employment and seeking work and 59,624 were dependents including housewives and children not attending schools, old, sick, permanently disabled and such other persons.

In the investigated villages, most of the Thakurs follow their hereditary occupation of agriculture and agricultural labour. In Mordhyacha pada of Poshera there are 20 households of Thakurs of whom ten cultivate their own land, five cultivate others' lands on lease and the remaining five work as agricultural labourers. At Kortad village, there are 225 Thakurs. Of them, 154 are workers. The remaining 71 are non-workers. Of the 154 workers, 150 work as cultivators, three work as agricultural labourers and one who was some years back a well-to-do cultivator has now changed his occupation and opened a multipurpose shop in the village by investing his own capital which he has raised during the last two or three years by selling his surplus agricultural produce. He has some cultivable land in the village but cultivation is now his subsidiary occupation. He deals in grains, kirana, cloth, oils, stationery, vegetables, dry fish and such other commodities required by the villagers for household consumption. The cost of the commodities kept in the shop for sale is about Rs. 2,000. Daily sales vary from Rs. 30 to 40. Transactions are carried on under a barter system as well as on cash payment. This is the only shop in the village. Excepting this solitary instance, no mobility of occupation was observed among them. One Thakur is a carpenter and one has opened a tailoring shop in the village. They are engaged in these jobs as subsidiary activities, agriculture being the principal one. Among those engaged in cultivation, 21 are owner cultivators and 16 are tenant cultivators. The owner cultivators own 389 acres of land in the village and tenant cultivators hold only 76 acres. The average holding for a owner cultivator works out to 18 acres and 20 gunthas while that for a tenant cultivator, is four acres and 30 gunthas. The economic holding as laid down in the Tenancy Act is 16 acres of jirayat land which means among the tenant cultivators, the average holding is not even one-half of the economic holding.

The Thakurs of Kortad village engage in subsidiary work in the off season. Enquiry reveals that 134 persons work as agricultural labourers, one works as a carpenter in the village, one works as a tailor, a few get some seasonal jobs with the forest contractors, a few maintain poultry and goats and a few rear cattle. The primary occupation of all these persons is agriculture.

As agricultural labourers, both males and females are paid at the rate of one rupee per day plus bhakri in the afternoon and some tobacco. As forest labourers they receive Rs. 1·50 a day. The carpenter gets only seasonal work. He prepares wooden beams, poles and doors for houses in the neighbourhood; he is paid Rs. 3·50 per day. He also prepares farm implements. His busy season is from April to June. The tailor stitches new clothes and repairs old ones. Since the villagers now purchase readymade clothes, he does not get sufficient work in the locality. Those who rear goats and poultry do so with the intention

of selling goats, eggs and chickens after keeping some for home consumption. Goats are reared both for slaughtering and for manuring. Only the male goats are sold for mutton, the female being kept back for breeding. The price of a goat varies from Rs. 20 to 25. A cock is sold at Rs. 3, a hen for Rs. 2 and a chicken for Rs. 1·50. Eggs are sold at Rs. 2·40 per dozen. At Kortad, about 45 persons have goats and nearly 70 persons have poultry. About 70 Thakurs in the village possess bullocks, 49 persons have cows and 12 persons have goats. Bulls are sold after one or two years, or at a later date. Older stock fetch better prices. The approximate prices at which these animals are sold in the village are as follows :—

Cow	...	Rs. 70 to 90.
Calf	...	Rs. 50 to 60.
Bullock	...	Rs. 100 to 200.
She-buffalo	...	Rs. 300 to 350.
He-buffalo	...	Rs. 150 to 200.
He-buffalo below 3 years.		Rs. 60 to 70.

Two Thakurs of the village are supplied with a cow and breeding bull by the community development block, Mokhada, for breeding purposes. Besides, one Thakur has two he-buffalos and nine possess nine bulls of country breed for the same purpose. Of these the cow and the bull which are supplied by the community development block are looked after with special care.

The soils of Kortad village, are red and black. At some places, the land is uneven and slopy. Coarse grains like ragi and varai and some paddy are grown. The Thakurs of Kortad grow mainly kharif crops such as urid, tur, kulith and khurasani, in addition to paddy and varai, the last three being the chief crops. They grow gram as a rabi crop. Since cultivation is entirely dependent on the rain which at times is erratic, the crop pattern has not changed for years. Agricultural operations start from April.

In Kortad village, six cultivators use ammonium sulphate and superphosphate, 12 cultivators use farmyard manure and nine cultivators use improved types of seed. Besides, 15 cultivators cultivate 23 acres of paddy land according to the Japanese method and one cultivator has constructed bunds around the field. Farm-yard manure which was rarely used in old days is now being used by some of them.

The practices of cultivation followed are more or less the same as those of the communities living in the village. Tuesday is generally avoided for starting agricultural operations as it is considered inauspicious. Among the Ka Thakurs, a cock is sacrificed and nagli seed is smeared with its blood before sowing. Seeds of other grains are also rubbed with onion or sweet oil. This is said to be a precaution against pest. Grinding and shaving are prohibited so long as sowing operations are in progress. Before starting transplantation, a coconut is broken and distributed as prasad. When the crop is ready, it is first worshipped and then cut and stored in kangis. A woman in menses is not allowed to visit the threshing floor. Similarly, brooms and foot-wear made of leather are also not allowed on the floor when threshing is in progress.

Small cultivators dispose of their surplus stocks soon after the crop is brought home, i.e., in November, after keeping some for domestic consumption and for the next year's seed. These cultivators generally sell their stocks either to the village shopkeeper or to the consumers, or to merchants of the locality who occasionally visit their villages for the purpose. Well-to-do cultivators wait for two or three months more and sell their grain in March. Those who are rich and can wait still longer sell in May or June when the prices are higher. Sometimes, it happens that a cultivator who sells his stock in November at low prices is forced to buy grain at a much higher price in May or June. This happens when there is a marriage or some other ceremony in the house or when the household disposes of the entire produce for constructing a house, for purchase of bullocks or for paying outstanding debts.

The income which a Thakur derives from agriculture and other resources is just enough to meet his domestic and agricultural requirements. He has neither the tenancy nor the scope to save, with the result that expenditure on any unforeseen events may force him into debt. Loans are drawn by mortgaging land, cattle, or ornaments, or by offering personal service or against personal credit. In case of loans advanced to agricultural labourers, the repayment is generally in the form of service to be rendered to the moneylender who in many cases happens to be a landlord. In other cases, it is repaid in the form of paddy, nagli or varai of equivalent amount. Those who sell their produce repay the loans in cash. They also get loans from Government and the village co-operative Society.

At Kortad village the shop-keeper who is a Thakur advances petty loans to his tribesmen in the form of cash or food-grains. The latter, therefore, hardly go to the neighbouring villages in search of a moneylender. About 29 Thakurs of the village have secured financial aid from the co-operative society which was established in the village in 1957 to assist its members

by advancing loans. This society caters to the needs of nine villages within a radius of five miles from the village. It has 192 members of whom 29 are Thakurs, 52 are Varlis and 84 are Koknas.

The income and expenditure of an average Thakur household as ascertained from a family is furnished below. The household is that of a small cultivator with six members in his family.

Annual income	Rs.	Annual expenditure	Rs.
1. From cultivation i.e, value of paddy, nagli, varai, khurasani and urid grown in the field.	500·00	1. Cost of grains required for household consumption.	350·00
2. From agricultural labour	150·00	2. Kerosene	15·00
		3. Sweet oil	25·00
		4. Kirana articles	75·00
		5. Clothes	50 00
		6. Tobacco and bidi	25·00
		7. Vegetables	10·00
		8. Expenses on cultivation	125·00
		9. Repayment of debt	25·00
		10. Miscellaneous	25·00
Total income ..	650·00	Total expenditure ..	725·00
		Deficit ..	75·00

Life cycle

Among the Ma and Ka Thakurs when a girl attains puberty, she observes monthly impurity for four days every month. She is deemed to be purified after taking a bath on the fourth or the fifth day. Though she is allowed to go out for field jobs, she is not permitted to do any household work during these four days. No rites are performed on the day when she comes of age.

If a woman is barren, her husband is free to take a second wife. The husband of a pregnant woman does not take part in a funeral procession and he abstains from sexual intercourse when his wife enters the eighth month of pregnancy. Delivery usually takes place at the husband's house. A professional mid-wife of the tribe in the village is generally engaged. After the child is born, the mid-wife cuts its nal with a sickle and buries it in a pit in or outside the house or in a cow-shed. A stone is kept over it. The mid-wife then bathes the mother and the child with hot water. On the sixth day, the mother takes a bath, worships a well and fetches water in a ghagar (pot) after which she is deemed to be purified. For a week or so, she is given light food, preferably rice pej or bhagar. Thereafter, she is allowed to eat rice and dal. This diet continues for a week after which she takes her usual food. The child is fed on the mother's milk. The mother resumes her household duties five days after childbirth but avoids outdoor work, till she regains her normal strength. Among the Ma Thakurs, she is allowed to go out for field work on taking a bath and worshipping a well on the 12th day.

On the fifth day from childbirth (pochora, sati puja or panchami as it is called), the mid-wife worships a female figure which she draws on a soop on some grains of rice or nagli. She worships the stone kept on the pit in which the nal is buried. Amongst the Ma, the mid-wife worships five female figures which she draws on a wall facing the place where the mother takes her bath. Circumstances permitting, neighbouring women and children are fed.

Among the Ka Thakurs, the child is named without any rite on any suitable day preferably on the day when the father goes to a police patil to record the birth of the child in the civil register. The Ma Thakurs consult a Brahman priest and name the child on an auspicious day as advised by him. The Ma also do not perform any rite.

Ananda, Balya, Damu, Ganpat, Krishna, Lakshman, Nana, Nanu, Prabhu, Ramnath, Ramchandra, Rambhau, Raghunath, Shankar, Sonya and Shantaram are some of the names of their male children as against the names of old men like Bhika, Budha, Dhavalu, Khandu, Manga, Manjya, Navashya, Punja, Sakaru, Sitya, Thakya and Zipar. Similarly, Chandra, Gangu, Lakshmi, Manjula, Mathi, Nani, Radha, Sakhu, Suman, Savitri, Tulsi, Tara and Yamini are some names of their female children as against the names of old women like Ambi, Bhagi, Bhiki, Bayaji, Baki, Budhi, Bhuri, Dhavali, Demi, Fashi, Godi, Jivi, Lahani, Poshi, Rahi, Sakhi, Sai, Somi and Yami.

The first hair of a child is shaved by its maternal uncle and the lower lobes of its ears are pierced by

a goldsmith on any convenient day. Some Ma Thakurs observe these practices on auspicious days fixed by a Brahman priest of the locality. Both the Thakurs have no rites on these occasions.

Marriage

Among both the Thakurs, the age of marriage for a boy and girl is about 14 and 12 years, respectively. Sometimes this limit is extended upto 18 years for a boy and 14 for a girl. During the 1961 census, 864 males (2·61) of the tribe out of 33,072 and 1,441 females (4·33) out of 33,248 were returned as married in the age group 0-14. As a rule the husband is older than the wife by one to five years.

Marriages within the same kul are strictly prohibited in both the communities. Marriage with mother's brother's daughter or father's sister's daughter is allowed. Marriage with mother's sister's daughter or father's brother's daughter is prohibited. In a majority of cases, marriage does not take place if the two contracting parties are already related to each other. Consequently, though marriage with mother's brother's daughter or father's sister's daughter is allowed, such marriages are not encouraged. The Ka Thakurs of Kortad do not permit such marriages. Marriages are performed at the girl's residence in Vaisakh, Magh or Falgun, preferably in Magh among the Ka or in Falgun, among the Ma, in the evening on any convenient day excepting Monday and Saturday. The Ma celebrate the marriage on any auspicious day indicated by a brahman priest. Among the Ka, the marriage is conducted by a female priestess of the tribe (ganarin). She may be a widow or a married woman, but never an un-married one. The Ma engage a brahman priest on such occasions. Marriages are settled by negotiation. Monogamy is generally observed, but they have no serious objection to polygyny. The practice of paying dej to the girl's father is common.

Among the Ka, it is Rs. 20 in addition to two maunds of grains at Mordhyacha pada and Rs. 21 in addition to two and a half maunds of paddy at Kortad; among the Ma of Vijapadicha pada, it is Rs. 20 in addition to two and a half maunds of grains. It is paid a few days prior to the day of marriage.

Negotiations usually start from the boy's side. When a boy attains the age of 14, his father selects a suitable girl for him in the neighbourhood. He goes to her father on any convenient day, accompanied by his wife, relatives and some important tribesmen in the village. If the girl's father accepts the proposal, the acceptance is announced to all assembled. Tea is served to all and the guests from the boy's side retire after fixing a day for the betrothal (bol pen).

The boy's father and mother, accompanied by some members of his family, visit the girl's place on the day for betrothal. On reaching there, the boy's father or any male member of his family breaks a nut and gives a broken piece of the nut and a little quantity of tobacco to the girl's father, village headman, girl's maternal uncle and all assembled there. Gur or sugar is distributed. Among the Ma Thakurs of Vijapadicha pada, a sugar packet is given to the girl on this occasion. The day for the mothi pen is then fixed and the guests retire.

After a few days, the boy's father, his mother, sister, some elderly relatives, a few suvasinis and some important tribesmen in the village go to the girl's place for mothi pen or varhadaki. On this occasion, a suvasini from the boy's side apply kumkum to the girl's forehead. The girl is offered a sari, a bodice and a garsoli. She then wears this dress, puts on the garsoli and bows to the assembled elders. The boy's father offers nut and tobacco to the guests from the girl's side. The day for paying dej is fixed; the ceremony ends with the distribution of ghugarya or tur to all. Among some Ka Thakurs, especially those from Kortad, the girl does not wear the garsoli on this occasion. She wears it on the day of marriage.

Some elders from the boy's side visit the girl's place to pay the dej as arranged. Among the Ka Thakurs of Mokhada, the corn to be given to the girl's father as a part of dej is first tied in a piece of cloth and kept near a mortar with a palas leaf over it and wreaths of rui flowers tied to it before it is taken to the girl's place. The boy and his mother wave a lighted lamp around it. The boy's younger sister (karoli), takes the boy's hand in hers and moves five times around the corn along with him. The corn is then carried to the girl's place. This is called ghan nene. It is followed by basta, the ceremonial purchases of clothes and bashings.

The Ka Thakurs select any suitable day for the marriage with the consent of both the parties; the Ma Thakurs consult a brahman priest.

Halad, Devadevi and Mandav are performed at both the places two or three days prior to the day of marriage. On the first day, some suvasinis apply haldi to the boy and the girl at their respective houses and a bhagat worships the family deities. On the next day, mandav is erected in the front yard of the house. It has preferably nine posts of which at least one is of an umbar tree. The umbar post is fixed near the entrance of the booth in the first hole dug for the purpose, after putting into it a few grains of rice or bhagar, a copper coin, and a few drops of water. The

entrance has a toran (bunting) of mango leaves. The mandav is erected with the help of the tribesmen in the village whom they specially invite for the purpose. Among the Ma Thakurs, the mandav at the girl's place is erected on the day of marriage. The Ka Thakurs of Mokhada perform Devadevi and Mandav on the same day as Halad, whereas those from Kortad perform Devadevi on the day of Mandav, i.e., on the second day of Halad. Among the Ma Thakurs, after constructing the mandav, the maternal uncle of the boy keeps five balls of bhagar, called muthi, on a pat covered by a piece of white cloth and kept on a ghongadi (blanket), spread near the umbar post. After covering these balls by another blanket, the boy sits there and his maternal uncle ties a bashing around his head in the presence of the panchas. At the girl's place, this rite is performed on the day of marriage.

On the day of marriage, the boy goes to the girl's place in a procession with music. Before that, a Ka Thakur boy of Mokhada goes to an umbar tree along with his fui (father's sister) and the ganarin. The ganarin worships the tree and ties five garlands of thread to it. The fui takes the boy's hand and leads him five times round that tree. The boy then returns home, shaves his head and takes a bath. On this occasion, five empty pots are kept around a gangal (a flat and round vessel filled with water), in the name of five suvasinis and around them is tied a garland of thread. The boy goes five times round these pots and puts a coin or two in each of them. These coins later on are given to the suvasinis. After bath, haldi is applied to his body and he wears a ceremonial dress which consists of a dhoti, a shirt and a red pagote in addition to a bashing and wreaths of rui flowers. Relatives of the boy offer him presents (aher). The Ka Thakur of Mordyacha pada do not perform this rite. The Ma Thakurs perform it after marriage. The boy is then conducted to the girl's place with a dagger (katyar) in his right hand in a procession either on shoulders or on a bullock cart or on foot. On reaching the girl's place, the procession halts for a few minutes at the place of Holi and then all go to the place where arrangements for their stay are made.

When the villagers assemble in the mandav, the boy is brought there, the girl's mother waves a lighted lamp before him and he enters the pandal. He stands on a pat after going five times round it. The girl is brought there and made to stand on another pat, both facing west. Next, they both sit and stand on their pats five times and later take their seats finally. The ganarin sings a few marriage songs. The boy and the girl wave a lamp around each other's face. The marriage is then over.

Among the Ka Thakurs of Kortad, the boy and the girl stand on pats facing each other with a jamnuk held between them. The ganarin sings a few marriage songs, the curtain is then removed and those assembled in the pandal throw akshata on the boy and the girl. Among the Ma Thakurs of Vijapadicha pada, the boy and the girl stand on pats kept at the entrance of the booth facing each other with a jamnuk held between them by two men. While standing, they hold each other's hands. A garland of thread is then tied around them. Next a brahman priest repeats some verses. At the end of the last verse, the priest and the assembled persons clap their hands, throw akshata over the boy and the girl, the jamnuk is removed and the musicians play. The boy and the girl then walk five times around their pats, enter the mandav and sit on pats in front of which is kept a flat vessel filled with water. The priest puts a few coins in this vessel. The boy and the girl take these coins. Later, they walk five times around the homa (sacred fire) kindled by the priest. The marriage is then complete. Relatives of the boy and the girl offer them presents. After a feast at the girl's place, guests from both sides spend the night in dancing and merry-making. The bashings tied around the heads of the boy and the girl are removed either on the same day or on the next day.

Expenses for the boy's marriage fall between Rs. 400 and Rs. 600, a major part of it is spent as dej, food and clothing. In a majority of cases, the boy's father has to incur debts. The girl's father adjusts his expenses within the amount of dej received from the boy's father. Besides he gets corn to cover his food expenses.

A boy is exempted from the payment of dej when he marries a girl by serving her father or if he agrees to stay with the girl's father as ghar-javai, after his marriage. The service is for five years or for an agreed period. The boy is then married to the girl at the expenses of the girl's father with full marriage rites after the term of his service. After marriage he may go to his own house with his wife or stay with the girl's father, if the latter so desires. If the girl does not approve of the boy, the marriage does not take place. In such an event, the boy is remunerated by the girl's father for the service rendered by him till then. In certain cases a boy is married to the girl on the condition that he should stay with the girl's father after he gets married. The expenses on his marriage are incurred by the girl's father and the marriage is celebrated with full marriage rites. Such cases occur when the girl's father has no son or he desires that his daughter should stay with him along with her husband during his life-time.

Sometimes a girl of her own accord goes to a boy whom she loves and declares her intention to stay with him as his wife. She is then married to the boy with full marriage rites. In certain cases, a girl is forcibly taken away by the boy and his party, if she desires to stay with him as his wife against the desire of her parents. The girl is afterwards married to the boy with full marriage rites. In all such cases, the boy has to pay the regular dej to the girl's father as well as an amount sufficient to meet other expenses in connection with marriage.

Widow re-marriage

Widow re-marriage (motur) is permitted by the Thakurs. A widow can re-marry a man of her choice. She is, however, not permitted to marry the younger or the elder brother of her deceased husband. The re-marriage takes place on any suitable day in the evening, preferably at the woman's residence in the court-yard or under a tree without any rites. It does not require a priest. A widow puts on kumkum on her forehead on this occasion and wears a new sari, a bodice and a garsoli given to her by the intending husband. She then bows to the elders present there. The guests assembled are entertained to tea and the ceremony is over. The expenses of the party are made good by the intending husband. Relatives, friends and prominent tribesmen from both the sides attend. Sometimes, the intending husband simply puts on a garsoli round the neck of the woman and the marriage is considered to have taken place. In some cases, both the man and woman apply kumkum to the forehead of each other ; in others the garments of the man and the woman are tied into a knot on this occasion. Among the Ka Thakurs of Kortad, a widow takes a plate in her hand in which is kept a burning lamp The intending husband and any three panchas of the tribe touch the plate and the other panchas present there say to the man and the woman " You should now lead a peaceful married life ". Tea is served and the ceremony is over. The intending husband is not required to pay any dej during this marriage. After marriage, the widow acquires the kul of her new husband. The latter has, however, no right over the children from her first husband. A bachelor desirous of marrying a widow is first married to a rui tree and then married to the widow.

Either the husband or the wife can seek divorce (dava), if they disagree with each other on certain grounds and want separation. Adultery and lack of affection are some of the causes for which a divorce is sought. It also becomes inevitable if the husband is impotent or either of them suffers from an incurable disease. The habits of drinking and beating may also be the probable causes for initiating a divorce. If a woman asks for a divorce with a view to marry her lover, the latter has to pay the marriage expenses to her old husband as directed by the panchas. In case she has no lover, the husband does not get any compensation. The woman is also not fined. If a man asks for a divorce, he is not entitled to get any marriage expenses from the woman. The woman is also not fined. A divorced woman can re-marry just as a widow re-marries. A divorced man is, however, allowed to marry by a regular marriage. A bachelor cannot marry a divorced woman without first undergoing a regular marriage with a rui plant. Among the Ka Thakurs of Mokhada, the old and the new husbands take a leaf-cup containing a few drops of liquor at the time of granting a divorce. They fold their hands, offer namaskar to the panchas and other tribesmen assembled there to witness the occasion and then drink the drops of liquor from the leaf-cup before them. A stick is broken to signify the divorce. Among the Ma Thakurs of Vijapadicha pada of Poshera a divorce deed (farkgatnama), is executed on this occasion. It is signed by the old and the new husbands and the panchas present.

Death

The Ma and Ka Thakurs practice burial as well as cremation. Most of them, however, bury their dead ; only a few well-to-do resort to cremation. Children are invariably buried. When it is obvious that a person is about to breath his last, he is removed from the cot and kept on the floor on a carpet or a rough blanket in a sleeping position. After death, a copper coin is placed in the mouth of the deceased. The body is bathed in warm water, rubbed with haldi and kumkum is applied to its forehead. It is then dressed in new clothes, placed on a bier of bamboo, called madha or vakati, wrapped in a new piece of white cloth at the four ends of which is tied some cooked food along with a copper coin and carried to the burial or cremation ground on shoulders by four relatives or any four tribesmen, if the deceased has no relatives. The chief mourner, preferably, the eldest son, walks in front with an earthen pot in which is kept a burning dung cake. The procession halts for a few minutes at the visava, where the bier is kept by the side of or on a chula of three stones in which are thrown a few grains of rice, some copper coins and a branch of a mango tree. After a while, the corpse is lifted and carried to the burial or cremation ground for disposal. During the procession, the khandakaris change their places

On reaching the ground, the corpse is placed in a pit. Some cooked food and a few drops of water are put in its mouth. The pit is then filled in with earth and

some thorns and stones kept over it. The chief mourner walks five times round the pit with an earthen pot in hand ; at the end of the fifth round he dashes the pot on the ground, breaking it to pieces. In cremation, the corpse is kept on a pyre. Cooked food and a few drops of water are put in its mouth. The chief mourner lights the pyre, walks round for five times with an earthen pot in hand and dashes the pot on the ground at the end of the fifth round. Among the Ka Thakurs of Mokhada, any male member of the family of the deceased places cooked food in the mouth of the deceased five times and another pours a few drops of water over his lips five times with a jambhul leaf. While doing this, other members in the family keep their hands for a while over the hands of these two persons. When this is over, a member keeps a piece of wood over the corpse and the other members touch it by placing their hands over the same. The tribesmen assembled there then cover the corpse with firewood. Any two members standing at the head and feet with burning sticks in hands, light the pyre. The men standing at the head and feet then exchange their places. While doing this, the former keeps his burning stick at the feet whereas the latter throws his stick at the head. Then any male member in the family takes an earthen pot filled with water, another takes a few twigs of a jambhul tree, the third one carries a few grains of rice and move five times round the pyre. While moving, the man carrying water throws drops of water over the jambhul twigs and the one carrying rice scatters the grains. When this is over, all the persons attending the funeral, including relatives, friends and tribesmen, throw coins at the feet of the deceased after waving them first around his head. In case, the deceased is a married man, his wife's bangles are broken and the garsoli is removed from her neck either at the burial or cremation ground or at the house before the body is removed from there. When the corpse is burnt (in case of burial, after the pit is filled in), all bathe at the nearest water source, go to the house of the deceased and then retire. Among the Ka Thakurs of Mokhada, persons attending the funeral go to the water-source before going to the deceased's house. On reaching there, a member of the deceased's family pours water five times over a boru stick and a branch of a nandani tree fixed in cow dung over which are thrown a few grains of rice. Then all take a bath and return to the house of the deceased. On reaching there, a relative of the deceased or any other person, pours water over their hands. Thereafter, they keep their feet in the wet cow dung spread in front of the house over a few grains of rice and retire. In the evening, the place where the deceased breathed his last is washed with cow dung. Later, they spread some flour of rice or nagli on that spot, keep there liquor, milk, water, bhakri and bidi and cover these by keeping over them a big basket. On the next morning, they remove the basket and see whether there are any footprints or any mark on the flour. It is believed that the deceased may be born again as a human being, if the footprints of a man or woman are seen on the flour. In case footprints of an animal or bird are observed there, the deceased may be an animal or bird in the next birth. If no marks are seen on the flour, the deceased may not be born again. This rite is performed by both the Ma and Ka Thakurs in the same manner and with the same belief.

The Ka Thakur observes post-death impurity for three days and perform obsequies on the third day. On this day, they take a bath, wash the clothes, clean the utensils and smear the floors of the house with cow dung. They are then deemed to be pure. Next, they keep two palas leaves containing cooked food and two tubes filled with milk and gruel or rice at the visava, go to the cremation or burial ground, repeat the same procedure there. Thereafter, they feed a boy and a girl and, if circumstances permit, offer a feast to the tribesmen. The Ma Thakurs observes post-death impurity for ten days and perform obsequies on the thirteenth day. On the tenth day, they offer pindas (balls) of rice flour to the crows in the name of the deceased on the bank of a river or any other water source after worshipping them as directed by a Brahman priest. On the thirteenth day, tribesmen are feasted and a portion of the cooked food is offered to crows in the name of the deceased.

Six months after death, the Ka Thakurs observe kaj. This is the last rite to be observed by them after the death of a person. On this occasion, two persons sit on pats with two leaf-cups filled with poha (pounded rice) and four persons sing songs for a couple of hours. The former are called ghumare (those who know how to get possessed) and the latter are called kamadi (those who sing songs). All these are of the Thakur community. On getting possessed, the ghumares meet all the persons in the deceased's family and distribute the poha. Thereafter, two or three persons of the tribe cut their heads slightly with a sword. The blood coming out from their heads is applied to the foreheads of the ghumare and the ceremony is ended. The offerers of blood are fixed persons. This rite is performed at a different village of the locality. It does not take place in the same village where the deceased was living. The Ma Thakurs do not perform this rite.

The Ka Thakurs of Kortad raise stones by the side of the village boundary in memory of their dead. These stones are smeared with sindur and figures of

men and women are carved on them. In case, the deceased is a woman, her figure is drawn on the same stone on which her husband's figure is drawn. For other members in the family, separate stones are erected. These stones are called vir and they are erected for only those who die in old age. Some Ka Thakurs draw an image of vir on a metal plate and keep it in the house in the same basket in which the images of other household deities are kept. The Ma Thakurs of Vijapadicha pada do not raise stones for their dead or prepare a vir for them. Both the Ma and Ka Thakurs do not observe shradha but offer food to crows in the name of their ancestors every year on the day of Pitar Amavasya. The above rites are performed for all men and women excepting children for whom no rites are performed.

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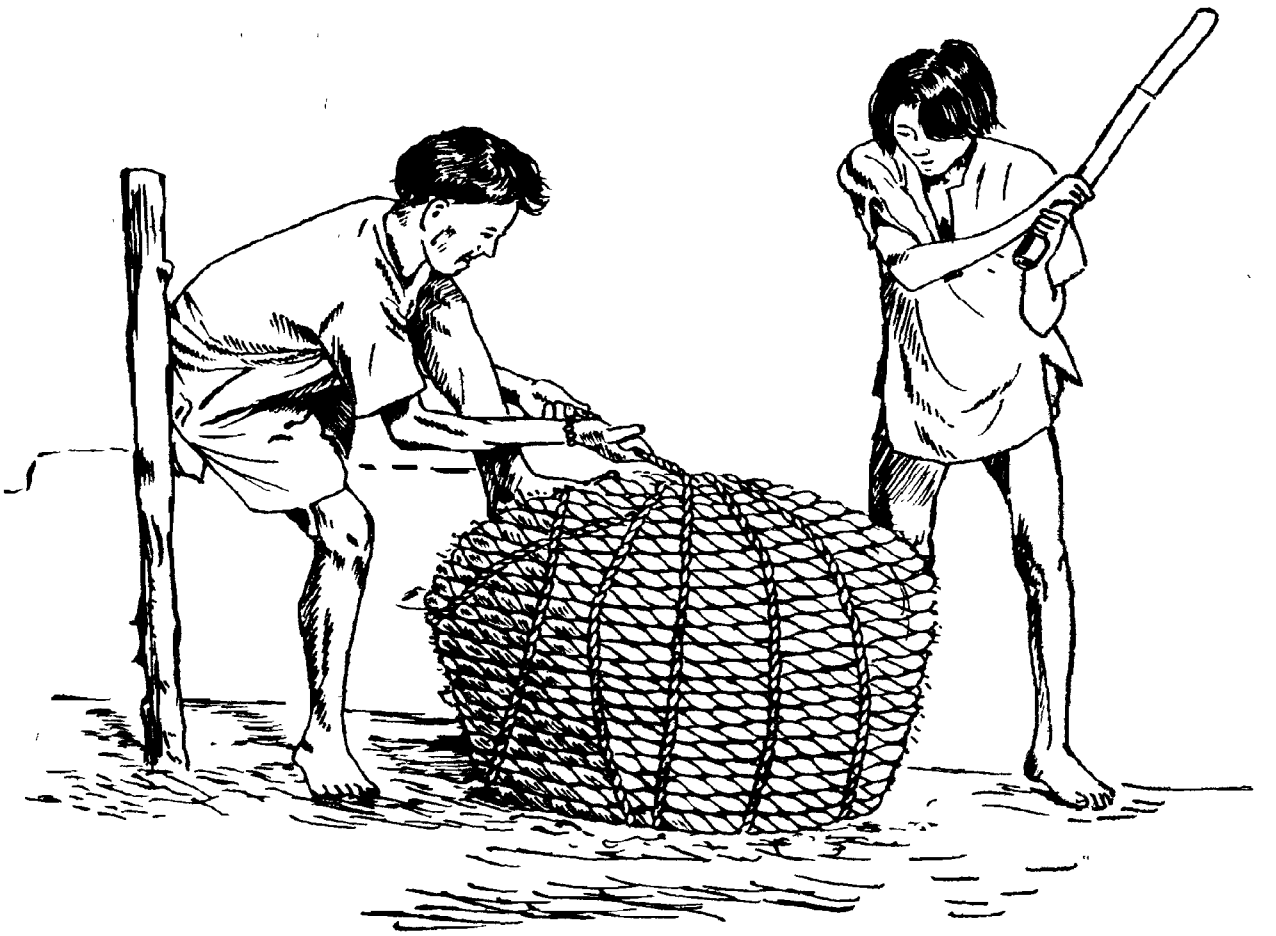
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Storing grain in a bin (Dholi)

KATHODI OR KATKARI

The Kathodi or Katkari, including Dhor Kathodi or Son Katkari, were first notified as a scheduled tribe against the name "Kathodi or Katkari" under the Constitution (scheduled tribes) order, 1950. The amendment act of 1956, included Dhor Kathodi or Dhor Katkari and Son Kathodi or Son Katkari in Kathodi or Katkari.

Investigations conducted at Poshera (Mokhada tehsil of Thana district) and Narangi (Khalapur tehsil of Kolaba district), for the ethnographic study of the tribe reveal that Katkari is another name or synonym of Kathodi, and Dhor Kathodi or Dhor Katkari or Son Kathodi or Son Katkari are distinct divisions of Kathodi or Katkari. Those from Narangi village are Son Katkaris and call themselves as Kathodis or Katkaris and the other people of the area also know them by the same names. Those living in Poshera refer to themselves and are known as Katkaris. They regard themselves to be socially superior to the other divisions and do not allow marital relations with any of them. The Dhor Kathodis or Dhor Katkaris are regarded as the lowest of them all as they are associated with beef eating. The other divisions of the tribe do not accept food from them or have marital relations with them.

The term Katkari is said to be derived from the Marathi word Kat or Kath (catechu, the thickened juice of the khair tree). 'Karne' means 'to make'. Katkari thus means "maker of catechu". The term Kathodi is similarly derived from Kath (catechu) and vadi (a cake). Kathodi or Katkari is thus an occupational name based on the association of the tribe with catechu making. The Katkaris living in the two investigated villages, accept this interpretation and say their forefathers were making and selling catechu cakes.

The Katkaris are reported to be of Bhil origin. Their dialect contains some words common among the Bhils and their customs to some extent indicate Bhil origin. According to their story, they were descended from the Vanaras whom Sri Rama took with him in his expedition against Ravana. When his expedition was crowned with victory, Sri Rama blessed the Vanaras and made them human beings. It is said that at one time there was no such division as the Dhor Katkaris, but that many generations ago, under the stress of famine, some of the tribe took to eating carcasses and since that time, the two sections have been distinct. It is possible that the Son division arose by its giving up of beef eating (1882 Thana gazetteer, p. 158; Enthoven, pp. 170-173). The Thana gazetteer says they are believed to have come from the north and to have been originally settled in Gujarat (p. 158). The Katkaris of Poshera and Narangi do not remember the place from where their forefathers came and settled in this State.

In Maharashtra, Kathodi or Katkari including Dhor Kathodi or Dhor Katkari and Son Kathodi or Son Katkari, are notified as a scheduled tribe in the 13 districts of western Maharashtra, including Greater Bombay. During the 1961 census, they returned a population of 140,672 persons (71,245 males and 69,427 females), from 12 out of these 13 districts. Their largest concentration was found in the three districts of Kolaba 60,223, Thana 57,738 and Poona 10,698. These three districts absorbed 91·46 per cent of their population in the state; 96·56 per cent of their population was in rural areas and only 3·44 per cent in urban areas. As Kolaba and Thana districts have large forest areas and a coastline of about 150 and 70 miles respectively, they provide scope for fishing activities and forest labour.

In earlier censuses, they had returned the following population in the present districts of Maharashtra :—

1911	...	...	51,863
1921	...	...	74,538
1931	...	...	44,364
1961	...	...	140,672

The tribe was heavily concentrated in Kolaba district during all these census years.

According to the 1961 returns, 96·56 per cent of the tribe lived in rural areas. Its sex ratio was 974. The sex ratio for the state's general population was 936. Out of the 140,672 individuals returned in the 1961 census, 63,148 (44·89) were in the age-group 0-14, 64,039 (45·52) in the age-group 15-44 and 13,417 (9·54) in the age-group 45 and above. Sixty-eight (0·5) did not state their ages. The proportions of the above three age-groups for the general population were 40·66, 44·02 and 15·32, respectively.

The Katkari family is patrilocal with patronymic designation. A study of 78 Katkari households from Dahanu and Palghar tehsils of Thana district showed

that 50 of them consisted of father, mother, unmarried sons and daughters. Married sons were found living with their parents in only five households. Other relatives were found living in 20 households. The average number of persons per household was 4·65 and the maximum size of the household observed was ten. No female head of household was noticed in any of these 78 households.

Property, inheritance and reckoning of descent are along the male line. The property is equally distributed among sons. Married or unmarried daughters do not get any share.

The Katkaris have exogamous kuls and use kul names as their surnames. Some kuls found in Poshera were Bhagare, Bhoye, Baraf, Diva, Gode, Kadali, Nadage, Pavar, Sambhar, Vagh and Valvi. Some of these names are found among other scheduled tribes of the region, e.g., Bhoye among Koli Malhar, Vagh among Koli Mahadev and Koknas. All clans are considered equal in status.

Kin on the mother's side have ritual and social roles to play during marriage and child birth. At a marriage when a priest of the tribe sings marriage verses, the boy and the girl join their hands together, these are later on separated by the maternal uncle of the bride. The maternal uncle also removes the first hair of the child.

Dwelling

The Katkaris generally live in separate hamlets called padas. At Poshera, they were found living in five hamlets out of the 13 hamlets of the village. The caste composition of these five hamlets was as under :—

Serial No.	Hamlet	Caste	No. of households
1	Katkariwadi ..	Katkari ..	36
2	Palas pada ..	Mahadev Koli ..	12
		Katkari ..	6
		Varlis ..	2
3	Phanas pada ..	Ma Thakur ..	17
		Katkari ..	3
		Mahadev Koli ..	1
4	Pawar pada ..	Mahadev Koli ..	20
		Varli ..	10
		Katkari ..	2
5	Wakharicha pada	Mahadev Koli ..	17
		Katkari ..	2
		Varli ..	1

The other hamlets of the village were inhabited mostly by Mahadev Kolis, Varlis, Ma and Ka Thakurs, Koknas and Mahars. In Narangi village, they lived in a separate hamlet known as Katkari pada.

Their houses are detached from one another. They are small huts with thatched roofs. The walls are of karvi twigs smeared with mud and cow dung on both sides. The huts are square or rectangular in shape. The poorer among them have only one room in the hut with a kitchen in one corner. If there is any livestock, it is kept in the same hut. Those in *good circumstances partition the room ; the kitchen* is in one part and the other part is used for all other purposes. The hut has generally one door, but no windows. The Katkaris of Narangi consult a brahman priest for an auspicious moment for fixing the hut's ridgepole (adhe). While fixing the first pole, they put a coin in the hole into which it is to be fixed. Before erecting and fixing the ridgepole, they tie mango leaves and a coconut to it. In many cases, houses are constructed by members of the family. The materials required—karvi twigs, wood, earth and stones—are obtained locally. Repairs to the house are generally made every year, before the monsoon sets in.

Dress and food

The dress of older men consists of a langoti and a kopari or a bandi. On occasions, they wear a dhoti, a kamij, a kopari and a pagote. Among the younger generation, dhoti, shirt and cap are common. School-going boys wear shorts and a shirt. Women wear a sari, a choli and a fadki. Girls wear a parkar, a polke and a zaga. Men shave their hair and moustaches according to the current fashion. Women part their hair in the middle and wear it behind in a knot.

Men have no special liking for ornaments. A few well-to-do persons wear a silken kargota around the waist. Women's ornaments are of brass, beads and glass. They wear glass bangles around the wrists, a nath on the nose and balis on the ears, a mithala (a necklace of green and yellow beads) and the garsoli (necklace of black beads). They also wear jodave on the toes. In daily life, they wear a few coloured glass bangles, a garsoli and jodave. Girls wear glass bangles, a necklace and balis. Women get tattooed with dots, crosses or stars on the forehead, chin and cheeks and with a picture of a tulsi plant or a milk-maid on the wrist. At Narangi, some women get the name of a god tattooed on their forearms.

Rice and nagli bhakri form their staple food. They consume urid, mug or tur dal. In the morning, they

take a nagli bhakri with dal ; in the evening, they take rice and dal. Sometimes, they take mutton, fowl and eggs but abjure beef and pork. Vegetables like brinjals, potatoes and pumpkin are consumed on festival days and when there are guests in the house. They drink country liquor in the evening. Morning tea has become common in a few families ; they take it without milk and use gur in place of sugar. For cooking and eating, they use earthen and brass pots and keep a few dishes, spoons and lotas. They keep a small wooden or stone mortar, a wooden pestle, soops, baskets and sickles. Musical instruments like dhol and tarpa are found with a few families. A pair of bullocks, a goat or two and some fowl are kept by a few cultivating households. Foodgrains are stored in earthen pots or in bamboo baskets. If the stock is larger, it is stored in kangas made of bamboo chips.

Sanitation and hygiene

Most of the Katkari families live in kachcha houses. They throw the garbage just outside their houses and do not care to remove it for months together. The open space around their houses is very often used for defecation by their children. During rains, the surroundings are dirty and insanitary owing to accumulated rain water, mud and dirt. The interior of their houses is also not clean and tidy. They are irregular in taking a bath and washing their clothes.

For treatment of disease, they mostly depend on a bhagat. The bhagat gives them some herbal medicine which he himself prepares from the roots and leaves of forest trees. Sometimes, he tries to remove the sickness by mantras or by asking the patient to propitiate a god. If the patient does not find any relief from his treatment, he directs him to approach any doctor available in the locality. The office of a bhagat is not hereditary. Any member of the tribe can officiate as a bhagat after receiving training from a senior bhagat.

Language and literacy

A large number of Katkaris (96·34) speak Marathi as their mother-tongue. In 1961, they returned 13 mother-tongues out of which Marathi (135,519), Katkari (3,857), Kathodi (526) and Bhili (487), were the main mother-tongues. Speakers of Marathi were more in Thana, Kolaba and Poona and that of Katkari in Kolaba. Kathodi has the largest number of speakers in Dhulia and Poona. Bhili is spoken only in Dhulia. Of the other mother-tongues, Gujarati had 106 speakers whereas each of the rest had less than 50 speakers. Some Katkaris (1,908) reported knowledge of 10 subsidiary languages. Of these, Marathi (1,490), Katkari (193) and Hindi (173) were the principal ones. Only three males reported English as a subsidiary language. At Poshera and Narangi, they speak Marathi and Kathodi among themselves, respectively ; with outsiders they speak in Marathi. They understand Hindi but cannot speak it.

Literacy among the Katkaris was only 2·02 per cent in 1961 as against 29·82 per cent in the general population of the state. Out of 140,672 persons, only 2,848 were literates. In the rural areas, the percentage was 1·97. Out of 135,839 individuals only 2,679 were literates. In the urban areas, out of 4,833 individuals 169 (3·50) were literates.

The break-up of the Katkari population by educational standards is furnished below :—

	Illiterate			Literate without educational level			Primary or junior basic			Matriculation or higher secondary			Total		
	P	M	F	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	14	15	16
Rural ..	133,160	66,303	66,857	2,260	2,007	253	419	392	27	..	..	..	135,839	68,702	67,137
Urban ..	4,664	2,394	2,270	114	98	16	51	47	4	4	4	..	4,833	2,543	2,290
Total ..	137,824	68,697	69,127	2,374	2,105	269	470	439	31	4	4	..	140,672	71,245	69,427

Two Katkaris had studied beyond matriculation or higher secondary stage. They ranked last in literacy among the numerically important tribes in the State. They say that instead of spending four years in primary education, and another four years in secondary education their children could share the economic burden of the family.

Economic life

The name of the tribe suggests that its original or traditional occupation was catechu making. A few partly support themselves by tillage. When their supply of grain is exhausted, they gather and sell firewood and honey. Their women work hard as labourers and take into the market the headloads of wood, their husbands have gathered in the forests (Thana gazetteer, p. 160).

The 1961 industrial pattern of the tribe showed that a large number worked as agricultural labourers or as cultivators. Out of 140,672 persons, 79,896 (56·80) were returned as workers. The sex-wise break-up showed that 42,810 (60·09) out of 71,245 males and 37,086 (53·42) out of 69,427 females were workers. In the rural areas, 60·21 per cent of the male population and 53·63 per cent of the female population formed the working force of the tribe. In the urban areas, the percentages of workers for males and females were 56·74 and 47·21, respectively.

The industrial classification of workers according to the 1961 census was as follows :—

Category	Total			Rural			Urban		
	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I ..	14,753 (18·47)	7,908 (18·47)	6,845 (18·46)	14,662	7,862	6,800	91	46	45
II ..	37,092 (46·42)	18,851 (44·03)	18,241 (49·19)	36,683	18,612	18,071	409	239	170
III ..	16,465 (20·61)	9,285 (21·69)	7,180 (19·36)	16,048	9,060	6,988	417	225	192
IV ..	716 (0·90)	398 (0·93)	318 (0·86)	592	364	228	124	34	90
V ..	1,448 (1·81)	907 (2·12)	541 (1·46)	1,144	715	429	304	192	112
VI ..	1,148 (1·44)	691 (1·62)	457 (1·23)	1,007	596	411	141	95	46
VII ..	1,335 (1·67)	536 (1·25)	799 (2·15)	1,113	425	688	222	111	111
VIII ..	313 (0·39)	268 (0·63)	45 (0·12)	190	159	31	123	109	14
IX ..	6,626 (8·29)	3,966 (9·26)	2,660 (7·17)	5,933	3,574	2,359	693	392	301
Total workers (I-IX) .	79,896 (100·00)	42,810 (100·00)	37,086 (100·00)	77,372	41,367	36,005	2,524	1,443	1,081

It is seen that the Katkaris have not given up their traditional occupation of catechu-making and engage themselves in agriculture in a fairly large number. Their participation is more as agricultural labourers than as cultivators. A study of 776 Katkari households from Dahanu and Palghar tehsils (Thana) revealed that 148 households owned or held land from Government for cultivation, 175 households cultivated others' lands on lease either on cash or on crop share and 453 households, i.e., more than half did not possess any land for cultivation. Of these, 148 households had land less than 5 acres, 18 households had land between 5 and 14·9 acres and only eight households held land 15 acres and above. Lease-holders paid four to six times, the land revenue to the landlord, apart from meeting all the cultivation expenses.

Out of 25 Katkari households from Katkari pada of Narangi, only three cultivated land. They mostly depended on agricultural labour for which they were paid a rupee and given two meals a day. Thirteen households kept goats and sold them as a subsidiary business. At Poshera, most of them worked as agricultural labourers for which they were paid Rs. 1·50 or one paili of paddy or nagli, in addition to afternoon meals. Those who work as cultivators grow paddy, nagli and varai as chief crops.

Persons working in the non-agricultural sector formed 35·11 per cent of their total working population. Mining, quarrying, livestock, forestry, fishing, hunting, plantations, orchards and other allied activities had the highest rate of participation (20·61). Gathering wild fruits, roots and honey, cutting and transport of forest wood for fuel, were some supplementary occupations in which they were engaged when they had no other work to do. As forest labourers, they were paid Rs. 1·50 to Rs. 1·75 a day. Some kept poultry and goats, but the income they got from these activities was uncertain.

Out of 60,776 persons (28,435 males and 32,341 females) returned as non-workers, 1,178 (903 males and 275 females) were full-time students or children attending school, 36 males were seeking employment for the first time and 66 (55 males and 11 females) were employed before but were then out of employment and seeking work. The remaining 59,496 persons (27,441 males and 32,055 females) were dependants.

Life cycle

Among the Katkaris, a pregnant woman takes her usual diet. Generally the delivery takes place at her husband's house. A midwife of the tribe (dai) is engaged. In case, she is not available, a midwife of any other caste is engaged. The dai cuts the nal of the child with an arrow-head and buries the placenta in a pit in one corner of the living room. A stone is kept over this pit. At Narangi the nal is cut by a sickle and kept near the pillow of the mother for five days. The placenta is buried in a pit and a stone kept on it. At Poshera the midwife serves mother and child for five days and is paid a rupee and some rice ; at Narangi, she serves for 12 days and is given meals and a rupee in cash. Both mother and child are deemed to be pure after taking a bath on the fifth day. On the 12th day, the mother goes to a well, worships it and fetches water. At Narangi, she is supposed to be pure after taking a bath on the 12th day. On this occasion the house is washed with cow dung, clothes are washed and earthenware in use is cleaned. The mother is given rice pej for a week or so, after which she is allowed her normal diet. She takes up her routine work after a fortnight. In case, there is no other woman in the house to cook and fetch water, she resumes her household duties after the period of her impurity is over, but does not go for outdoor work till she regains her normal health.

On the fifth day after birth, the dai worships the stone kept on the pit. At Poshera, this is called Panchavi ; on this occasion the midwife worships the stone kept over the pit as well as a female figure which she draws on some grains of rice in a soop. If circumstances permit, neighbours are fed at both the places.

The child is named on any convenient day without any rite. At Poshera, the name is given when the head of the household goes to the patel to register the birth of the child. In a few families of Narangi village, the name is selected in consultation with a brahman priest. The final decision, however, rests with the parents. At Poshera, the lower ear-lobes of the children are pierced after 18 months and the first hair is removed by the maternal uncle after six months without any ritual.

The Katkaris generally do not approve of premarital sex relations. If such indiscretion has occured, the boy and the girl are made to marry each other, if they belong to the tribe. If one of them comes from higher caste, they are also asked to get married ; but if the party belongs to a scheduled caste, the person concerned is excommunicated.

Marriage

A boy among the Katkaris of Poshera is usually married when he is 15 or 16 and a girl at the age of 10-12. Among the Katkaris of Narangi, the age is 17-18 for a boy and 14-15 for a girl. A study of 264 married couples of the tribe from Thana revealed

that as a rule the husband was older than the wife by one to five years. Marriage with father's sister's daughter, father's brother's daughter and mother's sister's daughter is not permitted. Marriage with mother's brother's daughter is allowed and given priority. There is no serious objection to polygyny.

The boy's father initiates marriage negotiations. Accompanied by one or two of his relatives and tribesmen, he goes to the girl's father with his proposal. If the girl's father approves, a day for finalisation of negotiations is fixed. The guests from the boy's side are treated to tea. The next meeting takes place at the girl's residence. The boy's father presents a sari, a blouse and a fadki to the girl. She puts on the new dress. Kumkum is applied to her forehead and rice, coconut and Rs. 1·25 are placed in her lap (oti). After distributing gur or sugar, the guests are entertained to tea. At Narangi, the girl is presented with a garsoli in addition to sari and blouse. The bridegroom puts this necklace round the girl's neck. A betelnut is then broken in token of finalising the proposal. Gur is distributed and guests are feasted. This ceremony is called Magani. After fixing the day for the payment of dej, the boy's party returns home.

Some elders from the boy's side go to the girl's father for paying dej on the day fixed. No rite marks this occasion. At Poshera, dej consists of Rs. 30 and two maunds of grain. The boy's father also offers three saris, three blouses and three fadkis to the girl. He pays Rs. 10 to the girl's mother, Rs. 2 to the patel of the village, half a rupee to the Kathya (village servant), rupees ten to the villagers as gaokanun (village's share), and rupees five each to the girl's grandfather, sister, brother, maternal uncle, father's sister and karbhari (headman) of the tribe. Among the Katkaris of Narangi, dej consists of Rs. 25, two saris, two blouses, a garsoli and some glass bangles.

A few days prior to the day of marriage, the Katkaris of Poshera observe Basta—purchasing cloth and coronets for the marriage. Persons from both the parties go to the nearby market and make the purchases jointly.

Marriage takes place at the girl's residence in the evening, preferably at sunset. At Poshera, it is celebrated on any day except Monday and Saturday, in the months of Vaisakh, Margasirsha or Falgun (preferably in Margasirsha). Amavasya and Poornima are avoided. The Katkaris of Narangi celebrate the marriage on the days held auspicious for marriage by the Hindus. The marriage service is conducted by a male priest of the tribe at both the villages.

Among the Katkaris of Poshera, haldi is applied to the body of the boy, three days prior to the marriage day and the mandav is erected on the day next to haldi. At the girl's place, this booth has to be erected on the day of marriage. The marriage booth has normally six poles, one of which should preferably be of umbar. It is constructed with the help of tribesmen who are specially invited for the purpose. Persons who install the booth are later on entertained to a feast. If there are any family deities in the house, they are worshipped that day.

On the day of marriage, the boy's party goes to the girl's place in a procession accompanied by four tribal musicians. The boy is either carried on shoulders or he goes on foot. He holds a katyar (dagger) in his right hand and wears a dhoti, a shirt and a white pagote. A bashing is tied to his forehead. At the bride's village, the procession first goes to the place of Holi and rests there for a while. Five suvasinis from the bride's party go to the spot and wave a lamp before the groom. The boy is led to the marriage booth where he stands under the toran (bunting) of the booth. The girl is brought there and made to stand, facing the bridegroom. The bride and the groom join hands. A jamnuk is held between them by two tribesmen. The medinga then recites the marriage verses. Persons assembled in the pandal throw akshata on the bride and the groom and musicians play. The hands of the bride and bridegroom are then separated by the bride's maternal uncle. The boy and the girl enter the booth and take their seats there for the fal (presentation by relatives). Later on, all the guests from the bridegroom's side are entertained to a feast by the bride's father. The next day the boy's party leaves the place along with the bride. On reaching the boy's house, the bashings tied on the foreheads of the bride and groom are removed and the ceremony ends.

At Narangi, the boy goes to the bride's place either in a cart or on a horseback or on foot. His party is led to the place fixed for their halt (janosa). A few minutes before the auspicious moment, the boy leaves the place for the marriage mandav where he is received by suvasinis of the tribe. The women wave lamps before him. The bride's mother washes his feet and he is led to the mandav by the bride's father and made to stand on a pat. A curtain is held in front of him and beyond the curtain the bride is made to stand on another pat. Both hold garlands in their hands. The medinga recites the marriage verses. When this ends persons assembled throw akshata on the boy and the girl ; the curtain is withdrawn and they garland each other.

Expenses for a boy's marriage amount to Rs. 300 as under :—

	Rs.
(1) Dej including the cost of grain to be given to the father.	100·00
(2) Amount to be given in cash to persons of honour from the bride's side.	50·00
(3) Clothing ...	75·00
(4) Food ...	50·00
(5) Miscellaneous ...	25·00
Total ...	300·00

At Poshera, a boy may serve his would be father-in-law as khandadia for a fixed period, if he is unable to spend money on his marriage. In such a case, the boy has to pay no dej. All the expenses of his marriage are met by the girl's father ; after marriage, he is free to take his wife to his own house. At Narangi, this practice does not exist. If the boy is to stay with his father-in-law as ghar-javai, he does not pay dej, and the marriage expenses, are met by the girl's father. No such case came to notice in the village studied.

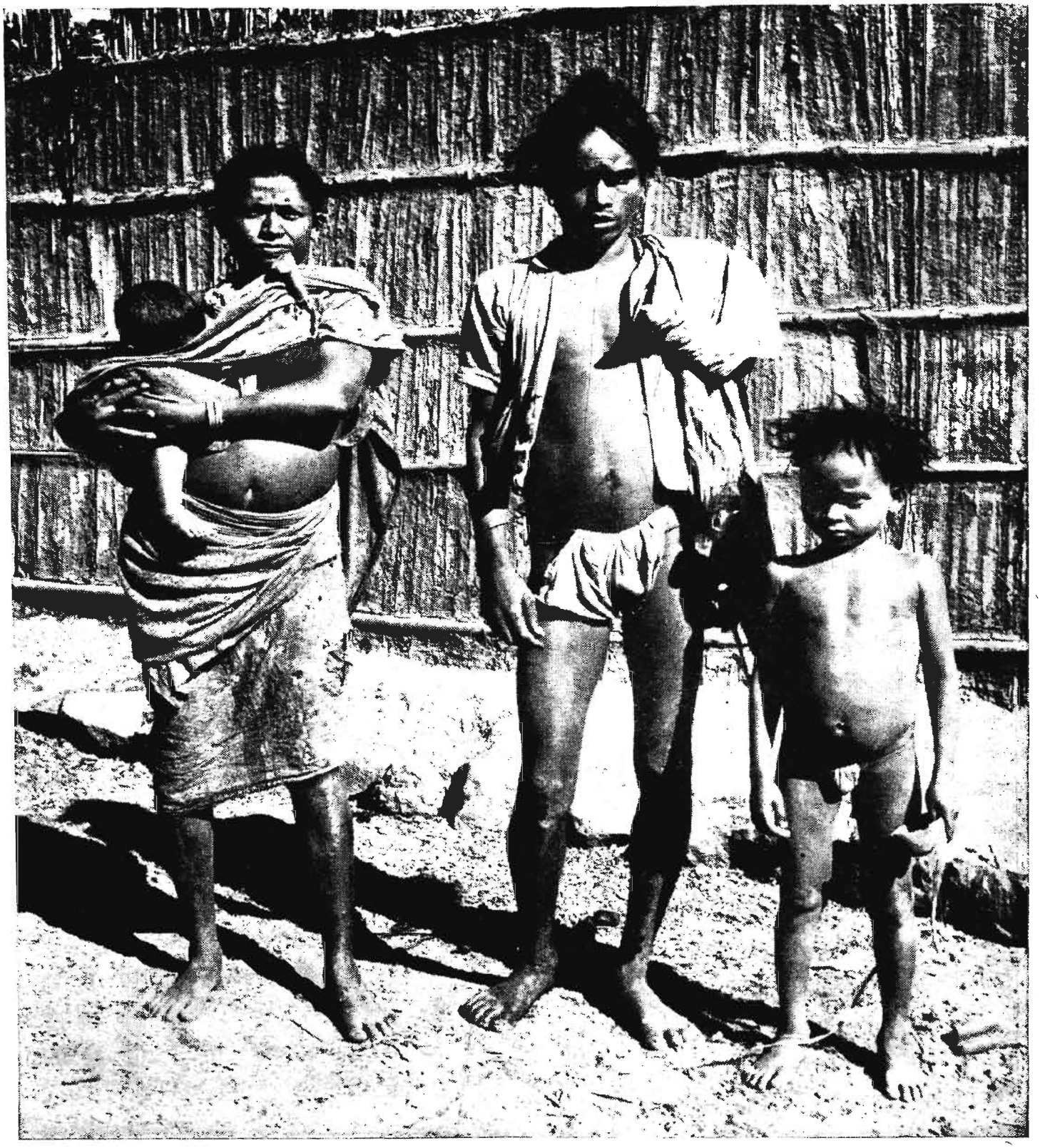
The Katkaris permit a widow to remarry a man of her choice other than her deceased husband's brother. The remarriage (motur) is celebrated at night at the woman's place without any elaborate rite. The intending husband applies kumkum on the woman's forehead and ties a garsoli round her neck. Only a few elders attend this ceremony. At Poshera, the intending husband has to pay Rs. 15 to the woman's guardians. He has also to offer a sari, a blouse and a fadki to the woman. After remarriage, the widow acquires the kul of her new husband but the kul of her children by the first husband remains the same as before. No medinga presides over such remarriages.

Divorce (dava), is allowed with the permission of the caste elders (panchas). A husband can seek divorce on the ground of his wife's infidelity and a wife can ask for it on grounds of cruelty and ill-treatment by her husband or his impotence. Where a divorced woman marries another man, the latter pays a fine, as fixed by the panchas, to the first husband. At Narangi, he is fined upto Rs. 100, according to his circumstances ; the divorced husband is compensated from the amount and part of it is spent on drinks. If a divorced woman remains without marriage, no fine is levied on her. At Poshera, at the time of granting a divorce, a stick is broken by the first husband as well as the second. A divorced woman remarries according to the widow remarriage form.

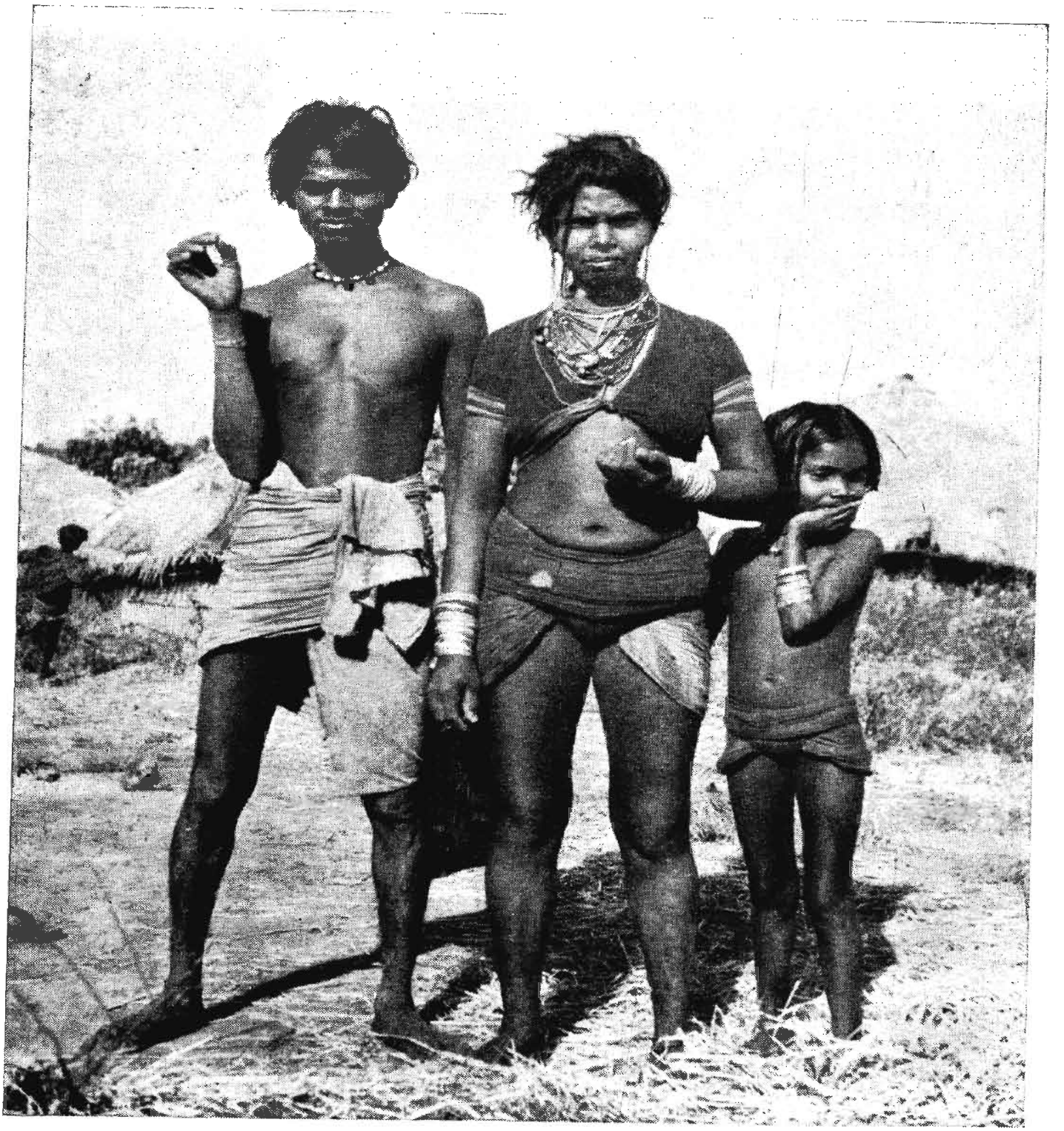
Death

The Katkaris prefer cremation to burial, unless poverty or rains prevent it. At Narangi, they bury the body of a pregnant woman, a newly delivered woman, or a child who has yet to cut its teeth. Persons dying of small-pox and leprosy are also buried. In other cases, the body is mostly cremated. The body is washed with warm water mixed with haldi, dressed in new clothes and placed on a bamboo bier (madha). A copper coin, some grains of rice and a few drops of water are put in its mouth. It is then covered with a new white shroud. Gulal is sprinkled over it and also on the forehead. The corpse is carried to the cremation ground by four relatives. The chief mourner, preferably the eldest son, walks in front with an earthen pot in which is kept a burning dung cake. When the procession reaches the visava, the bier is lowered for a few minutes ; after throwing some gulal and a copper coin there, it is lifted and carried to the cremation ground for final disposal. At Narangi, the corpse is not rested at visava, but carried straight to the ground. On reaching there, the corpse is placed on the pyre or in a pit, if it is to be buried. In both the cases, burial or cremation, the body is placed with its head towards the south. After putting some cooked rice and a few drops of water in its mouth, the corpse is covered with faggots. The chief mourner moves round it five times with an earthen pot which he dashes on the ground at the end of the last round. When the body is cremated or buried, members of the funeral party go home after taking a bath at some convenient place.

At Poshera, sutak (post-death impurity) is observed for five days and obsequies are performed on the fifth day after death. On this occasion, the sons of the deceased, shave their heads and faces and take a bath. All the members of the deceased's family also take a bath and thereafter, they are deemed to be pure. They feed any five children of the tribe on this occasion, after giving a bath to them. A portion of the cooked food is kept at the visava for the crows to eat in the name of the deceased. If circumstances permit, castemen are fed on this occasion. In case, an important man in the family dies, a vir (a picture of a man carved on a silver plate), is prepared in his name and is kept along with the other gods of the family. This is done only when a bhagat advises them to do so, for the recovery of a person in the family who has fallen ill. No obsequies are performed for children.



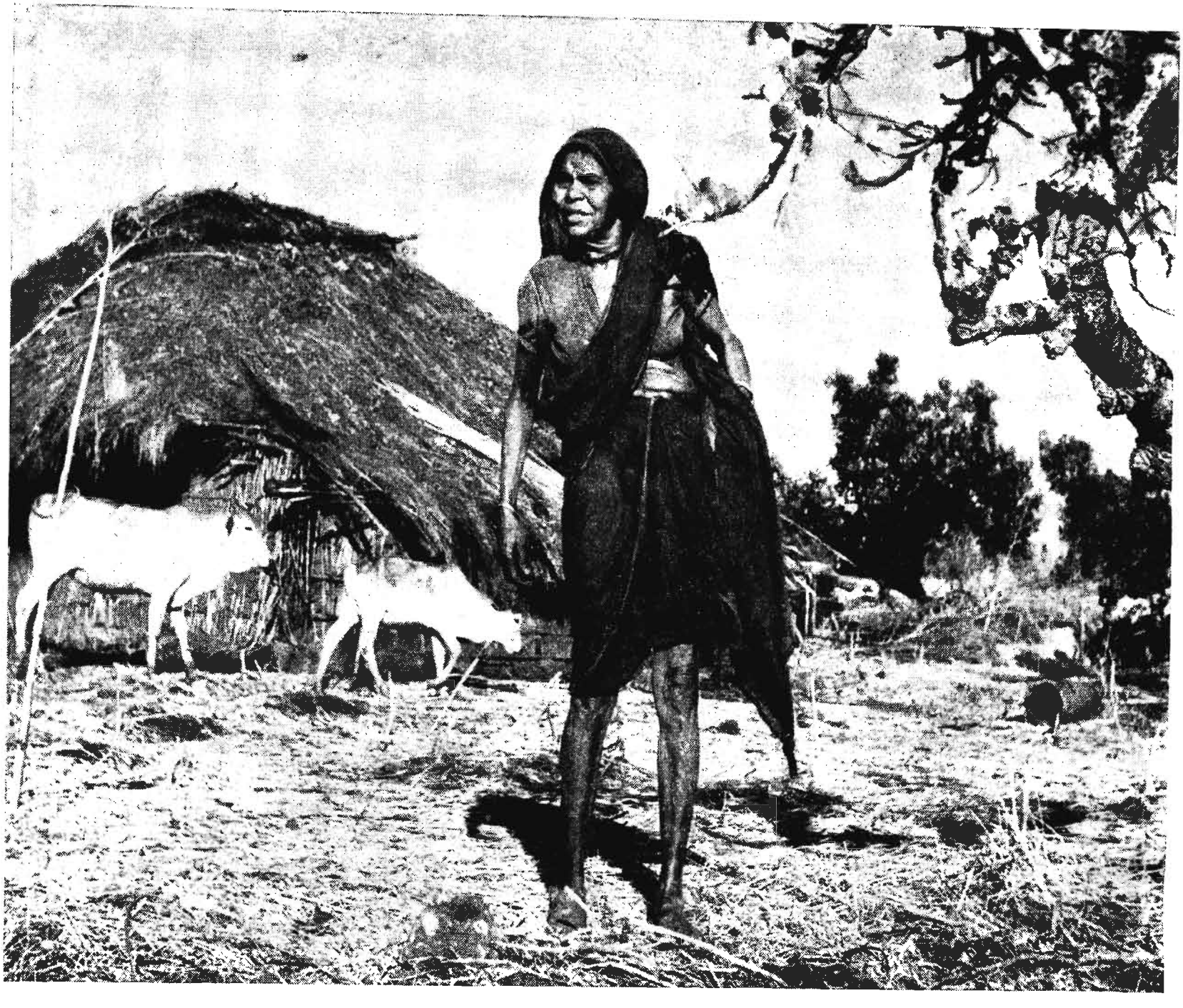
A Ka Thakur family from Thana



A Katkari family from Kolaba



A Katkari woman from Kolaba



A Koli Dhor woman from Thana

At Narangi, they observe sutak for 12 days. On the twelfth day, all the male mourners collect the ashes and bones. Ashes are kept aside in a heap. The place is then washed ; the bones are arranged in such a way as to form a pattern of a human body. These bones are then sprinkled with cow's urine and milk. After offering cooked rice to the bones, the members go back, take a bath, wash their clothes, sweep the floor of the house with cow dung and sprinkle cow's urine all over the house. All members in the family then drink some cow's urine. The ceremony ends with a feast to tribesmen.

Religion

During the 1971 census, 140,604 persons of the tribe were returned as Hindus, 66 persons reported Christianity as their religion and two were returned as Muslims.

Among the Hindu gods of the region which the Katkaris honour are Khanderao, Bhairav. Bhavani and Kansari. These gods are worshipped occasionally, with an offering of a goat, a hen or a coconut, especially at the time of Holi and Divali, marriages or when someone falls ill. Cheda is a devil god. He is supposed to be the soul of a dead relative who has become a spirit. This god is said to enter the body of any man and trouble him, if he is not kept pleased. Another tribal god is Hirva. No particular duty is assigned to Hirva or Cheda ; they are expected to do good to the tribe, if they are honoured and kept pleased. Hirva is represented by a bunch of peacock feathers and Cheda by a human palm carved on a silver plate. All the other gods are images of men and women carved on silver plates. They keep these silver plates in a bamboo basket after putting into it some rice and cover it with another basket. Hirva is kept over this basket in a separate covering. The silver plates or the images of gods are taken out from the basket only when they are to be worshipped. The Katkaris of Narangi do not worship any tribal god, but respect the Hindu gods of the region. The Katkaris regard the tulsi plant as sacred. They believe in spirits, ghosts and witches. If anybody suffers from a spirit or from an evil act of a witch, they approach a bhagat for necessary treatment.

The Katkaris of Poshera, celebrate Divali, Holi, Akaja, Pola and Pitar Amavasya. Like caste Hindus of the region the Katkaris observe Pitar Amavasya in memory of their ancestors (Pitars), who are said to gather near their houses in the form of crows and eat the cooked food offered to them on this occasion.

Among the Katkaris, Divali which falls on the last day of Ashvin and the following two days, is mostly an occasion for rejoicing and merry-making, drinking liquor, singing songs and dancing. They stage tarpa dances on this occasion. Both men and women participate in these dances.

Holi is the most important festival. At Poshera, they have a separate Holi in their hamlet. They erect a bamboo pole, preferably after sunset, with five papadyas (cakes of rice flour), tied to its top. Each tribal household in the hamlet is expected to tie five papadyas. Faggots and dung cakes are piled around this pole. The pole is worshipped and the firewood is set on fire as Holi by the tribesman who enjoys the hereditary right of doing it. He goes five times round the fire ; after that, tribesmen assembled there throw fire-wood, dung cakes and coconuts into the Holi. Some interested persons drink liquor and dance till late at night. On the next day, they offer worship to their household gods, dance to dhol music from house to house and demand post (gift) from the villagers. The money so collected is spent mostly on drinks. Dances staged by them on this occasion are restricted to men only.

The Katkaris of Narangi observe Gudhi Padva and Holi. On Gudhi Padva, they do not erect a gudhi like the caste Hindus of the region, but have a sweet dish. Like the Katkaris of Poshera, they also observe Pitar Amavasya. They do not light a separate Holi, but participate in the village Holi. Besides these festivals, they observe common Hindu fasts on the days of Ashadhi Ekadasi, Kartik Ekadasi and Sivaratri.

Leisure and recreation

Dancing is their chief recreational activity. In a peran dance, they dance to the beat of the dhol (drum) whereas in a tarpa dance, they dance to the tune of the tarpa. The peran is restricted to men and is chiefly performed at Holi. The tarpa is a mixed dance at the time of Divali. The dhol and the tarpa are the two popular musical instruments of these people. On other days, they spend their evenings in drinking liquor and smoking bidis.

Relations within the tribe

Enthoven has said that Athavar, Dhed or Dhor, Sindhi, Son or Maratha and Varap are the five endogamous divisions of the tribe. According to him, the Son or Maratha Katkaris do not eat cow's flesh. The Dhors eat cow's flesh and, like the Mahars, are held to be impure. The Athavars are regarded as inferior by the Son Katkaris. Sindhis are African immigrants in origin. Varaps may have been either

Christian or Musalman. The Dhors or Dheds are beef-eaters and therefore, rank socially as the lowest of the tribe (pp. 172-173). Excepting Katkaris and Son Katkaris, no other group of the tribe was found to be living in the two investigated villages. According to the Katkaris of these villages, Kathodi and Katkaris are the same. They, however, state that Son Katkaris or Son Kathodis and Dhor Katkaris or Dhor Kathodis are different from them. They do not allow marital relations with any of the above groups as they regard them to be socially inferior to them. Hindu Katkaris do not accept food and water from Chirstian and Muslim Katkaris as they regard themselves to be socially superior to the latter.

Inter-community relationship

The Katkaris do not suffer any social disability in the region. They can fetch water from any public well. They are allowed to enter caste Hindu temples. In hotels, schools and dispensaries, they are not discriminated in any way. The other scheduled tribes and caste Hindus have no objection to allow a Katkari into their houses. His entry into the kitchen is, however, prohibited. They receive traditional services from a barber. In social status they are however regarded as the lowest among all the tribes of the region ; as a result, Koli Mahadev, Koknas, Thakurs, Varlis and even Koli Dhors do not accept food from the Katkaris.

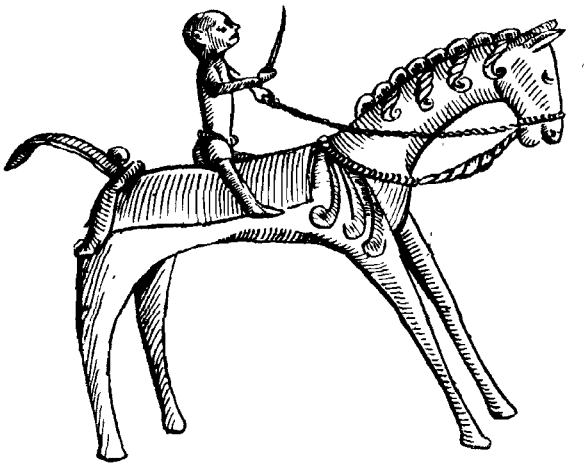
They have caste elders (panchas) to safeguard the social interests of the community. These panchas hear all the disputes arising from breaches of caste rules and settle them by way of a compromise or by imposing a suitable fine, if found necessary. Disputes within the family are settled by the elders. Disputes involving other members of the community are referred to the panchas. If persons belonging to two different localities or villages are involved in any issue, the panchas of these localities or villages meet together and settle the matter. Adultery, divorce and breaches of marriage rules, are the chief complaints which are generally referred to these panchas. The office of the pancha is not hereditary. Generally person who commands respect from its members because of his age, knowledge, character and wealth is looked upon as a caste elder or pancha. The chief of these panchas is called a karbhari ; at Narangi, they call him a naik. His office also is not hereditary.

On receiving a complaint, the complainant and the accused are asked to appear before the panchas and plead their cases and produce evidence. After hearing both the parties, the panchas arrive at their decision. As far as possible, they try to settle the issue amicably. In case, no compromise is arrived at, the party at fault is fined from Rs. 5 to Rs. 10. The fine is spent mostly on drinks. In a divorce case, the amount of fine is handed over to the injured person as compensation. It is said at Narangi that if person does not approve of the decision of the panchas, the matter is referred to a panchayat of five or six villages and its decision is regarded as final. At Poshera, such cases are generally disposed of on the occasion of a death ceremony in any Katkari family, when all the caste elders or the panchas from the surrounding villages meet together. This gathering is called a bhandara (meeting of tribesmen).

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Enthoven, R. E. The tribes and castes of Bombay. v. II. 1920.



KOLI MALHAR

The Koli Malhar, popularly known as Malhar Koli, are notified as a scheduled tribe only in Thana out of the 26 districts of Maharashtra and that too for the first time by the President's order, 1956. Their name is probably derived from either (i) the Dravidian word 'Mala' meaning a hill (Thana gazetteer, page 173) or (ii) from a description of the tribe as 'Kolis worshipping the god Malhar' (Enthoven, page 256). The latter appears to be more probable. The tribal people living at Shigaon and Kelwa (Palghar tehsil) and Shirvali (Bassein tehsil), do not know the origin of the word; they do not worship Malhar or keep his image in their houses. Some members of the tribe, however, worship the god Khandoba, occasionally, but they do not know whether Khandoba and Malhar are one and the same deity. At the same time, they do not reject the possibility that they came to be known as Malhar Kolis because their forefathers had been worshipping Malhar in very old times.

They are also referred to as Panbhari Koli and Chumli Kolis. The former refers to their traditional occupation of supplying water to villagers and wayfarers and the latter to the chumbal (twisted cloth) kept on their head when carrying water pots (Thana gazetteer, page 173). According to Mackintosh, they are called Kunam Kolis possibly because they eat and associate with Kunbis (Enthoven, page 256). In the villages studied, the tribe is referred to as 'Malhar Koli' or 'Malhar Kunbi' by its own members. Other inhabitants of the region know them as 'Malhar Koli'. The names Panbhari Koli, Chumli Koli and Kunam Koli are unknown to the tribe or to the other residents of the region. Their reported association with Kunbis, however, is reflected in the name 'Malhar Kunbi'.

In the published literature, the tribe is described as an endogamous division of the Deccan and Konkan Kolis and as one of the purest and respectable of all Koli tribes (Enthoven, page 245; Thana gaz., p. 173). In the villages studied, they do not know whether they are an offshoot or a branch of the Koli caste. They accept the designation Koli, but do not recognise any kind of affinity with other Koli groups such as Mahadev Kolis, Dongar Kolis or Raj Kolis. Jackson says that the Malhar Kolis of Thana frequently become Maratha Kunbis and the process has been recognised in parts of Poona district (Enthoven, page 256). Though the name Malhar Kunbi used by some Malhar Kolis supports this view, no case of a Malhar Koli becoming a Maratha Kunbi came to light in the villages studied. Enquiries reveal that the use of 'Malhar Kunbi' is an outcome of the strong desire on their part to equate themselves with the Kunbis in order to enjoy a similar social status. Yet they do not regard the Kunbis as their parent stock and concede that the Kunbis are socially superior to and distinct from them. No evidence about their place of origin and migration is available in published literature and members of the tribe are unable to throw any light.

Distribution

According to the 1961 census, their population in Thana district was 89,047 (45,502 males and 43,545 females). Of these 85,363 persons (95·86) were returned from rural areas and 3,684 persons (4·14) from urban areas. The Malhar Kolis, if any, living in other districts of Maharashtra, are not included in this population as they are not notified as a scheduled tribe in those districts under the President's order, 1960. In Thana district they are returned from all the 12 tehsils; their greatest concentration was found in Palghar—39,050 and Dahanu—23,789 which together accounted for 70·57 per cent of their entire population in the State. Other tehsils which had a sizable Koli Malhar population were Wada with 6,114, Bassein with 5,739, Jawhar with 5,423 and Bhiwandi with 3,377. The 1961 sex ratio for the tribe was 957. Their age-pattern showed that 40,854 persons (45·88) out of a total population of 89,047 belonged to the age-group 0-14, 35,558 persons (39·93) fell in the group of 15-44 and 12,622 persons (14·17) were 45 and above. In the investigated villages, their physical appearance did not differ much from that of the Kunbis and Mahadev Kolis found in the area.

Family and kinship

The Koli Malhar family is patrilocal with patronymic designation. After marriage, the woman leaves her parents' house to stay with her husband. In some cases, the newly married couple set up separately. In a few cases, they live with the husband's parents. A study of 918 Malhar Koli households from Palghar and Dahanu showed that 502 (54·00) of them consisted of father, mother, unmarried sons and daughters. Only in 117 households (12·00) were married sons staying with their parents. Of these 918 households, 209 (22·00) had 1 to 3 members, 449 (48·00) had 4 to 6 members, 204 (22·00) had 7 to 10 members and 56 had more than ten members. The average per household was 5·4 persons. All the 51 Koli Malhar households living at Shirvali also showed a tendency towards

small families. Of these, 17 had 1 to 3 members and 30 had 4 to 6 members. Married brothers staying together or a married son staying with his father in a joint family is an exception.

The male is generally the head of the household. Out of the 918 households studied, only 27 had women as heads of household. Most of these women were of age 40 and above. The father is usually the controlling authority in a family. After his death and if his children are young, his widow manages family affairs till they come of age. Sons inherit the property of their father in equal shares. Relations between separated brothers generally remain healthy even after partition. At social or religious functions or during times of distress, the relatives staying separately come together and help each other out. Monetary help and instances of supply of bullocks, ploughs and other farm implements to the separated brothers in times of need are quite common.

The tribe has a number of exogamous kuls. Some of these are Barad, Babar, Bodle, Balshi, Bhoye, Basvant, Bhoir, Bhomte, Bhavar, Chakar, Dalvi, Dumade, Dongarkar, Dhangade, Dhapasti, Ghatal, Gadag, Golim, Govari, Gahade, Hadal, Harke, Jadhav, Jimbhal, Kharpade, Karmode, Kathe, Katkar, Kamdi, Khatali, Kirkire, Lade, Lilke, Mali, Mor, Morghe, Matera, Madake, Narale, Patara, Ravate, Shironde, Savare, Shelar, Sumda, Sagane, Surum, Sambre, Talhe, Tandel, Tambade, Tilivada, Tope, Umbarkar, Wayade, Wartha, Warkhande, Welpade and Wanga. Bhoye and Dalvi are common kul names among the Koknas ; Jadhav is popular among the Koknas, Mahadev Kolis, Kunbis and Marathas. Hadal and Ghatal are common among the Varlis. Sons and unmarried daughters acquire the kul of their father ; a daughter on marriage acquires the kul of her husband. A widow or a divorced woman after her remarriage acquires the kul of her new husband. The kul of her children by the first husband remains unchanged.

The maternal uncle plays an important role in ceremonies connected with birth and marriage. He cuts the first hair of a newly born child. He generally stands by the side of the village barber and touches his hand when the barber shaves off the hair ; in some families, he clips a lock or two while the rest of the hair is shaved by the barber. At marriage, he ties the kankan and the bashing around the wrist and forehead of the bridegroom. The bride's brother also plays a leading part at marriage. When a bridegroom arrives at the bride's place for marriage, the bride's brother stands on the roof of the marriage booth, pulls the ear of the bridegroom and obstructs his entry into the booth till he receives a pheta (turban) and a coconut from him. The bridegroom's sister (karoli), pounds the rice and haldi in a mortar along with her brother, the bridegroom, a day or two prior to marriage ; at the bride's place, the bride's sister, (also called a karoli) does the same act. In a few families, the father's brother ties the kankan round the bridegroom's wrist.

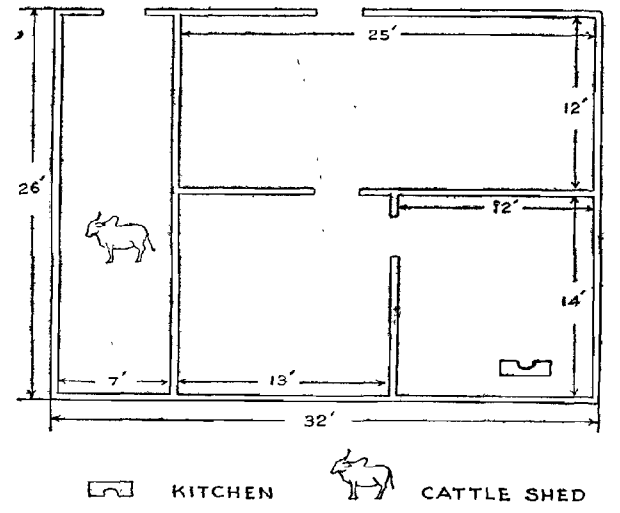
Dwelling

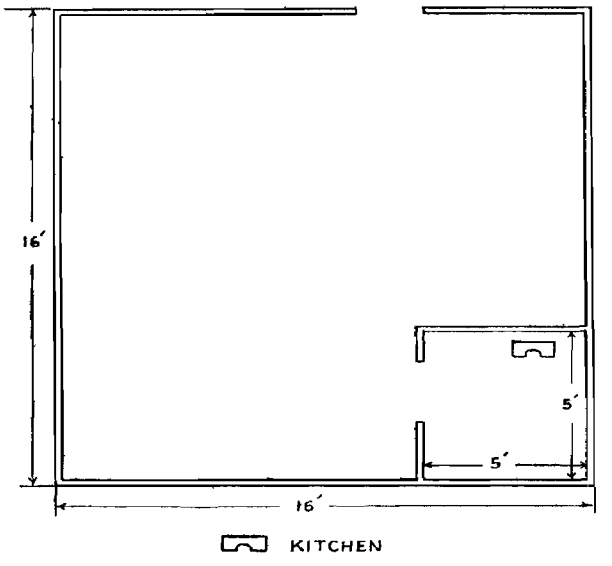
The population of Shirvali lives in two nucleated localities. One is the main gaothan (village site) where 87 of the 102 households live and the other is a hamlet half a mile from the main site. The main site and the hamlet are both situated on elevated rocky ground in the midst of cultivated lands. The hamlet obviously accommodates an overflow of the population from the main village and its site appears to have been selected to facilitate cultivation of lands separated from the main village because of intervening hills and forest. All the households residing in the hamlet (15) are of Malhar Kolis. The main site is inhabited by Kunbi (40) and Malhar Koli (36) households. Within the village site, the grouping of houses is broadly on a caste basis. The Malhar Koli houses form a separate block in the south-east. The four houses belonging to Nav-buddhas are separately located in the south-west corner. The houses of Kunbis are found in the north and the west of the village site. The population of Shigaon is contained in the main village and 12 hamlets. Excepting one hamlet where about 40 households of Katkaris reside, all the other localities (including the main site), are inhabited mostly by Malhar Koli households (about 300). The other communities residing in these hamlets include Kunbi (3), Bhandari (3), Muslim (1), Mahadev Koli (2), Dhodia (2), Brahman (2) and Marvari (1). The population of Kelwa resides in 18 localities, one of which is the main village and the others are its hamlets. In this village, the Malhar Koli households (46) are found in only four hamlets. Of the remaining hamlets, five are inhabited exclusively by Varlis (110) and the rest by caste Hindus, such as Somavanshi Kshatriya, Koli, Bhandari, Bari, Fudagi and Brahman.

The house of an average Malhar Koli is generally a hut either square or rectangular in shape and in many cases, constructed without any foundation. Its walls are of bamboo chips or karvi reeds plastered with mud and cow dung ; the roof consists of bamboo chips or karvi reeds covered with grass. It comprises a central room, a corner of which is partitioned to serve as kitchen. Cattle are housed in one corner of the central room. Most of the huts have no windows. A small hut has generally one door in the front. Larger huts have a back door also. A few

well-to-do persons have houses with brick walls and tiled roofs. Such houses have at least two doors, two or three rooms, a separate kitchen, a verandah in front and an enclosure around, but no windows. The hut has no separate enclosure for bathing. Women take their bath on a big slab kept outside the hut; men take it in the open near the well or in the river. The majority of the houses stand at a distance of five feet or more from each other.

Diagrams of two Malhar Koli houses at Shirvali are shown below.





All the 46 houses of Malhar Kolis in Shirvali have walls of bamboo chips or karvi reeds; 42 of them have thatched roofs and only four have tiled roofs. The total number of rooms in all these houses is 52, which means most of the houses are single-room structures.

A hut costs about Rs. 50 to build, including the price of the poles which support the walls and the roof, ropes, nails, etc. A house having a tiled roof costs Rs. 400-500. The bamboo chips and karvi reeds are available from nearby forests and are allowed to be taken free of cost, if required for building a hut or for fuel, provided not more than one headload is removed at a time. A cartload of karvi reeds for personal use is generally charged 75 paise; for sale, it costs Rs. 1·50 a cart-load.

Dress

A langoti, a kabja or bandi, a rumal (turban) constitute the dress of a male Malhar Koli. When he has to attend a festival or ceremony, he wears a dhoti, a khamij, and a pheta. Among the younger generation, shirts and caps, pyjamas and bush-shirts are also common though only a few wear them. Boys wear a langoti and a shirt. A few also wear shorts and shirts. Women wear a sudaka (sari) and a choli. Marriage and other ceremonies are the occasions when they wear saris of superior quality. Such saris are kept separately. Bright colours generally appeal to their tastes. Girls wear a chaddi and a frock or a parkar. These clothes are obtained by them from the weekly markets held in the locality. Most of the Malhar Kolis do not use any footwear and those using it wear locally made chappals which are thick and durable. Men keep short hair and moustaches but shave the beard. A few young men shave off their moustaches. Women do their hair by parting it in the middle and tie it behind in a knot.

The ornaments used by Malhar Kolis and their non-tribal neighbours like Kunbis differ both in design and in value. The difference in design is not so much as in their value. While the Kunbis can afford gold and silver ornaments, the majority of Malhar Kolis wear ornaments of brass, silver, beads and glass. Excepting a few well-to-do, who wear a ring on the finger, a silver kargota or kardoda around the waist and a kade around the arm, men do not generally wear any ornament. Women wear a number of them. These include bangadya and patalya (wristlets) and pavachi (armlet). Of the various necklaces, mangalsutra, garsoli, bormal and putali are popular. They also wear kudi in the ear, moti or fuli on the nose, anguthi on the finger, tode on the feet and ferve on the toes.

Excepting a few ornaments like glass bangles, kudya, moti or fuli and a garsoli, which they use in their daily life, the rest are worn on occasions. Girls wear moti or fuli and sometimes a necklace of glass beads around the neck. These ornaments are obtained from the annual fairs or weekly markets held in the vicinity.

Food

Rice is the staple food. Other foodgrains are not popular even as secondary food. The day begins with a nyahari (breakfast) before going to work. This consists of a bhakri of rice with chutni or baked dry fish. In the afternoon, they take rice and curry of dry fish. Sometimes, they take dal by way of a change. The dinner at night is like the afternoon meal. Rice is thus eaten thrice a day or at least twice. They occasionally take mutton, fowl and eggs, but abstain from beef.

Food is generally cooked in groundnut oil. The menu comprises rice, pulses, vegetables, mutton, chicken and dry fish. Dry fish is the most common as it is cheaper than pulses, vegetables or mutton and can be had for use any time once it is purchased and stored. In Bhadrapad, they collect kandamul (edible roots of certain trees and plants, from forests); during the monsoon, they catch crabs from the field and eat them. Country liquor is consumed daily by men and women though it is less common among women. Tea is nowadays popular. Gur is used generally and sugar is for special occasions. Owing to scarcity of milk in villages, tea is often served without milk.

Fuel is obtained from forests nearby. They are allowed to take dry wood free of charge provided, it is only headload at a time. They use cow dung cakes for rab operations, i.e., for preparation of the field by burning them before sowing paddy.

Household utensils

Their utensils are made of copper, brass and aluminium. Of these, handa (a round pot for storing water), patele (a pot for cooking food), parat (a big plate), thali (plate), vati or katori (a dish), lota (a round pot), pyala (a glass) and chamcha (a spoon), are usually found in their houses. They also keep some earthen pots for storing and heating water and for storing foodgrains. A few families use some crockery. Besides, they keep soops, baskets, buckets, pailis (a grain measure), lanterns or wall-lamps and a fishing net. Those interested in music and dance possess musical instruments such as dholki, thali and tarpa. A cultivating household has a few cattle, a goat or two and some poultry, in addition to farm implements. A rough stone handmill (jate), a long wooden pestle (musal) and a small wooden or stone mortar (ukhal), are also found with some families. Grain is stored in earthen pots or kangas (a container made of bamboo matting). After putting in the grain, the kanga is closed with matting on top and plastered with cow dung.

Only a few households have wooden cots, a rectangular framework of wood interwoven with coir rope. At Shirvali, three households were found to use electric torches; at Shigaon, one household had a wristwatch and a radio receiver.

Hygiene and sanitation

Most of the Malhar Kolis live in kachha houses having no windows to admit air and light. The surroundings of their houses as well as of the hamlets are on many occasions insanitary as garbage is thrown everywhere. As there are no service latrines in their settlements, they often go to the nearby fields for defecation which in turn creates insanitary conditions around their hamlets. The kachha roads in their settlements are not cleaned for days together. During rains, the floors of their houses get wet. As a result of propaganda by community development officers many of them now treat the water of their wells with disinfectants like potassium permanganate which are supplied to them free of cost. A few have constructed soakpits in the compound of their houses; some also maintain manure pits for storing cow dung and compost manure.

The Malhar Kolis are more careful about personal cleanliness. They clean their teeth every morning and also bathe regularly. They shave their faces at regular intervals and wash their clothes frequently. The floors of their houses are kept clean by periodical application of cow dung. In illness they look more to a bhagat of their community than to ayurvedic or allopathic treatment. They look upon the bhagat as their medicineman and have great faith in him.

Language and literacy

As many as 89,010 persons (99·00), of the Malhar Kolis in the State returned Marathi as their mother-tongue in 1961. Only 18 persons said, it was Gujarati, 12 Kannada, 5 Telugu and 2 Hindi. A very small proportion of 326 reported knowledge of subsidiary languages. The important subsidiary languages spoken were Hindi by 264 and Gujarati by 46. Seven said they knew English. In the villages surveyed, they speak Marathi among themselves as well as with outsiders. Marathi was claimed to be their ancestral language.

Only 6,741 persons out of 89,047, were returned as literates in 1961. In the rural areas, the percentage of literacy was 7·30 as against 13·87 in the urban areas. The figure for the whole tribe was 7·57 per cent. A table showing the break-up of their population by educational standards is given on page 89.

Area	Illiterate			Literate without educational level			Primary or junior basic			Matriculation or higher secondary			Non-technical diploma not equal to degree			Total		
	P	M	F	P	M	F	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	14	15	16	17	18	19
Rural	79,133	37,703	41,430	5,141	4,720	421	1,080	1,029	51	9	9	..	..	..	..	85,363	43,461	41,90
Urban	3,173	1,590	1,583	309	270	39	197	179	18	4	2	2	1	..	1	3,684	2,041	16,43 2
Total .. .	82,306	39,293	43,013	5,450	4,990	460	1,277	1,208	69	13	11	2	1	..	1	89,047	45,502	43,545

Not only is an overwhelming majority of the tribe illiterate, but of those who are literate, only 1,277 had completed the primary or junior stage of education, 13 had attained the matriculation or higher secondary level, only one person held a non-technical diploma and as many as 5,450 were literate without any educational level. None had studied beyond matriculation.

During the survey, it was observed that a large proportion of children of school-going age from the tribe did not attend school. At Shirvali out of their total population of 224, only four were literate and only one of the boys was attending school. One reason for this is the absence of a school in the village. Also, a child in a poor family grazes the cattle or engages in light field work. Sending him to school would deprive the family of an earning member. The position is not much different in other villages. They are not averse to education, particularly primary education. They do realise its importance in improving their lot. But they find themselves unable to educate their children owing to their poverty. They are, however, not so much in favour of girls' education, as in their opinion neither household work nor agriculture requires it. Moreover, they apprehend that if they educate their daughters their marriage would pose a problem as in such cases, they may find it difficult to get a suitable match in the community.

Economic life

It is said that in the past the Malhar Kolis used to guard the approaches to several hill forts, Sinhagad, Torna and Rajgad (Thana gaz. 173). Enthoven says, "As the name Panbhari or water filler shows, their usual calling is to supply villagers and strangers with water and to clean out the village rest-house and office. Near Pandharpur, many Malhar Kolis are Yeskars or village door-keepers and in Khandesh and Ahmadnagar, a few are husbandmen" (Enthoven, p. 256).

In the 1961 census, 52,495 persons (58·95) of the population of the tribe were returned as workers. A sex-wise break-up showed that out of 45,502 males, 27,945 (61·41), were workers and out of 43,545 females, 24,550 (56·38) were workers. In rural areas, these proportions were found to be as high as 61·56 per cent (males) and 56·78 per cent (females) as against 58·26 per cent (males) and 46·26 per cent (females) in urban areas. The classification by broad industrial categories as revealed in the 1961 census, is as follows :—

Category	Total			Rural			Urban		
	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I ..	31,988 (60.94)	16,520 (59.12)	15,468 (63.01)	31,854 (63.02)	16,445 (61.46)	15,409 (64.77)	134 (6.88)	75 (6.31)	59 (7.76)
II ..	16,130 (30.73)	8,402 (30.07)	7,728 (31.48)	15,540 (30.74)	8,081 (30.20)	7,459 (31.35)	590 (30.27)	321 (27.00)	269 (35.39)
III ..	1,115 (2.12)	803 (2.87)	312 (1.27)	968 (1.91)	714 (2.67)	254 (1.07)	147 (7.54)	89 (7.48)	58 (7.63)
IV ..	154 (0.29)	108 (0.39)	46 (0.19)	136 (0.27)	93 (0.35)	43 (0.18)	18 (0.92)	15 (1.26)	3 (0.40)
V ..	442 (0.84)	375 (1.34)	67 (0.27)	281 (0.56)	249 (0.93)	32 (0.14)	161 (8.26)	126 (10.60)	35 (4.61)
VI ..	158 (0.30)	148 (0.53)	10 (0.04)	122 (0.24)	120 (0.45)	2 (0.01)	36 (1.85)	28 (2.35)	8 (1.05)
VII ..	291 (0.55)	169 (0.60)	122 (0.50)	148 (0.29)	79 (0.29)	69 (0.29)	143 (7.34)	90 (7.57)	53 (6.97)
VIII ..	244 (0.47)	216 (0.77)	28 (0.11)	160 (0.32)	136 (0.51)	24 (0.10)	84 (4.31)	80 (6.73)	4 (0.53)
IX ..	1,973 (3.76)	1,204 (4.31)	769 (3.13)	1,337 (2.65)	839 (3.14)	498 (2.09)	636 (32.63)	365 (30.70)	271 (35.66)
Total number of workers	52,495 (100.00)	27,945 (100.00)	24,550 (100.00)	50,546 (100.00)	26,756 (100.00)	23,790 (100.00)	1,949 (100.00)	1,189 (100.00)	760 (100.00)

The data show that nearly 91 per cent of the workers were engaged in agriculture either as cultivators (60·95) or as labourers (30·73). A study of 9,237 Malhar Koli households in Thana district showed that 2,967 (32·12) of them owned or held land from government for cultivation, 3,055 households (33·07) cultivated lands taken from others on lease or contract basis and 3,215 households (34·81) did not possess any land for cultivation. Among, the 2,967 landholders, 151 households held land less than one acre, 2,706 households held lands between 1 and 9·9 acres, 65 households held land from 10 to 14·9 acres and 37 households held land from 15 to 24·9 acres. There were eight households holding 25 acres and more. Among the same 2,967 landholders, there were 1,189 households which cultivate their own land as well as land taken on lease from others.

Among the agricultural workers many have to seek some subsidiary economic activity in the off-season. Collecting forest produce like wild fruits, gum, lac and wax, felling of wood for fuel and sale, plying carts and rearing cattle are some of these supplementary occupations. Land and sea fishing provides a supplementary food to a few of them.

Outside the agricultural sector, 1,115 persons were reported to be working in mining, quarrying, livestock, forestry, etc., and 1,973 in "other services". Excepting these, the numbers engaged in other economic activities like trade, transport, manufacturing, etc., were negligible.

Among the 36,552 persons returned as non-workers during the 1961 census, 2,801 were full-time students or children attending school, 41 were seeking employment for the first time, 29 were employed before but were then without jobs and seeking work ; 33,681 were reported as dependents which include housewives and other engaged in unpaid home duties, infants and children not attending school, old, sick, permanently disabled and such other persons.

In the investigated villages, most of Malhar Kolis were engaged in their traditional occupation of agriculture and field labour. They carry on farming with a few implements such as a nagar (wooden plough), ali (for levelling), kolpe (for cutting grass), pahar (for digging), tikao (for clod-breaking), kurhad (for cutting trees and plants), khurapane (for cutting grass) and vila (for weeding). The type of crops they grow in their lands and the practices of cultivation followed by them are the same as those followed by other groups in the villages. These consist of ploughing the land with the help of a pair of bullocks, sowing seed, broadcast and transplanting the seedlings.

During April and May, seed beds are prepared by burning dry leaves, small twigs, refuse and garbage, paddy husk and dry cow dung, on patches of selected land. As a result, gress roots and weeds in these patches get burnt to ashes and the seed beds get manured. This operation is called rab or rabni. After the first rains which usually fall in the first half of June, the seed-beds are ploughed and paddy seeds are sown therein. After 3 to 4 weeks, the seedlings are transplanted to the paddy fields which are already ploughed about 3 to 4 inches deep with a wooden plough and bullocks. This operation of transplanting in July is called avni. The seedlings are up-rooted from the seed-beds, tied into bundles, and removed to the paddy fields where they are planted in a slanting position in bunches of 6 or 7 at a distance of 6 inches from one another. This requires a large number of workers. When the paddy seedlings grow up the grass and wild roots that row amidst them are removed during August-September in the case early variety or in September-October in the case of the late variety. This weeding is called benani.

When the paddy is ready for harvest, it is cut (kapani). The early variety of paddy gets ready for cutting in the first half of October and the late variety in the middle or by the end of November. After the paddy plants are cut and dried, they are tied into bundles and taken to the threshing floor (khale or khali). After cleaning the threshing floor, the plants are beaten on it to make the grains fall out. Sometimes plants are beaten with a log. This process is called zodani. The grains are collected from the threshing floor after removing the chaff with a soop (winnowing fan) and stored in a kanga. Another threshing is done after a month or two. This is known as malni. Paddy straw are spread over the threshing floor and cattle are made to tread them. The grains still remaining in the straw fall out and the straw gets softened. The straw is stored either on the lofts of cattlesheds or on trees or on open land and is used as fodder.

The soil of the area is fit for paddy only ; rain is the only source of water supply for cultivation. The crop pattern has not changed for years. A very few cultivators from among the tribe who have the means and the desire adopt improved methods by using better seeds, fertilisers, better implements and better breed of cattle.

The marketing season for paddy starts soon after Divali (November) when small cultivators who cannot wait longer sell their stocks to the middlemen or village shop-keepers. Others defer disposal of their produce for two or three months in expectation of a higher price and sell their paddy around Holi

(March). Generally most of them keep the inferior or the medium type of paddy either for their own use or for paying their labourers and sell the superior grain which fetches a higher price.

Many members of the tribe work as agricultural labourers as they have no land either of their own or on lease. At Shirvali, 42 households out of 51, engaged in agricultural pursuit work as purely agricultural labourers. Besides, small cultivators also work as agricultural labourers in addition to their own cultivation. Agricultural labour consists of repairs to bunds, rab making, threshing, storing, etc. Women are employed particularly for transplanting and weeding. At Shirvali, there are four methods of employing agricultural labour. These include labourers employed on an annual basis, labourers employed for the season of transplanting, labourers on daily wages and permanent agricultural labourers. Those on a yearly basis are given eleven faras of paddy (32 kg), every month in addition to Rs. 30 in cash once a year and clothes—two rumals, two kabjas, one ghongadi and one pair of chappals. They are given breakfast of bhakar with chutny or dry fish with tea and tobacco for smoking. Those employed for the transplanting season, are given 39 adhotis (half paili) of paddy for the whole work which takes 2 to 3 weeks in the case of big fields. They are given breakfast, tea and tobacco. For the other jobs after transplantation, they are given 2 to 3 adhotis a day according to the nature of the job and the usual breakfast, tea and tobacco. Labourers on daily wages are paid 2 adhotis a day in addition to one bhakar, tea and tobacco. Permanent agricultural labourers get 30 adhotis a month, besides breakfast, tea and tobacco in the morning and again tea and tobacco in the evening. They are also given clothes as in the case of labourers engaged on annual basis. These labourers are called gadi, They also work as domestic servants in the landlord's house.

Indebtedness

The Malhar Kolis are not generally free from indebtedness. The income of an average Malhar Koli is hardly enough to meet the minimum needs of his family. On occasions such as a marriage in the family or need of a pair of bullocks or improvement of land by bunding or fencing, many have to approach a moneylender. Loans are mostly taken from private moneylenders or landlords against personal credit or mortgaging land or cattle. Of the 51 Malhar Koli households in Shirvali village, eleven had taken loans ranging from Rs. 15 to Rs. 640 from private individuals. Loans for agricultural purposes varied from Rs. 20 to Rs. 200, that for marriage from Rs. 100 to Rs. 640, that for domestic purposes from Rs. 15 to Rs. 50. In the case of loans advanced to agricultural labourers, the repayment is generally in the shape of service to the moneylender who is generally a landlord. In other cases, it is paid in the shape of paddy. Those who sell their paddy repay the loan in cash.

Life cycle

A Malhar Koli girl who has come of age observes a period of menstruation for four days every month and abstains from household work. On the fourth or fifth day, she takes a bath, after which she is deemed to be purified. No rites are performed on the day she attains puberty. A barren woman is not always looked down upon as they think conception takes place only by the will of god. Miscarriage is sometimes ascribed to the wrath of god or an evil of a witch. Though a male child is preferred, a female child in one or two births is equally welcomed. Daughters are an economic asset to them so long as they are unmarried and sons can look after them in their old age. Any number of children is welcomed and they are against birth control.

They do not perform any ceremony when a woman conceives for the first time. A pregnant woman observes no restrictions and no special diet is prescribed for her. She continues to attend to all household work, indoor and outdoor, till the time of delivery. But she avoids places known to be the abode of evil spirits and contacts with suspected witches. Her confinement takes place at her husband's residence. It is not obligatory for the father to take his newly wedded daughter to his house for the first delivery. A tribal midwife is engaged. In case she is not available, a midwife of any other caste available at the moment in the village is engaged. In serious cases, a trained midwife from the nearest medical aid centre is also brought in. A few of the women, especially the well-to-do, go to a maternity home in case, they need special medical attention.

A corner room in the house is usually chosen for the purpose of delivery where it is hoped that the woman and her child would not catch cold. As soon as a child is born, the midwife cuts the nal with a sharp bamboo chip and buries it in a pit in one corner of the room or in the compound of the house or at a place where cattle are tethered. In some families, a stone is kept over this pit. The midwife then pats the head and the nose of the child to give them a proper shape. She serves the mother and the child for five days and is paid Rs. 2·50 along with rice.

The mother is deemed unclean for ten or twelve days after delivery. In some families, she is regarded as impure for five days in the case of a male child and four days if the child is female. The mother has to observe certain restrictions on food after delivery ; she avoids items which may cause cough, cold or bile. She takes light food, preferably rice gruel or soft rice mixed with salt, for a week or so. If possible chicken soup is given to her on the sixth day and for a couple of days thereafter. She takes her usual diet after a fortnight, and resumes her household duties, but does not engage in physical labour or go for field work till she regains her normal health. The child is breast-fed for a year. After about six months, it is also given cow's milk, if available. Solid food in the form of soft rice is given to the child after a year.

On the fifth day after child-birth, Sati-pooja (worship of the goddess Sati) is done. Pictures representing the goddess are drawn on the wall with haldi, abir and kumkum. A winnowing fan with rice, coconut, a blank sheet of paper and a pen of boru is kept in front of the spot or at the place where the mother takes her bath. Six leaves of a rui plant on which are kept, six burning lamps made of rice flour are kept on the winnowing fan. The pictures of the goddess drawn on the wall are worshipped. A boy and a girl take the child in a zoli (a cloth cradle) which they swing before the goddess. The lap of the mother (oti) is then filled with an arecanut, flowers, rice and some coins. In some families, the mother moves five times round the ukhal around which four lines of rice flour are drawn ; in some other families, a pata (flat stone) is worshipped by keeping on it some rice. The stone kept on the pit where the umbilical cord was buried is also worshipped in some families. Cooked gram is distributed to all and, circumstances permitting, relatives and castemen (especially neighbouring women), are entertained to a feast. It is said that a few families observe this ceremony on the third or fourth day in the case of a female child and on the fifth day in case the child is male.

The child is named 12 days after its birth without any rite. Some of them, after consulting a brahman priest, name the child on any auspicious day. Sometimes the child is given an ancestor's (grandfather's) name. At times it is named after the day of the week. If the child is born as a result of a vow (navas), it is named Navasha or Navashi. The name of Shravan is often given to a child if it is born in that month. The 1961 census slips show that Hindu names like Babu, Dattaram, Madhu, Vishnu, Dinkar, Ramchandra, Raghunath, Anant, Vasant, and Ramakant are given to their male children as against old names like Jivya, Kalya, Udarya, Budha, Dagadu, Chindhu, Devaji, Ladakya, and Navashya. Similarly, Sulochana, Kusum, Vimal, Indu, Lila, Kunda, Aruna, Indira, Manjula and Malu are some names of their female children as against the old names like Kasabai, Honsabai, Girja, Kanhi, Guni, Demi, Somi, Jani, Parvati and Barki.

A study of these names at Shirvali shows that in the case of ten males aged over 40 years, four males have names of deities, though two of them are in a slightly corrupted form (Mahadu for Mahadev and Ragho for Raghav) ; two have names of week-days and four names have no particular significance as they mean "lean". "black" or "stony". Among female names, two denote a place of pilgrimage "Kashi" (Banaras) and one denotes good qualities "Saguni". The other eight have no particular meaning. Among persons in the age-group 11-40, out of ten males, five have names of deities, one bears the name of a place of pilgrimage (Nasik) ; four bear names having no meaning such as Mithya, Nau, Paslya. Out of ten females, three bear names of deities, two are named after rivers in an abbreviated or slightly corrupted form, Bhagi for Bhagirathi and Krishni for Krishna ; one name denotes good qualities, "Changuna" ; one a bird, "Maina", and three have no meaning. Of the children in the age group 1-10, out of 23 males, eight are named after deities, four bear pet names such as Balu and Baban, one has a modern name Ashok, and ten names have no particular significance. Among 23 female names, two pertain to rivers, three to week-days though in a corrupted and short forms such as Mangi and Budhi for Tuesday and Wednesday ; five imply some good quality, two are "modern" names, Asha and Manu (short form of Manorama) ; eleven names have no particular significance.

The lower lobes of the children's ears are pierced by a goldsmith on a suitable day after 2/3 months. No rites are performed. In case, a goldsmith is not available, the ears are pierced by phase pardhis who frequently visit the weekly markets held in the locality. The next important ceremony is of shaving the child, 4-5 months after its birth. On this day, usually its maternal uncle cuts a lock or two. The rest of the hair is shaved by a barber. The maternal uncle is offered a hen, a coconut and Rs. 1·25 in this connection. The hair is thrown in running water.

Marriage

The tribe does not permit pre-marital sex relations within or outside the tribe. There are places such as a weekly bazar or a fair and occasions such as marriages and festival dances, where young boys and girls can come together and develop personal contacts. The contacts may sometimes result in pre-marital sex relations. In such cases, the boy and the girl are

made to marry each other, if they belong to different kuls. In case, they belong to the same kul, they are fined. If either of the two is of a lower caste like Koli Dhor, Katkari, Mahar, Chambhar, etc., the boy or the girl concerned is excommunicated from the tribe. In case, either of the two happens to be a Kunbi or Maratha, they are advised to marry.

A boy is generally married at the age of 17-18 and a girl at the age of 14-15. During the 1961 census, 44 males of the tribe out of 19,518 (0·23) and 314 females out of 21,336 (1·47), were returned as married in the age group 0-14. The husband is invariably older than the wife ; in the majority of cases, the difference between their ages is 1-5 years.

The tribe does not permit marriages within the same kul. Marriage with mother's brother's daughter as well as marriage with wife's sister are permissible. Marriage with father's sister's daughter, father's brother's daughter, mother's sister's daughter or own sister's daughter is prohibited. Generally, marriages do not take place when the two families are already related to each other. Consequently, though marriage with mother's brother's daughter is allowed, such marriages are not encouraged. Marriage takes place at the girl's residence in Vaisakh, Jeshtha, Margasirsha, Magh and Falgun, preferably at sunset, on any auspicious day chosen by a brahman priest. The marriage rites are conducted by a brahman priest or a caste priestess (dhavaleri). The bride can be from any village. In fact marriage alliances outside the village are more numerous than within the village. The social status of the concerned family is enquired into and, as far as possible, marriages are avoided with families known in the locality for anti-social as well as criminal practices and tendencies. Attention is paid to the general health and behaviour of the boy or the girl. A girl is expected to have a good moral character and physical fitness to carry out household as well as outdoor duties. A boy is expected to be good natured and promising, should not be addicted to vices or suffer from any serious disease or physical disability. Usually the father, assisted by his relatives and friends, makes the selection after due enquiry. Though monogamy is generally observed, there is no serious objection to polygyny. The reason for taking a second wife can be the inability of the first wife to bear any child or to bear a male child. Of the households studied no case of polygyny was observed. The practice of dej makes it difficult to marry again and polygyny is indirectly checked. At Kelwa and Shigaon, Rs. 21 are paid as dej while at other places it is reported to be more. It is the bride-groom's father who has to pay dej to the bride's father.

Marriage negotiations are generally opened from the boy's side. The boy's father selects a suitable girl for him in the neighbourhood and accompanied by some elderly relatives and respectable persons of the tribe approaches the girl's father with his proposal. The girl's father also invites some of his relatives and friends to guide him on the occasion. If the proposal is accepted, guests from both the sides are served with liquor or tea by the boy's father. The boy's party leaves after fixing the date for betrothal.

On the day of betrothal, the boy's father, mother, and their party go to the girl's father to finalise the marriage proposal. At the girl's house, the boy's father and mother offer an arecanut and sugar to the girl's father and mother. The girl's father and mother return the same to the boy's father and mother. The marriage is then treated as confirmed. The girl is offered a sari and a bodice. In some families, the lap (oti) of the girl is filled with rice, coconut, betel leaves and arecanut. Sugar or gur is distributed and the guests are served with tea or liquor by the boy's father. This is called badawani or sakharpuda.

The bride price is paid to the girl's father a few days prior to the marriage. The boy's father or his representative goes to the girl's father along with two or three persons, preferably relatives. Any suvasini from the girl's side takes a plate containing rice, kumkum and five burning lamps in her hands and waves it round. Then she applies kumkum on the foreheads of all those assembled there. The boy's father or his representative places the dej on the plate. In some families, the boy's father or his representative simply makes the payment without any rite or ceremony.

Two or three days prior to the marriage, some minor rites such as ghane (pounding of rice), mandav (construction of the marriage booth), deva devi (worship of family deities), and halad (applying haldi to the boy and the girl) takes place at both places. On the day of ghane, the boy along with his sister (karoli) and two suvasinis pounds two kilos of rice and 2 kilos of haldi in a ukhal. An elderly man in the family visits every house and gives two arecanuts to each household. One of the two nuts is an invitation for the construction of the mandav, while the other is an invitation for bashing (marriage).

On the day of mandav, the tribesmen bring wooden poles and construct the marriage booth in the front yard of the hut. This is preceded by any married man, chosen in consultation with a brahman priest, going to the forest and bringing a pole of an umbar (fig) tree or of any other tree called bechaki from the forest and fixing it in the presence of his wife (karoli)

and two other suvasinis in the central hole in the mandav in which some haldi, kumkum and one or two copper coins are put. Before coming back, another bechaki or umbar is left under a tree in the forest. A suvasini then draws a square (chauk) of rice flour on the wall of the house inside which she draws pictures of a bullock, a marriage booth, a palm tree, the sun, the moon, a karoli, a bride and bridegroom. This chauk is covered with a piece of cloth over it. The suvasini then carries the dehusked rice, haldi coconuts, a green sari and bodice to the house of the bride accompanied by women singing songs and music. On reaching the bride's place, the suvasini applies kumkum to the forehead of the bride and offers her a sari and bodice along with some rice, haldi and two coconuts and then returns. Thereafter, family deities are worshipped at both the places. Next, a bhagat worships the chauk by offering papadya (pancake of rice flour) and by applying haldi. Later on, he applies haldi to the boy. Suvasinis and other women also apply haldi to the boy. Two dhavaleris light two lamps (laman diva) which are kept burning day and night and sing songs. The same rites are performed at the bride's place also.

On the third day, the man who had brought the pole from the forest accompanied by his wife, two suvasinis, two dhavaleris, karoli and other women go to the place of the god Vaghya to worship him. A suvasini offers papadya and coconut to the Vaghya. All then go to the place where the umbar or bechaki had been cut and kept the previous day. A suvasini worships the umbar tree with papadya. The same married man then cuts a few branches of the umbar tree and, along with his wife, brings them to the marriage booth. The bechaki that was cut on the previous day is also brought back. At the marriage booth, a suvasini waves a lamp around the branches of the umbar tree. The bridegroom, the suvasini and karoli worship the branches and keep them in a basket in front of the central pole of the marriage booth. The bechaki or the umbar tree and a musal are then tied to the central pole. The bridegroom later on cleans his teeth with an umbar stick and takes tea. He is not allowed to eat or drink anything prior to that. He then sits on a pat (low wooden stool) when a suvasini applies haldi to his body and moves around him five times. He takes a bath, wears a dhoti, shirt and white cap and sits on a pat in front of the chauk. His maternal uncle or father's brother ties a kankan around his left wrist and a suvasini applies kumkum and akshata (grains of rice mixed with haldi and kumkum), to his forehead, feet and cheeks. His maternal uncle ties a thread (lolgan) around his neck and a bashing (marriage coronet) to his forehead. In some cases, the thread is tied by a bhagat. A suvasini puts akshata, a rupee coin and a betel leaf in his hand ; relatives and tribesmen offer presents of a rupee or two to the boy. Utensils may also be offered. The offering of presents is called aher or bhetani. Some girls and women of the tribe sing songs for a while. A coconut is broken and the bridegroom and his party leave for the bride's place for the marriage. The bridegroom goes in a bullock cart or on horseback and the rest follow him in a procession to the accompaniment of music and singing.

On reaching the girl's house, they are received by the girl's father and his party and are served with water. Two suvasinis from the bride's party wash the feet of the bridegroom and of his father, mother and other persons of honour and receive a rupee or two from each of them in return for this gesture. In the meanwhile, the bride's brother goes on the roof of the mandav and, from there, pulls the ears of the bridegroom for which he receives a pheta and coconut from the latter. The bridegroom enters the mandav and stands on a pat opposite to the bride who is made to stand in a basket. A curtain of cloth is held between them by two members of the tribe. The bride and bridegroom join their hands together. A brahman priest recites marriage verses and the curtain is removed. The persons assembled shower akshata on the bride and bridegroom while musicians play. A few minutes after the bride and bridegroom exchange their seats and a suvasini ties a mangalsutra (a necklace of black beads) around the neck of the bride and ties the garments of the bride and the bridegroom into a knot. The bride and brodegroom move five times around the homa (sacrificial fire) and take their seats on pats. Relatives of the bride present her some vessels, a cow or goat as andan. Thereafter each side arranges its own dinner. Only the bridegroom and two suvasinis and musicians from his side take meals at the bride's place. When meals are over, men and women from both the sides dance and make merry throughout the night.

The next morning all persons from both the sides including the bride and bridegroom take their seats in the mandav. The couple bow before the elders from both the sides. The bridegroom then takes a leaf cup called dron (of a betel or a pipal leaf), in his hands and the panchas of the tribe pour a few drops of liquor or tea into it. The bridegroom repeats the words, "Ram Ram", before all the guests assembled there and throws the leaf cup on the floor. From that day, he gets a licence to say 'Ram, Ram' to others. If he does it earlier, he is fined upto Rs. 5 by the panchas. Next, a few persons collect some coins from the father of the bride and bridegroom. The bride's father pays

half the amount paid by the bridegroom's father. These coins are later on distributed among the bhagat, the suvasinis, the dhavaleris, the patil and the kotwal from both the sides. The last coin is kept in the cap of the bridegroom as jamin vida, indicating thereby that from that day, the bridegroom shall be looked upon as surety for the bride's life. The bridegroom and his party then go to his house along with the bride. On reaching there, the couple bow before the kitchen chula and the chauk drawn on the wall. After meals, a suvasini removes the marriage coronets from the heads of the bride and bridegroom and the marriage is deemed to be complete.

It is reported that when the marriage is conducted by a dhavaleri, the bride is made to stand in a basket in which some paddy husk is deposited and the bridegroom on a pata (stone slab). After the curtain held between them is removed, the ends of their garments are tied into a knot and the couple move round the umbar pole five times. A dhavaleri may be a suvasini or a widow. She presides over marriges when and where a brahman priest is not available. In the investigated villages, many Malhar Kolis engage a brahman priest for this purpose.

On an average, the boy's father has to spend Rs. 500. Of this, Rs. 150 are spent on bride price and clothing, Rs. 100 on food, Rs. 75 on provisions, Rs. 75 on ornaments and Rs. 100 on miscellaneous items. In many cases, a debt is incurred to cover these expenses. In case of well-to-do families, these expenses may exceed Rs. 2,000. The expense incurred by the girl's father comes to Rs. 150.

In certain cases a girl of her own accord goes to the house of a boy whom she likes and declares her intention to stay there as his wife. The pair is afterwards married with full marriage rites. Generally, in such a marriage, the boy's father has to pay the usual dej (Rs. 21) to the girl's father. Sometimes a boy stays with his father-in-law as ghar-javai, if the latter so desires. Then, the boy is married to the girl at the expense of the girl's father. No dej is to be paid. Such cases occur when a girl's father is well-to-do and has no son to look after him in his old age.

Remarriage

Generally remarriages are permissible in the tribe. A widow is allowed to remarry a man of her choice, the only restriction being that she cannot marry the brother (either younger or older), of her deceased husband. Widow remarriage, called pat, is performed mostly at night at the bride's house without any rite or a priest. The intending husband presents a sari and bodice to the widow and pays Rs. 5 to her for bangles. He has to pay Rs. 6·25 to the villagers as gao kanun for drinks. He has not to pay any dej to the guardian of the widow. At the time of marriage, the husband applies kumkum to the forehead of the widow and ties a necklace of black beads around her neck. The guests are then served with liquor and the marriage is solemnised. Elderly relatives from both sides and some respectable persons of the tribe in the village are present. A bachelor can marry a widow after first marrying a rui plant.

Divorce

Divorce is permitted by the community and it may be initiated from either side. Adultery on the part of the woman, quarrelsome nature of the man or woman, careless management of the household, taking another man's wife and excessive drinking are some of the grounds on which divorce is sought. Before a divorce is granted, it is ascertained from the husband and wife that they are not willing to live together and are ready for divorce. If the initiative is from the wife's side and she happens to have a lover, the latter has to pay the marriage expense to the woman's husband. The father has a right over the children born of his wife when the latter is divorced. When a husband marries another wife, his former wife is permitted to marry another person. Divorce proceedings are initiated in the caste panchayat or at the bride's village. At the time of granting a divorce, a stick is broken by the panchas. A divorced woman can marry again just like a widow remarrying.

Death

The Malhar Kolis practise both burial and cremation. Children having no teeth and persons dying of small-pox are buried. The rest are mostly cremated. In case, a pregnant woman dies, the foetus is taken out from her womb and a handful of cooked rice is put in its place before the body is cremated. The foetus is buried.

When it is known that a person is about to breathe his last, he is removed from the cot to the floor and a piece of cloth is spread over his body. The news of death is made known to the relatives and the tribesmen in the locality. In case, some of the nearest relatives happen to stay at distant places, messengers are sent there to bring them. But as far as possible the funeral is not postponed to the next day. All those assembled at the house of the deceased assist the mourners in the preliminaries. These include sending firewood to the cremation ground and preparation of a bier. The body is washed with warm water and dressed in new clothes. A tulsi leaf, a coin, a few drops of ghee and some gur are put in the

mouth. In the case of a suvasini, kumkum is applied to the forehead. The body is placed on a bier, covered with white cloth with flowers on it and carried to the cremation ground. On the way, grains of nagli or rice and coins are thrown. Two men of the tribe taking two earthen pots in their hands walk along with the procession. One of these two pots is empty while the other contains a burning dung cake.

When the procession reaches the visava, the bier is lowered on the ground and the feet of the deceased are made to touch the earth as well as the empty pot. In case, the deceased is a married male, his wife's bangles are broken and the mangalsutra is removed from her neck. The kumkum on her forehead is also wiped out. The women from the family and the neighbourhood then take a bath at the nearest water-place and return. The bier is picked up and carried.

On reaching the cremation ground, a pyre of fire-wood is constructed and the body is placed on it with its head to the south and its feet to the north. It is covered with faggots. The chief mourner, usually the eldest son of the deceased, takes a burning stick in his hand, moves five times around the pyre and sets it on fire. The persons attending the funeral wait there till the body is burnt after which they collect the ashes and bones and throw them in running water. The place of cremation is washed with cow dung. All drink liquor, take a bath and return. In case of burial, a pit of a suitable size is dug and the corpse is laid in it, head to the south and feet to the north. The pit is carefully filled in with earth.

Pollution is observed for 12 days and the obsequies (divas) are performed on the 12th or 13th day or on any other suitable day. At the divas, the bhagat chants verses and sings. This continues till the soul of the deceased "enters", the body of some relative. The assembled persons go up to the man in whose body the soul "enters" and give him some presents and eatables. Relatives and tribesmen attending the function, are then entertained to a feast. A portion of the food cooked on this day is offered to the crows in the name of the deceased. It is said that tribesmen from far and near including the relatives of the deceased attend in large numbers. No rites are observed when small children die.

Religion

The Malhar Kolis consider themselves to be Hindus. During the 1961 census, only seven persons of the tribe reported themselves as Christians while the rest returned Hinduism as their religion. The gods they worship include Vaghaya, Hirva and Narayandev. Vaghaya protects the cattle while grazing in the fields and forests. He is represented by a picture or an image of a tiger carved on a log which is generally kept near the village boundary or such other place in the village in an open space without a roof or enclosure. At Shigaon, he is offered a goat or a hen once a year in Margasirsha, preferably on a Thursday. All persons assemble near the image, the bhagat recites verses and gets possessed. Some of those assembled sing throughout the night. Next day, the goats and hens offered to Vaghaya are cooked and a portion of it is distributed as prasad. At Shirvali, Vaghaya is worshipped in Kartik at the time of the annual fair held in honour of the gaodevi (village deity).

Hirva, an equally important figure, is looked upon as a family god who protects his worshippers from illness and accidents. He is represented by a bunch of peacock feathers and is worshipped once a year, preferably in Asvin on any suitable day after Dasara. Chavali, ghosal, kakadi and such other vegetables are offered to him. As far as possible, some Malhar Kolis do not eat these vegetables till they are first offered to the god. As he is a family god, his image is kept only with the head or senior branch of the family, where all other members of that family go for worship.

Narayandev is believed to protect them from calamities and miseries in life and is worshipped on the same day as Hirva. He is represented by a picture of a man carved on a brass plate. This image remains with the senior branch of the family. A few of them are reported to worship Khandoba, occasionally. His image is however not found in any of the houses visited for the study. All the above gods are also worshipped at the time of marriages or when there is an epidemic or any member of the family falls ill.

The gaodevi (village deity) is often represented by a stone besmeared with sindur and is generally found under a tree by the roadside or on a hilltop with or without a shed. At Shirvali, the gaodevi has a separate temple, which is now in a dilapidated condition, on a hill 200 yards away from the village site. The Malhar Kolis as well as Kunbis of the village, worship this deity specially on two occasions, before the rains set in and at the time of the annual fair held in her honour in Kartik. The practice is generally to offer a goat every year, to the deity. The meat is distributed among all villagers as prasad.

The sun and moon are regarded as gods and some natural objects and phenomena like the sea and lightening are considered divine. The earth is regarded as mother and corn is treated as sacred. The cow is held in reverence. Trees are not worshipped, but certain trees and plants like umbar and tulsi are considered to be sacred.

Belief in ghosts, spirits and witches is part of the tribe's religious complex. They avoid contacts with suspected witches and keep themselves away from places which are known to be haunted. A witch (bhutalin) is believed to have evil powers and charms by which she can harm others. When a person is believed to have been affected by a spirit, ghost or a witch, a bhagat is called for. He recites mantras and tries to remove the trouble. If a person suspected any woman to be a bhutalin, her relatives are asked to see that she abstains from her activities, which she generally does ; failing which she is driven out of the village.

Festivals

The Malhar Kolis observe the festivals of Naga Panchami, Gauri, Sakad-chauth, Pitar Amavasya, Divali and Holi, more or less on the same lines as Hindus of the region. On Naga Panchami unmarried girls and mantriks (those who know mantras for snakebite) observe a fast. The picture of a nag is worshipped only in the house of a well-to-do-man where other persons living in the hamlet go for the purpose.

Gauri is on the seventh day of the bright half of Bhadrapad. Gauri is the mother of the god Ganapati. It is chiefly a festival of women. On the festival day, a clay image of Gauri is installed in the house of a well-to-do man of the tribe where all the women living in the locality go for worship. At Shirvali, it is installed and worshipped in every house. After worship, women sing and dance before the deity to the accompaniment of dholki. Men also take part in the dance. The image is immersed in a river or well on the next day.

Sakad-Chauth is on the fourth day of the dark half of Bhadrapad. Women and bhagats fast during the day, worship the moon after it has risen and then take food. No other rite is performed.

Pitar Amavasya is observed in memory of all dead ancestors. It falls on the last day of Bhadrapad. Cooked food is offered to crows in the name of the dead.

Divali among Malhar Kolis is mostly restricted to the last day of Asvin and the first day of Kartik. On these days, they take a bath in the morning, put on new clothes, if possible, eat sweets, decorate their cattle and feed them. Well-to-do persons decorate their houses and light lamps in the evening. Drinking of country liquor and dancing are the other important features. At Shirvali, they arrange a special programme along with the Kunbis. They prepare a fire pit ten to twelve feet long and two feet broad. Cattle are made to jump over it across its breadth. These cattle are decorated and their horns are painted. Both the Kunbis and Malhar Kolis believe that this drives away all diseases and epidemics.

Holi is observed by all castes and tribes collectively as a community festival. No separate caste or individual function is held. According to custom, a newly married couple are expected to celebrate the first Holi at the house of the girl's father. Tradition demands that the couple take coconuts in their hands, move round the Holi and then throw it into the fire. The bonfire continues for two days. When worship of Holi is over, those interested take liquor, dance and make merry. On the next day, they throw coloured water on each other and dance. While dancing, they demand post from house to house. Villagers pay them coins according to their means as a reward for their dances. The amount collected as post is spent mostly on drinks. Dancing continues for three or four days.

Recreation

In their daily routine, they get some leisure in the afternoon and in the evening after returning from the second shift of work. They spend it generally in smoking bidis, chewing tobacco, drinking liquor, singing songs and in dancing. There is hardly anyone who does not smoke bidis. Even some women are reported to be heavy smokers. Tobacco chewing is common among both men and women. Chewing of pan (betel leaf) is, however, not so common. Liquor is liked and is an indispensable item in their ceremonies and festivals. A large number of persons drink illicit liquor. Drinking is, however, not so common among women as among men. They are fond of dancing. Men and women generally dance separately, and, on rare occasions, together. Divali, Holi and marriage ceremonies provide occasions for dancing. The Kamdi dance is staged in Bhadrapad for getting rains. In this dance, they clap their hands and dance. The Ghor is restricted to men only. It is staged in Asvin at the time of Divali. In this dance, they tie a rumal around the head, ghungaru around the feet and the waist and garlands of flowers around the wrists. They take two sticks in their hands and beat these sticks and dance to that tune. The tarpa is a mixed dance performed to the tune of tarpa (a musical instrument) during Divali by men and women together. The dholki is staged at the time of Gauri and Holi festivals ; both men and women participate. This dance is performed to the tune of the dhol (drum).

The recreational activities of women are restricted to dancing and singing folk songs at weddings, naming of the child, Gauri and Holi festivals and while grinding grain at the household. Boys play games such as hu-tu-tu and atya-patya ; a few girls sometimes play with moha tree seeds instead of sagargota.

Relations within the community

The Malhar Kolis have a number of kuls. In the social set-up of the community or in matters of inter-dining and marital ties, all these groups are regarded as equal. Among themselves, they do not recognise anyone as high or low owing to his descent or occupation. Even a bhagat who occupies a respectable position among them is neither considered high, nor does he owe his status to heredity. The few educated and rich persons and those who are looked upon as community leaders because of age and experience also do not form a separate group in the community. Those addicted to heavy drinking and notorious for anti-social and criminal activities are, however, regarded as belonging to a lower status. Such families are on many occasions segregated and as far as possible marital alliances with them are avoided.

Women are given due respect and honour in the family as well as in society though they play a secondary role in family affairs. They work in the fields particularly during transplanting and weeding ; they occasionally go to a shop to buy vegetables or fish. But all major purchases are made by men. The sale of agricultural produce is also carried out by men. In marriage negotiations, the leading part is taken by men, the women's role being confined to seeing the girl and giving an opinion about her suitability as a bride. Women are not entitled to a share in ancestral property.

At Shirvali, the Malhar Kolis occupy a lower status than the Kunbis in the social set-up. The lower standard of living among them tends to create a sense of inferiority complex from the social point of view and consequently they look upon the Kunbis as a superior community. The Kunbis does not take food at a Malhar Koli's house or in his company. The same conditions prevail at Kelwa village. Caste Hindus like Somavanshi Kshatriya, Bhandaris and Kolis of this village also regard the Malhar Kolis as belonging to an inferior caste. Excepting in matters like interdining and marital alliances, their social contacts with caste Hindus are however not restricted in any way. Caste Hindu communities invite them to their houses on occasions like Satyanarayan pooja and marriages and also attend their marriages and other ceremonies without any distinction or reservation on grounds of ritual purity. Their entry into the houses of caste Hindus is not restricted in any way. Barbers and washermen serve them without distinction. Similarly, a brahman priest has no objection to preside over their ceremonies, if he is called upon to do so. They are allowed to fetch water from the public wells along with caste Hindus ; in hotels, schools, hostels or dispensaries, they are not discriminated in any way. They have also free access to all temples of caste Hindus. In short, they are not looked upon as an " impure " community in the region.

As regards their relations with neighbouring tribal communities, they accept the superiority of the Mahadev Kolis but treat the Varlis and Katkaris as inferior to them. The latter two also accept this ranking. Consequently, they accept food from the Mahadev Kolis but not from the Varlis and Katkaris. The relations between all the castes and tribes residing in the investigated villages are cordial. They freely mix with each other in times of rejoicing and distress.

Social control

The Malhar Kolis settle their social disputes through a few respectable persons of their community who are called panchas. These panchas are self-elected persons and continue to be in office so long as they enjoy the confidence of the members of the tribe living in the hamlet or village. Generally, those who command respect and honour in the community because of their age, experience and wealth, are looked upon as panchas. They deal with matters pertaining to sexual misconduct, seduction, divorce, food and drink. Disputes within the family are mostly settled by the old men of the family. Sometimes kinsmen and other distant relatives also assist the family in arriving at a compromise. Disputes between different members of the tribe, are referred to panchas. If persons belonging to two different hamlets or villages are involved in any issue, the panchas of these two hamlets or villages meet together to settle the issue. In a majority of cases, the panchas try to end the quarrel by effecting a compromise. In case, no compromise is arrived at, the party at fault is fined Rs. 5 or even more and the amount collected as fine is spent on drinks. The amount of fine imposed depends on the nature of the crime. There is no separate machinery to execute the punishment, but as the decisions of the panchas are supported by the majority of persons, they are generally obeyed by both the parties. In case, the decision given by the panchas is not acceptable to either party, he is free to approach a court of law.

The procedure followed by the panchas is simple. They meet together when they receive a complaint. The complainant and the accused are summoned and heard. Both are given an opportunity to produce witnesses, if any, in support of their cases. After hearing the parties the panchas discuss the case between themselves and arrive at a decision unanimously. Sometimes, they consult other respectable persons of the community, who are not interested in either of the parties and seek their advice.

Besides, the tribal panchayat, a separate body consisting of representatives of all the castes in the village is also found functioning at Shirvali. It is known as the village panchayat and consists of eight members including five Kunbis, two Malhar Kolis and one Navbudha. They are elected by the whole village and their appointments are made once in every four or five years. The committee looks after the local affairs of the village, decides petty disputes such as thefts and beating and awards punishment. The committee also looks after the management of the fair held in the village and collects local contributions for the same. It, however, does not interfere in the social disputes of the tribe. The meeting of this committee is held once a month. No privilege of any kind is enjoyed by any member of the committee.

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A Thoti playing the Kingri.

KOLI DHOR

The Koli Dhors, also known as Dhor Kolis, are looked upon as the lowest among all other scheduled tribes in the State as they eat beef and also the carcasses of animals. Enthoven ranks them with Mahars (p. 253). The Maharashtriya Dnyanakosh described them as dacoits (Part XI, p. 832). Mackintosh speaks of them as the most degraded of Koli tribes, eating carcasses and given to excessive drinking (Thana gaz., footnote on p. 167). In his monograph on Warlis, Save has said that they are regarded as untouchables by all the aboriginal tribes (p. 257).

In the President's order, 1960, the tribe is mentioned against the name "Koli Dhor, Tokre Koli, Kokha or Kolgha". The name Dhor is said to be derived either from dhor (cattle) because they eat beef or from Kannada Dodda (big, in the sense of old). 'Tokre' is said to be derived from 'Thokar' meaning a bamboo. The name Tokre thus refers to their calling as bamboo-cutters (Thana gaz., p. 167).

The etymology of the name Koli, however, appears to be obscure. Enthoven says the term is almost certainly the origin of the word 'coolie' applied in India by Europeans to manual labourers (p. 243). Dr. Gerson da Cunha is of the opinion that the word is derived from the Sanskrit word 'kula' meaning a 'clan'.

This ethnographic note is based on a study of the tribe who call themselves Dhor Kolis. Field investigations were conducted at Mokhada and Gonde Khurd (Mokhada tehsil of Thana district), which are situated in hilly and forest areas where there are no adequate facilities of education, transport and communications. The members of the tribe living in these two villages call themselves Dhor Kolis instead of Koli Dhors and the people of the region also know them by the same name. The other names Tokre Koli and Kokha or Kolgha attributed to the tribe are not familiar to them. According to the tribesmen they are distinct and separate from Tokre Kolis and Kokhas or Kolghas and have neither synonyms nor sections.

The name of the tribe denotes that they are an offshoot of a Koli caste. According to the Thana gazetteer, they are said to have been Raj or Malhar Kolis who became Dhor or cattle-eaters and married Katkari girls and so have fallen to the rank of Mahars and Katkaris (p. 701). During the survey, it was revealed that the tribesmen accepted the designation Koli but did not show any affinity with the other Koli groups such as Malhar Kolis, Mahadev Kolis and Raj Kolis. On the other hand, they regarded the latter as socially superior to themselves.

In Maharashtra the Koli Dhors are notified as a scheduled tribe only in the 13 districts of western Maharashtra (including Greater Bombay). In the 1961 census, they returned a total population of 15,461 persons (8,138 males and 7,323 females) from these 13 districts. Rural areas accounted for 75 per cent of this population. The population was concentrated in Thana (4,988), Nasik (4,054) and Greater Bombay (2,310). These districts accounted for 73·42 per cent of the tribe's total population in the State. In Thana they were concentrated in Mokhada (2,666) and Jawhar (1,537). In Nasik district their concentration was in Surgana (2,030) and Malegaon (1,115). Forty-six per cent of the population fell in the age-group of 0-14; 41 per cent in the age-group 15-44 and 13 per cent in the age-group 45 and above. The sex ratio worked out to 900.

The tribe's population in Maharashtra has fallen from 15,923 in 1931 to 15,461 in 1961. A few persons of the tribe nowadays style themselves as Mahadev Kolis to escape the lowest status attached to the tribe in the region. The re-organisation of the State in 1960, may also be to some extent responsible for this fall. Maharashtra has the largest population of the tribe among all the other States in India, where it is declared as a scheduled tribe. These areas include Gujarat and Mysore and the Union Territories of Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

In physical appearance the Koli Dhors do not differ much from the neighbouring tribes. They are a medium statured people having a slim body and a dark brown complexion. Their eyes are straight and black and faces are from oval to round. The chin is usually round or oval.

The family among the Koli Dhors is patrilocal. Ordinarily a Koli Dhor family is a small group consisting of father, mother, unmarried sons and daughters. Out of 44 Koli Dhor households from Mokhada (Thana), married sons were found living with their parents in only two households. Other relatives were found living in eight households. The average number

of persons per household worked out to 4·5. Only two households were found to have female heads of households. Sons inherit their father's property in equal share.

The Koli Dhors are divided into a number of exogamous kuls. Some kul names found during the survey were, Ambekar, Arde, Bamhane, Bhoya, Bhouda, Choudhari, Gaikvad, Ghatal, Gavit, Kordha, Khanya, Misal, Padekar, Pavar, Pardhi and Sapta. Pardhi and Gavit also occur as the names of distinct tribes in different parts of the State. Bamhane, Pavar, Sapta and Ghatal are the most common clan names among Varlis. Ghatal is a popular clan name among Koli Malhar.

There is no hierarchy either among the clans themselves or within the clan. Marriages within the same clan are not allowed as the different families within the clan are believed to be descended from a common ancestor. If a widow or a divorced woman re-marries, she acquires the clan of her new husband but the clan of her children from the first husband remains the same as before.

The maternal uncle has to shave the first hair of a newly born child. This apart, other kin do not play any important ritual role in their social ceremonies. During marriage, the maternal uncle of the bride and her father's sister are among the chief guests of honour to whom the bridegroom's father is expected to offer some presents. The maternal uncle and father's sister's husband take a leading part in marriage negotiations. The maternal uncle's daughter and father's sister's daughter are acceptable to them in marriage in perference to all the other kin from both the sides.

A few of the kinship terms in the tribe are : father—Ba ; father's father—Ajo ; mother's father—Ajo ; father's elder brother—Motha Ba ; father's younger brother—Kaka ; son—Lek or Por ; daughter—Bai ; elder brother—Dada ; elder brother's wife—Vahini ; mother's brother—Mama ; mother's brother's wife—Mami ; father's sister—Fui ; mother's sister—Mavashi. The younger brother and his wife are addressed by name and all old persons are addressed by the term Davar.

Dwelling

The population of Gonde Khurd resides in two separate localities, Gonde Khurd proper and the Toranshed pada. The former is the main village site while the other is its hamlet. The main site consists of 40 households of Koli Mahadev, 20 of Koli Dhor, two of Mahars and one each of Sutar and Katkari. Toranshed pada is inhabited exclusively by Varli households (20).

Mokhada village includes 12 localities. One of these consists of 30 households of Koli Dhor, an other has 35 households of Koli Dhor in addition to four households of Raj Koli, a third one has 35 households of Ka Thakar besides seven households of Koli Dhor. The other localities of the village are inhabited mostly by Varli, Koli, Mahadev and caste Hindu communities.

The houses of Koli Dhors are constructed in separate blocks in both the villages. They are square or rectangular huts built on a layer of earth without any plinth. The material used consists of karvi sticks, bamboos, wooden poles, mud and cow dung plaster. Roofs are thatched with grass. A majority of the houses consist of a room divided into two parts by a partition inside. The kitchen is generally in the rear part of the house. The other part is a retiring room put to a number of uses. Hand-grinding, hand-pounding and such other work is done here. It is also used as a sleeping apartment and a store room. If there are any cattle, they are tethered here. In a majority of cases, the hut has one or two doors with no windows. The floor is often uneven. Well-to-do persons have sometimes 2 or 3 rooms in their houses with a separate kitchen. Such houses have at least two or three doors. The materials required for constructing a house, are obtained locally and the manual labour is provided by the household members.

Dress

A langoti, a kopari, and a feta worn by a few old men of the tribe, a sari and a bodice worn by their women, constitute the traditional dress of Koli Dhors. Young men nowadays wear a dhoti, a khamij and a cap or rumal. Women do not wear a full eight or nine yard's sari, but cut it into two pieces. They wear one piece around the waist. The upper part of the body is covered by a fadki or another piece of the sari. It is taken on the head over the left shoulder in the Maratha fashion. Girls wear a zaga (frock) and a parkar. School-going children wear chaddis and a shirt with half sleeves.

Wearing of ornaments is more common among women. Excepting a few old men who wear silver paragre (ear-rings), men do not generally wear any ornament. Women wear glass bangadya in the wrists, kudki in the ears, fuli in the nose and siver jodave on the toes. Mithal, gathi and garsoli are necklaces. The

bangles, garsoli, kudki and jodave are worn daily. The rest are worn only on occasions. Widows do not generally wear any ornament. Girls wear a necklace and ear-rings.

Tattooing is common among both men and women. Men get tattooed on the forearm and forehead and women on the cheeks, forehead, chin and wrists. The most popular designs are dots, crosses, stars and pictures of Hanuman, Krishna and the tulsi plant.

Food and drink

The staple food of Koli Dhors is rice, nagli and varai. Sometimes they take vegetables like onions, brinjals, val, chavali and pumpkin. Most of them cannot afford to have vegetables frequently. In off-seasons when the stock of foodgrains falls low, wild fruits like mahua, berries, umbar and avala and leaves of some edible plants also form a part of the food of poor persons. Such occasions are, however, reported to be very rare. Normally they take two meals a day. The first meal is taken at about 12 noon and consists of pancakes prepared from nagli flour and urid or tur dal. The other meal is taken in the evening after retiring from the day's work. It consists of rice, bread and dal. Sometimes they take besan, a preparation of urid flour, in place of dal as a change in their daily food. They are fond of meat and fish. They also take fowl and eggs whenever available. They do not seem to have any restrictions on animal food as they take beef, pork and carrion occasionally and whenever available. A general consciousness has nowadays grown up among many of them that they should give this up as early as possible. They are aware of the fact that it is because of this habit they are looked down upon as the lowest among all the other scheduled tribes in the State. As a result, a few of them now do not eat carrion or cow's flesh.

Drinking of country liquor is common. Generally, they take it in the evening after retiring from the day's work. A few take it during the day time also. Tea as a beverage has also found a place in their society. They however, take it without milk and add gur to it instead of sugar, which is reserved for occasions, when guests are to be served. Those who cannot afford to have tea take rice pej in the morning before going out for work.

Formerly, their cooking, drinking and eating vessels were all earthen. Nowadays, they use brass, iron and aluminium pots also. These are bought from the local market. They keep a few baskets, soops, a grinding wheel, a stone or wooden mortar, a wooden pestle, grain containers and measures, a clod breaker, a hoe, sickles, axes and fishing traps. One or two bullocks and fowl are also maintained. A few well-to-do households may keep a few more cattle, cups and saucers, a lantern and a cot or two.

Hygiene and sanitation

The Koli Dhor live in kachcha houses, which do not admit free air and light. The yard near their houses is on many occasions dirty and insanitary as they throw the refuse there after cleaning the houses. The refuse is not removed for months together. The roads in their hamlets are neither repaired nor swept regularly. During the rainy days, the floor in the hut gets wet and the open place around is full of stagnant water and mud. They are not used to latrines. Many of them do not bathe regularly or wash clothes regularly.

In illness, they first approach a Bhagat in whom have implicit faith.

Language and literacy

The Koli Dhors are a Marathi-speaking scheduled tribe in Maharashtra. In the 1961 census, they returned 12 mother-tongues out of which Marathi was spoken by 13,336 (86·00) of their total population in the State. The other important mother-tongues returned were Kannada (986), Telugu (481), Ahirani (375) and Gujarati (216). The speakers of these four mother-tongues added up to 13 per cent of the total. The remaining seven had negligible numbers of speakers. These included Hindi (28), Urdu (20), Kachhi (7), Tamil (6), Kokni (2), Lamani/Lambadi (2) and Malayalam (2). Among the subsidiary languages returned were Hindi (391), Marathi (734) and English (82).

Literacy among Koli Dhors in 1961 was 13·90 per cent. The literacy rates of the 18 major scheduled tribes having over 10,000 population each in Maharashtra range from 2·38 to 13·59. Thus the Koli Dhors are more advanced in education than many of the important scheduled tribes in the State though they are poorer and socially more backward than the other tribes. Out of their 1961 population of 15,461 persons, 2,149 were literates. In the rural areas the percentage of literacy was 8·37. Out of 11,638 individuals, 974 were literates. In the urban area the percentage of literacy was 30·73. Out of 3,823 individuals, 1,175 were literates.

The five university degree-holders and 57 matriculates out of 60 were from urban areas. Among the females only three were matriculates and they also came from urban areas.

Boys and girls of school-going age in the investigated villages did not attend school in a good number as they had to do out-door work to support their parents.

The break-up of the 1961 population by educational level is given below :—

Educational standard	Total			Rural			Urban		
	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Illiterate	13,312 (86·10)	6,362 (78·18)	6,950 (94·91)	10,664 (91·63)	5,208 (86·04)	5,456 (97·69)	2,648 (69·27)	1,154 (55·35)	1,494 (85·96)
2. Literate without educational level.	1,280 (8·28)	1,032 (12·68)	248 (3·39)	651 (5·59)	537 (8·87)	114 (2·04)	629 (16·45)	495 (23·74)	134 (7·71)
3. Primary or junior basic ..	804 (5·20)	682 (8·38)	122 (1·66)	320 (2·75)	305 (5·04)	15 (0·27)	484 (12·66)	377 (18·08)	107 (6·16)
4. Matriculation or higher secondary.	60 (0·39)	57 (0·70)	3 (0·04)	3 (0·03)	3 (0·05)	..	57 (1·49)	54 (2·59)	3 (0·17)
5. University degree or post-graduate degree other than technical degree.	5 (0·03)	5 (0·06)	..	..	..	..	5 (0·13)	5 (0·24)	..
Total ..	15,461 (100·00)	8,138 (100·00)	7,323 (100·00)	11,638 (100·00)	6,053 (100·00)	5,585 (100·00)	3,823 (100·00)	2,085 (100·00)	1,738 (100·00)

Economic life

According to the 1882 Thana gazetteer, the Koli Dhors of those days lived by day labour and were sometimes employed by Kunbis in mending bunds and cutting brush-wood for manure (p. 167). In the 1961 census, out of 15,461 persons, 7,864 (50·86) were returned as workers. The sex-wise break-up of the working force showed that 4,582 (56·30) out of 8,138 males and 3,282 (44·82) out of 7,323 females were workers. The industrial distribution of workers in the nine broad categories according to the 1961 census was as follows :—

Category	Persons	Males	Females
I	3,738 (47·53)	2,008 (43·82)	1,730 (52·71)
II	2,301 (29·26)	1,153 (25·16)	1,148 (34·98)
III	302 (3·84)	182 (3·97)	120 (3·66)
IV	87 (1·11)	65 (1·42)	22 (0·67)
V	515 (6·55)	433 (9·45)	82 (2·50)
VI	170 (2·16)	141 (3·08)	29 (0·88)
VII	160 (2·04)	80 (1·75)	80 (2·44)
VIII	281 (3·57)	259 (5·65)	22 (0·67)
IX	310 (3·94)	261 (5·70)	49 (1·49)
Total ..	7,864 (100·00)	4,582 (100·00)	3,282 (100·00)

Those working in activities other than agriculture and agricultural labour were almost negligible in number. A study of 488 Koli Dhor households from Thana, revealed that 162 of them owned or held land from Government for cultivation, 213 households cultivated others' lands on lease and 113 households did not possess any land for cultivation. Among the 162 landholders who owned or held lands from Government, 57 landholders held land less than five acres, 85 landholders held land between five to 14·9 acres and 20 held land 15 acres and above. Those who cultivated others' land on lease paid 4 to 6 times the land revenue as rent, besides they had to bear all the expenses of cultivation.

Collecting forest produce, cutting wood for fuel, plying carts and forest labour are their important supplementary occupations. Fishing which is practised with traps and poisoning, provides a supplementary food and income to a few of them, especially to those who reside near the sea-shore.

Those who work as cultivators grow paddy, nagli and varai in their lands. Those who have the means and desire use fertilisers, better varieties of seeds and better implements. Such persons are however very few. They use a wooden plough and a pair of bullocks to prepare their fields. Seeds are thrown over small patches of land with hand ; when the seedlings grow up they are plucked and transplanted in the fields.

Owing to poorer soils and lack of resources, they do not generally raise good crops. Consequently, in

many cases no surplus stock of grains is left with them for sale in the market. So when there is a marriage or death in the family, they have to approach a private moneylender and get loans at high rates of interest. Sometimes, the rate goes upto 25 per cent. Repayment of loan is in by cash and or in kind. When it is in kind, moneylenders offer very low prices for their grains.

A study of five Koli Dhor households at Mokhada revealed that the income of all these five households varied from Rs. 600 to Rs. 800. Sixty-five per cent of this income was spent on food, 15 per cent on clothing, three per cent on house repairs, two per cent on education, five per cent on interest and ten per cent on miscellaneous items like smoking, drink, religious ceremonies and travelling. In the case of three households, expenditure exceeded income.

Life cycle

The Koli Dhors observe no ceremony when a woman conceives for the first time. She takes her usual food and attends to all routine work till the last moment. But she takes care not to visit places which are known to be haunted by evil spirits. She does not take pots full of water on her head with the help of a barren woman. In case, she does not get children or her children die young, she observes some restrictions as advised by the bhagat. Contacts with suspected bhutalis (witches) are generally avoided. Delivery takes place at her husband's residence. A professional midwife of the tribe is engaged. In case she is not available, a midwife of any other castes is engaged. When the child is born, the midwife cuts its nal with an arrow head. The cord and the placenta are buried in a pit after a palas leaf with some grains of rice, nagli and varai is placed therein. It is then filled in with earth. A small stone is kept over this pit. The midwife serves the mother and the child for five days. She is paid Rs. 5 at Mokhada for her service. At Donde Khurd, she receives Rs. 2 in case of a male child and one rupee if the child is female along with some shidha (grain) of varai and dal.

The mother is held unclean for five days and assigned a separate place in the house. Though she enters the kitchen and moves freely in the house after six days, she is not permitted to go out for 12 days. On the 12th day she takes a bath, goes to a well, worships it and brings water in a pot after which she is permitted to go out for outdoor work.

The mother has a restricted diet for the first five days when she takes light food, preferably a pej of varai after which she is given rice and dal (pulse). She takes her normal food after two or three weeks. The child is fed on the mother's milk.

On Panchami—the fifth day after childbirth—the midwife worships a picture of Mauli (the goddess controlling the fate of the child) drawn on grains of varai in a soop after keeping an arecanut, some pieces of coconut and four or five coins, and applies sindur to the stone under which the nal was burried. The mother takes the child in her arm and bows before the picture of Mauli. If circumstances permit, neighbouring children and women are fed.

The child is named on any day without any rite. Normally the name is given at the time of the vaccinator's visit to the village or when the father goes to the patel or talathi to register the birthdate of the child. The ears of the children are pierced by a goldsmith after five or six months. The first hair of the child is cut by its maternal uncle after six months without any rite.

If a boy and girl of the tribe keeps sex relations with each other before marriage, they are advised to marry each other or allowed to live together as husband and wife without marriage rites. Premarital sex relations with higher castes are also not objected to. In such cases also the boy and the girl are advised to marry each other or allowed to live together as husband and wife. But in case, one of these two belongs to a lower caste like Katkari, Mahar or Mang, the person concerned is excommunicated from the tribe.

At Mokhada, boys are married at the age of 16 and girls at 14, while at Gonde Khurd, they are married at the age of 14 and 12 respectively. A study of 75 Koli Dhor married couples from Thana and Nasik districts revealed that as a rule the husband was older than the wife. A man may marry the daughter of his maternal uncle. Marriage with father's sister's daughter or wife's younger sister is also allowed but the daughter of a maternal uncle is given the first preference. Marriage with mother's sister's daughter or father's brother's daughter is prohibited. The selection of the bride is made by the bridegroom's father and that of the bridegroom by the bride's father. Polyguny is allowed, but is not common.

The offer of marriage comes from the boy's father who has to pay a dej of Rs. 21 plus three maunds of rice plus one paili urid and one paili of tur to the girl's father. He also has to give two saris (worth Rs. 30 each), two bodices (worth Rs. 1·50 each) and a fadki (worth Rs. 3) to the girl and a sari (worth Rs. 20) and a bodice (worth Rs. 3) to her mother. He has also to give money ranging from Rs. 2 to Rs. 6 each to the bride's grandmother, father, maternal uncle, brother, sister's husband, father's sister, sister and to the villages for drink, the patel of the village

and to the padakhod (chief man) of the hamlet. At Gonde Khurd, dej consists of Rs. 16·50 plus two and a half maunds of rice, one paili of tur and one and a half pailis of urid ; in addition, three saris, three bodices and two fadkis are given to the girl besides money to her brother, maternal uncle and father's sister, to the police patel of the village, to the padakhod of the hamlet and to the villagers for drink.

The boy's father goes to the girl's father with his relatives and friends and makes a proposal for the match. On getting a favourable reply from the girl's father, the date for sakharpuda (betrothal) is fixed. On that day, the boy's father, his mother and other relatives go to the girl's father. The boy's mother applies kumkum on the forehead of the girl, ties a gathi (necklace of red glass beads) around her neck and presents her a sari, a bodice and a fadki. A suvasini fills her oti (lap) with Rs. 1·25 and two pieces of coconut. The boy's father then gives Rs. 7·50 (at Gonde Khurd Rs. 10·00) to the villagers who spend the amount in treating the assembled guests to liquor. This ceremony is called sakharpuda or kunku lavane (bethrothal). After fixing the date for the payment of dej, the boy's party retires. The boy's relatives go to the girl's father and pay the dej.

A few days before the marriage, the boy and the girl are given a ceremonial bath at their houses when any four suvasinis of the tribe pour water over their heads and apply haldi to their bodies. This ceremony, halad, takes place three days prior to the marriage. Family deities are also worshipped on the same day at both the places. A bhagat has to be specially invited for this purpose, as he has the right to worship the family deities on this occasion.

On the next day, they offer some pieces of arecanut to a few tribesmen in the village and thereby invite them to their residence for erecting a mandav for the marriage. The tribesmen so invited are expected to bring some medis (poles) for the purpose. The mandav has normally nine poles. One or two poles of these are of an umbar tree and the rest of any other tree. After erecting the mandav all the persons who have brought medis for the booth are feasted. This rite is called mandav (construction of a marriage booth). It is performed at the girl's place also on the same day.

Marriage takes place at the girl's residence. The boy's party goes there for the celebration in a procession led by four musicians of the tribe. The boy wears a new dhoti, a shirt and red pagote and holds a dagger in his right hand. He also wears a bashing. The boy's party lights a holi (fire) on the village boundary and takes rest there for some time. Before lighting the holi, four musicians from the boy's side go to the girl's house and announce their arrival by playing on their musical instruments. On hearing this, the girl's mother goes there with a plate containing cooked food and feeds the boy there with her own hands. Meanwhile the girl's father goes round the village and invites the tribesmen for the celebration with the help of the same four musicians. On arrival of the tribesmen, persons from the boy's side go to the girl's residence and take their seats in the mandav. The boy stands outside, facing the entrance of the booth. The girl's mother waves a ghee lamp round his face and thereafter he enters the booth and stands on a pat. The girl wears a new sari, bodice, fadki and bashing. A suvasini of the tribe fills her lap with nuts, dates and grains of rice, after which she stands on a pat facing the boy who then puts one foot on her foot. Both the boy and the girl join their hands together. Two men of the tribe hold a jamnuk between them. The medinga ties a garland of thread round their necks and chants some verses. The curtain is removed. Persons assembled throw grains of varai on their heads. The boy ties a garsoli round the girl's neck. A suvasini ties the ends of their garments into a knot. The boy and the girl then move five times round their seats and go out for a dance. When the dance is over, the knot of their garments is untied by a suvasini. All the guests from both the sides are then feasted at the residence of the girl's father. On the next day, the boy and his party go to their village along with the girl. On reaching there, the bashings are removed from their heads and the celebration ends. The priest of the tribe conducting the marriage service receives Rs. 2 or Rs. 3 for his services. At Gonde Khurd, he is paid Rs. 5.

Marriages are performed at the girl's place in the months of Vaishakh and Falgun, preferably in Falgun, in the evening after sunset on any convenient day except Thursday, Saturday and Amavasya (new moon day). Marriage expenses on the bridegroom's side in case of an average family vary from Rs. 200 to Rs. 250. Sixty per cent of this amount is spent on dej, presents and food. Thirty per cent is spent on clothing and ornaments and 10 per cent on liquor, music and other miscellaneous items.

If a boy is unable to pay dej, he serves his would be father-in-law for a certain period after which he is married to the girl at the expense of her father. No dej has to be paid in such a marriage. In certain cases, a boy lives with his father-in-law as a ghar-javai if he has no male issue. The expenses of this marriage are met by the girl's father.

Widow re-marriages are called motur. The widow cannot marry the brother of her deceased husband. Moturs are generally conducted in the evening at the widow's residence without any rite. The widow wears a new sari and a bodice given to her by her intending husband who then applies kumkum on her forehead and ties a garsoli round her neck. The assembled guests are treated to tea. Elders and influential persons of the tribe remain present. Suvasinis too can attend the re-marriage. No dej has to be paid in motur and no priest is engaged. In case the widow has issues, the intending husband has to accept the responsibility of maintaining her children so long as they are minors. A bachelor cannot re-marry a widow but he is permitted to stay with her without marriage. Their issues are not discriminated against.

Divorce called dava is permitted by the tribe. A husband can divorce his wife, if he cannot agree with her or if her conduct is bad. A wife can divorce her husband if he is impotent or is suffering from an incurable disease. In both cases sanction of the tribal panchayat in the village is required. If a woman leaves her husband for no fault of his, she has to pay the marriage expenses to the latter. In case, she marries, her new husband has to pay these expenses. If the fault lies with the husband or the husband is impotent or suffering from an incurable disease, he gets no compensation. If the husband seeks divorce, he gets no compensation even if the fault lies with the women. At the time of granting a divorce, a stick is broken in the presence of the panchas and a farquatnama (divorce deed) is executed. A divorced woman is allowed to marry again, but this marriage is gone through in the motur form. She has no right over her issues by her first husband. A child can however, stay with her so long as it has to be fed on her milk. According to the 1961 census, there were 54 divorced males and 62 divorced females.

Death

The Koli Dhors believe that a person gets no peace after death if his or her wishes are not fulfilled during life-time. They, therefore, try to fulfil the wishes of a dead person according to their means. When a person breathes his last, the body is washed with warm water and dressed in new clothes ; after applying haldi it is kept on a madha (bier) in a sleeping position with a piece of new white cloth spread over it, gulal is applied to the forehead and sprinkled on the cloth. Any four near relatives of the deceased carry the bier on their shoulders. The chief mourner (preferably the eldest son) carries in front an earthen pot with a lighted cow dung cake in it. Relatives, friends and tribesmen including women attend the funeral procession. When the procession reaches the visava, the bier is lowered to the ground. Relatives and friends wave coins around the face of the deceased and throw them on the ground near the bier. The old clothes of the deceased are also thrown there. The corpse is then carried to the cremation ground after the bearers have exchanged their places. On reaching the ground, the corpse is lifted from the bier and kept on the pyre with its head to the south. Some cooked rice, drops of water and coins are put in its mouth by a relative. Faggots are then piled on the body. The chief mourner walks five times round the pyre with an earthen pot filled with water and breaks the pot on the ground at the end of the last round. He then lights the pyre. Persons assembled there wait till the corpse is completely burnt after which they take a bath and go to their houses. In the evening three dishes containing tea or liquor, cooked rice and water are kept at the place where the deceased breathed his last. A small basket is kept over these dishes. It is believed that the dead person eats this food at night without anybody's knowledge. Women do not go to the cremation ground, but they follow the funeral procession upto the visava only. Ashes and bones are collected on the second or third day and kept at the same place.

Children and persons dying of cholera and small-pox are buried. The corpse is placed in a pit with its head to the south. Cooked rice, drops of water and a coin are put in its mouth. Persons assembled throw in the pit handfuls of earth and the pit is filled in. The chief mourner moves five times around the pit with an earthern pot filled with water and breaks the pot on the ground at the end of the last round.

At Mokhada, they neither observe sutak (post-death impurity) nor shave the head and the face. They observe divas (death ceremony) either on the ninth or on the thirteenth day and feed the tribesmen on this occasion. At Gonde Khurd, only a few observe sutak for five days and shave on the fifth day. Divas is observed on the same day by feeding tribesmen and keeping a portion of the cooked food on the cremation or burial ground. During sutak, they do not eat non-vegetarian food and sweet articles or wear a feta or cap. Similarly, they do not shave and go out for field work. Sex-life is also prohibited during this period. On the fifth day, they shave, take a bath, wash their clothes and then they are deemed to be pure. No sutak is observed for children. Similarly, no rites are performed for them. No shradha is performed but a portion of the cooked food is offered to crows on every Pitar Amavasya day in memory of the ancestors.

Religion

The Koli Dhors are Hindus by religion. Except 80 persons who returned Christianity and one person

who did not state any religion, all the 15,380 persons of the tribe reported Hinduism as their religion in the 1961 census.

Hirva, Himani, Kansari, Khanderao, Bhairav, Brahma and Bhavani are their chief objects of worship. They worship these household deities with haldi and kumkum and offer a goat, fowl or coconut on occasions like Divali, Holi, a marriage in a family or when any member falls ill. Except Hirva who is represented by peacock feathers, all the other deities are carved on silver plates. These are always kept in a bamboo basket; on the day of puja, they are taken out from it for worship. Some grains of rice are also kept in the basket along with these images. Hirva is kept separately in a covering of cloth. Only the senior or the head branch of the family keeps these images in their houses. Other members of the family go to the house of the main branch and offer worship to the deities there or they take them to their houses when required and return them after puja. In case, they are unable to take them to their houses, an oil or ghee lamp is lighted and worshipped in the name of these deities. They do not offer worship to any other deity or God.

Divali and Holi are their chief festivals. They also celebrate Padva, Akhaji, Kavali Bhaji, Naga Panchami, Pola, Pitar Amavasya and Sankrant.

Kavali Bhaji is celebrated on any convenient day in the last week of June or the first week of July by offering leafy vegetables to household deities. Leafy vegetables grown in the monsoon are eaten by them only after they are first offered to the deities on this occasion. Till then they avoid eating such vegetables.

Divali is celebrated on the last day of Ashvin by worshipping family deities with an offering of cucumber, chavali and pumpkin. A senior member of the family does not eat these vegetables unless they are first offered to family deities on this occasion. For three or four days, men and women dance to the tune of the tarpa and demand a post from house to house.

Sankrant falls on 14th January. It is observed as a holiday without any rite. A few well-to-do families exchange sweet til-seeds among relatives and friends on this occasion.

Holi is the most important festival. A padakhod (chief man of the tribe in the hamlet), lights the pieces of wood piled round the bamboo pole and moves five times round them after offering worship. Assembled persons then throw coconuts and pieces of wood into this fire. Green mangoes are also offered to holi. At Mokhada, holi is lighted in every hamlet of the village by the padakhod of the hamlet. His office is hereditary. At Gonde Khurd, they have a common holi. On the day after holi, they worship family deities, throw coloured water on each other, men dance to the accompaniment of the dholki from house to house and demand post. The amount collected is spent on drinks.

The Koli Dhors believe in spirits. If anyone falls ill, they attribute it to the work of a witch or spirit unless it be due to the wrath of a God. They consult a bhagat and try to propitiate the spirit or the God with an offering like goat or a fowl.

Leisure and recreation

March, April and May are the three leisure months for these people as during these months they are mostly free from agricultural operations. They enjoy this leisure by staging dances. The tarpa is played at the time of mixed dances staged from Naga Panchami to Divali. The dholki is played at dances restricted to males only, at the time of holi. In both these dances one or two persons play on the tarpa or the dholki; others form a circle and dance.

During the working season they find leisure only in the evening and they enjoy it by smoking bidis and drinking liquor.

Women find leisure only on festival days. Singing songs and staging tarpa dances are their chief recreational activities.

Inter-community relationship

The Koli Dhors have no other divisions, sections, or groups except those based on kuls. Relations between different kuls are quite healthy and there is no rivalry between any of them.

In the social scale, they consider themselves superior to Katkaris, Mahars and Mangs. They do not accept meals or water from them, nor allow them to move freely in their houses. The other neighbouring tribes like Koli Mahadev, Kokna, Thakur and Varli however treat them as the lowest and rank them with Mahars and Mangs. They do not accept meals or water from them. If a Dhor Koli girl or boy marries a Katkari boy or girl, the person is excommunicated from the Dhor Koli tribe. In case, a Dhor Koli girl marries a boy from Koli Mahadev, Kokna, Thakur or Varli, they have no objection to such union. In such cases the boy marrying a Dhor Koli girl is ejected by his community but admitted into the Dhor Kolis. The Koli Dhors are allowed to fetch water from public wells and there is no prohibition against their entering temples. Barbers serving other castes serve them without any distinction and a brahman priest, will be ready to preside over their marriages if called upon for the purpose.

The chief man of the tribe living in each hamlet is called Padakhod. He is the head of the organisation of the tribe in that hamlet. His office is said to be hereditary at Mokhada, while it is not so at Gonde Khurd, where he is an experienced man commanding the respect and confidence of all tribesmen. In case he fails to retain such confidence, another suitable man is appointed in his place. Whenever there is any social dispute between two members, the Padakhod convenes a meeting of all adult tribesmen in the hamlet and gives his verdict by majority. This meeting is called jat sabha. In case of dispute between two hamlets or villages, the padakhods and tribesmen of these hamlets or villages meet together and settle the matter. As far as possible quarrels are composed through compromise. In a few cases, offenders are fined upto Rs. 5 and the amount is spent on drinks. If no compromise is arrived at, the matter is sent either to the police patel of the village or to the courts. Sexual misconduct, adultery, divorce and breaches of marriage rules are the main subjects which come up before this meeting. At Gonde Khurd, all such disputes are generally settled on the occasion of a death ceremony in any Dhor Koli family when all the tribesmen are expected to meet together. This gathering is known as bhaudava (meeting of tribesmen). Cases or quarrels which need immediate attention are disposed of by convening special meeting.

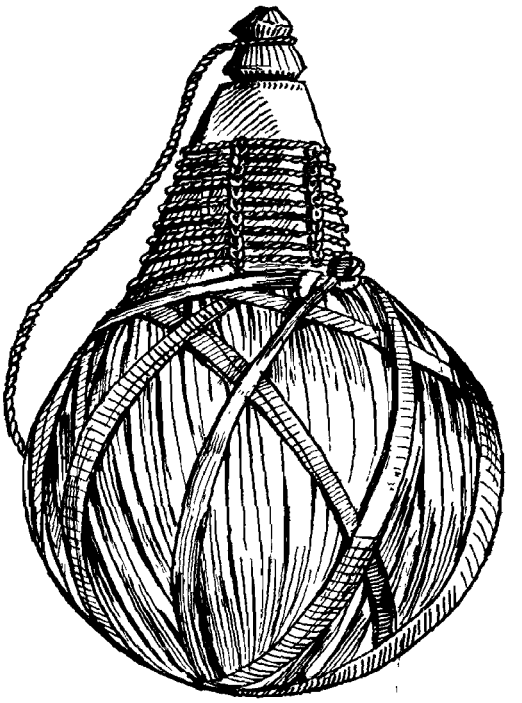
Besides the tribal organisation, there is one police patel and statutory village panchayat in every village (including all the hamlets) for the general administration of the village. The police patel and the village panchayat do not normally interfere in the social disputes of the tribe. They exercise their influence and interfere in the matter only on occasion when such interference is called for by the tribal organisation.

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Yetty Bokka—a water bag of Madia Gond (Chandrapur)

DUBLA

The Dublas, including Talavia or Halpati, are one of the predominant tribes of Gujarat, who are also found in Maharashtra, mostly in the districts adjoining Gujarat. They were notified as Dubla under the the Constitution scheduled tribes order, 1950. The amendment act of 1956, included the names Talavia or Halpati. This ethnographic study conducted at Saroli (Saravali) and Asave (Ashagad), both in Dahanu tehsil, Thana district, revealed that tribesmen living in this area referred to themselves and were known by their neighbours as Dublas and they were not aware of the other names.

The name appears to have been derived from the Sanskrit word ' Durbal ', meaning one who is weak or feable. Enthoven says, the Dublas are a tribe weakened by their hard life and fondness for liquor (p. 341), Shah mentions a story about their inability to fight the enemy, which was construed as physical weakness and led to their being called Dublas (p. 32).

A legend is cited to explain why some Dublas came to be recognised as Talavia Rathods. A group of Rathods was sitting by a tank when Parasuram, who was then engaged in exterminating the Kshatrias, appeared there. The Rathods, got afraid and told him they were not Rathods but Talavias leaving by the side of the tank (talav). From then on, they came to be known as Talavias or Talavi Rathods. Shah mentions another story according to which the name was derived from ' talwar ' (sword) and that the Talavias claim to be people who had been living by the sword but who fell on evil days owing to their land being taken away by moneylenders (pp. 32-33).

Some Dublas of Saroli admit that the tribe got its name because of the physical weakness of their ancestors. They say that their ancestors were Rajputs who became refugees following frequent Muslim raids. Their wives and children were killed during these raids and they were robbed of their belongings. They had to take shelter with others and came to be known as Dublas because of their inability to defend themselves.

Most of the Dublas show some affinity with the Rajputs. Yet they now look upon themselves as socially inferior to and distinct from Rajputs. It is argued by some that the Dublas and the Kolis had common ancestors, Enthoven (p. 341). But the Dublas in the two villages studied, do not admit any affinity with the Koli groups. On the other hand, they admit their affinity with the Rathods whom they consider as their parent stock.

Shah speaks of their having migrated across the seas, He refers to certain practices they follow in their observance of the Divaso festival. Small cloth dolls are ceremoniously married and sent floating down the river and across the seas to the place of their father-in-law (p. 33). The Dublas have no knowledge of any such place across the sea. Some tribesmen in Saroli refer to Vapi and Daman in Gujarat as the place of their origin.

The Dublas are also notified as a scheduled tribe in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Mysore and in the Union territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli. In the 1961 census, they were returned in the largest number from Gujarat (323,644). Next came Maharashtra (13,630) and Dadra and Nagar Haveli (1,094). No one was returned from Mysore and Rajasthan. In Maharashtra, they are notified in the 13 districts of western Maharashtra. Out of their 1961 population of 13,630 made up of 7,440 males and 6,190 females, 7,238 (53·10) were returned from Thana district ; 5,007 (36·74) from Greater Bombay and 1,385 (10·16) from the four districts of Dhulia, Kolaba, Jalgaon and Nasik. The Dublas appear to be the most urbanised tribe in the State as 6,954 (51·02) were found in urban areas in 1961. This is the highest among scheduled tribes in the State.

The sex ratio for the tribe was 832. The 1961 census showed that 5,282 (38·75) were in the age group 0-14 ; 6,630 (48·64) in the age group 15-44 and 1,705 (12·51) in the age group 45 and above. Thirteen could not state their age.

Family and kinship

The Dubla family is patrilocal with patronymic designation. A study of 82 households from Dahanu and Talasari tehsils showed that 42 of them consisted of father, mother, unmarried sons and daughters ; 18 households included married sons, who were, however, living separately from their parents and nine households had married sons, living with their parents. The average size of the household was 5·2. Except in the case of three households, the head was a male.

Sons inherit the property of their father in equal shares. In case, they desire separation during the lifetime of their father, the property is divided equally among the sons and the father. After the death of the father, the sons acquire his share in equal proportion. Daughters have no claim over the property.

The Dublas are divided into exogamous kuls. In the two investigated villages, the following kuls were found: Bamhaniya, Bailmarya, Garasiya, Kadave, Mandiviya, Patil, Pindhari and Rajapur. Garasiya and Bamhaniya are common clan names amongst Dhodias; Patil is a popular clan name among the Marathas and the Kunbis, whereas, Rajput occurs as a distinct caste name in different areas of the State.

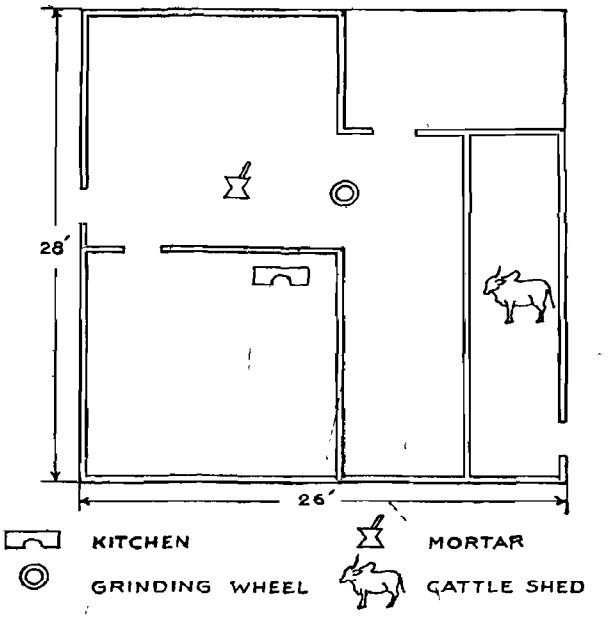
Kin on both the mother's and father's side have assigned roles during marriage and birth ceremonies. The father's sister generally suggests a name for a newly born child. Among some Dublas who are in close contact with Hindu communities, the maternal uncle removes the first hair of a child (mundan). In looking for a suitable match for a boy, his mother's brother and his sister's husband take an important part. During marriage, the elder brother's wife of the bridegroom applies haldi to him. At the time of marriage they invite all the relatives who in turn are expected to give some gifts to the boy or the girl, according to their means. Similarly, on the occasion of a death in the family all the relatives of the deceased, even his distant kin, are expected to attend the funeral. In case, anybody fails to do so, he has to pay a condolence visit later.

Dwelling and dress

In Saroli and Asave, the Dublas were found living in different hamlets (padas or wadi) along with other scheduled castes and tribes. The Dubla hamlets are mostly situated near the agricultural lands and by the side of forests.

The huts or houses are in most cases detached from one another. A Dubla hut is generally a single or double-room structure, square or rectangular in shape, built on a simple earth foundation with a thatched roof and walls of boru (reeds) or karvi twigs, plastered with clay and cow dung on both the sides. There is often a partition inside, dividing the hut into two or three parts. The rear part is used as a kitchen. The hut has one or two doors, but no windows. Cattle and goats are tied in the same house. In most of the cases, the hut has neither a verandah nor an enclosure around. Woman take their bath on a slab kept outside the hut. Men go to the river or nearby well for bath. Some big houses have three or four rooms, and a separate shed for cattle; but even they do not have a bath-room or windows.

The house shown in the sketch, is eight feet high. It is constructed on a simple earth foundation. Its walls are of boru reeds and plastered with cow dung on both the sides; the roof is of grass. The owner is a cultivator and has an annual income of Rs. 700.



Dress

Dubla men wear a dhoti and a bandi or kopari, women wear a five-yard cotton sari and a bodice. A few old men still wear a langoti. Young men use trousers and bush shirts. On ceremonial occasions, men wear dhoti, a kamij and a feta or a cap. Young men put on coloured shirts and prefer caps to fetas. There is no ceremonial dress for women but on such occasions, they wear a better type of saries and bodcies which are usually kept in reserve. School-going boys wear shorts and half shirts and girls wear a polka and a ghagara. Both men and women use country chappals (sandals), while on field work.

Men shave their hair and moustaches and women hair by parting it in the middle and tie it behind in a knot. A few women, however, do not tie their hair in a knot but allow it to fall loosely on the back. School-going girls dress their hair with oil and wear it in braids.

Some well-to-do men of the tribe wear a silver sakhali round the waist and silver kades on the arms occasionally. It was customary to wear silver kadis in the ears at the time of the marriage ceremony. These had to be removed at the time of the wife's death. This practice is not in vogue now.

The ornaments worn by Dubla women do not differ much from those worn by the women of neighburing tribes. These are usually made of copper, brass and silver. Lavangya in the ears, fuli on the nose and jodave on the toes, a gathi and a

bormal (another necklace) round the neck more popular. They also wear bangadya (glass bangles) on their wrists, pochi around the arms and vale and sakhali on their feet. Ordinarily, a Dubla woman wears a fuli, lavangya, glass bangles and one or two necklaces of glass beads. The other ornaments are worn by them on occasions. Unmarried girls wear a fuli, lavangya and glass bangles.

Food

Rice and nagli are the staple food of the Dublas. They are generally eaten in the form of bhakar (pancakes). Tur and urid are consumed, especially in the summer months when vegetables are scarce. Their daily diet consists of rice or nagli, tur or urid dal and, at times, chutni of onions or chilli mixed with garlic, salt and oil. Sometimes, they consume vegetables like val, chavali, pumpkin, brinjals and onions. They take mutton and fowl, fish and eggs when they can afford the luxury, but not beef and pork.

Drinking country liquor, smoking bidis and chewing tobacco are common. Many now take tea in the morning before going out for field work. Those who cannot afford it, usually consume rice pej (gruel) in the morning. It is a preparation of rice flour, water, salt and, if possible, buttermilk.

They cook their food in earthen or metal pots and keep utensils made of copper, brass, nickel, silver and iron. A goat or two, some fowl, a rough stone handmill, a stone mortar, a wooden pestle, lanterns or wall lamps, baskets and winnowing fans are generally found in the house of an average Dubla family. A pair of bullocks and some agricultural implements are also seen in case the family has some land for cultivation.

Hygiene and sanitation

They live in kachcha houses with no windows. There are no latrines in the settlement. Garbage is mostly thrown around the walls of houses. The surroundings of their houses are therefore dirty and insanitary especially during rains. The floors of their houses, however, appear to be clean and tidy owing to periodical application of cow dung. They are more careful about personal cleanliness. They clean their teeth daily in the morning, take a bath frequently and wash their clothes occasionally though not daily. The utensils used for cooking and eating are washed regularly. They prefer to go to a bhagat in illness.

Language and literacy

Their mother-tongue is Gujarati ; but some of them who have migrated into Marathi-speaking areas have picked up Marathi and in course of time Marathi has become their mother-tongue. At Saroli and Asave, they speak Gujarati at home but with Marathi-speaking outsiders they speak in Marathi. It is a corrupt form of Marathi, much influenced by Gujarati. In the 1961 census, they returned nine mother-tongues in Maharashtra. Gujarati is spoken by 11,792 persons (86·52) and Marathi by 1,785 (13·10). Some (1,774) also reported knowledge of other languages in addition to their mother-tongues. Among these, 21 persons (all males) returned English as their subsidiary language. The principal subsidiary languages spoken are Marathi (1,158) and Hindi (355). The literacy rate among the Dublas is higher than that for important neighbouring tribes like Koli Malhar, Varlis, Koknas, Thakurs and Katkaris. All these tribes have percentages of literates varying from 2·38 to 9·52 as against 11·04 for the Dublas. One reason may be that more than half of their population is living in urban areas where they have better educational facilities. Their literacy rate is still much lower than that for the State's general population (29·82). Out of the 13,630 Dublas in the state in 1961, only 1,505 were returned as literates. Among these, 1,208 persons were literate without any educational level. In the rural areas the percentage of literacy was 9·96 ; out of 6,676 individuals only 665 were literates. In the urban areas the percentage was 12·08. Out of 6,954 individuals, 840 were literates. The break-up of population by educational standards is given below :—

Areas	Illiterate		Literate without educational level		Primary or junior basic		Matriculation or higher secondary		Technical diploma not equal to degree		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Rural ..	3,192	2,819	410	121	122	10	2	..	..	..	3,726	2,950
Urban ..	3,033	3,081	556	121	119	37	5	1	1	..	3,714	3,240
Total ..	6,225	5,900	966	242	241	47	7	1	1	..	7,440	6,190

Economic life

According to the 1961 census returns on occupation, 7,381 (54·15) persons of the tribe were workers. The sex-wise break-up showed that 4,814 (64·70) out of 7,440 males and 2,567 (41·47) out of 6,190 females formed the working force. In rural areas, the percentages of workers for males and females were 66·48 and 51·97 as against 62·92 and 31·91 in urban areas. Labour participation rates were higher in rural areas, both for males and females, than in urban areas.

The industrial classification of workers according to the 1961 census was as follows :—

Category	Total			Rural			Urban		
	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I ..	911 (12·34)	461	450	878 (21·90)	437	441	33 (0·98)	24	9
II ..	1,076 (14·58)	523	553	926 (23·09)	453	473	150 (4·45)	70	80
III ..	589 (7·98)	372	217	361 (9·00)	242	119	228 (6·76)	130	98
IV ..	34 (0·46)	19	15	21 (0·52)	12	9	13 (0·39)	7	6
V ..	2,488 (33·71)	1,968	520	1,022 (25·49)	849	173	1,466 (43·49)	1,119	347
VI ..	86 (1·17)	78	8	12 (0·30)	11	1	74 (2·19)	67	7
VII ..	139 (1·88)	108	31	26 (0·65)	19	7	113 (3·35)	89	24
VIII ..	480 (6·50)	429	51	118 (2·94)	114	4	362 (10·74)	315	47
IX ..	1,578 (21·38)	856	722	646 (16·11)	340	306	932 (27·65)	516	416
Total ..	7,381 (100·00)	4,814	2,567	4,010 (100·00)	2,477	1,533	3,371 (100·00)	2,337	1,034

In the caste index of 1891 (Census of India, 1891, volume II, p. 4), the Dublas were classified as "agricultural labour". The Thana gazetteer described them as peasants and labourers, ploughmen and hereditary servants of better class cultivators (p. 158). It will be seen from the above table that many of them have now left their traditional occupation of agriculture and taken to "manufacturing other than household industry". Out of 2,488 persons returned as working in manufacturing, 1,466 were from urban areas. Among these 1,294 were found living in Greater Bombay, the remaining 1,022 being from rural areas. "Other services" also had a large number of persons (21·38). To some extent this fact supports the statement made by Enthoven (v. I. p. 346) and the Thana gazetteer (p. 158), that Dubla women worked as household servants in their master's family.

Agriculture attracted only 26·92 per cent of the total working population of the Dublas. However in Talasari, Palghar and Dahanu tehsils of Thana, most of them were reported to be following this occupation. Out of 2,757 workers among the Dublas in the above three tehsils, 862 (31·26) were working as cultivators and 878 (31·85) as agricultural labourers. A study of 931 households of the Dublas from the three tehsils revealed that 89 (9·56) owned or held land from government for cultivation; 217 (23·31) households cultivated others' land on lease (on cash contract), and 625 (67·13) households did not possess any land for cultivation. All the 89 landholders held land upto 9·9 acres, which is not sufficient to maintain a tribal family. In the circumstances, seven landholders cultivated others' land on lease and 20 households cultivated a part of their own land, leased out the rest to others and also cultivated others' land on lease. In the investigated villages, their subsidiary occupations were forest labour, plying carts and transport of forest goods. Those holding land grew paddy, jowar and urid and carried on farming with the same implements and practices as other tribals and non-tribals in the region.

Life cycle

The Dublas believe that conception takes place by divine will ; therefore, a barren woman is not necessarily looked on with contempt. A pregnant woman takes her usual food till the time of delivery. The delivery takes place at her husband's house. She can however, go to her father for the purpose, but it is not customary that she should go there even for the first delivery. A male child is preferred, but female children are equally welcomed. An experienced dai (midwife) of any caste available at the moment in the village is engaged. At Saroli, they prefer to engage a Dubla dai. In difficult cases, a trained dai from the maternity centre in the neighbourhood is also called to assist the dai. At Asave, they mostly engage an experienced woman of the Varli tribe, there being no trained woman of the Dubla tribe.

The dai cuts the nal of the child with a boru chip and buries it in a pit in the house or outside the house after putting into it some salt, a copper coin, arecanut, rice, kumkum and haldi. A stone is kept on this pit and it is on this stone that the mother is bathed every day. The uncut portion of the nal is tied to the neck of the child with a thread for a week or so after which it is thrown away. The dai serves the mother and the child for five days and is paid five rupees for her service, after filling her lap (oti) with a seer of rice and four annas. The mother and the child are held impure for the first 12 days, after child birth and are deemed purified after being given a bath on the 12th day. On this occasion the mother goes to a well, bows before it, lights an earthen lamp there, worships the well with kumkum and haldi, breaks a coconut and fetches water. She has a restricted diet at least for two weeks after delivery after which she is given rice, dal and other usual food. She resumes her normal duties after 12 days but does not cook food or go for outdoor work till she regains strength.

On pachava (fifth) day, the dai lights a lamp near the stone kept on the pit in which the nal was buried. She applies sindur to this stone and worships it with haldi and kumkum. The child is then placed in a zoli (swing) after putting into it some rice and four anna coins. Neighbouring women who are invited to attend this function are entertained to tea. At Saroli the child is named at pachava. At Asave, it is named mostly on the day on which the patel (headman) of the village visits them for entering the name of the child in his register. At Saroli, Mohan, Raman, Chotu and Bhiku are among the names given to a male child and Somi, Bhiki, Nanli, Shanti, Gajari, Divari, Hakari and Rama are the names of female children. The lower lobes of the child's ears are pierced after an year, or even earlier, on any convenient day by a goldsmith without performing any rite or ceremony. The child's first hair is removed by a barber on any convenient day without any ritual.

Pre-marital sex relations are not generally welcomed by the tribe. There are occasions such as a fair or a bazar when boys and girls meet together. They also meet during dances at marriages and festivals like Holi. If this leads to pre-marriage sexual liberty, the persons concerned are mostly made to marry each other. If one of these two persons happens to be of a lower caste like a Varli or a Koli Dhor, the offender is excommunicated from the tribe but re-admitted after undergoing a purification ceremony in the presence of the tribal panchas. On this occasion, three tribesmen and their panchas meet together and pour cold water over the head of the offender who is then asked to clean the feet of the panchas in the presence of all the tribesmen assembled there. A thread of a dabha plant is tied around his shoulders and he is made to drink cow's urine along with cow dung after which he is declared purified.

Marriage

In the investigated villages, the usual age of marriage among the Dublas varies from 16 to 20 for boys and 12 to 15 for girls. During the 1961 census, 22 males and 67 females in the age-group 0 to 14 were returned as married among the Dubla population in the State. A study of 90 married couples of the tribe from Thana district showed that the husband was always older than the wife, the difference being mostly between one and six years.

Marriages do not take place when a relationship can be traced between the two contracting parties. Marriage with a mother's sister's daughter, father's sister's daughter and maternal uncle's daughter is not allowed. Marriage with father's brother's daughter and own sister's daughter is also not permitted. Marriages are contracted by negotiations, mostly with families in the neighbourhood. Monogamy is generally practised but there is no objection to polygyny.

The offer of marrige comes from the boy's side. The boy's father selects a suitable match for him in the neighbourhood in consultation with his relatives and friends. Relatives from the father's and the mother's side take a leading part in approaching the family in view. It is also ascertained that no member of either party suffers from any hereditary disease or physical disability. If it is found to be so, the marriage does not take place even if all other information about the family is found favourable.

After taking a final decision the boy's father goes to the girl's father with his relatives and friends. If the girl's father approves his proposal, all the assembled guests are treated to tea at the expense of the boy's father and, after fixing the date for the betrothal called perami, the boy's party returns home.

On the appointed day, the boy's father accompanied by his wife, daughter, relatives and caste elders, goes to the girl's father for perami. The boy's mother or his sister applies kumkum on the forehead of the girl, fills her oti (lap), with gram and presents her a sari, a blouse, a rupee coin, a gathi (necklace) and sakhali (anklets). The girl puts on the new dress presented to her. After distributing gram to all, a contribution of Rs. 6·50 from the boy's father and Rs. 6·00 from the girl's father is raised and the guests from both the sides including the tribesmen in the hamlet are entertained to tea. Perami takes place a few days or months prior to marriage. After fixing the date for the payment of dej (bride price), the boy's party goes back.

Four or five persons from the boy's side go to the girl's father to pay dej. On this occasion, the girl is made to sit on four lines of rice flour drawn on a pat which is placed on a mortar. The boy's mother or sister applies oil to her hair. Then she applies sindur on the middle line of the hair. The boy's father or uncle or any other elder hands a plate to the girl containing some rice and dej. The amount of dej varies from Rs. 65 to 80.

Marriage takes place at the girl's house preferably at sunset, on any convenient day in the months from Margasirsha to Jyeshtha excepting Paush and Chaitra. The service is conducted by a brahman priest or a caste priest called dholi. He is one of the musicians who play music at the time of marriages. A brahman priest is paid Rs. 5·25 in addition to some grains which include rice, dal and coconut. A dholi receives Rs. 2·50 for his service.

Five or six days prior to the day of marriage, the boy and the girl are rubbed with haldi at their respective houses daily in the morning and evening by any four suvasinis of the tribe who sing songs relating to the occasion. Other women assembled there also join in singing. Prior to the marriage day, the tribesmen in the boy's hamlet assemble at his residence for installing the mandav (marriage booth). This booth has generally nine or twelve poles, preferably of teak wood, if they are available in the region. The first pole is fixed at the centre after putting into the hole some rice, arecanut, betel leaf, milk and a copper coin. An umbar twig is tied to this pole. Tribesmen erecting the booth are feasted in the evening.

On the next day, the boy goes to the girl's place for the marriage ceremony either in a bullock cart, a tonga or on horseback in procession. He wears a dhoti, a shirt, a coat and a feta ; he holds a pen-knife and a coconut in his right hand. A marriage coronet is tied to his forehead. The procession is headed by five Dubla musicians who play on three musical instruments. Two of them play the dhol (drum), two play the shehanai (a wind instrument) and one plays on the Nadaga. When the group reaches the girl's village the girl's father receives it and takes it to a place where arrangements are made for its stay. The five musicians go to the girl's residence to announce the arrival of the boy's party. Men of the tribe in that hamlet assemble at the girl's house and instal a marriage booth ; when this is over, some persons from the girl's side go to the place where the boy's party is staying and return with them to the girl's residence immediately.

On arrival, the boy is led to the marriage booth and made to stand on a pat. The girl's sister or any other suvasini of the tribe applies kumkum on his forehead and throws some akshata over his head. The girl is brought there with a marriage coronet tied to her forehead and made to stand on another pat facing the boy. A suvasini from the boy's side washes the feet of the boy and one from the girl's side of the girl. A mendola (a fruit) is tied around the right wrist of the boy and of the girl on this occasion. Two men hold a jamnuk between them. The dholi recites some verses and the assembled persons throw akshata over the heads of the boy and the girl while the musicians play. The boy and the girl then bow down before their parents and thereafter the boy says " Ram, Ram " to all the persons assembled in the booth to grace the occasion. The boy has no right to say " Ram Ram " to others before he gets married with full rites.

There is a tradition of offering gifts to the girl after the marriage. This is called chandalo. The relatives of the girl meet together in a group and offer presents to her according to their means. These gifts or presents are mostly in the form of cash or utensils. When this is over the guests from both the parties take their meals separately and spend the night singing and dancing. Next day the boy's party goes back to its village along with the girl. On reaching there, the relatives of the boy offer some presents of cash or utensils to him. The marriage coronets are removed and the ceremony is over.

When a brahman priest conducts the ceremony, he recites the sacred verses. The jamnuk held between the boy and the girl is then removed and the persons assembled in the booth throw akshata over their heads.

The garments of the boy and the girl are tied into a knot and they walk four times around the sacred fire (homa). The other rites are the same as described above.

Expenses for a boy's marriage of an average family amount to Rs. 500 or so. The girl's father has to spend much less from his purse as he gets dej.

In certain cases, a boy and a girl take a fancy for each other and live together as husband and wife. The caste elders do not generally object to this, but advise them to get married in the accepted manner. A boy has to pay no dej but bears all the expenses of this marriage. In case, a boy is unable to spend on dej, he serves his would be father-in-law for a certain period as a khandalia, after which he is married to the girl with full marriage rites at the expense of the girl's father. The boy then goes to his own house along with the girl. In certain cases, a boy goes to stay with his father-in-law as a ghar-javai. In such a case also, all the expenses of marriage are made by the girl's father and no dej is paid.

Widow re-marriage

A widow is permitted to marry the younger brother of her deceased husband if she desires so. This re-marriage takes place in the evening at the residence of the widow without any rite. The widow sits on pat after putting on a new sari and a bodice given to her by her intending husband. Any suvasini of the tribe applies kumkum on her forehead. At some places, the kumkum is applied by a widow or a re-married widow. The intending husband ties a gathi (a necklace to be worn by a married woman) around her neck. The ceremony ends with a feast to all the guests present. The intending husband has to pay no bride price, but bears the expenses of the feast by paying Rs. 25 or Rs. 30 to the guardian of the widow. The widow goes to the house of her new husband on the same night or on the next day. The widow's children generally go with the mother when she re-marries and her new husband has to accept the responsibility of bringing them up. At the time of re-marriage, castes elders and kin on both the sides remain present.

Divorce is permitted by the tribe. The husband or the wife can ask for a divorce and it is generally permitted with the consent of the tribe's panchas. Incompatibility, bad character, cruelty, physical disabilities, incurable diseases, quarrelsome nature and ill-treatment are some of the grounds for obtaining a divorce. If the husband asks for a divorce, he has to pay Rs. 51 to Rs. 101 to the wife as compensation. In case, the fault lies with the wife, it rests with the panchas whether she should be compensated or not. If the initiative is from the wife's side, she has to pay Rs. 51 to Rs. 151 to her husband as expenses which he had incurred on her marriage. In case, the fault lies with the husband, the panchas have to decide whether he deserves to be compensated or not. The injured party is always compensated. The amount to be paid as compensation varies with the circumstances of each case. The children of the divorced couple generally remain with the father. Children in arms however, remain with the mother for the time being.

At the time of granting a divorce, the husband tears off a piece of the wife's sari and the wife tears off a piece of the husband's dhoti in the presence of the panchas. A written document called Farqati or Farqatnama (divorce deed) is executed and signed by the husband, his wife and panchas. A divorced woman can marry a man of her choice, if she desires. This marriage is celebrated in the same manner like that of a widow re-marriage.

Death

The Dublas mostly cremate their dead; but those who are extremely poor and are unable to buy fire-wood follow burial. Children having no teeth are invariably buried. The body is bathed in warm water, smeared with haldi, dressed and placed on a narnami (a bamboo bier) in a sleeping position and covered with a new white cloth in the case of a male and a red cloth in the case of a female. It is carried to the cremation ground in a procession by four relatives. The chief mourner, preferably the eldest son, walks in front and carries in his right hand an earthen pot with burning fire-wood in it. At the Visava the bier is lowered and kept on the ground for a while. A suitable spot nearby is then selected and washed with cow dung. A stone besmeared with sindur is kept on this ground along with grains of rice and a copper coin. The corpse is then moved around this stone four times. The sleeping mat, clothes and bed used by the deceased are left here so that his soul may have no desire to go back home. An earthen pot containing haldi, a portion of which was applied to the body of the deceased, is also left. In case, the deceased has a wife, her bangles are broken here and the gathi tied at the time of her marriage is removed from her neck. Women accompanying the procession return after taking a bath at the nearest water place.

The body if then carried to the cremation ground. It is laid on the pyre with its head towards the north. Relatives and friends keep some copper coins on its lips and fire-wood is piled on it. Any two relatives take two burning sticks in their hands, move round

the pyre four times and then light it by the side of the head and feet of the deceased. When the body is completely burnt, the place is washed with cow dung and made clean. Some rice is cooked nearby in the earthen pot which was carried by the chief mourner. The rice is kept on four banyan leaves and these are then left for the crows to eat. Four datwans (twigs of neem or babul or any other tree used for cleaning the teeth), are also kept on these leaves. After leaving an earthen pot filled with water by the side of these leaves, all take a bath and return home.

In case of burial, a pit is dug north-south and the corpse is laid in it with head towards the north. Relatives and friends keep some copper coins on the lips of the deceased. The assembled persons then put handfuls of earth into the pit and fill it very carefully ; the other rites are the same as in cremation. In case of a burial, a miniature effigy of the deceased has to be made out of a dabha plant and burnt on the cremation ground on any convenient day, preferably on the fifth.

Pollution is observed for five days after death. They shave their heads and take a bath on the fifth day. Funeral rites are generally held on the fifth or twelfth day by feeding the tribesmen in honour of the deceased. On this occasion four or five bhagats sing songs throughout the night. The next morning, one of them gets possessed and begins to shake his head and body. This goes on for a long time. It is believed that during this period the spirit of the deceased enters the body of the bhagat. The relatives of the deceased offer him water and some coins according to their means to please the deceased. Generally no rites are performed for small children.

Religion

Enthoven (p. 344), described the tribe as animists. But in the 1961 census, all the 13,630 Dublas returned Hinduism as their religion. The Dublas believe that the gods will harm them in case, they are not pleased and propitiated. In the investigated villages, Brahma, Hirva, Zoting and Bamhania are the deities whom they respect. They keep these deities in their houses in the form of betelnuts besmeared with sindur and worship them with haldi, kumkum and flowers, with an offering of a goat, hen or coconut occasionally, especially at the time of marriages, festivals, harvesting or when any member in the family falls ill. They believe, they can get early relief from illness if the deity concerned is propitiated. The bhagat tells them which deity has caused the particular illness and the deity is offered a goat or hen. Brahma Dev is the chief deity of the Dublas. He is said to be difficult to please. The Dublas also honour and respect an ancestor god called Khatri. Wherever there is any trouble, the Dublas think that some ancestors having unfulfilled desires are responsible for it. They consult a bhagat and, on his advice, install and worship a Khatri. Khatris are small wooden or earthen representations of male or female ancestors.

Sakad Chouth, Dasara, Divali, Sankrant and Holi are the chief festivals which they celebrate.

On Sakad Chouth (Bhadrapad vad 4), the chiefman and woman in the family fast during the day and take their meals only in evening, preferably after moonrise. A circle of rice flour mixed with kumkum and haldi is drawn either on a pat or on the ground. The circle presents the shape of a moon. A tulshi plant is kept on this circle and worshipped with a coconut. Other members in the family may observe a fast and take meals in the evening after worshipping the circle and the plant, if they so desire. Caste Hindu people of the region refer to this festival as Sankashta Chaturthi. They also observe a fast on this occasion and take their meals in the evening after worshipping the moon. While caste Hindus observe this on the fourth day of the dark half of every month, the Dublas observe it only on the fourth day of the dark half of Bhadrapad.

Dasara is on Ashvin sud 10. A hen is killed at the khala (threshing floor) and its blood is sprinkled on a handful of rice. Later on, these grains are thrown in the fields where crops are grown. In the evening apta leaves are given to elders in the family. The Dublas of Asave do not celebrate Dasara but observe the day as a holiday and, as far as possible, do not go for outdoor work.

Divali is observed on the day prior to Ashvin Amavasya by worshipping family deities with an offering of five pancakes prepared from a mixture of cucumber and rice flour. Freshly cooked chavali (a vegetable) is also offered to the deities on this occasion. Later on they have a feast, preferably with a non-vegetarian dish. They start eating chavali and cucumber only after this ceremony. The other important programme of the day is to dance to the music of dhol and shahanai. Men and women and even grown-up children take part in these dances and sing songs.

Sankrant is celebrated on January 14. On this day, they take a bath in the morning. The water used for bath contains some til grains. The sister pours some water on the head of the brother and receives from him a rupee or two or a piece of cloth as a present. Sweets are distributed between relatives. The sweet balls are prepared from gur and til.

Holi falls on the full-moon day of Phalgun. On this day they collect fire-wood and dung cakes and heap them at a central place in the hamlet. This heap is lighted and worshipped by the man who enjoys the hereditary right of doing it. All other persons then throw some pieces of fire-wood, dung cakes and coconuts into the Holi, move round it and worship it. The man who has the hereditary right to light and worship the holi first has to observe a fast and take his meal in the evening only after worshipping the holi. Among some Dubla families the chief man and woman also fast during the day and take their meals only in the evening after worshipping the holi. Holi is lighted in every hamlet of the village and there is only one common holi for all the communities living in that hamlet. The man who enjoys the hereditary right of lighting it may be of any caste or tribe. At Asave, holi is lighted in two different hamlets and at both these places it is first worshipped by a man of the Varli tribe. In Dublapada of Saroli, this right belongs to a man of the Dubla tribe. In the other hamlets of Saroli the right is enjoyed by persons of different castes living in those hamlets. A few of them worship their family deities on this day or on the next day. After worshipping the holi, most of them indulge in drinking throughout the night. On the next day, they throw coloured water at each other and dance. They collect a post or fagawa (a present in the form of coins) from house to house. The money is usually spent on drinks.

The Divaso, which falls on the last day of Ashadh, is an important festival which the Dubla tribe celebrates with great enthusiasm in addition to Hindu festivals described as above. It is a day of rejoicing and feasting. Special dishes of food (especially hen) are prepared on this occasion. Unmarried girls of the tribe perform doll marriages in a small pandal which is specially erected for the purpose. The dolls are carried ceremoniously to the river in cups made of palas leaves and later on immersed in the flowing water. The girls then sit together on the sands of the river, sing songs and eat pancakes and coconuts brought by them. Their parents also remain there till they go back to their places. The dolls are made of rags. Generally a male doll is made of white cloth and a female doll of red cloth. Usually the doll is one foot high.

Leisure and recreation

The Dublas get leisure only in the evening after dinner. Men sit together at a common place in the hamlet and smoke bidi, chew tobacco and drink country liquor. At times, especially on moon-lit nights, they dance. They also dance on occasions like birth and marriage and festivals like Divaso and Holi. Singing and music loom large in their recreational activities. Generally men and women dance separately, but they may dance together provided they are related in some way. In the investigated villages, they enjoy two types of dances called garba and nachani. In a garba dance, they move round in a circle and dance to the tune of dhol and shahanai. In a nachani, they swing their hands up and down and dance. Women take much pleasure in singing folk songs at births and marriages and festivals like Divaso and Holi.

Inter-community relationship

The Dublas engage a brahman priest at marriages and at times visit Hindu temples in the neighbourhood. They receive traditional services from brahman priests and barbers, have free access to temples and hotels of caste Hindus in the locality and fetch water from the public wells in the region. They do not suffer any social disability nor are they considered to be an impure caste. Castes like Sutar, Kumbhar, Sonar, Lohar and Marathas attend their marriages, but do not necessarily accept food from them. The Dublas are permitted to work in their houses, including the kitchen, without any distinction. They accept food from all these castes but abstain from doing so from the Chambhars, Dheds and Bhangis, whom they consider as impure. They also treat the neighbouring Varlis and Dhodias as inferior. The latter, however, do not necessarily accept this view and claim social equality with them.

The Dublas have their tribal panchayat (panch), which consists of a headman and the representatives of the tribe from each hamlet. The headman is called patel and the representatives are called panchas. Disputes between two individuals of the community are mostly referred to this panchayat. Conflicts and differences between two members of a family are usually settled by the elders of that family without referring the issue to the tribal panchayat. It goes to the panchayat only when a compromise is not forthcoming. Generally each hamlet of the village has a separate panchayat with a headman assisted by panchas. When the persons involved in a quarrel belong to different hamlets or villages, panchas of these hamlets or villages meet together and settle the issue.

The headman's office is not hereditary. His selection is primarily based on his age, experience and the influence he carries among the persons of the community. The panchas or representatives who are expected to be wise and intelligent are selected by the inhabitants of the hamlet in the same manner. These persons enjoy office so long as they command the respect and confidence of their tribesmen.

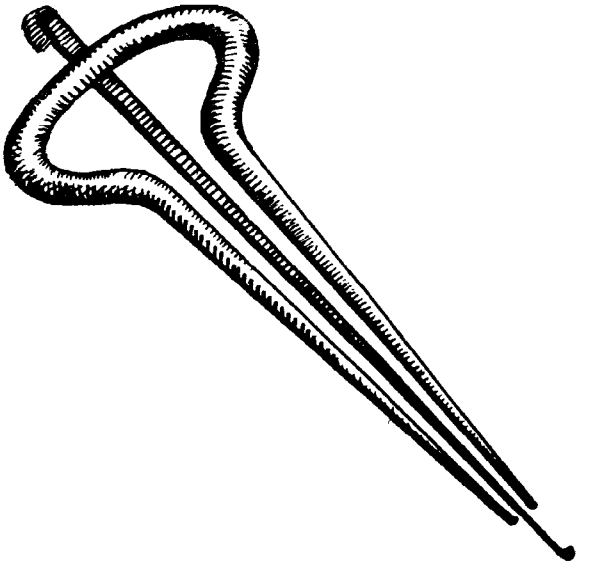
The tribal panchayat deals with all domestic problems and quarrels relating to marriage, divorce, adultery, food and drink. These disputes are generally settled amicably by way of compromise after hearing both the parties. In case, no compromise is arrived at, the party which is found guilty is punished by a fine befitting the occasion. The amount is mostly spent in treating the members of the panchayat to a feast or drink. In certain cases, like divorce, it is given to injured person as compensation. The person who does not pay the fine or obey the decision of the panchayat is excommunicated from the tribe.

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Tendur—a musical instrument of Madia Gond (Chandrapur)

DHODIA

The Dhodias are a Gujarati-speaking scheduled tribe mainly concentrated in Thana and Greater Bombay. In the President's order, 1960, the tribe is notified as "Dhodia" without any synonym. At Asave and Saravali in Dahanu tehsil of Thana district, where this field study was conducted, the tribesmen refer to themselves as "Dhodi" instead of "Dhodia" and the people of the region also know them by the same name. The Maharashtriya Dnyanakosh says they belong to a non-Aryan class of people (pt. XVI, p. 79). Wilson describes them as an offshoot of the Kolis. Enthoven says that some exogamous divisions of the tribe such as Bhat, Bhoi, Brahminia, Kanbi, Koknia, Nayaka (Mota), Nayaka (Nana), Parbhu, Parsi, Vania, Vanjari and Veragi are apparently other caste names and from this it appears that the tribe is a mixture of numerous other castes (v. I, p. 330; v. II, p. 244). The Dhodias do not remember any story or legend which can throw light on their origin. A few households of the tribe connect themselves with the Rajputs. It could not be firmly established from where the tribe had immigrated A few households claimed Nagar Haveli and Umbargaon (Gujarat) as their place of origin.

The Thana gazetteer reported that they spoke Gujarati at home in the 1880s (p. 157). In the 1961 census, 86 per cent of their population returned Gujarati as their mother-tongue.

The Dhodias are notified as a scheduled tribe in the 13 districts of western Maharashtra as also in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Mysore and the Union territories of Dadara and Nagar Haveli. In 1961, they were returned in the largest number from Gujarat (275,787). In Maharashtra, they returned a population of 12,037 persons (6,302 males and 5,735 females), from only five districts out of the 13 districts wherein they were declared as a scheduled tribe. Their distribution was—Thana (6,260), Greater Bombay (5,270), Dhulia (438), Nasik (51) and Kolaba (18). Thana and Greater Bombay account for 95·79 per cent of their entire population in the State. Within Thana, Talasari (1,850), Dahanu (1,263) and Bhiwandi (1,170) tehsils accounted for 68·42 per cent of their total population in the State.

Their population of 12,037 in 1961 compares with 12,289 in 1911 and 14,615 in 1931 in districts at present comprising Maharashtra. The decrease may be attributed to the thansfer of 206 villages from Umbargaon tehsil of Thana district and Nawapur, Nandurbar, Akkalkuwa and Taloda tehsils of Dhulia district to the new Gujarat State.

Out of its 1961 population, 6,025 (50·05) were returned from rural areas and 6,012 (49·95) from urban areas. Its sex-ratio was 910. Its age distribution was 4,867 (40·43) in the group 0 to 14; 5,711 (47·45) in the group 15 to 44; 1,455 (12·09) in the group 45 and above.

Family and kinship

Family among Dhodias is patrilocal with patronymic designation. The girl leaves her parents after marriage to stay with her husband. A study of 32 households from Thana district revealed that 16 of them consisted of father, mother, unmarried sons and daughters. In four households, married sons were staying with their parents; the other four households included married sons who were living separately from their parents. Other relatives were found living in only eight households. All members of the family, male, female and children have to find out some work so as to cover the family expenses.

Sons inherit the property of their father in equal shares. Married or unmarried daughters cannot claim right over their father's property. Some provision is made for the widowed mother as well as for the marriages of the un-married daughters, brothers and sisters. In the absence of direct decendants, property is divided between the brothers of the deceased or their sons. Family deities in the house are kept with the eldest son of the deceased. Other members of the family who get separated take these deities to their houses whenever required and return them when no longer required.

The Dhodias are divided into exogamous kuls, some of which found during the survey were named Bhatada, Bamhanya, Baglanya, Chobade, Doifode, Koknya, Mota Nayak, Paraimode, Rupasari, Sikargarasiya, Sohangya, Valvigarasiya and Wani. Besides these, the following kuls were observed in other parts of the State : Atara, Chavan, Dhalkar, Desai, Dalvi, Dharat, Gamta, Rathod and Sarnaik. Chavan and Desai are popular clan names among Marathas. Bamhanya is common among Dublas and Dalvi among Koli Malhar and Koknas. Wani occurs as a caste name and Mota Nayak occurs as a name of a sub-tribe of Naikdas.

The maternal uncle removes the first hair of a Dhodia child. No other kin from the mother's and father's side plays any prescribed role during their ceremonies, the father's sister, mother's brother and sister's husband are often consulted at the time of fixing a marriage and their advice in this matter is often valued.

Dwelling and dress

The Dhodias tend to settle in separate padas (hamlets) of a village along with other castes and tribes of the region.

Asave is at a distance of four miles from Dahanu, tehsil headquarters and is connected with it by a road on which public buses ply regularly. The village has nine hamlets ; three of these consist of Dhodia households. The other six hamlets are inhabited mostly by Varlis. Saravali is five miles from Dahanu and is connected with it by a regular road. It has 22 hamlets ; the Dhodias live in two hamlets. The other hamlets are inhabited mostly by Varlis and Machhis. The hamlets are connected with each other by kachcha roads, foot-paths and cart tracts. The inhabitants claim that their families have been living in these localities for more than three generations. The huts are detached from one another. The walls of the hut are of bamboo, karvi or boru reeds, plastered with earth and cow dung on both sides ; their roofs are either thatched with grass or have tiles. A small hut has generally a partition inside which divides it into two parts. It has no windows. The rear portion is used as a kitchen while the front one is utilised for all other purposes. A slightly bigger hut has two or three rooms including a separate kitchen, but no windows. These huts have no verandah or enclosure. Cattle, if there are any, are housed in the same area which is utilised for all purposes. A slab is kept outside the hut for bathing.

Dhodia women wear a sari and a short blouse (choli). Girls below 14 use frocks and ghagara. Men wear a dhoti and a shirt. On ceremonial occasions, they wear a pagote. Young men prefer caps to pagotes. School-boys wear shorts, a shirt and a cap. Both men and women wear country chappals when they go out for field work. Women part their hair in the middle and tie it behind in a knot.

Dhodia women's ornaments are usually made of silver, gold, brass and copper-brass. They wear lavangya in their ears, fuli in their noses and jodave on their toes. Necklaces are also worn by them round their necks ; the more common among these are gathi and bormal. Besides, they wear bangadya (glass bangles) on their wrists, pochi around the arms and dondal or vale around the feet. Some men wear a silver chain around the waist and a ring on the finger.

Tattooing is not common among the Dhodias. Some girls have a dot tattooed on the forehead before marriage ; boys get their names or images of gods tattooed on the forearm. There appears to be no particular belief attached to this practice.

Food and drink

The Dhodias are non-vegetarian. They take mutton, fowl, fish and eggs but not beef. Their daily meals include pulses, rice and pancakes of nagli or rice flour. Sometimes they take vegetables like val, chavali and pumpkin. Drinking country liquor is quite common. Both men and women drink liquor, often to the point of getting intoxicated. It is not however, so common among women as it is among men. Men are fond of smoking bidis. They make their own bidis with apta leaves. In the two investigated villages, they take tea in the morning or in the evening or at both the times. Those who cannot afford tea take rice pej in the morning before leaving for outdoor work. Their utensils are made of brass and iron. Cups and saucers and porcelain dishes are also seen with some families. A stone hand-mill, a long wooden pestel, a small wooden or stone mortar, buckets, baskets, soops and lanterns or wall-lamps, a wooden plough, an axe, a hoe, a digging stick and some sickles are their other possessions. A few cattle, a goat or two and some fowls are also found with these families. Besides these, some musical instruments like a tur and thali are found with them.

Hygiene and sanitation

The surrounding of their houses are often insanitary owing to the refuse thrown by them. During rains the floors in the houses get wet and it is on these wet floors they sit, cook food and rest. The area around the houses is rarely cleaned. They clean their teeth every morning, bathe regularly and wash the clothes frequently. For treatment of diseases, they depend on the bhagat and go to a doctor only in serious cases.

Language and literacy

In 1961, the Dhodias in Maharashtra returned eight mother-tongues. Gujarati was the mother-tongue of 10,393 persons (86·34). Marathi had 1,606 speakers (13·34). Hindi 21 speakers, Mawchi 6, Wagdi 3, Kachhi 3, Telgu 3 and Kannada 2. Knowledge of five subsidiary languages was reported. Nineteen males knew English, 1,116 knew Marathi, 377 knew Hindi and 276 knew Gujarati. The Dhodias of Asave and Saroli speak among themselves in Gujarati and with outsiders either in Gujarati or in Marathi.

Education and literacy

Only 1,493 (12·40), out of the Dhodia population of 12,037 were returned as literate. In 1961, in the rural areas, out of 6,025 individuals only 575 were literate (9·54). Out of 6,012 individuals in urban areas, 918 were literate (15·27).

The break-up of the 1961 population of Dhodias by educational standards is given below :—

	Illiterate		Literate without educational level		Primary or junior basic		Matriculation or higher secondary		Technical diploma not equal to degree		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Rural ..	2,603	2,847	354	40	171	10	..	..	..	..	3,128	2,897
Urban ..	2,421	2,673	547	128	188	37	14	..	4	..	3,174	2,838
Total ..	5,024	5,520	901	168	359	47	14	..	4	..	6,302	5,735

Thus out of 1,493 persons who are literate, only 406 or 27 per cent had completed the primary stage of education whereas as many as 1,069 or 71 per cent were reported to be literate without any educational level. All the 18 persons who had attained matriculation or higher level or held a technical diploma came from the urban area. There was none from the rural areas who had studied beyond primary school or middle standard Poverty compels them to send children of school-going age for outdoor work.

Economic life

Enthoven (v. I, p. 335), reported husbandary as the hereditary occupation of the tribe. Agriculture including agricultural labour was also reported as the traditional occupation of the Dhodias living in the investigated villages.

According to the 1961 census, 6,494 (53·95) were workers. The sex-wise break-up showed that 3,997 (63·42) out of 6,302 males and 2,497 (43·54) out of 5,735 females were workers. Out of 5,543 persons (2,305 males and 3,238 females) returned as non-workers, 512 (391 males and 121 females) were full-time students or children attending school.

The industrial distribution of workers according to the 1961 census, was as given in the next column.

Category	Persons	Males	Females
I ..	1,550 (23·87)	718 (17·96)	832 (33·32)
II ..	380 (5·85)	201 (5·03)	179 (7·17)
III ..	185 (2·85)	141 (3·53)	44 (1·76)
IV ..	31 (0·48)	21 (0·52)	10 (0·40)
V ..	2,913 (44·86)	1,856 (46·43)	1,057 (42·33)
VI ..	148 (2·28)	125 (3·13)	23 (0·92)
VIII ..	88 (1·35)	73 (1·83)	15 (0·60)
VIII ..	577 (8·88)	484 (12·11)	93 (3·73)
IX ..	622 (9·58)	378 (9·46)	244 (9·77)
Total ..	6,494 (100·00)	3,997 (100·00)	2,497 (100·00)

While 29·72 per cent of the total workers of the tribe were working in the agricultural sector as cultivators and agricultural labourers, 70·28 per cent were engaged in other economic activities, out of which manufacturing had the highest rate of participation (44·86). This may indicate that they depend more on

the other means of livelihood than agriculture or agricultural labour, especially on manufacturing other than household industry.

Among those in the agricultural sector, very few held land for cultivation. A study of 689 Dhodia households from Thana district showed that only 99 owned or held land and 277 did not possess any land for cultivation. The remaining 313 households cultivated land on lease. Of the households holding land only one had land measuring ten acres and above.

Rearing of cattle, collecting of forest products like wild fruits and leaves, cutting wood for fuel are some supplementary occupations of these people.

Those who are engaged in cultivation grow rice and nagli. Among their implements are nagar (wooden plough), kudal (digging stick), favda (spade) and koyata (sickle). During April and May, dried leaves and grass are burnt on the fields. This process is called rab. Nagarni (ploughing) is over by the end of June. It is followed by perni (sowing), after the first rains. Seeds are thrown with hands over a small patches of the burnt land. The next operation is avani (transplanting). The seedlings are plucked and transplanted before the end of July. Benani (weeding) is done in August. Kapani (cutting) takes place in October and November. The standing crop is cut with sickles, tied in bundles and after threshing it, is brought home.

In times of need, they have either to sell the stocks reserved for home consumption to the village merchant who often pays them much lower rates or obtain a loan from a private moneylender. The rate of interest charged is usually 25 per cent.

Life cycle

No special rite marks the attainment of puberty by a Dhodia girl. Women are deemed to be impure for three or four days during menstruation. They take a bath on the 4th or 5th morning before resuming their activities. A pregnant woman takes her usual food, does all routine household work and even goes for outdoor work till the time of delivery. While children of both sexes are equally welcomed, a male child is preferred during the first pregnancy. Delivery takes place in her husband's residence. It is not customary for her to go to her father's home even for the first delivery. As there is no experienced Dhodia midwife at Asave, they engage a midwife of a Varli tribe. She is assisted by some experienced women of the village, if she needs any help. In case, it is a difficult delivery case, a midwife from the nearest maternity centre is also engaged. The midwife cuts the nal with a boru reed and buries it in a pit in the back ground of the hut. A stone is kept on the pit. The mother is bathed every day on that stone. The midwife massages with oil the body of the mother and the new born child to improve blood circulation and to give shape to the body.

For a few days after child-birth, the mother is given light food like rice or khichadi (a preparation of rice and tur dal). She is held unclean for twelve days and is assigned a separate place in the house during this period. On the 12th day, she takes a bath, worships a well and fetches water after which she is deemed to be purified. She resumes her household duties but does not cook food or go for outdoor work till she regains her normal health. The Daya is paid Rs. 5 and some rice for her services.

The fifth day after child-birth is very important. The goddess of fortune is supposed to write the fortune of the new-born child. On this day, the midwife applies sindur to the stone on the pit. It is believed that this stone represents the goddess Sati who controls the fate of the child. The stone is then worshipped with kumkum and haldi. A ghee or oil lamp is also lighted and worshipped on this occasion. Thereafter, the child is placed in a zoli (a cloth cradle), after putting in it some rice and a four anna coin. The zoli is moved for a few minutes by any two married women of the tribe. Neighbouring women are invited to attend the function when a dinner or tea is given. This ceremony is called Pachora (fifth day ceremony). It is performed on the fifth day in the case of a male child or on the 4th day, if the child is a female. The child is named on the Pachora. Its ears are pierced after an year or so by a goldsmith.

The nimal (first hair) of the child is removed by its maternal uncle. On this occasion the uncle removes some locks, the rest of the hair is shaved by a barber who is paid Rs. 1·25, some rice and a handkerchief. This ceremony is usually held five weeks from birth. The mother and the child avoid contacts with suspected witches and avoid places which are known to be infested with evil spirits or ghosts.

Where contacts between grown up boys and girls lead to pre-marital sex-relations, the panchas (caste elders) of the tribe take a liberal view and ask the boy and the girl to marry each other. If one of them belongs to lower caste, the offender is excommunicated from the tribe ; in case, he or she comes of a higher caste, the panchas have no objection, if they get themselves married.

A boy among the Dhodias is usually married at the age of 16 and a girl at the age of 12. During the 1961 census, only 73 males and 38 females in the age-group 0-14 years were found to be married among the Dhodias of Maharashtra. A study of 53 married couples of the tribe from Thana district revealed that as a rule the husband was always older than the wife.

Marriage within the same kul is not permitted nor with one's mother's brother's daughter, father's sister's daughter, mother's sister's daughter or father's brother's daughter. As far as possible marriage between two relatives do not take place. Monogamy is generally the rule. But there is no serious objection to polygyny. The proposal is initiated by the boy's father. He goes to the girl's father with the mother and the sister of the boy as also some relatives and elders. It is his elders who formally put forward the proposal to the girl's father. If it is accepted the parties decide the amount of dej. In the investigated villages, dej usually consists of Rs. 115·25. A tea at the expense of the boy's father is arranged on the betrothal day, the boy's father again goes to the girl's father, the boy is also in the party. His father gives Rs. 1·25 to the girl. Refreshments are served. On this occasion the expenses are shared by both the parties in that the boy's father has to contribute more than the girl's father. In the investigated villages the boy's father contributes Rs. 5 and the girl's father Rs. 2·25.

On the day fixed for dej the boy's father, his brother and other relatives go to the girl's father. The brothers of the boy and the girl to be married, sit on pats facing each other. The boy's brother takes a thali (plate) in his hands containing some rice, sindur, an oil or ghee lamp and the bride price. He hands it over to the girl's brother. The girl's brother keeps this plate in front of the family deities.

Marriage takes place at the girl's place on any auspicious day at sunset preferably in the month of Falgun. The service is conducted mostly by a brahman priest. In case a brahman priest is not available, a male priest of the tribe (Turia) is engaged. Well-to-do persons send printed invitation cards.

The marriage rites are spread over four or five days. For four days prior to the marriage day, the elder brother's wife of the boy and the girl apply haldi to them at their respective places. The boy and the girl are prohibited from having a bath during this period. The haldi is washed off with a ceremonial bath on the fifth day (i.e., the day of marriage). Among a few families, haldi is nowadays applied on the day of marriage and washed off on the same day with a ceremonial bath. On the day on which they are first rubbed with haldi, the boy and the girl have to pound some rice in a mortar for a few minutes at their respective places. The ceremony of rubbing haldi is called halad. It is followed by the mandav ceremony. The mandav (marriage booth) is erected at both the places usually on the day prior to the marriage day. It has normally 12 poles—one of which may preferably be of teak. It is constructed with the help of tribesmen who are specially invited for the purpose. The teak pole is fixed first by any two married and two un-married men of the tribe in a hole in which any married man of the tribe has put some rice, two copper coins, grass, milk and water. At the entrance to the booth a toṛan (bunting) of mango leaves is tied to two poles which are fixed by any two married and two unmarried men of the tribe and the holes in which they are to be fixed are also worshipped on the same lines. Persons who construct the booth are later on entertained to a feast.

The mandav ceremony is followed on the same day by worship to the family deities (Brahma and Hirva) by the bhagat. If the person has no deities in his house and he is unable to bring them from the main branch of the family where they are kept, an oil or ghee lamp is lighted and worshipped.

On the day of marriage, the boy's party goes to the girl's place in a procession accompanied by two musicians of the tribe. One of these musicians plays on thali (plate) and the other on tur (dhol). The boy usually goes in a bullock cart. He wears a dhoti, a kafani (shirt), a cap or pagadi (headwear) and chappals or shoes. He has a coconut, an umbrella and flowers in his hands. A bashing is tied to his forehead. At the marriage booth, the feet of the boy and the girl are washed by Ritkarins (married women) from both the side. Later on, they are made to sit on pats facing each other with a jamnuk held between them by two men of the tribe. A brahman priest ties a garland of thread around their necks after which a Ritkarin ties their garments into a knot. A gathi (a necklace of black beads) is then tied around the neck of the girl by a Ritkarin. A brahman priest recites marriage verses. At the end of the last stanza, the persons assembled in the booth throw akshata on the heads of the boy and the girl, the jamnuka is removed and the musicians play on thali and tur. The couple then exchange their seats and walk four or five times round the homa (sacred fire) lighted by the brahman priest. Next a stone is kept near the homa with sindur. The boy and the girl walk round this stone and place their right feet on it. The guests from both the sides take their meals at their respective places. The boy's party goes back to its village along with the girl on the same night or on the next

morning. On reaching there, the knot of the garments of the boy and the girl is untied by the younger brother of the boy. The boy and the girl then sit on pats kept on a mortar, standing before them the younger brother of the boy puts a question to him "Brother, I request you to arrange my marriage". On getting a favourable reply from both of them, he removes the bashings from their heads and receives Rs. 1·25 from each of them.

On the next day, 40 to 50 persons from the girl's side go to the boy's father who entertains them to a feast. They return with the girl. On the following day, 50 to 60 persons from the boy's side go to the girl's father taking the boy with them. On their arrival, all the guests sit together in the front compartment of the house. The boy and his mother-in-law take a palas leaf cup in their hands. The cup contains tea or milk. Turning to the boy, the mother-in-law says "Please accept my Ram Ram." The boy repeats the words "Ram Ram". A cow, a goat, a gold ring or a wrist-watch may be presented to the boy on this occasion by his father-in-law, if he can afford it. After a feast at the house of the girl's father the guests from the boy's side return home with the girl. The brahman priest conducting the ceremony, receives Rs. 6 from the boy's father and Rs. 5 from the girl's father.

When a turia conducts the ceremony, the boy and the girl sit on pats facing each other. Their garments are tied into a knot and their heads are knocked together. Some enthusiastic persons then carry the boy and the girl on their shoulders and start dancing and singing. An unmarried boy of the tribe goes on the roof of the mandav and gives a twig to the groom who takes it in his right hand and beats the bride with it a few times. The turia receives Rs. 12 from the boy's father and Rs. 10·50 from the girl's father. Expenses for a boy's marriage amount to Rs. 500. Out of this Rs. 115·00 are spent on dej, Rs. 100 on clothing, Rs. 75 on ornaments, Rs. 140 on food and Rs. 70 on miscellaneous items. A girl's father has to spend Rs. 250. He covers half of his expenditure from the dej.

Widow re-marriage

Widow re-marriage (natra), is permitted. A widow is allowed to marry the younger brother of her deceased husband, if she desires. This re-marriage is performed at the residence of the intending husband without any ritual. A widow wears a new sari and a blouse. Her intending husband applies kumkum on her forehead and ties a gathi round her neck in the presence of relatives and elders from both sides. Tea is arranged at the expense of the new husband. If the widow has no issues, her new husband has to pay a dej of Rs. 50 to her guardian. In case, she has issues, no dej has to be paid. The widow's children generally go with the mother when she remarries and the step-father accepts the duty of rearing them up.

Divorce (farquat), is also permitted. It may be initiated by either party. A husband can divorce his wife if he cannot agree with her or her conduct is bad. A wife can ask for a divorce if her husband is impotent or is suffering from an incurable disease. Each case has to go before the panchayat. When a wife asks for a divorce, she has to refund the dej to her husband; if she remarries another man, the latter has to refund it. The husband may or may not get this refund if the fault lies with him or he is found guilty. The decision rests with the panchas. When a husband asks for a divorce, he has to pay a fine upto Rs. 51 to his wife in case he is found guilty; if the fault lies with the wife, no fine has to be paid by the husband. The man or woman who wants divorce approaches the tribal panchayat of his or her village. If the panchas grant a divorce, they ask the party to pay the fine fixed by them or to refund the dej (as the case may be), to the injured party. If the wife has issues, divorce is most often refused. At the time of granting divorce, the husband removes the gathi tied around the neck of his wife at the time of their marriage and the wife tears off a piece of cloth from her husband's dhoti in the presence of elders or the tribal panchayat. A faraqatnama (deed of divorce) is executed and signed by the husband, wife and the panchas.

The children of the divorced couple generally go with the father. In case, they are infants, they remain with the mother for the time being but later they have to go to the father. Generally the responsibility of rearing and marrying such children rests with the father.

A divorced woman is allowed to re-marry, if she desires. In case, she re-marries a bachelor, all the rites which are performed at the time of a regular marriage are gone through. A turia conducts the marriage. If she marries a widower, the Natra form is followed. In the 1961 census, 24 males and 38 females were returned as divorced among the total population of the tribe in the State.

Death

The general belief of the Dhodias is that the soul of a person gets complete rest after death in case, he has done good deeds in his lifetime. The body is washed with water, rubbed with haldi, dressed in its usual clothes and kept on a tiroli or khatara (a bier)

in a sleeping position. A copper coin is placed in its mouth, kumkum is applied on its forehead and a garland of flowers is placed round its neck. It is then covered with a kafan (a piece of white cloth to be spread over the body). Kumkum is thrown on the cloth and the body and the corpse is carried on the shoulders of any four men related to the deceased with head in front and legs towards the direction of the house. The chief mourner, who is generally the eldest son of the deceased, walks in front with an earthern pot in hand in which fire and cow dung cake are kept.

At the visava, the body is lowered and kept near a tree for a few minutes. After keeping there a mat, an earthen pot filled with water and the clothes of the deceased, the body is carried four times round the tree. Women and children, except the wife of the deceased, turn home from the visava. On the cremation ground, the body is lifted from the bier and placed on the pyre with its head towards the north. Relatives pour some water and place cooked rice in its mouth. Any two men of the tribe standing near the legs and the head of the deceased with lighted pieces of wood in their hands move four times around the pyre anti-clockwise and light the pyre at the end of the fourth round, break the earthen pot containing fire and cow dung cake which was carried by the chief mourner. The kumkum of the deceased's wife is wiped off and her bangles, gathi and kade are broken and thrown in the burning pyre or buried in a pit along with the corpse in case of burial. Persons attending the funeral wait there till the body is completely burnt. Thereafter, they take a bath, sprinkle milk on their bodies and go to the house of the deceased. When they reach the house, a man of the deceased's family or of the tribe standing at the door of the house with a pot containing water sprinkles water from the pot on their heads after which they enter the house, take tea or drink liquor and retire. The expenses of this tea or liquor are usually met by raising contributions from the persons attending the funeral. In case of burial they do not move round the pit in which the body is buried. Barring this they follow the same procedure as at the time of cremation. No sutak is observed.

Funeral rites (divas) are held on the 12th day after death. In case, this day is not suitable, it is performed on any other convenient day. On this occasion, an unmarried boy and a girl of the tribe are fed and some portion of the cooked food is kept on the roof of the house on a palas leaf for the crows to eat in the name of the deceased. On the same day, two bhagats and five relatives of the deceased living in other villages are invited. One of the two bhagats sings songs and gets possessed. Members of the deceased family and others assembled there give water and some coins to them. If circumstances are favourable tribesmen are latter on feasted. On the first Mahasivaratri after death, all persons belonging to the kul of the deceased go to Dudhwada, a village in Gujarat, and shave their heads there on the bank of a river. A brahman priest is engaged on this occasion and under his directions they prepare pancakes of rice flour and keep them on the palas leaves for the crows to eat in the name of the deceased. The priest is paid Rs. 10·25. On coming back a stone besmeared with sindur is fixed in the compound of the house in the name of the deceased. This stone which is later on worshipped with an offering of a coconut is called khatri (ancestral god).

Children, pregnant women and persons dying of small-pox are buried. All others are cremated. If a pregnant woman dies, the foetus is removed and buried in a separate pit. These pits have to be constructed at some distance from each other. No rites are performed for children having no teeth. For the rest, all the rites described above have to be performed.

Religion

The Dhodias are Hindus by religion. Except four persons who returned themselves as Christians and four as Muslims in the 1961 census, all the persons of the tribe in the State are Hindus.

Brahma and Hirva are the chief gods of these people whom they consider as their household deities. Brahma is represented by three or four earthen horses fixed on a small ghumat (basket) of clay. Hirva is represented by an arecanut besmeared with sindur. These images are kept in two separate kandis (baskets) along with some grains of rice. This kandi is made of bamboo chips and plastered with clay and cow dung on both sides. It is tied to the pole of the roof with a strong thread and brought down only when the deity is to be worshipped. These images usually remain with the main branch of the family where members of other branches go for worship. They can also bring them when required and return them after the celebration for which these are required is over. In case, they are unable to go there or bring them, they light a lamp in the name of these deities and worship it with haldi and kumkum and an offering of a goat, a hen or a coconut. It is believed that by doing so, they are protected from all the miseries of life. Generally, these deities are worshipped on the occasions of Divali and Holi, during a marriage in the family, at the time of cutting the crops or when there is an epidemic or any member of the family is ill.

The Khatri (ancestral god) is installed in the compound of the house in the form of a stone besmeared with sindur or a piece of wood on which human figures are carved. It is worshipped on the same occasions on which the other two deities are offered worship. Vaghaya is the god of all the tribes living in the village. He is generally placed in a field near the village boundary in the form of a piece of wood smeared with sindur on which a picture of a tiger is carved. It is worshipped collectively by all the tribes in the villages once a year on any convenient day after Divali. On this occasion a goat is sacrified ; it is later on cooked and distributed among all as the prasad of the god.

The bhagats (medicinemen and spiritual guides) enjoy a high position in the social life of these people. They are devotees of some god or goddess and say that they can exercise an evil spirit or counteract a witch by singing songs or reciting mantras. They prescribe medicines which they prepare from roots and leaves of trees and at times resort to a magical treatment. Any member of the tribe can become a bhagat after receiving training from a senior bhagat.

Festivals

The Divasa festival falls on Ashadi Pournima. It is celebrated by organising mock marriages of dolls on a large scale. It is a festival for un-married girls. Married men and women however do not keep aloof from the celebration. The girls prepare male and female dolls and marry them in a small pandal which is specially erected for the purpose. This marriage is performed with most of the details observed during marriages. The dolls are made of cloth. When the marriage is over, these dolls are ceremoniously carried to a river in palas or teak leaf cups and immersed. This mock marriage is not performed separately in each house. It is performed jointly. If the village is small there is only one celebration for the whole village. In big villages, a group marriage is arranged in one or two of its hamlets.

Narali Poornima falls on the full moon day of Shravan. The chief activity of the day is to throw coconuts into the river. Excepting this no other rituals are performed on this occasion.

Sakad Chouth comes on the 4th day of the dark half of Bhadrapad. A married man or woman, preferably, the head of the household, fasts during the day and worships the moon after moon-rise by drawing an image of the moon on a pat in sandalwood paste. A few persons draw a circle of rice flour, kumkum and haldi on a pat, keep a tulsi plant on it and walk around it after the same is worshipped.

Divali is not so important among the Dhodias as it is among caste Hindus of the region. They observe this festival on the 14th day of the dark half of Ashvin by worshipping family deities with an offering of uncooked chavali. If it is possible, a feast of mutton is arranged. They do not eat chavali unless it is first offered to family deities on this occasion. The most common features of the festival is the dance in which men and women take part.

On Holi, the head of the household, either male or female or both, observe a fast. This fast is broken in the evening after offering worship to Holi. All communities share and enjoy a common Holi in a village. At Asave, Holi is lighted in two different hamlets At both these places, it is first lit and worshipped by a man of the Varli tribe who holds the hereditary right to do so. Household deities are worshipped with an offering of a green mango. They start eating green mangoes only after this. On the next day, they throw coloured water, drink liquor, sing songs, dance and demand a post or fagva (gifts) from house to house.

The Dhodias observe the Nava festival on any convenient day after Divali when the crops in the fields are ready for cutting. On this occasion, they worship the family deities with an offering of the new crop. They do not consume new rice or any other new crop unless it is first offered to family deities on this occasion

Leisure and recreation

The main recreation of these people is dancing and singing. Men, women and grown up children dance to the music of the tur and the thali. The tur is a two faced drum, cylindrical in shape and made of clay or wood with leather streched on both sides. The leather is carefully tanned and its central portion is made black according to the tune required. The thali is round and flat in shape and is made from kasa metal. While dancing, they go round and round, sometimes clapping their hands, sometimes striking rhythmically the sticks which they carry in their hands. Usually the dancers hold their hands or catch each other either round the waist or shoulder and dance together as a group. Men and women generally form different groups but they may dance together in case they are well acquainted with each other or related in some way.

They smoke bidis whenever they find leisure while working in the field and drink liquor or toddy in the evening.

The Dhodias receive traditional services from brahman priests and barbers. They fetch water from public wells along with others and have free access to Hindu temples.



A Thakur girl from Kolaba

They enter the houses of Marathas, Wanis, Sonars and Kumbhars, who enjoy a higher social status in the locality and their houses are also frequestly visited by such caste Hindus of the region. The scheduled castes and tribes like Katkari, Koli Dhor, Dhed and Mahyavanshi consider them to be of a higher status.

The Dhodias have traditional panchayats of their own. The elderly persons who command respect carry some influence by virtue of their age, experience, character or any other reason act as panchas. The two investigated villages have a common panchayat with jurisdiction over five villages, Asave, Saroli, Jamshet, Malyan and Dhundalwadi. This panchayat consists of five representatives who are headmen of the tribe at these villages. They are called Patel or Karbhari and their office is not hereditary. They hold their office so long as they enjoy the confidence of their tribesmen in their villages. When they fail in that another suitable person is appointed. The headman of the tribe at Saroli, called Mukhya, is the chief of this panchayat. His office is also not hereditary. He is elected by the representatives of the five villages coming under the control of the panchayat as mentioned above. He holds his office so long as he commands respect and confidence from the other four members failing which another man of the choise from among the four representatives is appointed in his place.

This panchayat holds its meeting as and when occasion arises at the place from where it receives a complaint. Before starting proceedings, the panchayat advices both the parties to settle the issue amicably by way of a compromise. In case no compromise is arrived at proceedings are started by directing the complainant to state his case and lead his evidence. The accused is then given an opportunity to defend himself and prove his innocence by producing his witnesses. After hearing the parties, members of the panchayat discuss the case between themselves and come to a decision. The accused is fined in case he is proved guilty. The amount of fine to be levied and the manner in which it is to be utilised depends mostly on the nature of the case. It is either spent on drinks or given to the injured party. Sometimes it is spent on a caste feast.

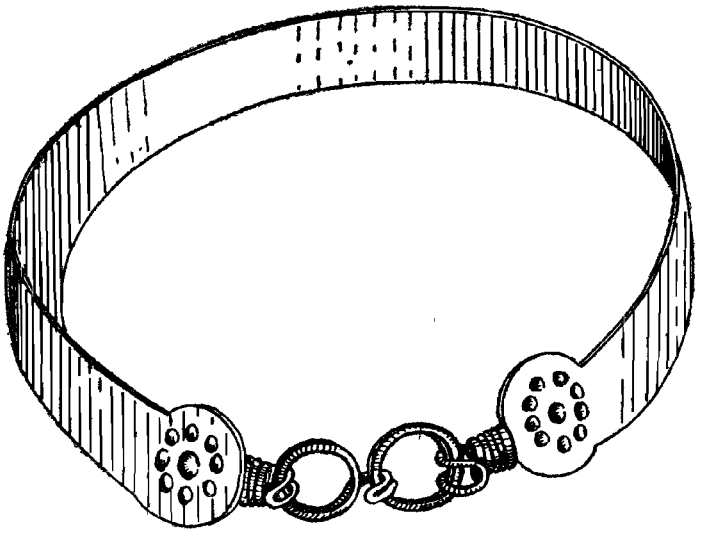
Besides the tribal panchayat there is a statutory village panchayat at both the investigated villages. This village panchayat does not generally interfere in the social disputes of the tribe.

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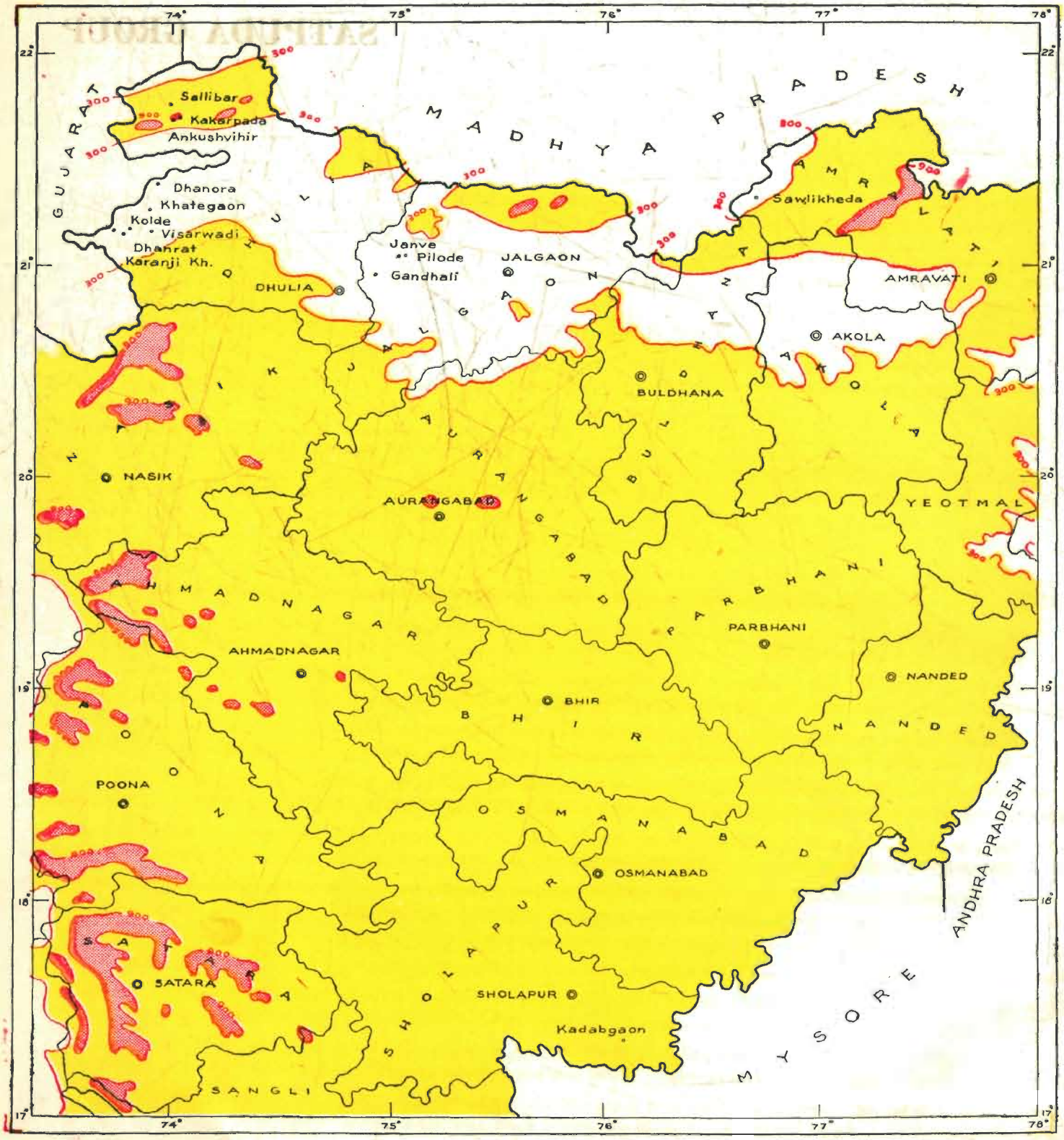
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Kamarpatta.—a metal belt worn round the waist by Gond women of Nagpur

SATPUDA GROUP



Villages surveyed in connection with the study of Central Maharashtra tribes are shown in this map.
District headquarters towns are also marked
Altitude in metres. Contours are approximate.

BHIL

The Bhils are one of the largest tribal groups in India. They have lived in contact with advanced people for centuries and their quarrels with the Moguls, the Marathas and the British in defence of their territories form part of history. The earliest mention of their name occurs in the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. A Bhil woman, Sabari, of Dandakaranya offered sweet berries to Sri Rama in token of her devotion towards him when he was in exile. Valmiki, the author of the *Ramayana*, was himself a Bhil according to traditional accounts of his life. In the Adiparva of the *Mahabharata*, Ekalavya, a Bhil, is said to have acquired extraordinary skill in archery by practising the art before a clay image of Dronacharya. It was a Bhil who mortally wounded Sri Krishna, having mistaken him for a deer. The *Mahabharata* also refers to the god Sankara, being attracted by the beauty of a Bhil girl who in fact was Parvati who wanted to marry the god. At another place, there is a description of the fight between Arjuna and Sankara who was disguised as a Bhil or Kirat. In the *Parasara Samhita*, it is stated that the Bhils were the children of a brahman woman born to a Tavara father. The name also occurs in the *Katha-sarit-sagara* of Gunadhya, wherein mention is made of a Bhil chief opposing the progress of another king through the Vindhyas. According to Weber, Gunadhya flourished about the sixth century. Reference to the Khandesh Bhil is found in the *Ain-i-Akbari* of Abul Fazal, wherein he praises them for their law abiding nature.

The term 'Bhil', according to Wilson, is derived from 'villu', a Dravidian word for the bow, which is the characteristic weapon of the tribe. Sanskrit lexicographers derive it from the root 'bhil', which means to cut. Dasyu is also given as another name for Bhil. The Dasyu are mentioned in the *Rigveda* as a numerous tribe opposing and fighting the Aryans (Enthoven, p. 151). Venkatachar points out that the ancient Tamil poets termed certain people of pre-Dravidian blood as Villavar, meaning bowmen who may possibly be identical with the modern Bhils. The word Nishada, which occurs in early Vedic literature, is sometimes held to mean a Bhilla or Bhil, though others hold that the word seems to denote not so much a particular tribe but the non-Aryan tribes in general who were not under Aryan control (Census of India, 1931, v. I, pt. III, p. 51). The word Nishada of the *Vajasaneyi Samhita*, according to Law, is explained by the commentator, Mahindra, to mean a Bhil or Bhilla (Naik, p. 11). According to Natu, the term Billu from which the word Bhil is said to have been derived, signifies the bow in most Dravidian languages. The bow was till recently a principal weapon of all the Bhils and of other tribes of Central India too. It may be that this term was initially applied to all these people to indicate their skill in archery. In course of time, it is possible that the term was adopted as a name by the people themselves. Mujumdar also inclines to the view that probably the term Bhil is a generic term used to cover a number of tribes living in adjacent areas and bearing a superficial resemblance (p. 21). In the *Mahabharata* list of tribes, they seem to be included under Pulindas, a general term for wild tribes. Captain Graham and Sir John Malcolm state that the Bhils are mentioned in the *Mahabharata* but the word used in the original is Nishada and there appears to be no more reason for identifying the Nishadas with the Bhils than with many other of the hill races. In the *Panchatantra*, mention is made of the Phillis or villages of the Bhils and in the *Jatimala*, the Bhils are classed with Medhs as one of the seven lowest tribes (Bombay gazetteer, 1880, v. XII, Khandesh, p. 80).

According to Venkatachar, the Bhils possibly belong to a proto-Mediterranean race who spread far and wide when a climatic crisis occurred in the grass steppes of the Sahara and it is this race which is responsible for the industry associated with the final Caspian culture in the Vindhyas. They are also said to be a section of the great Munda race which occupied pre-Dravidian India (Census of India, 1931, v. I, pt. III, p. 51). Enthoven says the Rajputs had more connections with the Bhils than with any other Hindu race. Many Rajputs intermarried with the Bhils and from this connection rose the Bhilalas (p. 153). A story related in the *Puranas*, as reproduced by Naik, traces their descent from the thigh of Vena, son of Anga, a descendant of Swayambhu Manu. Vena was childless, so the sages rubbed his thigh and produced a man like a charred log with a flat face and extremely short in stature. He was asked to sit down (nishad). He did so and thenceforth he was known as Nishada. From him sprang the Nishadas dwelling in the Vindhya mountains. Another version of this episode specifically mentions the descent of the Bhils. According to this account, Vena was tainted with sin. When the rishis went to him, he asked them to go by a wave of his hand. At this, one of them, named Angiras, cursed him. As a result of this curse, Vena's offending hand was turned into a churning stick, from which

sprang Nishada. When the rishis began to churn with the left hand, three more men came out, Mushahantara, Kolla and Villa, the ancestors of the Mushahars, Kols and Bhils (Naik, p. 12).

Another legend about the origin of the Bhils, says that one day, the god, Sankara, was feeling unhappy and resting in a forest. A beautiful woman appeared before him and their union resulted in many children, one of whom slew the favourite bull of Sankara. For this crime, he was banished to the woods and mountains. Since then, his decendants began to be recognised by the name Bhil and Nishads (Russell and Hira Lal, p. 282). According to another legend cited by Venkatachar, a dhobi was one day warned by a fish of the approach of a great deluge. The fish asked him to prepare a large box which would enable him to escape. The dhobi prepared a box and got into it with his sister and a cock. When the rain god came to know of these survivors from the deluge, he sent for them and enquired about the nature of relationship between them. The dhobi told him that the woman was his sister, but when asked again he said that she was his wife. On hearing this the god ordered them to repopulate the world. The dhobi married his sister, by whom he had seven sons and seven daughters who again intermarried among themselves. The god presented the eldest son with a horse but he left the horse and went into the forest to cut wood. From him were descended the modern Bhils (p. 52).

In Sanskrit literature, the Bhils are always mentioned as denizens of the Vindhya forest. These references show that the Bhils were a race both feared and hated. Consequently, they were gradually pushed back by the invading Aryans to the mountains and forests. They were once a powerful race owning considerable tracts of the country. According to Enthoven, the hilly country between Abu and Asirgad was the original home of the Bhils from where they spread westward and southward into the plains of Gujarat and northern Deccan, and later, under the pressure of famine, even to Sind. He quotes Sir John Malcolm's view that the country north-west of Malva was the original stronghold of the Bhils from which they were gradually ousted and pushed towards the hilly tracts and the country where they are found to-day. Venkatachar speaks of the western Vindhyas as the original home of the Bhils ; he thinks that it is perhaps through contact with the Dravidians on the other side in Gujarat that they acquired their present appellation.

This ethnographic study of the Bhils conducted at Kolde (Navapur-tehsil), Dhanora (Nandurbar-tehsil), and Sallibar (Akkalkuwa tehsil), from the district of Dhulia ; and Gandhali and Pilode from Amalner tehsil of Jalgaon district, showed that the Bhils living there did not know why they were called Bhils. They also could not recount any story which could give some clue to their origin except that of Sabari ; according to them, they were of the same race to which Sabari belonged. A few Bhils from Kolde traced their origin from the Rajputs and said that their forefathers might have come to this tract from northern India. Some Bhils from Dhanora referred to Gujarat as their original home and said that in very old times their forefathers were gradually ousted and pushed from there towards the area where they were now found. Most of the Bhils interviewed, however, did not know the original place of their ancestors

Distribution

The 1961 census population of Bhils in India was 3,836,308 which was 12·73 per cent of the total scheduled tribes population of India. Of these, 1,229,930 (32·00) were in Madhya Pradesh, 1,124,282 (29·00) in Gujarat, 906,705 (23·00) in Rajasthan and 575,022 (15·00) in Maharashtra. These four States together made up for 99 per cent of the Bhil population in India. The other States which reported Bhils in 1961, included Mysore (217), Andhra Pradesh (83) and Tripura (69). In Maharashtra, the Bhils formed 24 per cent of the 1961 scheduled tribes population in the state. The population of scheduled tribes in Maharashtra was 7·96 per cent of the 1961 scheduled tribe population in India and 6·06 per cent of the total population of the state. The Bhils are thus numerically a very important element of the tribal population in Maharashtra.

The Bhils are notified as a scheduled tribe in the following districts under the names as stated against them. (1) In the districts of Greater Bombay, Thana, Kolaba, Ratnagiri, Nasik, Dhulia, Jalgaon, Ahmednagar, Poona, Satara, Sangli, Sholapur and Kolhapur—Bhil, including Bhil Garasia, Dholi Bhil, Dungari Bhil, Dungari Garasia, Mewasi Bhil, Rawal Bhil, Tadvi Bhil, Bhagatia, Bhilala, Pawra, Vasava and Vasave.

(2) In Melghat tehsil of Amravati district, Gadhchiroli and Sironcha tehsils of Chanda district, Kelapur, Wani and Yeotmal tehsils of Yeotmal district—Bhil.

(3) In the districts of Aurangabad, Parbhani, Nanded, Rajura, Bhir and Osmanabad—Bhil.

With a population of 575,022 persons (289,730 males and 285,292 females), they ranked first among the 40 scheduled tribes enumerated in the state in 1961.

The bulk of this population (98·00) is concentrated in the districts of Dhulia (300,099), Nasik (116,153), Jalgaon (85,383), Ahmadnagar (42,775) and Aurangabad (24,197). These five districts form a continuous zone. Nasik, Dhulia and Jalgaon adjoin the states of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh which together absorb nearly 61 per cent of the Bhil population in India.

Dhulia and Nasik hold 40 per cent of the state's scheduled tribe population of the Koli Mahadev, Koknas, Gamits, Dhankas, Thakurs and Varlis, in addition to Bhils. The districts have large forests which provide the residents of the region good opportunities of labour throughout the year, especially in the agricultural off-season. The most important species found in them is teak. It is associated with shisam, tivas, halda, kalam, ain, dhavada, bor and anjan. The other commercially important products are (1) tendu and apta leaves for bidi making, (2) mahua flowers and fruits, (3) kadai for gum, (4) palas for propagation of lac, and (5) khair for manufacture of kath. Bamboo and karvi are also found in good amount. The forests have a number of charoli trees which produce valuable dry fruits. Besides timber and other products, fodder and grass are available in large quantities. The rosha grass which is found in large areas of Akrani tehsil (Dhulia) is used for producing scented oil and is in great demand outside the country. The animal life in the forests includes tiger, panther, deer, bear, sambhar, wolf and fox. Rabbit and other small game are also found.

The main systems of hills are the Sahyadri and its off-shoots and the Satpura. The Godavari, the Girna and the Tapti are the chief rivers of the region. The soils are black, medium black, deep black, red, red and black, and light brown. The principal crops are jowar, bajra, rice, cotton, groundnut, mug, wheat and gram. Agriculture is the predominant economic activity of the people in the region. Mineral deposits have not been reported anywhere in the districts. Building material such as stone, limestone, and clay for brick making is available. Mining activity in the district is, therefore, restricted to quarrying of stones and clay.

The population distribution shows that the Bhils are very largely a rural people. In the 1961 census 554,052 (96·35) were found in rural areas. Only 20,970 (3·65) lived in urban areas. The sex ratio for the Bhils in Maharashtra was 985. On the whole, there are more females among the Bhils than among the general population.

The 1961 returns on age showed that the Bhils had 254,787 persons (44·32) in the age group 0-14 ; 246,028 persons (42·79) in the age group 15-44 : and 74,074 persons (12·38) in the age group 45 plus. Excepting the lower proportion of the age group 45 plus in the population of the Bhils, 12·88 as against 16·01, the age pattern of the tribe is not much different from that of the general population in rural areas. The lower Bhil proportion for the age-group 45 plus may be due to the lower standards of living and health.

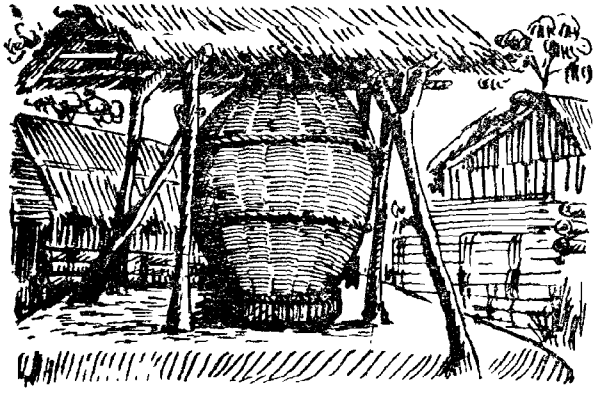
Physical characteristics

Enthoven describes the typical Khandesh (Dhulia and Jalgaon) Bhil as dark, well-made, active and hardy, with high cheek bones, wide nostrils and, in some cases, almost African features (p. 154). Russell and Hira Lal speak of the typical Bhil as small, dark and broad-nosed, but well-built and active with hands somewhat small and legs fairly developed, those of the women being the best (p. 292). Venkatachar says the Bhil has a broad nose, thick lips which are " opened " and the upper jaw somewhat strong and prominent. Their hair is black and straight (p. 56). T. B. Naik says most of the Bhils range from five feet four inches to five feet six inches in stature. The skin colour is generally brown and rarely dark. The Bhil has an attractive face, broad massive jaws, broad forehead, a fine or narrow nose, a well-cut chin and thin lips. Women are fair and gracefully built and are seldom fat or plumpy (pp. 21-22). Nath says the Bhils are generally a short to medium statured people with a slim body build. Stature varies from five feet to five feet six inches for men and four feet four inches to four feet nine inches for women. They are generally a round-headed people with a sprinkling of both long and broad-headed types. Features are pleasant, exhibiting more the Indo-Mediterranean physiognomy. The so-called Australoid features (low and broad nose in a broad face with a heavy ridging of eye-brows and wavy to curly hair) are also met with sporadically. Generally of a darkish brown complexion, they are often fair and handsome (p. 15).

Stephen Fuchs measured 86 Bhils from Central India. He found that the average Bhil was of medium height. Most of them had round or oval faces. The chin was usually round or oval and slightly receding. The forehead was straight or somewhat retreating ; the super orbital ridges were generally well developed. The nasal root was often depressed. The complexion was of a dark brown colour generally ; black or pale individuals were rare. The eye colour was brown or dark brown ; a few also had light brown eyes. They had no epicanthic fold. None had wavy or curly hair ; and most of them had sparse beards and no or little body hair (Census of India, 1941, v. XVI, Holkar State, pt. I, pp. 300-303).



A Bhil from Dhulia



Grain store of Bhils

The skin colour of the Bhils from the villages studied was dark brown. A few individuals of chocolate brown and dark colour were also found. The root depression of the nose was shallow to medium. The eyes were straight and black. Faces were from oval to round. A few individuals with broad faces were also found. The chins were fairly well developed.

Family and kinship

The family among the Bhils is patrilocal with patronymic designation. A girl goes to stay with her husband (she gets married.) Sometimes the newly married couple prefers to set-up separately. In some cases, they live with the boy's parents. A study of 526 Bhil households from Dhulia showed that 225 households consisted of father, mother, unmarried sons and daughters. Married sons were found staying with their parents in 21 households. Other relatives were also found in eleven households. The latter included father's brothers, father's or mother's widowed sisters, mother's widowed mother, etc. The average number of persons per household was 5·5. A majority of the Bhils thus tend to live in a small-size family, consisting of five to six members.

Out of the same 526 households, only nine had female heads of households. Of them, six were of ages 15 to 34. Of the 517 male heads of households, 270 fell in the age group 35-59 and 31 were 60 and above. The father looks after the property and the management of the household, take care of the old, sick and disabled persons in the family, makes all major purchases, receives guests and arranges for the marriage of his sons and daughters when they come of age. His word is final in the purchase or sale of a property, construction of a new house, raising of loans and in all other matters concerning the interest of the family. The mother looks after domestic management. The girls assist the mother in the kitchen and look after the small children when the parents go out for work. Grown up boys and, on many occasions, girls also do some field job to supplement the family income. On the death of the father, his widow looks after the property and the management of the household, so long as her children are minor. Property, inheritance and reckoning of descent is along the male line. Sons inherit the father's property in equal shares. When partition takes place after the death of the father, provision is made for the maintenance of the widowed mother and for the marriage of unmarried sons and daughters. Relations between the separated brothers continue to be the same as before. In times of distress or at the time of a marriage, they come together and help each other according to their means.

The Bhils are divided into a number of exogamous kuls. A few kuls found in the region during the survey were Akhate, Bagul, Bagale, Bapade, Desai, Gavli, Mala, More, Malse, Malchi, Naik, Pardhan, Pavar, Patil, Sonavne, Shinde, Soins, Thakare and Vagh. The kul has no regional significance and there does not seem to be any hierarchy either among the clans themselves or within the clan. Except as a principle of common descent and exogamy, clanship seems to have little significance to the Bhil. Sons and unmarried daughters acquire the clan of their father. When a girl gets married, she becomes a member of her husband's clan. Similarly, if a widow or a divorced woman remarries, she acquires the clan of her new husband and thereafter ceases to be a member of the clan of her first husband. Her children by the first husband continue to be members of the same kul as before.

Enthoven says some of the clans such as Ahir, Barda, Baria, Dangi, Gaikvad, Gomava, Jadhav, Katara, Makvana, Mali, Mori, Parmar, Pavar, Rathod, Shinde, Sonavne and Thakur have arisen from a mixture of non-Bhil blood ; others like Vaghia and Ghania are taken from the names of animals. A third set like Pipalsa is derived from the names of trees. A fourth is of miscellaneous origin, from a forefather's name, a favourite settlement or some private signal. According to him, some clans of the tribe indicate an original totemistic organisation. A list showing the names of such clans and their totems, as mentioned by him, is given below :—

Name of the clan		*Its devak or totem*
1. Ahir	...	A snake-like fish called Ahir.
2. Bhavare	...	Gamgudli (a bird).
3. Bhor-Kole	...	Kohala (pumpkin).
4. Bijary	...	Biju (polecat).
5. Bongade	...	Gamgudli (a bird).
6. Borshe	...	Bore (a bird).
7. Gaikvad	...	Pipal (a tree).
8. Gamgode	...	Gamgudli (a bird).
9. Magar	...	Magar (crocodile).
10. Mali	...	Any kind of flower.
11. More	...	Mor (peacock).
12. Pavar	...	Pigeon.
13. Pipalsa	...	Pipal (a tree).
14. Shakere	...	Sparrow.
15. Shinde	...	Shindi (a tree).
16. Sonone	...	Balde (a bird).
17. Vagh	...	Vagh (tiger).

Enthoven adds that the clans show their reverence by not cutting the trees and by abstaining from eating the flesh of the animals or birds representing the Devaks (pp. 156-157). The Bhils interviewed were, however, ignorant about any such totemistic organisation, but did not reject the possibility of such organisation among them.

Kin play important ritual roles in Bhil social ceremonies, specially during birth and marriage. At some places, the first hair of a newly born child is shaved by its maternal uncle and he receives a hen from the child's father as a gift. At some places, maternal uncles of the bride and the bridegroom hold the jamnuk between the boy and the girl when they stand on pats at the time of marriage. The maternal uncle of the bride and her father's sister are among the guests of honour to whom the boy's father has to offer presents on the occasion of his son's marriage. Among the Bhils, marriage with maternal uncle's daughter is preferred. In some places, father's sister's daughter is also acceptable in marriage.

Some kinship terms are given below :—

Father	...	Bahako
Mother	...	Yahaki
Grandfather	...	Dohalo Bako
Grandmother	. .	Dohalo Yaki
Mother's brother	...	Mama
Father's brother	...	Kako
Father's brother's wife.		Kaki
Father's sister	...	Fui
Mother's sister	...	Jiji
Father-in-law	...	Haharo
Mother-in-law	. .	Havadi
Son	...	Poyaro
Daughter	. .	Poyari
Grandson	...	Natanyo
Granddaughter	...	Natani
Brother	...	Dado
Sister	...	Baya
Wife's younger sister.		Hali.

Dwelling

The population of Dhanora resides in nine localities—the gaothan and its eight padas (hamlets). It was found during the 1961 study that all these localities were inhabited mostly by some 500 Bhil households. Others were Christian (33), Teli (14), Muslim (12), Mahar (11), Vanjari (6), Chambhar (5) and Mali (3). Most of the non-Bhil households were living in the gaothan. At Kolde the Bhils were found living mostly in two localities. One of these had 120 Bhil households and one Mahar household. The other was inhabited exclusively by 32 Bhil households. In some villages of Navapur tehsil ten to twelve closely related households live in a small locality called fali. Five to six falis constitute a pada and ten to twelve padas constitute a revenue village. The distance between two falis is two to three furlongs and that between two padas nearer a mile. The population of Sallibar lives in nine localities It consists mostly of Bhil (99) and Gavit (40) households. Three households of Mahar and one household of Nayaka are also there.

The residential pattern of Gandhali and Pilode is somewhat different. The population of these two villages live only in the gaothan area and a significantly large majority of this population belongs to non-tribal communities. The predominant groups of Gandhali are Maratha (200), Mali (45), Pardhi (35), Mahar (30) and Chambhar (25), next to them are Bhils (15). Besides, a few households of Brahman, Koli, Gujar, Wani, Teli, Sonar and Sutar are also living there. Pilode is inhabited mostly by Marathas (175), Chambhars (50), Bhils (40), Mahars (40), Kolis (30), Pardhis (25) and Dhobis (25). Besides a few communities like Bad-gujar, Brahman and Gurav are also living there side by side with the above communities. In these two villages, the Bhils live in a compact group of their own. The Marathas, Malis, Kolis, Dhobis and such other communities which form the bulk of the population also live there in more or less compact blocks. The houses of the Bhils and Mahars are constructed at some distance from the houses of these communities.

Kolde, Dhanora and Sallibar villages from Dhulia district are situated in forest areas and connected to the tehsil headquarters by roads. Gandhali and Pilode from Jalgaon district lie in the plain area and are connected to the tehsil headquarters by a road on which passenger buses ply regularly.

The houses of the Bhils are either square or rectangular in shape. They are constructed on a simple earth foundation or on a raised platform of earth or on a layer of stones. Those built on a stone foundation are very few. At Gandhali and Pilode, the walls of their houses are made of earth ; at Kolde and Dhanora, they are made of boru twigs or bamboo chips and plastered with earth and cow dung. At Sallibar, they are made of bamboo matting without any plastering on either side. A few well-to-do Bhils of Kolde, Dhanora and Pilode live in houses built on a stone foundation with walls made of bricks. The roofs of

their houses are either slopping (as at Kolde, Dhanora and Sallibar) or flat (as at Gandhali and Pilode). Those which are sloping have country tiles ; those which are flat are made of earth and wood. A few houses have thatched roofs.

The house of an average Bhil is a single-room structure with a partition inside that divides the room into separate compartments ; the one at the rear is used as a kitchen and the other for all other purposes. It has one or two doors, but no windows. Those having brick walls have, however, one or two windows. The cattle are tied in one corner of the same room which is used for all purposes. At Kolde and Dhanora, they are tied in a separate shed. The bigger house has, however, three or four rooms with a separate kitchen, a shed for cattle and a verandah or a raised platform at the front. The floor in the house is often uneven and the yard near it is on many occasions dirty. As the Bhils are not used to latrines or bath-rooms, their houses do not have any separate arrangement in this regard. They go to the village boundary or the neighbouring fields for defecation and bathe in the open either at the river or well or on a stone kept outside the house.

The houses are built with the help of all the grown up members of the family and no outside labour is engaged. Sometimes, especially in the case of bigger houses, tribesmen in the village assist them in this work. They are then fed by the owner of the house. In many cases, the material for the house such as bamboo matting, tiles and bricks is prepared by members of the family. Usually in case of a small hut, no ceremony is performed before constructing a house or after that. It was learnt at Sallibar that before starting construction at a particular place, they keep some grain on the floor. If the grain remains undisturbed till the next day, they take it as permission for inhabitation, otherwise they select another spot and repeat the same process.

Dress

While describing the dress of the Bhil in 1920, Enthoven said : "The hill Bhil in Khandesh has seldom any clothing but a piece of cloth round the loins and their women a coarse, tattered robe. The peasant Bhil wears a turban, a coat and a waist cloth and their women a ribe with or without a bodice" (p. 154). The traditional dress of a male Bhil consists of a loin cloth, a kopari and a feta. The feta is either of cotton or artificial silk according to the means of the wearer. The loin cloth is nowadays replaced by a dhoti. A Bhil today wears a dhoti, a kudchi (shirt) with half or full sleeves, a cap, and occasionally a coat. We also find him wearing a vest, pyjamas and a bush-shirt. A long collarless shirt, a jacket (waistcoat) and a white cap of rough khadi, are also met with among the Bhils living in the vicinity of towns. A few educated Bhils working as teachers or in offices wear trousers. The well-to-do Bhils, particularly those from Jalgaon district, are often seen quite neatly dressed in western style. School boys wear shorts called chaddi or injar, a shirt with half-sleeves and a cap. Their clothes are mostly bought at the weekly markets as ready-made wear. Those who can afford wear shoes and chappals.

Women are poorly dressed as compared to men and there has been no noticeable change in their daily wear. They wear only two garments, saris and cholis. A sari of nine yards is divided into two parts of which one is worn from above the waist and over the shoulders and the other from below the waist upto the knees. They often dispense with the bodice when indoors, particularly those from Dhulia. Girls wear a parkar, a polke an angi and a zaga. These are slowly being replaced by skirts. Women generally do not wear any footwear though a few use chappals while going out for field work.

Bhil men are not found of personal adornment. Only a few wear bali, khudsi or vetla on the ears, a kade around the wrist, a sakhal around the waist and a mundi round the finger. Women's ornaments include wakadya, baje and kade, gathala or dorehe, zuleri sakhal, chohora, ahali, chire, kanjya, pare and hasali. They also wear bangles, patalya and gotu, tandale or tanode, bhavari, balya or zok in the ears, kato or fuluri (fuli) on the nose, sakhal, jahre or korne on the feet and tolo or bele on the toes. These are made of silver, brass, glass, beads and white stones. Excepting bangles, ear-rings and a few necklaces of glass beads which they wear daily, the other ornaments are worn on occasions. Wearing of ornaments is a sign of wealth and of the status of the family.

Men keep moustaches and hair on the head like other non-tribals in the region. A few young men shave the moustaches and keep hair short in western style. The common practice is to shave off the beard and trim the moustaches. At Sallibar, they shave each other's hair as there are no professional barbers either in the village or in the surrounding villages. The Bhils from the other investigated villages, however, go to a barber for the purpose. Women do their hair by parting them in the middle and tie it behind in a knot.

Food

The staple food of the Bhils is jowar, rice and dal. Chutni of onion, garlic and chilly also forms a part of their daily food, particularly of those who are extremely poor and cannot afford to have dal and vegetables

frequently. Sometimes, they take khichadi (rice and dal cooked together) for a change. Wheat is consumed on festival days and when there are guests in the house. The menu is generally, rice, jowar bhakri, dal, preferably of urid or mug, chutni and sometimes khichadi. Those who can afford cook vegetables frequently. These include onions, brinjals, pumpkin, val and chavali. Milk, curd and ghee are not common though a few take them on very rare occasions. In the morning, they take jowar gruel before going out for field work. A few take jowar bhakri with chutni. The poorer Bhils sometimes eat wild roots and fruits such as mahua, ber, umbar, jambhul, chinch, kauth, avala and karavand.

The Bhils take eggs, fish, mutton, fowl and pork, but abjure beef. It is only occasionally that they can afford to take meat and fish. The meat is cooked in oil and, when available, spices are added. Fowl is also consumed occasionally. In the past, most wild game was acceptable to them. Those living in the forests used to eat carrion, buffaloes, rats, jackals and monkeys. It may be because of this indiscriminate eating that though their touch does not defile, the Bhils are one of the few classes from whom a high-caste Hindu will not accept water. Probably, it is because of the same reason that certain sections of the Bhils such as Gavits and Dhankas regard themselves as distinct and separate from the Bhils. They are now giving up their old food habits and now take only goat's flesh and the meat of some game such as deer.

The Bhils of Sallibar do not sit together while taking their food in the house. Instead a member of the household sits in one corner of the room, another goes to a different corner of the same room and the third takes his food under the shade of a tree outside the house. In a marriage feast, they sit opposite to each other, cover their heads and food with a piece of cloth and eat. The idea behind this practice is that while taking food none else should see the face of the person or his food. If any one looks at him and at the food he is taking, the food taken by him may cause harm to him. This practice is, however, not followed by the Bhils at the other places studied.

Tea has now become a common beverage among a few Bhils. They generally use gur instead of sugar and often drink it without milk. Drinking of country liquor is a common habit. Men and women chew tobacco. Smoking of bidis and chilim is quite common among males.

Their household utensils consist of some pots, dishes, spoons and plates made of brass, aluminium, iron and clay. A few well-to-do Bhils also keep some crockery. A stone hand-mill for grinding corn, a stone or wooden mortar, a long wooden pestle, baskets, winnowing fans, wall lamps, wooden cots and mirrors are also found in many Bhil houses. Those interested in music keep instruments such as a pawari, dhol, and zanj ; those used to fishing and hunting have nets, traps, bows, arrows and knives. A cultivating household has a pair of bullocks, a goat or two and some fowl, in addition to the farm tools. Besides these, a few clothes and ornaments and some stocks of foodgrains lasting for a few months form a part of their belongings. At Sallibar, a few Bhils were found having rifles, petromax, lanterns, flashlights and chairs.

Sanitation and hygiene

In the villages surveyed, most of the Bhils live in kachcha houses which do not provide for good ventilation or sufficient light. Refuse is often thrown outside the house and remains there for days. In the case of a cultivating household, the refuse is thrown on manure heaps outside the village site or far away from the houses. Cow dung is also thrown on these heaps. The waste water of the household is collected in pits either in front or at the rear of the house; but as these pits are not " soak pits ", it overflows. The floor in the house is on many occasions uneven.

The area surrounding the well is often dirty owing to waste water running along. Water in the wells is nowadays got disinfected by the villagers at least once a year, especially during the rainy season by using potassium permanganate supplied to them free of cost by the village panchayat or the block development authorities. DDT spraying is done in villages at regular intervals. Consequently, malarial mosquitoes have been mostly eradicated. Small-pox has been checked through vaccination. The Bhils readily cooperate with all such measures.

The Bhils regularly bathe every morning. A few do so twice a day. They clean their teeth every morning with a neem or babhul stick or with burnt tobacco or snuff. Clothes such as dhoti and sari are washed every day. Kitchen utensils are washed every morning and evening. Most of the Bhils do not use toilet soap. Those who can afford use washing soap.

For treatment of diseases, many Bhils still depend on the bhagat, their medicineman and spiritual guide. In order to know the cause of illness, the bhagat sometimes, cuts a lime into two halves with a knife, takes a part of it, moves it over the body of the patient from feet to head and later on throws it outside the house or buries it in a choukula (a place where four streets meet), or at any public place in the village. He watches the reaction of the patient for a day or two and starts his treatment according to his findings. As medicineman, spiritual guide and an enemy of witches, the bhagat is an important figure in the tribal life of

the Bhils. He is consulted on all occasions of general calamity and individual sickness. He evokes spirits and tells them the results on such occasions when he gets possessed. Any Bhil who can learn to recite the magic formulae can become a bhagat after training by a senior bhagat. It is said at Gandhali that when a bhagat dies, his body is buried in a pit in a layer of salt which means he receives special treatment from the tribesmen even after death.

Language and literacy

Enthoven noted in 1920 that the Bhils spoke the cognate dialects of Gujarati, Marathi, Ramgadi, Mevadi, Hindi or Rajputani in accordance with the proximity of the larger languages (p. 154). Russell and Hira Lal recorded in 1916 that the Bhils had entirely abandoned their own language and spoke a corrupt dialect based on the Aryan vernaculars current around them (p. 293). According to Venkatachar in 1931, the Bhils spoke Bhili and other cognate dialects and the Bhili dialect spoken by them was mainly derived from Gujarati and is influenced by Malwi, Nimadi and such other dialects. Grierson says that Bhili shows traces of a non-Aryan basis which are too few to be certainly identified. The basis may have been Munda or it may have been Dravidian—perhaps more probably the former—but has been completely overlaid by an Aryan superstructure (pp. 178-179). In his foreword to Nath's "Bhils of Ratanmal", Haimendorf says that Bhili is an Aryan dialect and it is closely linked with Gujarati (p. V). The Bhili dialect spoken by the Bhils in Maharashtra contains a number of words which appear to have been borrowed from Gujarati and Marathi.

At the 1961 census, the Bhils have returned 33 mother-tongues in Maharashtra. Of these, Marathi speakers were reported to be 286,904 (49·00) and those of Bhili 212,766 (37·00) which means that 86 per cent of the Bhils in Maharashtra speak these two languages as their mother-tongues. Other important mother-tongues returned by them in 1961 were Pavri (38,195), Ahirani (25,408), Urdu (5,486) and Tadvi (3,859). Of the rest, six mother-tongues had more than 100 but less than 1,000 speakers. These included Mavchi (910), Gujarati (339), Hindi (321), Madari (234), Telugu (168), and Afghani (126). The remaining 21 mother-tongues had less than 100 speakers each.

A few Bhils (20,482), also claimed knowledge of 17 subsidiary languages in addition to their mother-tongues. The numerically important of these were Marathi (11,799), Hindi (4,827), Bhili (2,006), Ahirani (833), Urdu (323), Tadvi (183), Gujarati (178) and English (178).

In the investigated villages, they spoke in Bhili among themselves and in Marathi or Gujarati with outsiders. The former is their ancestral language and the latter are the mother-tongues of their dominant neighbours in the region. They also understood Hindi though they could not speak it. The Bhili spoken by them contained mainly Gujarati words and a few words of Marathi.

The 1961 census returns on education showed the Bhils' literacy rate as 6·48 per cent as compared with 29·82 for the general population. It was also significantly lower than the literacy rates for the neighbouring tribes like Dhanka (11·71), Gamit (11·23), Koli Mahadev (10·66) and Koknas (9·52). Out of 575,022 persons, only 37,291 were returned as literates. In the rural areas the percentage of literacy was 6·19. Out of 554,052 individuals, only 34,282 were literates. In the urban area the percentage of literacy was (14·34). Out of 20,970 individuals, 3,009 were literates.

The break-up of the population by educational standards is given below :—

Educational Standard	Total			Rural			Urban		
	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Illiterate ..	537,731	256,267	281,464	519,770	248,163	271,607	17,961	8,104	9,857
Literate without educational level.	27,433	24,347	3,086	26,039	23,235	2,804	1,394	1,112	282
Primary or junior basic ..	9,735	8,994	741	8,200	7,663	537	1,535	1,331	204
Matriculation or higher secondary.	118	117	1	43	43	..	75	74	1
University degree or post-graduate degree other than technical degree.	5	5	..	..	..	..	5	5	..
Total ..	575,022	289,730	285,292	554,052	279,104	274,948	20,970	10,626	10,344

Out of the literate persons, as many as 73 per cent were literate without educational level and 26 per cent had studied upto primary or junior basic. Only five had obtained a university degree and 118 had studied upto matriculation or higher level.

In the villages studied, their children of school-going age did not go to school in a good number and those who went did not attend regularly. The poverty of the people compels them to make their children work and earn something for the family. A boy of about ten or even eight years is often required to take the cattle out for grazing. If the family has no cattle, he does this work for others or finds some other suitable job and earns something. A girl of this age helps her mother in the kitchen and looks after the small children when her parents are out for field work. In some cases, of course, there is indifference on the part of parents, but such cases are fewer than those of genuine hardship. They are not against the education of their female children though they do not approve of higher education as in their opinion that is not useful for girls.

Economic life

The main economic activity of the Bhils is agriculture. According to Enthoven, they are mostly peasants, labourers and watchmen. In Khandesh, they work as husbandmen and field labourers, sell grass and fuel, help the Kunbi landholder, and when they can get them, gather wax and honey. They also rear fowls in large numbers, especially for sale (pp. 170-171). While describing the economic resources of the Bhils of the old Hyderabad State, Syed Sirajul Hassan mentions that the Bhils raise coarse grain and a few vegetables, collect and sell firewood, honey, gum, jungle fruits and mahua flowers and also serve as watchmen besides working frequently as day and farm labourers (p. 76). According to Nath and Naik, the Bhils are primarily an agricultural people. Our study revealed that their traditional occupation is agriculture which they still follow in large numbers though their participation in that is more as agricultural labourers than as cultivators.

According to the 1961 census, out of 575,022 Bhils in the state, 329,537 (57·31) were workers. A sex-wise break-up showed that 174,355 (60·18) out of 289,730 males and 155,182 (54·39) out of 285,292 females were workers.

The industrial classification of these workers as found in 1961 census was as follows :—

Category	Total			Rural			Urban		
	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I ..	87,340 (26.50)	50,362 (28.88)	36,978 (23.83)	87,036	50,151	36,885	304	211	93
II ..	207,946 (63 11)	101 275 (58.09)	106,671 (68.74)	204,084	99,445	104,639	3,862	1,830	2,032
III ..	13,434 (4.08)	8,456 (4.85)	4,978 (3.21)	12,657	7,936	4,721	777	520	257
IV ..	2,651 (0.80)	2,164 (1.24)	487 (0.31)	2,564	2,114	450	87	50	37
V ..	2,332 (0.71)	1,870 (1.07)	462 (0.30)	1,221	1,024	197	1,111	846	265
VI ..	1,527 (0.46)	1,039 (0.60)	488 (0.31)	1,217	847	370	310	192	118
VII ..	1,852 (0.56)	772 (0 44)	1,080 (0 69)	872	357	515	980	415	565
VIII ..	855 (0.26)	797 (0.45)	58 (0.04)	438	432	6	417	365	52
IX ..	11,600 (3.52)	7,620 (4 37)	3,980 (2.57)	9.164	6,045	3,119	2,436	1,575	861
Total workers (I—IX)	329,537 (100.00)	174,355 (100.00)	155,182 (100.00)	319,253	168,351	150,902	10,284	6,004	4,280

The Bhils thus depend mostly on agriculture specially agricultural labour, for their livelihood. The number of those who work in the non-agricultural sector is less than one per cent except in categories III and IX. Of those who work as cultivators, very few hold land measuring 15 acres or more. A study of 5,232 Bhil households from Nandurbar and Navapur tehsils of Dhulia, revealed that only 1,446 (28·00) were owner-cultivators (those who either owned or held lands from Government for cultivation). Of the rest 124 (2·00) cultivated lands on lease from others and 3,662 (70·00) did not possess any land for cultivation. Among the owner cultivators, eight households (0·50) had land less than one acre, 807 households (56·00) owned land between one acre and 9·9 acres, 535 households (37·00) had land from ten acres to 24·9 acres and 90 households (6·00) had land between 25 acres and 49·9 acres. There were six households holding lands 50 acres and above. Out of the 124 lease-holders, 104 households cultivated land on cash payment and 20 households on crop share. There were four households who cultivated their own land and took some land on lease from others. As lease-holders, they were required to pay four to six times the land revenue in addition to the expenses they incurred on cultivation. Even small cultivators possessing land from five to 9·9 acres work as agricultural labourers. A few ply carts, maintain poultry, rear cattle and collect and sell forest produce. Forests situated in the neighbourhood also provide them opportunities of labour when they have no other work to do. For hunting, they use bows and arrows. Some of the Bhils have swords and guns. Big knives, stones and axes are sometimes used for hunting. Gullar (galols) for shooting birds. For snaring birds, catching pigs and other small game, they use traps.

Out of 245,485 persons who were returned as non-workers during the 1961 census, 19,040 (15,836 males and 3,204 females), were full-time students or children attending schools, 241 (215 males and 26 females) were seeking employment for the first time, 171 (151 males and 20 females) were employed before but were then out of employment and seeking work and 226,033 (99,173 males and 126,860 females), were dependants, which included housewives, infants and children not attending schools, old, sick, permanently disabled and such other persons.

At Sallibar, out of 99 Bhil households, 55 worked as cultivators ; at Gandhali only three were cultivators out of 15 and at Pilode only eight were engaged in cultivation out of 40. Those from Gandhali had hardly one or two acres of land for cultivation ; those from Sallibar and Pilode held lands rising from two to 20 acres. The position at Kolde and Dhanora was more or less the same. At all these places, they grew jowar, dadar, rice, cotton and tur as major crops and wheat, gram, bajra, mug, urid, maize, chavali, til and khurasani as minor crops.

The tools they use are the ol (a wooden plough) drawn by a pair of bullocks and at times by he-buffaloes, the wakhar and the kolap (for removing grass), the pambar (for sowing bajra, groundnut and til), the dusa (for sowing dadar, wheat and gram), the moghad (for sowing jowar), the kurki (for sowing gram, wheat and bajra), the pathal (for clearing the land), the tikam (for removing roots and plants from the ground), the dahalo (weeding sickle), the kuwado (axe for cutting trees) and the ilchi (for removing grass from the wakhar).

Agricultural operations begin in April and continue till the end of February. The calendar of work is as follows :—

> April and May—repairs to land and ploughing ; June and July—sowing ; August and September—weeding ; October and November—cutting ; December—harvesting.

Bajra is generally sown in August and harvested in January. Rabi crops like gram and wheat are sown in October and harvested in February. Before sowing, a plough is worshipped with an offering of eggs : after harvesting, the new crop is worshipped with an offering of a hen.

Those who have no land, work as agricultural labourers either on daily wages or on yearly contract. In 1961, daily wages for men varied from Rs. 1·50 to Rs. 2, and for women were around one rupee. Those employed on yearly contract, were paid from Rs. 300 to Rs. 600. Sometimes they were paid from Rs. 150 to Rs. 200 in addition to clothes and two meals a day. At Kolde, four persons of the tribe had kirana shops and three had opened tailoring shops. Ten persons had left the village and secured better jobs in the neighbourhood. Of them, one was a clerk at Nandurbar and one was in the anti-malaria staff. Eight were serving as primary school teachers.

Subsidiary jobs in off-seasons are obtained from local forest contractors, railways and the public works department. A few Bhils ply carts, maintain poultry and goats, rear cattle and collect and sell forest produce. At the neighbouring railway stations and bus stops, Bhil boys, girls and even women are often seen selling forest fruits in small baskets and carrying the luggage of passengers. Sometimes, they get seasonal work on construction projects. A few Bhils load and unload the trucks engaged in the surrounding

forests for the transport of timber and other forest produce while a few work in the local saw-mills. Fishing, which is done with nets and traps, and hunting, which is practised with bows, arrows and knives, provide supplementary food and income to some. Some Bhils from Sallibar prepare tiles, earthen vessels, wooden agricultural implements, baskets, bamboo matting and brooms of shindi leaves and also weave loin cloth and godhadi (rough quilts made of pieces of old and waste cloth), for their personal use. Indebtedness is widespread. The major proportion of debt results from expenses on agriculture, marriage, food, clothes and drink. Some of these borrowings are for a short time as in the case of agricultural operations for which money is needed to purchase seeds or to pay wages. The repayment of such debts is done soon after harvest, either in cash or in kind. Loans taken for marriage, purchase of clothes or foodgrains, require a long time to repay. If during this period, the man borrows again, he is entangled. The high rate of interest (25 per cent), charged by private moneylenders aggravates this situation. Loans are drawn from Government or the village co-operative society or from private moneylenders by mortgaging land, cattle or ornaments, or by offering personal service or against personal credit. Of the five households studied at Sallibar, all were found to have debts ranging from Rs. 50 to Rs. 200. Three had taken loan from Government and the society for purchase of bullocks and two from private moneylenders for marriage and domestic requirements.

Life cycle

When a Bhil girl comes of age, she is deemed impure for four or five days every month and does not attend to household work during menstruation. On the fourth or the fifth day, she takes a bath and is deemed to be purified. No rites are observed on the day she attains puberty or when a married woman conceives for first time. A pregnant woman has no special diet prescribed and does household as well as outdoor work till the last hour. She however takes a few precautions like avoiding contacts with witches and avoiding places known to be haunted. Delivery takes place at her husband's residence. In a few cases it takes place at her father's residence, if he is well-to-do and invites her for the purpose. A midwife (huvaki) belonging to a Bhil tribe (at Kolde and Dhanora), or a Maratha (at Gandhali) or a Chambhar (at Pilode) is engaged. In case, she is not available, a midwife of any other caste available at the moment is engaged. In difficult cases, a midwife from the nearest maternity centre is also called in. As soon as the child is born, the midwife cuts its nal with a boru chip, sickle or a stone and buries it in a pit in the living room. At Pilode, half of the nal cord is tied to the neck of the child and the other half buried in a pit. The mother is held unclean for 12 days at Gandhali and Dhanora and for five weeks at Kolde and Pilode. At Gandhali and Pilode, she takes a bath on the 12th or the 13th day and worships a well. Cow's urine is sprinkled on her clothes, cot and the walls of the house. She takes light food for the first five days, preferably rice or wheat gruel or jowar with water, gur and oil (or ghee). Then she is given dal and rice or a jowar bhakri. This diet continues for a couple of days, after which she is allowed to have her usual food. The child is fed on the mother's milk. Infants which have lost their mother are fed on cow's or goat's milk. The mother resumes her work after five weeks, but does not go for out-door work till she regains normal health. The midwife serves the mother and the child for a day and receives a rupee or two and some corn : in well-to-do households, she is given a sari and a bodice as presents.

Pachara or pachavi (fifth day ceremony) is observed on the fifth day. At Kolde, the midwife worships the place where the nal was buried. She keeps some rice there and pours a few drops of liquor. Gur or sugar is distributed among all. In a well-to-do household, relatives and friends are fed on this occasion. At Dhanora, the midwife worships five heaps of rice kept in front of the place where the nal was buried. She pours a few drops of liquor on these heaps and keeps some cooked food before them. She then collects all these articles and throws them into the pit in which the nal was buried. The pit is later filled with earth and smeared with cow dung. At Gandhali, the mother worships the stone kept on the pit. Then she worships five banyan leaves on which are kept a handful of sand, arecanuts and dates and lights a clay lamp before them. Thereafter, every person in the family pours oil into this lamp. Tribesmen are entertained to tea ; if possible, a bhajan is arranged.

The child is named on the fifth day, in a few cases on the 12th day, without any rite. Arvind, Arjun, Chandu, Dattu, Hemant, Mohan, Prabhakar, Pravin, Prakash and Yeshvant were some names of their male children as observed during the field study as against the names of the old men like Bapu, Bhivasan, Dharma, Fulu, Giba, Gorakh, Kalu, Mansu, Nagu and Ravaji Asha, Chandra, Gita, Lila, Mangala, Shanti, Suman, Vimal, Vasanti, Yamuna and Yashoda are some names of their female children as against the names of old women such as Bayaja, Bama, Chechi, Fuli, Girji, Janki, Posli, Rupa, Supali, Vadagi and Zulu.

The lower lobes of the child's ears are pierced by a goldsmith on any convenient day after five weeks or after a year or so from birth without any rites. They go to a goldsmith of the neighbouring village when they have leisure. At Dhanore, the ears of the child of a woman whose earlier children have not survived, are pierced by a midwife instead of a goldsmith as it is believed that by doing so the children will enjoy long life. At Kolde, many boys now-a-days do not undergo this operation.

The first hair of a Bhil child is shaved on any convenient day after five weeks or after a few years from its birth without any ritual. At Kolde and Dhanora, the maternal uncle of the child cuts a few locks. A hen is presented to the maternal uncle ; occasionally a feta or dhoti or some coins are also given. The Bhils of Gandhali and Pilode do not call on the maternal uncle for this. Among them, the first hair of a child is shaved by a barber in front of the family deities. In a few cases, the first hair of a child is shaved in a fair held in the locality before the shrine in whose honour the fair is celebrated.

The Bhils are somewhat liberal with regard to premarital or extra-marital sex relations. The offender is either asked to marry the girl or both are allowed to live together as husband and wife without actual marriage. In case, they belong to the same kul, the offender is fined.

At Kolde and Dhanora, a Bhil boy is usually married when he is 12 to 15 and a girl at the age of 10. At Gandhali and Pilode, this marriageable age is reported to be 18-20 for a boy and 14-16 for a girl. In the 1961 census, 1,344 males out of 130,502 (1·03) and 7,204 females out of 124,285 (5·80), were returned as married in the age group 0-14, among the Bhils in the state. The husband is always order than his wife ; the difference is usually from one to 5 years.

Marriage between two persons belonging to the same kul is not permitted. Similarly, marriage with father's brother's daughter, mother's sister's daughter or with one's own sister's daughter is also not allowed. Marriage with mother's brother's daughter is permitted. Marriage with father's sister's daughter is also permitted though it is prohibited at Gandhali and Pilode. The marriage takes place at the girl's house on any auspicious day, at times on the day fixed by a brahman priest, preferably in Vaisakh, Jestha or Falgun between 12 noon and 5 p.m. or at sunset. The service is conducted by a tribal priest called Punjaro. At Pilode, a brahman priest presides. The selection of the bride or bridegroom is made by the father. In some cases, the boy and the girl themselves select their partners and start living together as husband and wife without actual marriage. The couple later on receive social sanction from the panchas after paying a fine. Dej at Pilode amounts to Rs. 25 ; at Gandhali, it is Rs. 110 or even more. They have to pay Rs. 650 at Dhanora and from Rs. 300 to Rs. 600 at Kolde. Besides, they have to offer a sari to the girl's mother's sister and father's sister, a shirt or a cap to her brother, a dhoti to her father and some money to the patel of the village. At some places, a rupee is given to each of them, if they are unable to buy clothes. Monogamy is generally observed, but there is no serious objection to polygyny.

The proposal of marriage is made by the boy's side. The boy's father, along with relatives and elders of the community, goes to the girl's father to discuss it with him. If his offer is accepted a choli, a coconut and Rs. 1·25 are offered to the girl. Some money is paid to the girl's father as an advance towards the payment of dej, the acceptance of which signifies approval of the proposal (at Kolde). But usually before this formal proposal is made the boy's parents are informally sounded through friends and relatives in the matter. At Dhanora when the proposal is accepted, the punjaro moves his hand over the backs of the girl's and the boy's father, saying 'May your ties and relations last long'. Similarly, the female priestess moves her hand over the backs of the girl's and boy's mother and utters the same words. At Pilode, kumkum is applied on the forehead of the boy and a coconut is offered to him. The occasion on which the proposal of marriage is made is called 'magani'. At Gandhali, after the acceptance of the proposal, persons from the boy's side go to the girl's place on a convenient day. On reaching there any married woman from the girl's side applies kumkum on the forehead of the girl, then to the persons in her family and lastly to all the persons present there. The boy's father pays the dej to the girl's father. The marriage is then treated as fixed. At Dhanora, a man from the boy's side goes to the girl's place with some corn, the dej and a bottle of liquor. On reaching there, the girl's mother applies kumkum on his forehead and waves a lamp before his face. He then hands over the articles he has brought to the girl's father in the presence of the panchas. Next, a few persons from both the sides meet together, go to the nearest market place and make purchases of cloth for the girl and the boy jointly with each other's consent. This rite is called kapad padane (purchases of marriage cloth). It is observed mostly by the Bhils of Gandhali.

The next important occasion is halad. A few days prior to the day of marriage as advised by a priest, the boy and the girl are rubbed with haldi nine times

in their respective houses by suvasinis of the tribe. On the same day or on the day prior to the marriage, a mandav is constructed and an earthen pot and the family deities are worshipped. Twigs of a kakad tree are brought ceremoniously and tied to every pole of the booth after an offering of cooked rice, coconut and liquor. Invitations for marriage are extended to friends, relatives and tribesmen by keeping a palas leaf with akshata at the door of their houses ; while doing this, the household is orally informed of the day and time of marriage. On the day of marriage the boy goes to the girl's place in a procession on foot or in a bullock cart. He wears a ceremonial dress consisting of a dhoti, a shirt, a coat, a feta or a cap and shoes and holds a sword or dagger in his right hand to the end of which is fixed a lime. Wreaths of flower and a marriage coronet (bahange) are also tied around his forehead. The procession is headed by a few musicians of the tribe who play on pavari, dhol and zanz. On reaching the girl's place the boy's party halts in a temple, or under the shade of a tree or at the place where arrangements for their temporary stay are made and the boy goes to the girl's place with a bundle of paddy on his head. Suvasinis from the girl's side wave lamps before him and take the bundle of paddy from his head. After that the boy goes to his place. The girl's father then goes to the boy's place and presents him a dhoti and a shirt. Later, the boy's father goes to the girl's place and offers her a sari and a bodice. After exchange of clothes, a few women from both the sides go to each other's places and apply haldi to the boy and the girl. The boy goes to the girl's place on horseback. While going, he is held up by a man from the girl's side who places a bamboo or a piece of wood on his way and is allowed to proceed further only on giving him Rs. 1·25 and bottle of liquor. When the boy reaches the entrance of the mandav the girl's younger sister washes his feet with water and thereafter the boy touches the toran (bunting) of mango leaves fixed at the entrance with a sword, goes into the house and stands on a pat facing east. The girl is brought there and made to stand on another pat at his right, facing east. Before that a thread is tied around the pats after keeping nine dates, nine arecanuts and nine coins on them.

Among the Bhils of Kolde, the boy and the girl then take leaf cups of liquor (or of sugar water) in their hands. The priest pours a few drops of this on the ground and thereafter the boy and the girl pour the remaining liquor on the ground. Next, the priest ties nine coins in the dhoti of the boy and also of the girl and ties these two knots into a big knot. Later on, the girl takes a pot containing water and nine coins, walks nine steps ahead and then returns to her original place. Next, she goes to an apta tree along with the boy. The priest worships the apta tree and places leaf-cups of liquor in their hands. The boy and the girl exchange these cups and later pour the liquor on the ground. A few men then sprinkle water on the boy and the girl and on all the persons present there. Thereupon the boy and the girl go to the temple of Maruti. The priest worships Maruti with an offering of a coconut, applies sindur to the image, lights a lamp and breaks a coconut. The boy and the girl bow before the image and return to the mandav. Kinsmen from both sides then offer presents (milani). The boy and the girl and all the other persons assembled in the booth then dance for a few hours ; thereafter guests from the boy's side go back to their village along with the girl. On the same day or on the next day, the ceremony ends after washing off the haldi applied to the body of the boy and the girl and removing the coronets tied round their heads.

Among the Bhils of Dhanora, when the boy and the girl stand on pats and the priest worships the earth and ties the ends of their garments into a knot, any man of the tribe goes on the roof of the mandav and from there sprinkles water and throws umare (small balls of wheat flour) on all the persons assembled in the mandav, including the boy and the girl. Throwing of umare is considered to be the binding portion of the marriage. The guests from the boy's side then go back to their village along with the girl. On the next day, the boy and the girl bow before the image of Maruti and thereafter the haldi applied to their bodies is washed off. Next, the girl stands on the shoulders of the boy and from there she ties the marriage coronet to any of the poles of the booth. She then demands a present from the boy and gets down only when the boy promises to offer the same to her. The ceremony is then over.

Among the Bhils of Gandhali and Pilode, the boy and the girl sit on pats facing each other with a jamnuk held between them by their maternal uncles. The priest goes on the roof of the mandav and from there he claps his hands when the sun sets in the sky. Musicians play on their instruments and the persons assembled in the booth throw akshata on the heads of the boy and the girl. The boy and the girl exchange seats and thereafter their hands are separated by their maternal uncles. The boy and the girl bow before the family deities. They put a portion of cooked food into each other's mouth five times and then all enjoy a feast. On the next day, guests from the boy's side go back to their village along with the girl. The ceremony ends with the washing of haldi from the body of the boy and the girl and removing the coronets from their foreheads. When a brahman

priest presides over the ceremony, he goes on the roof of the booth, repeats marriage verses and then claps his hands when the sun sets in the sky. He keeps the hands of the boy on the hands of the girl and ties the ends of their garments into a knot. Next, he performs the kanyadan ceremony. On the occasion, the father and the mother of the girl sit on pats. The priest repeats mantras and worships a nut representing god Ganpati. After that, the hands of the boy and the girl are separated. The boy and the girl move round the homa (sacrificial fire) kindled by the priest and bow before the family deities. The ceremony ends after untying the knot of their garments.

Among the Bhils of Kolde and Pilode, expenses for the boy's marriage range from Rs. 350 to Rs. 450 in case of an average household ; at Dhanora, they vary from Rs. 500 to Rs. 800. Much of this is spent on food, clothes and ornaments. On many occasions, the boy's father has to incur a heavy debt on that account. The expenses for the girl's marriage are comparatively less. The girl's father does not spend much on clothes. He also receives dej from the boy's father.

The marriage which is performed with the consent of all including the boy and the girl and their parents with full marriage rites described as above, is called varhad. On many occassions, the boy and the girl live together as husband and wife with each other's consent without going through the actual marriage By doing this, the boy can save the expenses to be incurred over his marriage. This way of obtaining a wife is called podye. Sometimes, a girl of her own accord goes to a boy and declares her intention to stay with him as his wife. If the boy agrees, she stays with him as his wife without any marriage ceremony. This practice of obtaining a partner in life is called Avividhi. Sometimes a girl is forcibly taken away by the boy and his party, with her consent. Then they live together as husband and wife, but do not perform the marriage. This way of obtaining a wife is called Toyeledi. When such instances take place, panchas from both the sides meet together, discuss the issue and fine the boy. The amount of fine which a boy is expected to pay in such cases varies from Rs. 200 to Rs. 300 and it is recovered from him in equal instalments over a reasonable time. On paying the fine, the union receives social sanction. It is not binding on them that they should go through the marriage after that. Sometimes, it happens that when a boy is unable to find money for his marriage or to obtain a wife by any of the ways described as above, he stays with his would be father-in-law for five years. After the term of his service is over, he is free to stay there or set up a separate house along with the girl. In this case also, the marriage may or may not take place. If the marriage takes place, the boy is exempted from the payment of dej and the expenses of marriage are met by the girl's father. At times, a boy stays with his father-in-law as a ghar-javai. This happens mostly when a person has no sons or if he desires that his daughter should stay with him along with her husband during his life-time. In this case also, the boy is exempted from the payment of dej and the expenses of marriage are made by the girl's father.

Widow re-marriage

Widows are allowed to marry again if they desire. The remarriage is called motir or maotir. It takes place at the widow's residence at night, preferably during the dark fortnight of the month without any ritual. At Kolde and Dhanora, a widow is permitted to marry the younger brother of her late husband. The man wishing to marry a widow pays no dej to her parents or guardians. He, however, presents a sari, a bodice and a few ornaments to the widow and also offers a feast to the relatives and friends including important tribesmen in the village. At Gandhali and Pilode, a widow is not allowed to marry the younger brother of her deceased husband. The man marrying a widow is required to pay dej varying from Rs. 40 to Rs. 50 at Pilode or from Rs. 50 to Rs. 100 at Gandhali, to the guardian of the widow. At Gandhali, the binding portion of the marriage is to bring the forehead of the widow in contact with the forehead of the intending husband in the presence of all assembled at the widow's residence. This is supervised by any interested man of the tribe. At Pilode, a brahman priest presides over this ceremonly. He recites a few verses on this occassion and applies kumkum on the forehead of the widow. Thereupon he knocks the forehead of the widow on the forehead of the intending husband. The widow and her children by the re-marriage have no right in the property of the first husband.

Divorce is permitted when the wife and the husband do not agree with each other or when there is cruelty or ill-treatment on the part of the husband or adultery on the part of the wife. It is also allowed if the husband is impotent or suffering from an incurable disease or the wife is barren. Both the husband and the wife can ask for a divorce. If the initiative is from the wife, she has to pay marriage expenses to her husband at Kolde and Gandhali. In case, she has children the husband receives no compensation from her at Kolde. If she marries, the new husband has to pay the marriage expenses to the old husband at Kolde and Dhanora. In case, a man takes the initiative and leaves his wife, he has to pay a fine varying from Rs. 50 to 100 to the woman at Gandhali

or present her a sari and a bodice in addition to a few coins as directed by the panchas at Dhanora. The panch is a final authority to decide whether a man or a woman is to be compensated or not. At Pilode, either of the parties has to pay a fine as directed by the panchas. Before a divorce is granted, it is ascertained from the husband and the wife that they are not willing to live together and are ready for separation. At the time of granting a divorce, the husband tears off the end of his wife's sari. A stick is broken in the presence of the panchas and a divorce deed (farkatnama) is executed at Pilode and Dhanora. A divorced woman can marry again a man of her choice, if she desires so. This marriage is done in the form of a widow re-marriage.

Death

The Bhils follow both burial and cremation. At Kolde, most of the Bhils cremate their dead ; at Dhanora, Gandhali and Pilode, a large majority of them resort to burial. When a person dies, the body is bathed in warm water, dressed in new clothes and is kept on a cot or a bier (kadi) in a sleeping position with a white shroud spread over it. A silver coin is kept on its forehead or in its mouth. Kumkum is applied on the forehead. At Dhanora, a few grains and a copper coin are tied to the shroud whreas at Kolde, some rice, jowar, bajra, tur, maize and mug are put in front of the door of the house. The body is carried to the cremation or burial ground on a cot or a bier by any four men related to the deceased. At Gandhali and Pilode, the chief mourner, preferably the eldest son of the deceased, walks in front with an earthen pot in hand containing a burning dung cake. At Kolde, any two men of the tribe walk in front ; one carries a basket filled with cooked rice and some edibles and the other an earthen pot filled with mixed grains put in front of the door of the house. The latter is called saravanya. While walking along, he sprinkles the grains in the pot all along the way upto the place of cremation or burial. In case of a well-to-do person, coins are also thrown on the way. At Dhanora, one of these two men carries an earthen pot containing a burning dung-cake and the other carries a basket filled with cooked rice and vegetable. When the procession reaches the visava, the bier is lowered for a while. The bangles of the deceased's wife are broken, the garsoli around her neck is removed and the kumkum on her forehead is wiped off. At Gandhali and Pilode, a copper coin and a little quantity of jowar are put on the ground ; at Kolde, all the women attending the funeral throw liquor on the ground from leaf-cups and the saravanya sprinkles a few grains from the earthen pot which he carries in his hand. The body is then carried to the place of burial, after the bearers change places. In former days, if the deceased had left his wife behind, it was customary for her to accompany the dead on his cot in a sleeping position till the visava. This practice is not in vogue now.

On reaching the burial ground, the body is placed in a pit in a sleeping position. Some cooked food is kept along with some water and liquor by the side of it. Persons attending the funeral throw a few grains and some coins on the face of the deceased. Later on the chief mourner puts a handful of earth in the pit and then all the persons present there fill in the pit carefully. When this is over, the chief mourner or any other man related to the deceased, walks five times round the pit with an earthen pot in hand which he later dashes on the ground. Thereupon, all drink liquor and return, after taking a dip in the nearest river, tank or a well. On returning home, they chew some neem leaves and later throw the same into the fire, at Gandhali and Pilode.

At Kolde, where most of the Bhils practise cremation, the bearers take the body and move with it nine times around the pyre with the saravanya walking in front with the earthen pot filled with water and basket containing cooked rice. They place the corpse on the pyre, along with the cot carrying it, with its head to the north and feet to the south. The chief mourner puts a part of the cooked rice on palas leaves and also a few drops of water and liquor by the side of the pyre. Persons assembled there do the same. The body is then covered with faggots. The Saravanya throws the cooked rice kept on the three palas leaves towards the north and breaks the earthen pot and the basket to pieces. He and any other man of the tribe stand towards the south at the two sides of the pyre with axes in their hands. The saravanya dashes his axe on the pyre and passes it on to the other man. The latter also dashes his axe on the pyre and returns it on to the saravanya. This is repeated seven times. Then the saravanya lights the pyre. All stay there for a while and then go to the nearest water place and keep there some green grass (durva). The saravanya keeps there an axe, a copper coin and an umbar twig. All pour a few drops of water over the durva three times, take a bath and return to the place of cremation. While returning from there, the saravanya sprinkles water on their heads with an umbar twig. On reaching the cremation ground, they keep there some liquor in three leaf-cups. The saravanya pours a few drops of this liquor, some grains of rice and copper coin. He then picks up the coin, covers it with a palas leaf and holds it between his toes. He takes an axe in his hand and dances for a few minutes round the three leaf-cups filled with liquor

While dancing, he utters the name of the deceased and declares that he has reached heaven. All the persons attending the funeral then take liquor and return to the house of the deceased after the body is completely burnt. On returning home, water is sprinkled on their heads after which they go to their respective houses. The next day, a few go to the cremation ground, keep a bhakri on the place where the deceased was cremated and, after ascertaining that the corpse is completely burnt, clean the place, drink liquor, bath, and return home. At Dhanora, eggs and gur are also kept on the spot where burial or cremation took place.

The Bhils of Gandhali and Pilode observe post-death impurity for ten days and are deemed to be purified on the tenth day after shaving their heads and faces and sprinkling cow's urine in the house. Unmarried boys and girls observe impurity for three days only. The Bhils of Kolde and Dhanora do not observe post-death impurity nor shave. The Bhils of Pilode and Gandhali perform obsequies on the 11th day by feeding the tribesmen. The Bhils of Dhanora perform these rites on the 12th day or on any other convenient day after a month or a year. On this occasion, they keep a bhakri, cooked rice, a hen and other articles on the burial place and feed the relatives and tribesmen. On the next day, the chief mourner wears a feta and his relatives offer him some clothes or a few coins as aher (gift).

The Bhils of Kolde perform the obsequies on the 12th day or on any convenient day after that. On the 11th day, they pour some liquor on the place where the deceased breathed his last and dance throughout the day and night. On the 12th day the nephew of the deceased (father's sister's son) kills a hen on the threshold of the house after bathing it. The hen is cooked and kept in a basket along with other cooked food. The basket is covered with a piece of cloth and same roshan grass. The nephew carries it on his head to the cremation ground and, on the way, places it for a few minutes on the ground at the visava. Relatives and other tribesmen also carry the basket by turn on their heads. At the cremation ground, the food in the basket is kept on three palas leaves on the spot where the body was cremated. The saravanya keeps a portion of this food on the ground. They clean the place where the pyre was lit, prepare a small hut there and keep the roshan grass on the hut. Those present throw a few grains of rice and some coins on the hut. Later on, the saravanya places his feet on the hut. Then all take a bath, return and join a feast at the house of the deceased. After the feast, the bearers of the corpse stand in front of the door of the house and any woman of the tribe moves two balls of cooked food on their backs and later throws it on the roof of the house. Two men of the tribe hold up a new dhoti by its ends and a suvasini from the deceased's family walks a few steps under this canopy with a pot filled with liquor. Persons gathered there throw a few drops of liquor on the ground from this pot. Five small boys of the tribe sit on a cot and pour a few drops of liquor on the ground from the same pot. The chief mourner puts on a new feta on his head and a zoli round his waist. Relatives and tribesmen put some coins into this zoli according to their means. Gur or sugar is distributed. For unmarried boys and girls, they prepare flat balls of wheat and rice flour and keep the same on the branches of an umbar tree at the visava after mixing them in haldi. Next they shake these branches and make the balls fall on the ground. No rites are performed for small boys and girls.

Religion

In the 1961 census, most of the Bhils in Maharashtra returned Hinduism as their religion. The break-up was as follows :—

Hindu 557,135 ; Muslim 17,676 ; Christian 200 ; Sikh 7 ; Buddhist 3 ; Jain 1.

No Bhil in the state in 1961, returned his religion as "tribal" or "animism". Out of the total scheduled tribe population of 21,882 returning "Muslim" as their religion in 1961, as many as 17,676 were from Bhils. They belong to a sub-tribe known as Tadvi Bhil. The 1931 and 1941 census reports show 8,172 and 2,462 as the population of Muslim Bhils from Bombay province. The 1951 census did not show the scheduled tribe population by religion.

The Bhils of Kolde and Dhanora neither keep the images of Hindu deities in their houses nor visit their temples frequently. Their chief objects of worship are Pandhar, Shivarya, Vaghdev and Nanduradev. The goddess Pandhar protects the crops and cattle and gives them health and wealth. She is found in the fields in the form of a dome made of clay and worshipped on the first day of the bright half of Falgun, at the time of Divali and on occasions of sowing and harvesting with an offering of a goat or a hen. Shivarya is the corn god. He gives them good crops and protects them from snakebite. His image is also made of clay and found anywhere in the fields. He is worshipped at the time of Narali Poornima and on the occasions of sowing and harvesting with an offering of a goat, a hen, coconut, eggs and liquor. Vaghdev protects them and their cattle from tigers. To please him, a man of the tribe who dresses like a tiger is worshipped on the full moon day of Shravan with

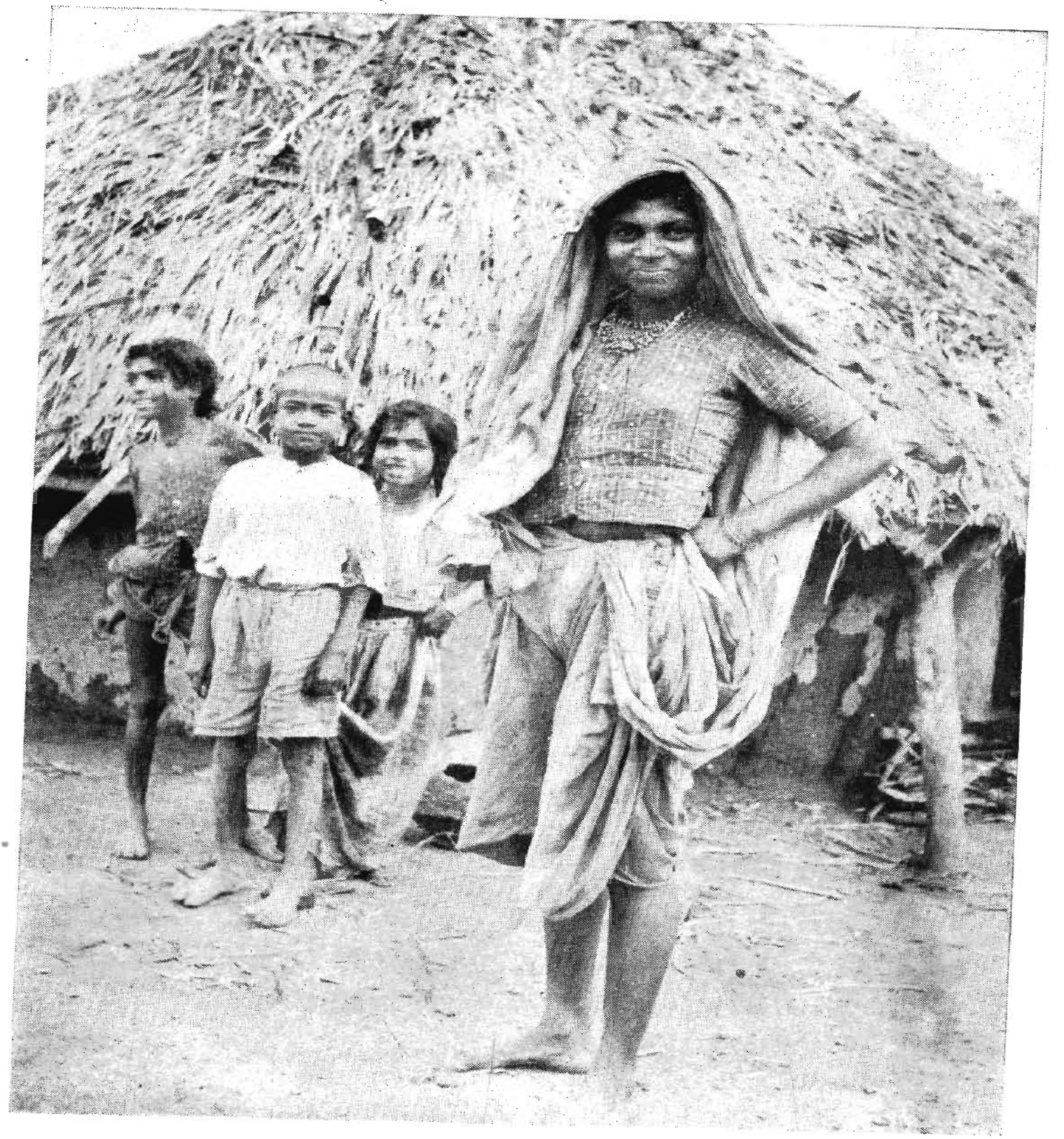
an offering of milk. The place in the neighbouring forest where a tiger is believed to live is also worshipped on this occasion with an offering of cooked rice and milk. Nandura is worshipped on any convenient day, preferably a Sunday, after the rains set in. On this occasion a stick, called purani, an axe and a sickle are worshipped in the fields with an offering of grains of rice and wheat, coconut, eggs and liquor. A few Bhils from Lolda also respect two more deities, Yahamogi and Beniheja. The former is worshipped in fulfilment of vows. The temple of this deity is situated at Devmogara, a village in Gujarat, where a big fair is held in her honour every year on the first day of the bright half of Falgun. Those who make vows to this deity attend this fair and worship the deity. The latter is worshipped on the same occasions when Pandhar, Shivarya and Vaghdev are worshipped. This deity is found anywhere in the fields in the form of stones. She receives no animal sacrifice. There is one more goddess, called Hiyaro, whom they do not worship but hold responsible for granting a good crop to a man for whom she takes a fancy. If anybody gets a bumper crop during any harvest season, it is believed that this is chiefly because of the mercy and the stay of this goddess in his house. It is also believed that this crop is a stolen property given to him by Hiyaro and as it is a stolen property, he is not entitled to claim it so long as he does not pay a fine to the bhagat as directed by him. The bhagat is the competent authority to find out the person in whose house Hiyaro is believed to be living. He declares the name of that person, determines the fine and directs him to pay it.

The Bhils from Gandhali and Pilode, who appear to be more Hinduised than those from Dhulia, worship a number of Hindu deities on festival days, at the time of marriage or when any one falls ill in the house. Among there deities are Khanderav, Bairam, Kalimaya, Kalankadevi, Narladevi and Gangamaya. These deities are represented by silver plates on which pictures of men and women are drawn. These images are generally found with only the senior branch of the family where other members of the family go for celebration. They can also bring them to their houses when required and return them after the celebration is over. Maruti is worshipped by them especially at the time of marriages. Those from Dhanora, revere Sri Krishna and Arjun, make vows to them and worship them occasionally, especially on the day of Mahashivaratri and at the time of Divali. The images of these two gods are kept at Pimplod, a village near Dhanora, in the house of the caste priest who is called Madavi. A few years ago the Madavi used to carry these images to their village on every Divali to offer worship to them in their houses and for that he used to get money from every house. At present, he goes to them on any suitable day. The office of Madavi is reported to be hereditary. They also worship Maruti at the time of marriages.

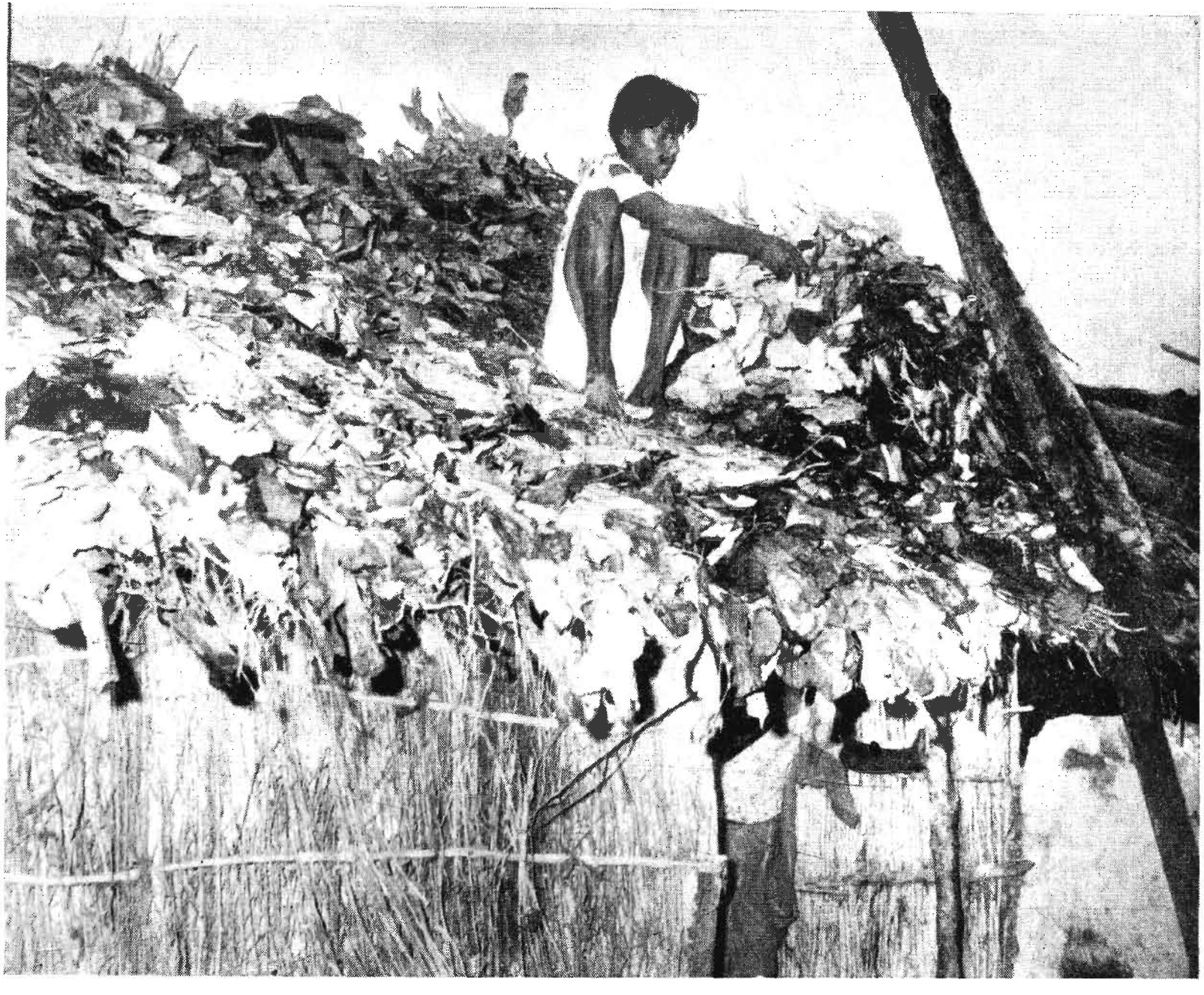
The Bhils recognise two kinds of spirits benevolent and malevolent. The benevolent spirits are considered as gods and worshipped as such and offered sacrifices on occasions of calamity and sickness. Belief in magic and witchcraft is widespread. Sickness of all kinds is on many occasions attributed either to the displeasure of some deity or spirit or to the evil eye of a witch. In the former case, vows are made to the deity or the spirit ; in the latter case, the witch is threatened and made to remove the trouble caused by her. In all such cases, they approach a bhagat for his advice in the firm belief that he alone can ward off that trouble.

Except the pipal, vad and apta, the Bhils have no holy trees or plants and no special feeling for the cow. They, however, regard the earth as the mother, corn as a goddess and natural objects like the sun, moon, sea and sky as divine. They revere hilltops as being the abodes of spirits or the seat of some power. Though they do not seem to have any clearly defined notions of heaven or hell, they have some definite ideas about the future of the departed soul. According to them persons who had lived a good life and died in natural circumstances become good spirits after death and take a keen interest in the welfare of their descendants, those who had indulged in anti-social activities during their life-time become evil spirits.

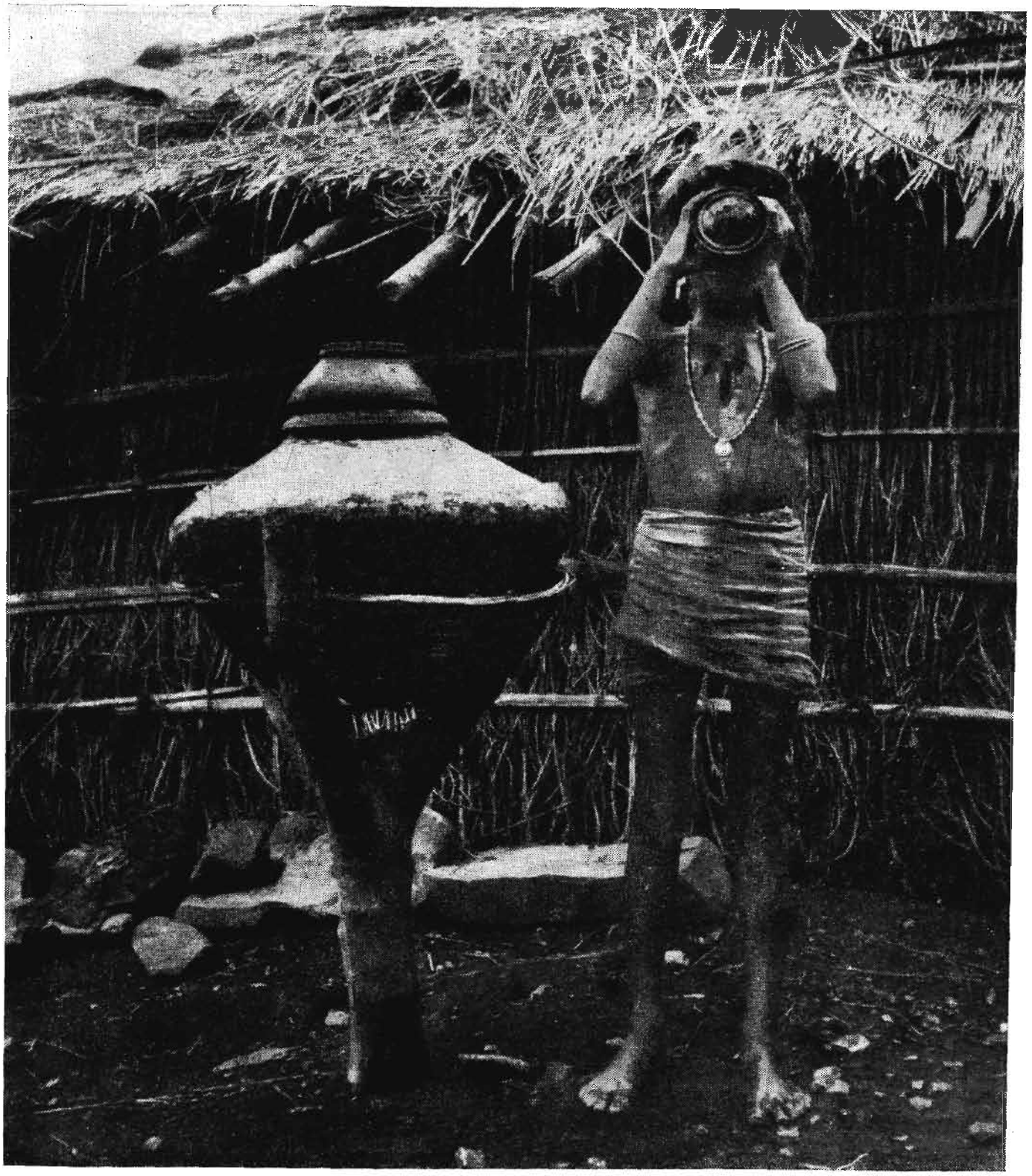
A large number of omens, both good and bad, are recognised by the Bhils. If a Bhil going on a business meets a woman carrying an empty pot on her head, he believes that his work will not be fruitful. Similarly, if he happens to see a cat or a snake crossing the road, it is treated as a bad omen. In case, he meets a woman carrying a pot filled with water, it promises success. If a kheka bird cries, some guest is expected in the house. The continuous cries of a crow sitting on the branch of a tree suggest illness or death. The cry of a kakadkumbha bird in Jestha or Asadha is a sign of storm and rain. If a man going out for bringing medicine meets a person with a bundle of fuel on head, it is considered a bad omen. When a Bhil goes out for work and somebody sneezes or makes water at the roadside, he believes that he is bound to fail in his mission. If he meets a suvasini, it promises success. Saturdays and Sundays are considered to be inauspicious for starting any good work. The number one is considered to be very lucky. If one's toes dash against a stone, it is a bad omen. If a cock moves his feathers in front of the door, it suggests arrival of a guest in the house. The sight of



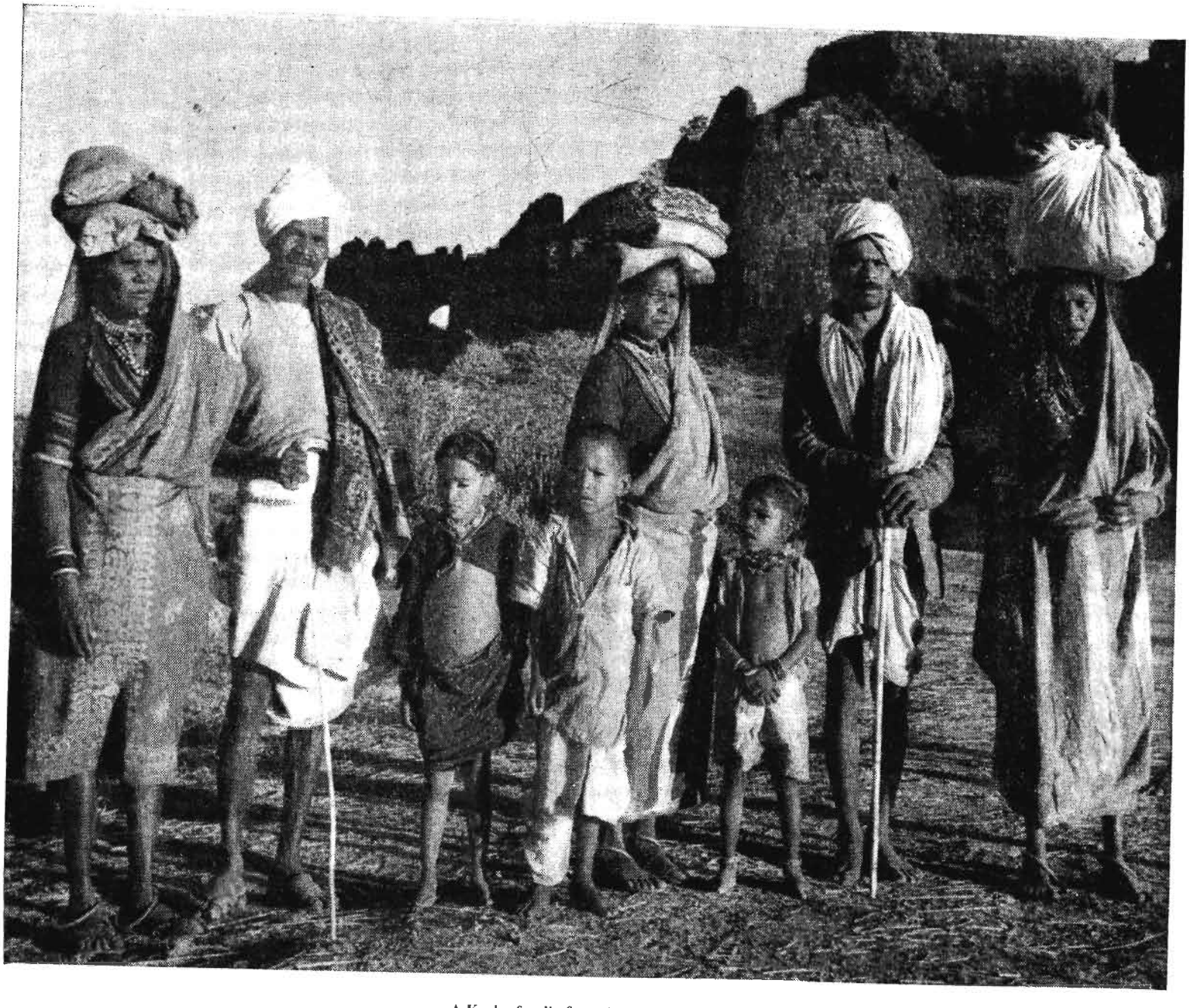
A Bhil family from Dhulia



A Pawara Bhil thatching his hut (Dhulia)



A Bhil girl from Dhulia



A Korku family from Amravati

a fire or dance in a dream is considered to be unlucky whereas that of a dead man or anything white is supposed to be lucky. The hill situated near Dab village at a distance of about eight miles from Sallibar is supposed to be the burial place of Sri Krishna and Arjun and that situated at a distance of about ten miles from the same village is believed to be the living place of the great Asvatthama.

The marriage ceremonies of the Bhils are conducted by the punjaro, the male priest of the tribe. Brahmans are not as a rule engaged by them for any ceremonial purpose. Some Bhils of Jalgaon employ brahmans as priests in marriages. The punjaro and the bhagat play an important role in their religious and social ceremonies. The punjaro serves them as a priest and the bhagat serves them as spiritual guide and medicine man. They are held in great esteem by the Bhils.

The Bhils observe the following Hindu festivals more or less on the same lines as the caste Hindus in the region :—

(1) Gudhi Padwa: This festival is on the first day of Chaitra. It is considered an auspicious day to start any new work or undertaking. The Bhils of Kolde start their agricultural operations of the new year from this day by ploughing a portion of the land. They do not erect a gudhi (flag pole) on this day as is done by caste Hindus. Most of the Bhils do not perform any rite on this occasion, but enjoy a feast and observe the day as a holiday.

(2) Akhaji: This is a day for commemorating one's ancestors by offering cooked food to them. It falls on Vaishakha sud 3 and is also known as Akhatri. On this day, the Bhils of Gandhali and Pilode worship an earthen pot and feed a man belonging to a different clan as pitar (ancestor) and offer cooked food to crows in the name of all the ancestors in the family. The Bhils of Kolde appoint Saldars (labourers who work on yearly contract), on this day as they regard the day to be an auspicious one and believe that any work started or anything done on this day will turn out well.

(3) Naga Panchami : This festival is celebrated on Shravana sud 5 in honour of cobras. The worship of varuls (ant-hills), with an offering of milk is its main feature. Only a few Bhils observe this festival.

(4) Pola: This is a day observed by agriculturists in honour of the bullocks on the new moon day of Shravan. Farmers who own cattle get up early in the morning and bathe their bullocks after anointing them with oil. Sindur is applied to their horns and glazed paper is stuck thereon. Their bodies are stamped with various designs and garlands of peacock feathers are put around their necks and at the tips of their horns. Coronets are also tied on to their horns. The bullocks are taken out in a procession round the temple of Maruti five times, brought home, worshipped and offered cooked food to eat. By the time Pola arrives, all agricultural operations are over and bullocks have particularly no work to do ; hence as a mark of acknowledging their utility to the farmer in cultivation, they are honoured on this day.

(5) Dasara: This festival falls on the tenth day of the bright half of Ashvin. On this day the Bhils of Kolde worship at the usual fixed place in the village with offerings of a coconut, arecanut, betel leaves, liquor, a few grains of rice and a hen. Farm implements are also worshipped. At Gandhali and Pilode, they feed a man of the tribe as pitar (ancestors) on the day preceding Dasara and on the day of festival they take out a procession of the tribesmen through the main streets of the village. The procession is led by the bhagat who walks in front with a long bamboo pole in hand to which are tied a garland of flowers, a piece of cloth, and a peacock feather. At Dhanora, they have a homa (fire) near the main entrance of the village and pour a little ghee into the fire. A goat is then taken round the village and, near the village gate, its four feet and horns are cut and buried ceremonially in the ground by the side of the fire. Its tail is cut and kept hanging from the roof above. Later on, the remaining portion of the goat is cooked and distributed as prasad.

(6) Divali is celebrated by the Bhils on different days in different ways. Those from Gandhali and Pilode observe the festival on the last day of Ashvin and the first day of Kartik more or less on the same lines as caste Hindus. They decorate their houses and huts, get up early in the morning, take a bath after anointing the body with oil, worship family deities and, if possible, wear new clothes, eat sweet dishes and light tiny earthen oil lamps in the evening. The Bhils of Sallibar, Kolde and Dhanora, observe the festival on any convenient day after the main agricultural operations are over, preferably in the month of Ashvin, Kartik or Margasirsh. A few days prior to that, the panchas of the tribe in the village sit together to discuss the subject with the tribesmen, fix the day for celebrations with their consent and collect contributions from every house to meet the expenses. Every village celebrates the festival on a different day so as to facilitate the participation of all neighbouring villagers. On the day of the festival, they have a dance or tamasha at the house of the karbhari or any other interested person. The next morning, they go to the nearby forest and worship the goddess, Pandhar with an offering of a goat or a hen which is later on cooked

and distributed as prasad. Then they enjoy a community dinner (bhandura). After dinner, they go to their houses, put a portion of the prasad in the food cooked at their houses and keep this food in front of the hearth in the name of deceased ancestors after pouring some liquor over it and sprinkling a few drops of water around it. After putting a portion of this food in the kitchen hearth, it is eaten by all members of the family.

Five days prior to the day of festival are observed by the Bhils of Sallibar as Palani (period for observing certain restrictions). They do not sleep on cots or eat meat during Palani. Association with women is also prohibited. At Dhanora, the Madavi (cast priest) takes the images of the gods, Sri Krishna and Arjun, in his hands before the commencement of the tamasha on the first day of the festival and any un-married girl of the tribe called Lakshmi, waves a lighted lamp before these images and the Madavi. The man at whose place the tamasha is staged, requests the Madavi to grant him health and wealth. The Madavi gets possessed and gives him his blessings by saying "you will get good health and wealth and enjoy a happy life". The host fasts on that day.

(7) Holi: This falls on the full moon day of Falgun though in practice it starts a few days earlier and lasts for a week more. A few days prior to the day, they collect logs of wood, dried leaves of trees and dung-cakes, in fact everything that can be burnt, in an open area of the hamlet. On Holi day, a pole of bamboo, teak or sawari is brought and fixed in the midst of this heap. A few cakes of wheat flour, pieces of coconut (vatya), a garland of gathya prepared from sugar, a garland of flowers, a palas fruit and a red cloth are tied to the top of this pole The heap is then lit and worshipped as Holi. A man of the tribe lifts the central pole from its place when it is on the point of falling down and moves with it at least five times round the Holi. At the end of the last round, the pole is cut with one stroke of a sword. In case, the man doing this fails to cut the pole in a stroke, he has to give Rs. 1·25 to the panchas. The ash of the burnt pole is then applied to the forehead and pieces of coconut are distributed as prasad. When this is over, those interested drink liquor and dance to the accompaniment of dhol, pavari and zanj throughout the night. The next day, a feast of shevaya is enjoyed and a plate containing coconut, gur, vatya, gathya and shevaya is sent to relatives as Holi present. Dancing continues for some days While dancing, the villagers pay them money. The amount so collected is spent on a non-vegetarian feast. Only men and unmarried girls participate in these dances. Grown-up women do not generally dance on such occasions.

Among festivals which are peculiar to the Bhils are Palodi, Nilichari or Nanduradev and Vaghdev. The first one is observed by the Bhils of Kolde, the second by the Bhils of Dhanora and the third by the Bhils of both these two places.

(8) Palodi is observed on any convenient day as fixed by the tribesmen preferably in April when trees and plants in the forest sprout new leaves. It is restricted to men only. On the day of festival, they worship the neighbouring forest with an offering of rice, liquor and a goat. They cook rice, dal, potato and mutton and enjoy a community feast in the forest. Expenses of the celebration are met by contribution from the villagers.

(9) Nilichari or Nanduradev is observed on any suitable day, preferably a Sunday in Jyesta after the rains have set in. The day is fixed by the panchas. On the day of festival, they keep farm implements in the field near the village boundary and worship them with an offering of coconut, eggs, liquor and handful of rice and wheat.

(10) Vaghdev is observed in honour of the tiger god and it is believed that by doing so they are protected from the tigers roaming around their villages. The Bhils of Kolde observe this festival on the full moon day of Shravan. On that day one tribesman becomes a tiger and the other pelt him with clods of earth. To avoid these clods, he starts running for a few minutes. On coming back, milk is offered to him. All the tribesmen then go in the neighbouring forest and worship the place where a tiger is believed to be found with an offering of cooked rice, milk and a vegetable dish of Tandla leaves. After distributing this as prasad of the tiger god, a portion of it is kept in the house on a teak leaf as it is believed that by doing so, they are protected from the tigers. The Bhils of Dhanora observe this festival on the Sunday prior to the full moon day of Sravan in a slightly different manner. Formerly, they used to observe it on the full moon day of Sravan. Early that morning they go into their fields and fix there five or six branches of palas tree. On coming home, a branch of the same tree is fixed in the compound of the house and at the place where cow dung manure is stored. In the evening, they enjoy a community dinner on the bank of a river or at any other convenient place. Before that, a man of the tribe who becomes a tiger is offered milk to drink. This man then starts running and the assembled children pelt him with stones. The man who becomes a tiger on this occasion observes a fast during the day and takes his meal only in the evening at the time of the community dinner.

Leisure and recreation

The Bhils indulge in smoking, drinking and gossip in their leisure time. A few go hunting wild animals and birds such as hare, peacock and pigeon. Singing

and dancing form part of their recreation. These two are seasonal activities enjoyed mostly at the time of marriages and at festivals like Divali and Holi. Women enjoy dancing along with men and dance to the tune of dhol (drum), pavari and zanj, on the above occasions. Cinema shows exhibited by the block development authorities in their villages or in the neighbouring villages, are enjoyed by them occasionally. They, however, do not play any game, outdoor or indoor.

A large number of Bhils work as agriculturists. Consequently, their hours of work and leisure are common to all. The different agricultural operations keep them busy from June to February, when they get leisure only during the afternoon recess and after dinner. In the afternoon, they generally take a nap. At night after dinner, this leisure is generally spent in smoking bidis and gossiping. Those interested in drinking take country liquor. It is only during the off season from March to May that they have leisure during the day and work for only three or four hours in the morning. A visit to the weekly market held in the neighbouring village forms part of their ammusement. Some go to their kinsmen, pass the leisure in their company for a couple of days and enjoy a feast of mutton, if circumstances permit. Boys have no special recreational activities. Sometimes, they go to the forests to collect seasonal fruits ; women also have no special recreational activities.

Relations within the community

According to the President's order, 1960, the Bhils are divided into a number of sections such as Bhil Garasia, Dholi Bhil, Dungri Bhil, Dungri Garasia, Mewasi Bhil, Rawal Bhil, Tadvi Bhil, Bhagatia, Bhilala, Pawara, Vasava and Vasave. Enthoven classifies the Khandesh Bhils into three broad groups—(1) Plain Bhils, (2) Hill and forest tribes, and (3) Mixed tribes. According to him the plain Bhils are known simply as Bhils, the hill and forest tribes include Barda, Dangchi, Dhanka, Dhorepi, Gavit, Khotil, Mathvadi, Mavchi, Nahal, Pavra, Varli and Vasava, and the mixed tribes are Bhilala (half Bhil half Rajput or Kunbi), Nirdhi (half Muslim half Bhil), and Tadvi (half Muslim half Bhil). He also mentions that of the above sections, Khotils and Nahals are regarded by the pure Bhils as inferior because they eat carrion and do not hesitate to touch a dead cow (pp. 156, 173, 174, 175). Venkatachar speaks of seven sections of the Bhils which include Bhil, Bhilala, Barela, Mankar, Nihal, Patlia and Rathia. According to him, Bhilalas claim Rajput descent and are considered to be of higher status than the others and the Patlias are almost on the same footing as the Bhilalas and have an admixture of Rajput blood in them (pp 51, 58). Natu also speakes of seven sections of the Bhils such as Patlia, Bhilala, Rathia, Bhil, Rawal, Dhanka and Naika. According to him among other things, ranking of these groups seems to be based principally upon the type of animal food acceptable to them and he thinks that in this order the Patlias come at the top, followed by others with the Naika at the bottom of the scale. Patlias may eat only goat's meat and the meat of certain game such as deer. Bhilala and Rathia may eat wild boar. Bhils eat the flesh of buffalo on certain ceremonial occasions and most wild game and fowl are acceptable to them. The lower status attached to Rawal, appears to be probably because of his functional role as a priest and barber to the Bhils. Dhanka is considerably dirty in his ways of life. As regards Naika, most animal flesh is acceptable to him, including beef. He is alleged to eat even the carcasses of these animals (pp. 60-61).

Dungri, Dangchi, Mathvadi and Rathia appear to be territorial sections of the Bhils as their names are associated with the Dongar (a hill), Dang (a district in Gujarat), Mathvad (a former state situated north of the Narmada) and Rath (a territory which in former days formed part of Alirajpur State).

Enthoven regards Ravals and Dholis as separate castes, and not sections of the Bhils as mentioned in the President's order, 1960. According to him, Dholis are the bhats or genealogists of Bhils who also supply music at their weddings and funerals and the chief duty of the Raval is to officiate at a funeral feast at the house of a Bhil and it is for this that each Bhil clan has a Raval attached to it (p. 167). This, however, could not be confirmed during the field study.

In the villages surveyed, the Bhils proper, Vasavas and Vasaves were interviewed with a view to get an idea of the ethnic relations existing between the reported groups of the Bhils. Some Gavits, Mavchis, Dhankas and Naikas living at other places were also contacted. Those consulted, had little knowledge of the reported sections of the Bhils. From discussions held with them it appears that Bhils, Gavit, Valvi, Vasave, Padvi and Naik from Kolde and Dhanora, call themselves as Mewasi Bhils. According to them, it is a territorial name given to them after the name of a territory in Gujarat which in old times was ruled over by a Bhil king. Among the sections of the Bhils known to them, Pavras are held superior to all in the social set-up of the tribe. Next to them are Vasave (Vasava), Valvi and Padvi. Gavits and Mavchis rank third. Bhil, Naik, Barda, Kotval, Varli Bhil, Dhanka, Ambuda, Mathavadi and Tadvi are held as the lowest. Nowadays, the Bardas, Dhankas, Gavits, Varlis, Patlias and Naikas regard themselves as distinct and

separate from the Bhils. The reason why they dis-associate themselves from the Bhils is perhaps their desire to have higher social position in the hierarchy of castes and escape the lower status attached to the Bhils. In consequence of this, they now consider themselves to be socially superior to the Bhils. They are also shown as independent tribes in the President's order, 1960. Similarly, some Mavchis regard themselves as a section of Gavit, mostly with a view to enjoy a status higher than that attached to the Bhils. They have also been shown as a section of Gavit in the President's order, 1960. All these communities do not permit marital ties with the Bhils as well as with each other. Some of them even do not accept food from the Bhils. According to Dhankas, Mavchis and Gavits, they were formerly Bhils but now they deny any connections with the Bhils and regard themselves as distinct and separate from them. Naikas on the other hand do not recognise any affinity with the Bhils. Some Gavits and Mavchis accept that they are sections of the Bhils but at the same time they say, they are superior to the Bhils. Consequently, they do not intermarry with the Bhils nor accept food from them. Of the remaining sections, each forms an endogamous group and as such inter-group marriages do not take place. Except the Tadvis who are Muslims by religion and a few Bhils and Mavchis who are Christians, all the other groups are Hindus.

Each of the Bhil groups is further divided into a number of exogamous clans. All the clans belonging to the same group are, however, regarded as equal in social status. According to Naik, for establishing marital ties the Bhils are divided into two big sections—the haga and the hagwadia. The hagas include brothers, cousins, clansmen and a still wider circle of the hagas of hagas on the paternal side. Marriage between two hagas is not allowed. The other division, the hagwadia, is made up of the marriageable relatives, relatives-in-law and their hagas. In settling a marriage the Bhils first find out whether the prospective relation is a haga or hagwadia (p. 55). Bhils from the villages surveyed also have these two sections though they do not know them by these names or by any such other name.

The Bhils do not think it proper to give equal rights or equal share to women in ancestral property. They also do not approve their women folk taking part in public activities along with men in meetings, village panchayat affairs, and in discussions, though they consider it quite normal for women to work with men. However, in domestic matters women are given their due share and are consulted in household affairs and in marriage negotiations. Though marriage negotiations are carried on by men, women have a voice in the choice of the bride.

Inter-community relationship

The Bhils are not subject to any social disability when they come in their contacts with other groups though they occupy a lower status in the social hierarchy of the region. They fetch water from public wells along with others. They enter the temples. Brahman priests preside over their marriages. Generally, the Bhils do not come into close contact with the other castes. Nevertheless they are invited to the houses of caste Hindus on occasions like Satyanarayan Puja and marriages. The latter also attend their marriages and other social ceremonies. The Bhils are by no means considered to be ritually impure. In terms of a caste frame of reference, they are considered as belonging to a lower caste because of their food habits. Consequently, caste Hindus do not accept food from them. The Bhils accept this ranking and concede the superiority of the above tribes in the social set-up of the region. Among the scheduled tribes, the Bhils rank lower in status than Koli Mahadev, Koknas, Gamits, Dhankas, Thakurs and Varlis. These tribes do not accept food from them. The Bhils accept this ranking. They enjoy a better social position than the Nayakas and the scheduled castes like Mahars, Chambhars and Bhangis. They maintain cordial relations with all the other castes and tribes in the neighbourhood and go to each other in times of rejoicing and distress.

Social control and leadership

Like other tribal communities of the region the Bhils also have certain rules regarding marriage, divorce, food, drink and morals for effective social control. By enforcing these rules they try to safeguard the social prestige of the tribe in the region. Any person who behaves in a way injurious to the prestige of the community is censured and fined. The Bhils have panchayats of their own in every hamlet of the village. These panchayats regulate the affairs of the community.

Disputes within the family or among relatives are settled by the elders of the kin's group. Disputes involving other members of the community are referred to the community panchas. If persons belonging to different localities are involved in any issue, inter-locality panchayats are convened. These panchayats at the different levels do not have formally elected or appointed members. Generally elderly persons who carry some influence because of their character or wealth or any other reason constitute the panchayat. They meet together as and when occasion arises to settle the dispute. One of them who is either senior in age and experience or commands more respect from the members of the community officiates as the

head of this panchayat. He is called karbhari. All these persons enjoy their offices so long as they retain the confidence of the members of the tribe. In a majority of cases, the matter is settled amicably through a compromise. In case, no compromise is arrived at, the person at fault is fined from Rs. 5 to Rs. 25 or even more and the amount collected is spent in drinks or on a caste feast. In case, the amount is more, it is spent on some useful purpose. The amount of fine depends mostly on the nature of the crime. If the decision given by the panchas is not acceptable to either of the parties, the party concerned is free to approach a court of law for justice ; but before that, the matter is generally referred to the karbhari of the main village if the village has a number of hamlets.

The majority of cases coming before the panchayat pertains to love, marriage, divorce, ill-treatment, food, drink and morals. On receiving a complaint, the head of the panchayat or, in his absence, any one of the panchas calls a meeting of the panchayat. The panchas sit in a semi-circle and the head of the panchayat or, in his absence, any elder or respected man from among the panchas opens the proceedings. The complainant and the accused present their cases and produce witnesses, if any, in support of their argument. After hearing them, the panchas discuss the case between them and pass the decision unanimously. Sometimes they seek the advice of some influencial persons in the village who are not in any way interested in either of the parties concerned, so as to ascertain the facts. This mostly happens when the panchas hold different views. Women generally do not take part in this discussion unless their presence is required as a witness for the sake of evidence. The decision of the panchas has a strong moral force behind it as it is supported by the majority of the community Besides, there is a fear of ex-communication from the caste. It is, therefore, generally obeyed by both the parties. However, it is observed that in recent times this tribal organisation of the Bhils is losing importance.

Besides the caste organisation, there is a statutory village panchayat which looks after the sanitary conditions and the general development of the village. The police patel is the headman of the village, being the non-official representative of the Government. He has certain duties in the sphere of law and order in the village and hence the name. As the village headman, he enjoys an important status in the village. The police patel and the members of the village panchayat, however, do not interfere in the affairs of the caste organisation of the Bhils, unless their advice is sought to effect a compromise in certain complicated cases. Nevertheless, there is now a growing tendency among the villagers to refer their petty quarrels to the police patel as he is the village headman and commands more respect from the villagers than anybody else. This tendency is weakening the caste organisation of the Bhils.

While describing the caste organisation of the Bhils in 1931, Venkatachar mentions that before the organisation of a judiciary in the state, the panchayat used to decide all cases. Later on it tried cases pertaining to the caste (p. 57). Naik, T. B. states that the panchayat met when unmarried people ran away, when through pre-marital sex relations a woman became pregnant and when a married woman of one village went away to another man in a different village. In cases, where only one man is concerned, the Bhils of the girl's village may gather and decide themselves the fine ; where two men are concerned, elderly Bhils from both the villages gather and decide the matter (p. 53). According to Nath, the village panchas normally include all the adult males in the village except in larger villages where only the heads of different families or lineages sit as panchas. Any interested person could attend this meeting and express his views freely on the question under discussion. Subjects discussed by this assembly may range from an impending visit of a revenue officer to the elopement of a married woman. Once the case is decided by the panchas, it is expected that it will not be reopened (pp. 174-178). The caste organisation of the Bhils observed in the investigated villages is more or less of the same pattern as described by the above writers.

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GAMIT, GAMTA OR GAVIT

The Gavits are notified in the President's order, 1960 as "Gamit, Gamta or Gavit, including Mavchi, Padvi, Vasava, Vasave and Valvi". The tribesmen living in the villages of Dhanrat, Visarwadi and Khatgaon (in Nawapur tehsil of Dhulia district), which were visited for this ethnographic study of the community, say that Gamit or Gamta is a synonym of Gavit and Vasava that of Vasave. The other people of the region also know them by the same names. The tribesmen regard Gavit, Mavchi, Vasave, Padvi and Valvi as sections of the same community which is popularly known as Gavit. All these sections have equal social status, accept food from each other and intermarry. This study indicated that they shared common cultural features and their social systems did not fundamentally differ from each other. The Gavits, however, are found to be somewhat economically better off among all of them.

The President's order mentions Vasava and Vasave as sections of the Bhils and Valvi that of the Dhanka. The Vasava or Vasave sections of the Gavit, however, do not intermarry with the Vasavas and Vasaves who are considered as Bhils. Similarly, the Valvi section of the Gavit does not permit marriages with the Valvi section of the Dhanka as they regard themselves to be separate and socially superior to the latter. A few Vasaves and Valvis of Kolde (Nawapur), who were interviewed for a study of the Bhil tribe, said the Vasaves and Valvis were sections of the Bhils. They do not agree with those who regard the Vasaves as a section of the Gavit and the Valvis that of the Dhanka. They say they are a section of the Bhils even when admitting that they hesitate to dine with the Bhils. In the hierarchy of castes, they regard themselves to be equal to the Gavits but superior to the Bhils. Consequently, they do not have marital alliances with the Bhils, but encourage such relations with Gavits. This may lead one to believe that Vasavas and Vasaves appearing in the President's order as sections of the Bhils as well as the Gavit are not exclusively separate and distinct communities. Similar is the case with the Valvis who are shown as sections of the Gavit as well as the Dhanka. The Gavits enjoy a comparatively higher social position among tribes of the region like the Dhanka, Naika, Barda and Bhil. Next to them are the Dhankas; the Bhils are assigned a lower status as they are reported to eat carrion.

Some old tribesmen say that Gavit is derived from the word 'Gao', meaning a village. They say their forefathers were once headmen of villages and the name Gavit got associated with them. They, however, do not know as to why they are called Mavchi, Padvi, Vasave and Valvi.

Enthoven says that Gavit, Mavchi and Vasava are hill and forest tribes like Barda, Dhanka, Dangkhi, Khatil, Pavra and Nahal. He adds that all these hill and forest tribes constitute one of the three big groups of Bhils, the other two being the plains Bhils and mixed tribes (p. 156). In the investigated villages also, the Gavit trace their origin from the Bhils but they now regard themselves as separate and distinct from the Bhils and consider the latter as lower in the social scale. Most of the Gavits in the State speak Bhili as their mother-tongue.

The tribe is concentrated in Dhulia which is a part of the region known as Khandesh. The tribesmen do not know from where their forefathers came to stay in their present settlement.

Distribution

Gamit, Gamta or Gavit, including Mavchi, Padvi, Vasava, Vasave and Valvi, are notified as a scheduled tribe in the 13 districts of western Maharashtra. In the 1961 census, they returned a population of 102,321 persons (51,796 males and 50,525 females) from only eight districts—Dhulia (101,607), Thana (481), Nasik (103), Greater Bombay (53), Sholapur (39), Satara (20), Poona (14), and Kolaba (4). Of these, 98,842 (96·60) were returned from rural areas and 3,479 (3·40) from urban areas. Dhulia had the largest concentration (101,607), in the Nawapur (60,574), Nandurbar (12,457), Akkalkuwa (10,470), Sakri (8,660) and Taloda (5,210), tehsils which together accounted for 95·16 per cent of their population in the State. With Bhil, Gamit, Dhanka, Kokna, Naika and Pardhi as predominant tribes, Dhulia has the largest proportion of scheduled tribes in the State. The Bhils are the largest scheduled tribe in the district and the second largest group is of the Gavits. The district has large forest areas which offer good facilities of labour to a number of landless persons in all the seasons.

The 1961 sex-ratio for the Gavits was 975. Out of the 102,321 persons, 48,018 (46·93) were in the age-group 0 to 14; 42,027 (41·07) in the age-group 15 to 45; and 12,268 (11·99) in the age-group 45 and above. Eight had not recorded their ages at the time of the 1961 census.

Family and kinship

Family among the Gavits is patrilocal with patronymic designation. After marriage, a girl goes to stay with her husband. A study of 930 Gavit households from Nandurbar and Nawapur showed that 468 households consisted of father, mother, un-married sons and daughters ; only in 97 households married sons were living with their parents. Only eighteen of these 930 households had women as heads. Scrutiny of 128 households from Nandurbar indicated that the average number of persons per household was 5·9. Sons inherit the property of their father in equal shares. In the case of a joint family which usually consists of a couple, their children and descendants in the male line, the senior male is normally the head and his word is final in all matters relating to the welfare of the family.

The tribe is divided into kuls. Some clan names met with during the field study were Malvi, Desai, Gayali, Kuvar, Borthi, Naik, Deha or Dehe and Bhor. There does not seem to be any hierarchy either among the clans or within one clan. But it was observed at Dhanrat that persons belonging to the Dehe regarded themselves as superior to others. The mother's brother and the father's sister have special roles. The maternal uncle shaves the first hair of a newly born child. A maternal uncle's daughter is given preference while selecting a match for the boy.

Dwelling

Each of the three investigated villages has a number of hamlets (padas) which are connected with each other by kachcha roads and foot-paths. Dhanrat has eight hamlets which are inhabited by Gamits (47) and Mavchis (127). Some Bhil households (20) were also found living along with them. Of the nine hamlets (including the main village) of Visarwadi, eight are inhabited by Gavits. In the main village, they are found living with caste Hindu communities like Gosavi, Kumbhar, Nhavi, Maratha, Wani, Lohar and Sutar.

The Gavit houses are built on a simple earth foundation with walls of bamboo or boru ribs, plastered with mud and cow dung on both sides, and roofs of ordinary tiles. Houses with thatched roofs are comparatively few. The doors are made of wood. The houses have no windows or verandahs. A slab kept outside the house serves the purpose of a bath-room. A house having only one room has generally a bamboo partition dividing it into two compartments. Bigger houses provide a separate kitchen, a store-room, a retiring room and a shed for cattle and a well-to-do man's house has a room or two more, with a veranda at the front and an enclosure around. Such a house has generally three or four doors, but no windows.

Dress

Older men wear a dhoti, a bandi or kopari and a feta. On occasions like marriages, they wear a dogali (a shirt with full sleeves) and sometimes a coat instead of a bandi. Young men wear a shirt in place of the kopari and a topi instead of a feta. The coat is equally popular among them. The loin cloth has practically disappeared. School-boys put on a chaddi or lehangi (shorts), a shirt and a topi. Women wear a nine-yard sari and a choli. The sari is divided into two pieces. One is worn from the waist upto the knees and the other above the waist. Girls wear frocks or ghagro (skirts).

Men keep moustaches but shave the beard. Many young people have shaved off their moustaches. Women part their hair in the middle and tie it behind in a knot.

Old men or those in good circumstances wear some silver ornaments only occasionally. These include kudchya or sakhalya in the ears, kada (around wrists), mundi round the finger and kandora or sakhal (chain) round the waist. Women's ornaments are of gold, silver, beads and glass. These include bangadya and patalya around the wrists, balya or tandale (in the ear), kato or fulugi on the nose and sakhal or korane (around the legs). They also wear gathala (a necklace of black beads), doreha (a necklace of white stones), rupyahar (a necklace of silver coins) and chohora (also a necklace), wakdya, baje or kade round the arms and tolo on the toes. In their daily life, they wear a few glass bangles, a gathala, a fulugi and kade. Women get tattooed on their forearms or on foreheads. One's own name or the husband's name is tattooed on the forearm ; a representation of a tree or a design is tattooed on the forehead. The practice is not so common now as in earlier days.

Food and drink

The Gavits take fish, eggs, mutton and fowl but abstain from beef. Their daily meals include pulses, jowar bhakri and chutni. Rice is consumed frequently. Sometimes, they take vegetables. It is only occasionally that they can afford to take meat and fish. Butter-milk, ghee and such other milk preparations are included occasionally in the diet of families having milch cattle. Poor families have to subsist on roots, various fruits and berries, edible flowers, leaves and honey during the lean months. Drinking of country liquor is quite common among men. It has a social and religious significance ; it is taken by them during dances, village meetings and on ceremonial occasions. Tea is taken with gur.

Their household utensils are made of brass, aluminium, iron and clay. A stone hand-mill, a stone or wooden mortar and a long wooden pestle are also seen with many families. They keep buckets, baskets, soops, lanterns or wall lamps and wooden cots. A cultivating household has also a pair of bullocks, a goat or two and some fowls, in addition to farm implements.

Hygiene and sanitation

Most of the Gavits live in kachcha houses having no windows for ventilation. Garbage is thrown just outside their houses and is not removed from that place for days together. Water in kachcha wells gets muddied and polluted. The Gavits are more particular about personal cleanliness. They clean their teeth every morning, bathe regularly and wash their clothes frequently. The floors of their houses are kept clean and tidy by periodical smearing of cow dung. For treatment of diseases, they depend on their bhagat. As their villages are situated in the interior they have no other provision for medical aid or treatment. The bhagat's office is not hereditary.

Language and literacy

In the 1961 census, the Gavits returned 14 mother-tongues. Bhili was the mother-tongue of 64,155 persons, Mavchi of 27,100 and Marathi of 10,014. There were 188 speakers of Vasava, 173 of Gamit or Gavit and 30 of Padvi. Excepting Gujarati and Telugu which were spoken by 412 and 128 persons, respectively, the speakers of each of the remaining six mother-tongues were less than 100. Twenty-two males returned English as a subsidiary language. The principal subsidiary languages spoken were Hindi (1,165), Gujarati (454) and Marathi (310).

At Dhanrat, the Gavits speak Mavchi at home, but with outsiders they speak either in Marathi or in Gujarati. At Khatgaon, they speak Gujarati among themselves, but with outsiders they speak either in Marathi or in Gujarati. They also understand Hindi though they cannot speak it.

The Gavits, especially the males are conscious of the importance of education. They, however, do not seem to be much interested in the education of female children ; they say that if their girls go to schools, their marriage would be a problem to them since they may not get equally educated boys for them in the community. In the investigated villages, their children go to schools in fairly good numbers. After passing vernacular final or matriculation, many of them try to join government service as clerks, village level workers, teachers, talathis, peons, policemen and forest guards.

Out of the 102,321 persons returned in the 1961 census, 11,506 (11·25) were literate. The break-up of their population by educational standard is shown below :—

Area	Illiterate			Literate without educational level			Primary or junior basic			Matriculation or higher secondary			Total		
	P	M	F	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	14	15	16
Rural	87,813	40,446	47,367	7,408	6,271	1,137	3,607	3,216	391	14	14	..	98,842	49,947	48,895
Urban	3,002	1,463	1,539	222	162	60	251	221	30	4	3	1	3,479	1,849	1,630
Total . ..	90,815	41,909	48,906	7,630	6,433	1,197	3,858	3,437	421	18	17	1	102,321	51,796	50,525

Economic life

The 1961 returns showed 59,921 (58·56) Gavits as workers. The sex-wise break-up was 30,821 (59·50) out of 51,796 males and 29,100 (57·58) out of 50,525 females were workers. In the rural areas, these percentages worked out to 59·67 for males and 58·16 for females as against 55·16 for males and 40·61 for females in urban areas.

The industrial classification of workers of the community is as shown in the statement on page 157.

Their largest concentration (95·00) was in agriculture and agricultural labour. The 1,231 persons shown under the category of 'other services' included house servants, teachers, talathis, village level workers, village panchayat secretaries as well as peons and clerks working in government, semi-government or private institutions. Most of the persons shown under category III reared cattle and worked as labourers either with the forest department or with forest contractors and those under category 'Trade and Commerce', were petty shop-keepers or employed in shops.

Statement showing the industrial classification of workers

Category	Total			Rural			Urban		
	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I ..	39,639 (66·15)	20,809 (67·52)	18,830 (64·71)	39,459 (67·75)	20,684 (69·41)	18,775 (66·02)	180 (10·70)	125 (12 25)	55 (8·31)
II .	17,492 (29·19)	7,932 (25 74)	9,560 (32·85)	17,120 (29·40)	7,781 (26·11)	9,339 (32·84)	372 (22·12)	151 (14·80)	221 (33·38
III ..	454 (0·76)	417 (1·35)	37 (0·13)	407 (0·70)	370 (1·24)	37 (0·13)	47 (2·79)	47 (4·61)	....
IV ..	191 (0 32)	166 (0·54)	25 (0·09)	182 (0·31)	161 (0·54)	21 (0·07)	9 (0·53)	5 (0·49)	4 (0·60)
V ..	279 (0·47)	235 (0·76)	44 (0·15)	144 (0·25)	110 (0·37)	34 (0·12)	135 (8·03)	125 (12·25)	10) (1·51)
VI ..	75 (0 13)	52 (0·17)	23 (0·08)	37 (0·06)	30 (0·10)	7 (0·03)	38 (2·26)	22 (2·16)	16 (2·42)
VII ..	362 (0·60)	175 (0·57)	187 (0·64)	160 (0·28)	103 (0·35)	57 (0·20)	202 (12·01)	72 (7·06)	130 (19·64)
VIII ..	198 (0·33)	182 (0·59)	16 (0·05)	129 (0·22)	129 (0·43)	....	69 (4·10)	53 (5·20)	16 (2·42)
IX ..	1,231 (2·05)	853 (2·76)	378 (1·30)	601 (1·03)	433 (1·45)	168 (0 59)	630 (37·46)	420 (41·18)	210 (31·72)
Total Workers (I to IX)	59,921 (100·00)	30,821 (100·00)	29,100 (100·00)	58,239 (100·00)	29,801 (100·00)	28,438 (100·00)	1,682 (100·00)	1,020 (100·00)	662 (100·00)

A study of 9,309 agricultural households from Nawapur and Nandurbar tehsils showed that 6,134 (65·89) owned or held land from government, 674 households (7·24) cultivated others' lands on lease and 2,501 (26·87) did not possess any land for purposes of cultivation. Of the 674 households who cultivated others' lands on lease, 509 households cultivated it on cash payment and 165 on crop share. Among the 6,134 landholders, three had land less than one acre, 2,625 (42·79) had land between one acre and 9·9 acres, 1,427 (23·26) held land from 10 acres to 14·9 acres and 1,392 households (22·69) owned land rising from 15 acres to 24·9 acres. There were 687 households (11·20) holding land 25 acres and above. Among the 6,134 landholders, there were 58 households who leased out their entire land to others ; 51 households who cultivated their own land and also took others' lands on lease. Leaseholders paid 4 to 6 times of the land revenue or even more as rent ; they also incurred all the expenses of cultivation.

Among the 42,400 persons returned as non-workers in the 1961 census, 5,553 (13·10) were full-time students or children attending schools.

The Gavits and Mavchis living in the villages surveyed are primarily cultivators. According to them, cultivation of land is their traditional occupation. The Bombay gazetteer has also reported that they are mainly cultivators. In the villages studied, they grow paddy, jowar and cotton as major crops and wheat, nagli, varai and dadar as minor crops. Some of them also grow groundnut, urid, khurasani and kulith. Vegetables like chavali, pumpkin, val and onion, brinjal, chilli and a variety of green plants are also grown by a few of them in the open space around their houses. Most of these vegetables are seasonal and are available during the late monsoon and in spring. Among the tools they use are the ol (wooden plough), pamar (for sowing), kulpi (for weeding), olta (for levelling), kurhad (axe), kudal (clod breaker), and koyata (sickle). The principal draught animal is the bullock. They also keep other cattle, goats and poultry. Cattle represent a form of wealth to them which tends to increase as the years pass.

The agricultural cycle starts towards the end of May. Sowing is done soon after the first good showers in late June or early July.

The Gavits and Mavchis usually grow two crops, one in the monsoon and a second in the winter, depending upon adequate and early rains. The monsoon crops are mainly paddy, nagli, varai, jowar and cotton ; the principal winter crops are wheat, gram and dadar. The sowing of monsoon crops is done early in July ; they are harvested in October. Winter sowing is done in November and harvesting in February or March. Rab (burning the land) is done by the end of May, ploughing in June, sowing in July, weeding in July, August and September and cutting in October. Ploughing is done with a wooden plough and a pair of bullocks and sowing with a pamar and nai. Weeding and cutting are done with a sickle.

Cow dung and compost manure are commonly used. A fairly good number of cultivators have started using chemical manures. Their main complaint is that they do not get these manures easily at the right time ; when made available, they are short of funds to purchase them. Even in a good year the yield they get is not sufficient to last them through the year. Many of them are forced to fall back upon secondary resources of food and income ; collection of forest produce and labour in forests are among them. Besides, they produce and sell milk, rear cattle and keep poultry. For raising cash, they sell money crops like cotton, groundnut, khurasani and kulith. In case more cash is required, part of the food crop is also sold after keeping some in reserve for the next year's seed.

Indebtedness is common among them. They have to borrow money for purchase of seeds, cattle, fertiliser and for marriage or such other ceremonies. In the first case, they try to get loans from co-operative societies or from government in the form of tagai by mortgaging land or cattle ; in the latter case, they have to depend mostly on private moneylenders. The rate of interest charged is often more than 25 per cent.

Life cycle

A girl in menstruation keeps aloof for four or five days and is deemed to be purified on the fourth or fifth day, after taking a bath. During menstruation, she is not allowed to cook food or fetch water though she is permitted to go out for field work. No rite is observed when she attains age. Similarly, there is no ceremony when a married woman conveives for the first time. In a majority of cases, a pregnant woman takes her usual diet and attends to her daily work. Delivery takes place at the husband's house. In a few cases, a woman goes to her father for the purpose. A midwife (huvaki) of Gavit or Mavchi tribe is engaged at the time of delivery. In difficult cases, a trained midwife from the nearest maternity centre is also employed. When the child is born, the midwife cuts its nal with a boru chip and buries the placenta in a pit in a corner of the hut and keeps a stone over it. The midwife serves the mother and the child for five days and is paid from Rs. 2 to Rs. 5 and some corn. In the case of a second or third delivery, she is paid less. The mother is held impure for five weeks after child-birth. She is given dasali (a preparation of rice without salt) for the first five days. She takes light food, preferably rice and dal, for the next two weeks ; thereafter, she takes her usual diet. She resumes her duties after five weeks but not go for out-door work till she regains her normal health.

On the fifth day after child birth, Pecharo is performed. The huvaki worships a mortar and keeps in front of it some rice or a little liquor and a few coins. Five children are fed and after that relatives and tribesmen are feasted. Those attending the feast put some coins according to their means in a plate containing rice as a present to the child. Children are named on the same day. In the investigated villages Madan, Arvind, Gulab, Mohan, Vikram, Pratap, Ajit, Sudhir, Babu and Nanda are some names given to male children as against the old names like Madya, Kotodya, Sipadya, Shiva, Vajya, Munga, Bimla, Chamtya, Mokanya, Devji, and Huraji. Similarly, Sudha, Kunda, Vrunda, Uma, Mina, Bina, Sindhu, Vimal, Lata, Yamuna, Rekha, Kamal, Usha, Pushpa, and Mangala are some of the names given to their female children as against the names of old women like Bondali, Zalu, Bhilki, Kochari, Fuli, Relu, Manshi, Chamdi and Kasu.

The first hair of a child is shaved on any convenient day after six months from its birth. Its maternal uncle cuts a few locks with scissors, the rest of the hair being shaved by a barber. A hen is offered to the maternal uncle as a present. The lower lobes of the child's ears are pierced after a year or so by a goldsmith. They also nowadays get their children vaccinated.

In cases where premarital sex relations take place the boy's father is simply asked to pay the usual dej to the girl's father and after that the girl is handed over to the boy. Both the boy and the girl are then allowed to stay together as husband and wife without actual marriage rites.

Boys are married at the ages 17 and 18 and girls between the ages 15 and 16. In the 1961 census, 108 males out of 24,292 and 343 females out 23,276 were returned as married in the age-group 0-14. A study of 971 married couples of the tribe from Dhulia showed that as a rule the husband was older than his wife, in a majority of cases the difference between their ages did not exceed five years.

Marriage within the same kul is prohibited. Marriage with mother's brother's daughter or father's sister's daughter and wife's sister is allowed. Marriage with mother's sister's daughter or father's brother's daughter is not permitted.

Marriage takes place at the boy's residence at about 4 a.m. preferably on any Monday in the month of Chaitra, Vaisakh, Jyesta or Ashadha. Most of the marriages take place in Vaisakh or Jyesta. The service is conducted by a male priest (Punjaro) of the tribe. Though monogamy is practised there is no serious objection to polygyny.

The offer of marriage comes from the boy's side. The boy's father goes to the girl's father with his proposal. If the party receives a favourable reply, liquor is served to all and, if possible, a part of the dej is paid to the father of the girl. After fixing the date for the payment of the remaining part of the dej, the boy's party returns.

A few days later some important men from the boy's side go to the girl's place to pay dej. Bride price varies from Rs. 250 to Rs. 500. Besides, some cash is paid to the patel and villagers and a sari, a bodice and some ornaments are presented to the girl. At Dhanrat, the patel of the village receives Rs. 1·25 and Rs. 25 to Rs. 40 are paid to the villagers for entertainment. A sari, a bodice, corn, some thread, a bottle of coconut oil and a few ornaments are presented to the girl.

The girl's party goes to the boy's village along with the girl for the marriage ceremony so as to reach there before evening. The boy's father and his party receives the guests, offer them some bottles of liquor and lead them to the place where arrangements are made for their stay. It is said that the guests from the girl's side do not get down from their carts unless they receive liquor from the boy's father. After a rest, the boy goes to the girl and offers Rs. 1·25 to her after which the latter takes her meal. Persons from both the sides then take their meals at their respective places. There is dancing throughout the night. It stops only an hour prior to the actual time of marriage. Meanwhile some suvasinis from the boy's side go to the girl and apply haldi to her body. Women from the girl's side go to the boy and rub haldi to his body. This is repeated nine times. The girl then takes her bath, after which the boy is given a bath. At the time of taking bath some haldi and some coins are put in the bucket containing water. This water is later on poured on the head of the boy and the girl. The boy and the girl are then dressed in new clothes and brought near a ukhali (mortar) on which is kept a basket containing rice. The girl is made to sit on this basket. The boy sits on a pat kept by the side of the basket, both facing east. The boy wears a special dress on this occasion which consists of a dhoti, a shirt, a feta or pagadi of white colour and uparana (long cloth to be worn on shoulders) and shoes. He has a dagger or sword in his right hand to which is fixed a lime. The punjaro repeats some verses and a married or unmarried woman ties the ends of the garments of the couple into a knot. The boy and the girl are lifted on shoulders by their men and taken to an apta tree for worship. From there they go to the boy's place. On reaching there, the ends of their garments are untied. The girl then goes to the place where guests from her side are resting for taking leave of her parents. On this occasion, kinsmen and friends offer her some money as presents. Later, the boy goes there and brings her to his house. This completes the ceremony. Persons from the girl's side go back to their village. The girl goes to her father's house after five days and comes back after nine days.

Expenses for the boy's marriage in case of an average family range between Rs. 400 and Rs. 500. The girl's father has to spend about Rs. 200.

Many boys cannot afford to spend big sums over their marriages. Sometimes they take away the girls they have in view by purpose, by force or by mutual consent. By obtaining a girl in such a manner, they save a great deal of money.

In certain cases, a girl on her own accord goes to the house of a young man and declares her intention to stay there or sometimes a young man assisted by his friends enters the village and makes off with the girl. In all such cases, the boy's father has to pay dej of Rs. 300 or so to the girl's father as advised by the tribal panchayat. The dej varies from case to case but mostly depends on the paying capacity of the boy's father. Where the girl is carried away, the dej is comparatively more than that in the other two cases. It may be paid in full or in instalments. The panchayat accords recognition to the union on payment of dej and thereafter the boy and the girl are recognised as husband and wife. No marriage takes place in such cases. The consent of the girl is however necessary. The children born to such couples are not looked down upon nor are they prevented from marrying into the tribe. Sometimes a boy obtains a girl by serving her father for a period of five years. He need not pay dej then and all the expenses of his marriage are met by the girl's father. When the period of service is over, he may stay there if he desires or have a separate house. In the latter case, the father-in-law often provides the young couple with

the means to start their own home. In certain cases, a boy stays with his father-in-law as his ghar-jawai if the latter so desires. In such a case a boy is married to the girl at the expenses of the girl's father without paying dej.

Widow re-marriage is permitted. There is no objection for her to marry any particular person such as her husband's younger brother. The intending husband goes to her village with some clothes including a sari and a bodice as presents. After a feast at his expense and drinking, the ceremony is complete. A few elders with some important tribesmen from both the sides attend. No dej is paid, nor is a priest required to preside. The widow and children by the re-marriage have no right in the property of the deceased husband after re-marriage. When she marries her deceased hunband's younger brother, should there be already a son by the first husband, the children by the second have no right to the property of the first husband. It is said that a widow does not wear a bodice till she breaths her last if she does not re-marry. She wears it only if she re-marries.

Divorce is permitted on grounds like adultery, quarrelsome nature of the man or woman, beating, excessive drinking or change of affection by either side. It may be initiated by either side. In case a woman leaves her husband and re-marries, her second husband has to pay to the first husband his marriage expenses as directed by the tribal panchayat. At the time of granting a divorce, the husband gives Rs. 5 to his wife which she ties to the end of her sari. The husband then tears off a piece of her sari and the divorce is complete. A divorced woman allowed to re-marry a man of her choice. It takes the form of a widow re-marriage. In certain cases she stays with a man of her choice without marriage formalities.

Death

The tribe practises burial as well as cremation. Among the Gavits, dead persons are mostly cremated whereas among the Mavchis burial is more common. Persons dying by snake bite are necessarily buried among all the sections of the tribe. Small children are also buried.

The body is washed and dressed in new clothes and placed on a cot in a sleeping position with a piece of white cloth spread over it. It is carried to the ground by four men related to the deceased. A tribesman called Saravanya (man who assists the chief mourner in the disposal of the dead body), goes in front with an earthen pot in which is kept a burning dung cake. One of the mourners carries cooked food on a plate or in a round pot.

At visava, the cot is kept on the ground for a few minutes. A portion of the cloth spread over the head of the deceased is pulled aside for a while so as to enable the assembled persons to see the face for the last time. These persons throw a few coins and some rice over the body. If the deceased has a wife, her bangles are broken and the gatni (necklace) that was tied around her neck at the time of her marriage is removed. In case the deceased is a woman, her husband removes the kudcho (ear-ring) worn by him in his left ear. The cot is then carried by the same four men for final disposal, after they change their places. It is said that in former days the wife of the deceased used to be carried along with him on the same cot upto the visawa.

At the cremation ground, the corpse is lifted from the cot and placed on a pyre of wood prepared by the saravanya. A portion of the cooked food is placed in its mouth by the persons gathered there. Firewood is piled around it. The saravanya stands by the side of the pyre with two axes in his hands. His assistant also takes two axes and stands at the other side of the pyre opposite to him. The saravanya strikes the pyre with his axe at two different places. His assistant repeats the same action. Later both exchange their axes five times, the saravanya then dashes the earthen pot to pieces and lights the pyre. All take a bath in a nearby river or stream, eat whatever they have brought with them by raising contributions and return home. The same practice is followed at burial. Post-death pollution is not observed by one and all though a few are reported to observe it for 3, 5 or 8 days. Obsequies are performed mostly on the second day after death. The saravanya cooks food for the deceased and also for all the other dead ancestors in the family. This food is cooked in a cattle shed on a chula made of stones which are brought from outside by the women in the family after a bath in a neighbouring river or well. It consists of rice, dal and vegetable. In case of a well-to-do family, shira and puri are also prepared. Half of this food is then kept in a basket which is later carried by the saravanya to the place of cremation or burial. Members of the bereaved family follow him and keep their hands on the basket all the way. The saravanya keeps a portion of this food on a palas leaf at the visava. At the cremation ground, the place where the dead was buried or cremated is first made clean with water and the saravanya builds a small hut on this place and keeps some palas leaves around it with some cooked food on them. One of these leaves is kept aside in the name of all the dead ancestors in the family. Members of the bereaved family pour a few drops of liquor on all these leaves. When this is over, the saravanya dismantles the hut with his foot and breaks

the bottle in his hand which contains liquor. Later, all go to the house of the deceased.

On reaching the deceased's house, they keep the remaining cooked food on four palas leaves in front of the chula in the house. One of these leaves is kept aside in the name of the dead ancestors in the family. The family members pour a few drops of liquor on these leaves. The saravanya takes some balls of rice flour in his hand, waves them round the backs of the four men who carried the corpse and throws them on the roof of the house. Later they cook fresh food on a chula in the house and spread a handful of rice or jowar flour on the spot quite close to the back of this chula. Then they keep three dishes filled with this food on the rice or jowar flour and cover them with a basket or a big pot. One of these three dishes consists of rice, another of dal and the third one contains some liquor. Next morning, the basket is removed from its place so as to ascertain whether the food kept in the dishes has been eaten by the deceased or not. If they notice some foot-prints on the rice flour, they suppose that the food kept in the dishes has been eaten by the deceased. Relatives of the deceased then offer some money to the chief mourner as presents. On the eighth day, they keep a portion of cooked food on three palas leaves in the name of the deceased. Similarly they remember all the dead ancestors in the family on every full moon day in the month of Bhadrapad by casting a portion of the food into the chula and on the roof of the house in their honour.

Religion

The Gavits are Hindus by religion. Excepting 640 persons who were returned as Christians, 11 as Muslims and one as a Buddhist, all the remaining 101,669 persons of the tribe reported themselves as Hindus during the 1961 census. They worship a number of village deities on different occasions. These include Pandhari or Gimdev, Rajavadu, Shivaya, Kakohedu, Shiopatli, Govaldev, Vaghdev, Dongardev, Hindladevi, Maruti, Mahadev and Nagdev. Hindladevi, Maruti, Mahadev and Nagdev are Hindu deities. The images of all these deities are made either of clay, wood or stone and they are often found under a tree in a field, in the adjoining forest, near a nalla, at the village boundary or at any such place in the neighbourhood of the village or in the village itself.

Pandhardevi is the deity of corn. Dongardev is the hill-god. Shivaya, Rajavadu, Shiopatli and Kakohedu are for protecting the tribe from various diseases. Vaghdev protects them from tigers and Nagdev from snakes. Govaldev is the god of cattle. Though no specific duties are assigned to Hindladevi, Maruti and Mahadev, they are expected to do good for them and guard their interest.

Hindladevi and Pandhari are represented by a woman's image carved on a stone, Nagdev by a picture of a serpent. Vaghdev is an image of a tiger made of earth. Maruti and Govaldev are stones smeared with sindur. Mahadev is represented by a stone. Shivaya and Kakohedu are made of clay. Rajavadu is a log or a wooden plank smeared with sindur and on which are carved the pictures of the sun and the moon. Shiopatli is also a log or a wooden plank smeared with sindur having the same two pictures. It has, however, two more pictures, that of a tiger and of a serpent. Dongardev is a hill situated in the locality.

Mahadev is generally worshipped on any Monday. Govaldev is worshipped on the full moon day of Jyesta, Nagdev on the fifth day of the bright half of Sravan and Vaghdev on any suitable day falling between the full moon day and the fifth day of the dark half of the same month. Rajavadu receives worship on the full moon day of Bhadrapad, Shivaya and Shiopatali on the first day of the bright half of Ashvin and Maruti on Dasara. Kakohedu is worshipped on the eighth or ninth day of the bright half of Kartik and Dongardev on the full moon day of Kartik. Hindladevi receives worship on the first and the fifteenth day of the bright half of Magh and Pandhari on the first day of the bright half of Falgun. Sometimes they make vows to these deities and sacrifice a goat or a hen. No animal sacrifice is made to Mahadev. They think that if worship of any of these deities is delayed or neglected, some calamity may be fall them by way of punishment. In the investigated villages, a few families (four or five) had an image of Mahadev and pictures of Dattatraya, Krishna, Rama and Hanuman in their houses. According to them, they bowed before these gods every morning and evening and also worshipped them at the time of marriages and festivals.

Festivals

Naga Panchami is celebrated on Sravan sud Panchami by offering worship to a varul or a picture of Nag. On Pola (the last day of Sravan) the bullocks are washed and decorated and offered cooked food to eat. Rajavadu falls on Bhadrapad Poornima. The worship of Rajavadu is the chief activity of this festival. At night they arrange a tamasha, drink liquor and make merry. On Dasara (10th day of the bright half of Ashvin) they worship Maruti with an offering of a coconut and a goat. A few persons exchange apta leaves, after offering them first to Maruti. School boys worship the picture of goddress Sarasvati in their schools.

There is no fixed day for the observance of Gao-Divali. It is generally celebrated on any convenient day after the commencement of the kharif harvest as fixed by the panchas of the tribe. Each village celebrates the festival on a different day so as to enable the people in the village to enjoy the festival in the surrounding villages also. On the day of festival, they take bamboo or boru sticks, pour ghee or sweet oil over them, move around them by repeating the words "Let Divali go and Holi come" and later throw these sticks on any nearby tree. A tamasha is arranged. The other important programmes of the day are playing cards and drinking liquor.

Gimdev is a community festival celebrated on the first day of the bright half of Falgun in honour of Pandhardevi by worshipping her image under a tree with an offering of a goat which is later on cooked and eaten by all. A community dinner is followed by drinking of liquor.

Holi is celebrated in every hamlet of the village collectively by all the communities living in that hamlet. They erect a teak pole at the place fixed for Holi. The pile of faggots around it is lighted and worshipped as Holi by a man who enjoys the hereditary right of doing it so. Later they drink liquor and dance till late at night. Generally Holi is lighted in the evening after sunset and kept burning throughout the night.

Leisure and recreation

Drinking country liquor, smoking bidis, chewing tobacco and dancing form the chief recreational activities of the tribe. In the evening they meet at a common place in the hamlet in groups after dinner. Men of other tribes and castes living in the hamlet also join and spend their time in conversation. In the off season of March, April and May, they have dances in which women also take part along with men. Women however dance separately. While dancing they play on the dhol (drum) and zanj. Dances are also staged at the time of marriages and festivals. Women sing songs at birth and marriage ceremonies and at Divali and Holi festivals and while singing songs they dance to the tunes of dhol and zanj. Radio sets are now supplied to villages by the state government. Cinema films are exhibited in their areas for doing propoganda in favour of prohibition, family planning and such other schemes. These are attended by a large number of tribesmen.

The tribe is divided into five sections—Gamtaor Gavit, Mavchi, Padvi, Vasava or Vasave and Valvi. These sections are treated as equal in all matters. Culturally, these groups have much more in common with one another than with the Vasava or Vasave under the Bhils and the Valvi under the Dhankas.

The Gamits do not suffer any social disability nor are they considered to be ritually impure. Barbers and washermen serve them. They can fetch water from public wells. They have free access to Hindu temples in the locality. Their entry into the houses of caste Hindus is not objected to.

They hold themselves superior to the Bhils, the Dhankas, the Naikdas and the Bardas. They neither accept food from them nor allow marital relations with any of them. These tribes also accept this ranking and regard the Gavits as superior to them in the social scale. The latter consider the Koknas to be of a slightly higher status.

Social control

Each hamlet in a village has separate panchas. The head of these panchas is called karbhari or daya. Disputes within the family are settled by its elders. The disputes between different members of the community are mostly referred to the panchas. If persons belonging to different hamlets are involved, panchas of these hamlets or villages meet together and settle the issue. It was learnt at Dhanrat that in case the decision given by the panchas in a hamlet was not acceptable to the parties, the matter was then referred to the panchayat of the main village. The police patel of the village, the sarpanch of the village panchayat and the panchas of the main village then meet together and settle the issue finally. The decision given by them is regarded as final. These panchas are not formally elected or appointed. Generally old and experienced men who command respect, act as panchas. If any one of them fails to retain such confidence from the members of the community, another suitable man is requested to take his place. These panchas deal only with social disputes relating to marriage, divorce, food and drink. If no compromise is arrived at, the party at fault is fined from Rs. 5 to Rs. 51. This amount is in most cases spent either on drinks or on caste feasts.

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KORKU

The Korkus are found on both sides of the Satpura hill range with a heavy concentration in Nimar, Betul and Chindwara districts of Madhya Pradesh and the Melghat tehsil in Amravati district in Maharashtra This note relates to the Korkus living in Melghat who form roughly one-fourth of the total population of Korkus in India.

Dalton traced 'Korku' to 'Kurako' which was simply the plural of 'Kur' or 'Kura", meaning a boy in Munda language. Russell says 'Koru' is the Korku word for man and 'ku' is a plural suffix. Hislop in some places calls them 'Kurs' but has noted that the Kokus of Melghat would prefer to be called Muasis. Dalton thought the word 'Muasi' was derived from Marwasi, which was a pargana in Rewa. But Hislop feels that the word may have been derived from the mahua (*bassia latifolia*) tree which is connected with a Korku legend. The area inhabited by the Korkus appears to have been known to the Marathas as 'Muas', also meaning a troubled area. (Dalton, p. 231).

Dalton and Russell have described the Korkus as an offshoot of the Kol or Munda group which includes Juangs, Kharias, Mundas, Santals and Hos. Their sept names are similar to those of the Kols. Their tribal names and physical characteristics are similar to those of the Kols. Dalton assigned their language to the Kolarian family. Grierson has classified it as a Kolarian dialect.

Tribal legends

The Korkus believe that King Ravana requested God Mahadeva to populate the region of the Vindhya and Satpura hills. Mahadeva went to Saoligarh and Bhanwargarh hills (now in Betul district of Madhya Pradesh), picked up a handful of red earth and made images of a man and woman. He imparted life to the images and called them Mula and Mulai. Those two are the legendary ancestors of Korkus.

Dalton (p. 231) has described another Korku legend tracing their origin to a male and a female serpant, known as Naga Bhuiya and Naga Bhuiain. On having a son, they wrapped him in a sheet, left him under a mahua tree and disappeared. The child was picked up, taken to the king of Kanauj who brought him up and called him Mahvasi from the name of the tree under which he had been found. The boy married and the king gave him the country called Ganjar. The legend describes him as the ancestor of the Korkus. According to the Amravati gazetteer, Melghat has also been known as Gangra.

The Korkus are at present separated from other Kolarian tribes by an intervening region dominated by the Gonds and other Dravidian tribes.

The Nihals are said to have been the earlier inhabitants of Melghat. But they gradually lost power. The Nihals have now been notified as a sub-tribe of the Korkus. The Korkus treat them as untouchables.

Melghat is the northernmost tehsil of Amravati district and lies entirely in the Gavilgar hills which are a branch of the Satpuras. The country is extremely rugged and broken into a succession of hills and valleys. consisting of barren areas. scrub jungle and stony ground. Only 7·86 per cent of the geographical area is under cultivation and is spread out in three scattered zones, one towards the west on the banks of the Tapi, another in the south at the foot of the hills towards the Berar plains and the third in the north-east. The soils are poor. The Khandwa-Hingoli railway line passes through the western fringe of the tehsil.

Melghat belonged to the Nizam of Hyderabad and came under British administration with the rest of Berar in 1853. At that time, the tehsil was occupied by jagirdars known as Melghat rajas and the villagers, who were mostly Korkus and other aboriginals, practised shifting cultivation. Ryotwari settlement was first introduced in 1905. Earlier, the Korkus had been cutting timber freely and selling it in Berar. Between 1870 and 1880, forest areas were demarcated, bamboo cutting was regulated and temporary cultivation on the banks of streams and on the slopes of hills where the plough could not be used was forbidden. In the wake of these regulations, the Korkus migrated to other areas. This, combined with famines round about 1900, resulted in a heavy fall in the population of Melghat in 1901.

Distribution

The Korkus are notified as a scheduled tribe in (i) Melghat tehsil (Amravati), (ii) Gadhchiroli and Sironcha tehsils (Chanda) and (iii) Kelapur, Wani and Yeotmal tehsils (Yeotmal). In Melghat, their population in 1961 was 50,271 ; the other tehsils together reported only eight of them. From the 1961 census mother-tongue returns, it appears that there are 3,159 Korku speakers in Akola district, 1,313 in Buldhana district and 4,985 in other tehsils of Amravati district.

Melghat is the western part of the Korku habitat, the eastern portion of which stretch into Madhya Pradesh.

The Korkus are spread uniformly over the entire Melghat tehsil as shown in the following table on the distribution of Korkus and other non-Korku population :—

Serial No.	Size of village	Number of inhabited villages	No. of villages with no Korku population	No. of villages with less than 25 per cent Korkus	No. of villages with 25 per cent to 50 per cent Korkus	No. of villages with 50 per cent to 75 per cent Korkus	No. of villages having more than 75 per cent Korkus
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Villages with population less than 200 ..	147	11	2	6	11	117
2	Villages with population 200-499 ..	107	..	6	6	24	71
3	Villages with population over 500 ..	32	1	2	5	11	13
	Total ..	286	12	10	17	46	201

Since Melghat tehsil is the only scheduled area in Amravati district, the total population of Korkus in the entire district in 1961 is not available. Yet 55,007 persons have returned Korku as their mother-tongue in that district. Presuming that speakers of Korku language represent their approximate population in the district, it will be seen that during the period 1931 to 1961 the Korkus in Amravati district have increased from 33,869 to 55,007 (62·41). The total population of Amravati district has grown only by 30·92 per cent during the same period.

Sex ratio

The 1961 Korku sex ratio was 979. For Amravati district (rural) the figure was 948.

A study of 850 Korku households for size gave the following pattern :—

Number of members	No. of households	Percentage
1	2	0·24
2—4	261	30·71
5—7	402	47·29
8—10	136	16·00
Above 10	49	5·76
Total ...	850	100·00

The average per household was 5·9. Only nine households had women as their heads.

The Korkus have three sub-divisions, Mahvasi, Ruma and Bondoya. They appear to be territorial groups. Each division has 32 exogamous gotras (septs).

Dwelling, dress and food

Small hill tops surrounded by cultivable land on the slopes are preferred by the Korkus for village sites. Twenty to twenty-five houses would make a village. In the forest areas, there are sites with only five to six huts. Out of 286 inhabited villages in Melghat, 147 have less than 200 population.

The layout of a Korku village is of a set pattern. One finds two rows of houses standing very close to each other and facing north or south. Every Korku village has a Muthuwa gomaj (village god) in the centre of the street (usually in front of the village headman's house). Lower sub-tribes of castes like Nihals, Moghya, Balai, or Chambhars have their houses in a detached part of the village. A hamlet is known as a 'dhana' of the village and is named after the community inhabiting it.

A korku hut a retangular room (about 25'×15') without any built-in partition. Every hut has an open verandah in front and a closed one at the rear. A portion of the rear verandah is used for storing water in earthen or brass pots kept on wooden stands. The hut is constructed on a thick layer of stones covered with murum and earth. The walls are of bamboo matting, plastered with cow dung on both sides. The roofs are sloping and made of teak leaves and grass. A few well-to-do Korkus have mud walls and roofs of country tiles or corrugated sheets. The doors are made of bamboo ribs. The entrance and the back doors are always opposite to each other. The big room is used by the family for all purposes. Big kothis or earthen pots used for storing grain are arranged in a line to serve as partition. Those who own cattle have cattle sheds behond their buts. Those sheds have unplastered thatch walls and sloping roofs.

The interior of their houses is very clean and tidy. Brass pots are kept clean and sparkling. But the areas surrounding the houses are rarely cleaned.

Korku men wear a dhoti, a shirt or a 'bandi' and a white or red turban. A Korku never goes bare-headed. They have a long piece of cloth (feta) tied round the waist or to cover the back in the absence of a shirt. Well-to-do Korkus also have coats and silk turbans. Korku women wear saris of five or ten yards and blouses. Saris are worn with anchals drawn on the head and dropping in the Maratha style on the right shoulder. A few wear a special type of Korku chappals which are very light in weight and have shoelike heels.

Jowar is the staple food of the Korkus and is taken with dal or vegetables. Wheat and rice are their cash crops. They are not consumed even by those who produce them in ample quantities. Poorer Korkus who cannot afford dal, eat kodo, kutki and jowar with chillies or with leaves or roots of various plants cooked as vegetables. Popular among the roots are bhatkand and wayalkand. They are non-vegetarians. They eat boiled or roasted fowl, all sorts of animals and birds (including the crow) and all varieties of fish.

Tobacco chewing and smoking of bidis are very common. They are very fond of drinks and distillation of mahua flowers is widespread. Liquor is a necessary ingredient in all Korku ceremonies and festivals. Morning tea has nowadays become common. They take it without milk.

Food is taken in big common thalis (plates). Even when there are guests in the house, food is served to all males (including guests) together in one thali. Women similarly share another thali. This practice is said to be a precaution against poisoning.

Ornaments

Both men and women are fond of ornaments. Men wear silver or copper anguthis (rings), solid silver kadas (bracelets) on the wrists, silver or gold balis (ear-rings), a silver jemka (chain) round the waist and shirt buttons of coloured stones set in silver and stringed in a silver chain. Women wear kangani (silver bangles) and polle (hollow silver bracelets) on the wrists, bahutas (silver armlets) and tadias (hollow silver armlets) on the arms and tagali (a thick silver ring) and mala (a necklace) of silver coins round the neck; a thick and long silver chain (jemka) round the waist decorated silver ear-rings, gold nose-rings with pearl or coloured beads, solid or hollow silver anklets and toe rings; glass bangles and poths of coloured beads. Old women wear a solid round armlet made of lead and called "mathi", but it is now disappearing.

Women part their hair in the middle and tie it behind in a knot with a silken thread. They do not apply kumkum on their foreheads as their neighbours do. Tattooing on the forehead, hands and legs is very common.

The Korkus bathe once or twice a week in the river or at a well.

The Korkus are a very care-free people. It almost amounts to laziness. An average Korku having food-stuffs for a few days in hand would prefer to enjoy the day than work. Small groups sitting on wooden benches in front of the huts and gossiping are a common sight in Korku villages.

During the rains and in winter, they keep a fire burning in the centre of the hut and men, women and children all sleep around it in a circle. This occasionally leads to accidents. The Korkus in the interior part of Melghat do not burn any lamp at night and cook or eat only in the light produced by the fire. While going out at night, they carry a stick in one hand and a burning bamboo in the other. They keep dogs and maintain poultry. Many of them rear cattle and trade in them.

Language

Korku is a dialect of the Munda or Kherwari language. The language has no script of its own. There are only two genders, one for animate beings and the other for inanimate objects. There are three numbers—the singular, the dual and the plural. Rev. John Drake has written a grammar of this language.

In 1961, the Korkus returned their mother tongues as follows: Korku 49,979, Marathi 167, Hindi 66, Nimadi 51 and others 16. With outsiders the Korkus speak either in Hindi or Marathi. Their contacts with the Hindi speaking areas both on the west towards Burhanpur and towards the north or the north-east have been more than those with the Marathi-speaking plains in Berar. A very large number 21,979 of the Korkus speak Hindi as a subsidiary language.

Education

The educational level of the Korkus in 1961 was as follows:—

Educational standard—	Percentage		
	Persons	Males	Females
Illiterate ...	93·95	89·14	98·86
Literate without educational level.	4·70	8·30	1·02
Primary or junior basic	1·33	2·53	0·12
Matriculation and above	0·02	0·03	...
Total ...	100·00	100·00	100·00

General literacy among the Korkus is only 6·05 per cent. There were nine matriculates among the Korkus in 1961 who were employed as primary school teachers, patwaris, etc. The percentage of full-time students to the total non-working population of the Korkus was 8·15 against 22·74 for Maharashtra.

Occupation

The following table gives the 1961 percentage of workers and non-workers among the Korkus :—

	Total	Males	Females
Workers	58·06	60·72	55·32
Non-workers	41·94	39·26	44·68

The 1961 percentage distribution of the working Korku population in Melghat by broad economic activities was as follows :—

Category	Persons	Males	Females
I ...	75·03	75·47	74·53
II ...	20·82	18·39	23·55
III ...	2·46	3·79	0·97
IV ...	0·08	0·12	0·02
V ...	N	0·01	..
VI ...	0·51	0·74	0·25
VII ...	0·07	0·12	0·02
VIII ...	0·03	0·06	...
IX ...	1·00	1·30	0·67

A study of 8,505 Korku households showed the following pattern of land holding :—

	Number	Percentage
Households not owning or not cultivating lands.	1,976	23·23
Households owning but leasing out entire lands.	8	0·10
Households owning and cultivating land.	5,622	66·10
(*a*) Less than 5 acres	450	5·29
(*b*) 5-10 acres ...	1,059	12·45
(*c*) 10-20 acres ...	1,088	12·79
(*d*) 15-20 acres ...	1,654	19·45
(*e*) 20-25 acres ...	404	4·75
(*f*) Above 25 acres ...	967	11·37
Households not owning any land but cultivating others' lands on lease.	899	10·57
Total ...	8,505	100·00

The average size of an ownership holding appears to be 15 acres, which is not very large because of the extremely poor soils and location of lands on hill slopes.

Only 717 persons were engaged in raising livestock, forest labour and allied activities. The number of Korkus working in household industry (23), manufacturing (1), trade and commerce (21) and transport (9) were almost negligible. Almost all trade and commerce was in the hands of non-tribal people.

Gathering of fruit, tendu leaves, roots and honey are important supplementary occupations of the Korkus. Even women and children go for collection of seasonal fruit and return with headloads. Mahua flowers and char seeds are stored for use when food gets scarce.

Fishing and hunting provide them with supplementary food as well as income. Various types of bamboo traps known as pats are used for fishing. They hunt with muzzle-loading guns and spears. Sometimes they dig pits by the side of their fields and use them as traps for big animals.

Out of 293 Korkus employed in "other services", 41 were watchmen or chaukidars, 14 were teachers in primary schools, 27 were patwaris or forest guards and 15 were domestic servants.

Life cycle

Professional midwives belonging to their own tribe are called in at child-birth. All the members of the family are supposed to be impure for three days after child-birth. On the fourth day, the mother takes a bath, goes to the village well or river and worships the water god after which she is supposed to be purified. A feast is given on the same day The child is named on the seventh or eighth day.

The marriage age for boys is usually 15 to 20 years and for girls 12 to 17 years. A study of 1,095 Korku couples showed that the difference in age of husbands and their wives, was between 6 and 10 years in 54 per cent of the cases. In the case of nine couples, the wives were found to be older than their husbands.

The initiative for marriage is taken by the boy's side. Bride price ranges from Rs. 500 upwards depending on the bridegroom's economic status. The marriage takes place in the boy's house and is preferably celebrated on a Monday or a Friday. The marriage among Korkus is more of a social than a religious affair and the priest takes no part in it.

A noteworthy feature is the Bhawar in which the maternal uncles of the bride and the bridegroom lift them in their arms and dance in a big circle. After that, the bridegroom lifts the bride with one hand and walks one full round of the circle. If he falls in this round, he has to pay Rs. 1·25 as fine to the panchayat.

Those boys who cannot pay bride price, go and work at the bride's father's house for a fixed period. This is called Lamsena marriage. Widow re-marriages take place without any ceremony. Widows usually marry their husbands' younger brothers.

Death

The Korkus bury their dead. No fixed period of mourning is observed and the members of the family are supposed to be impure only for a day. There is a ceremony called Pitar miloni. Relatives of the deceased go to the burial place and keeping a piece of haldi in a leaf cup, hold it over the grave and pour water in it. With water falling on the tomb the spirit of the deceased is supposed to ascend from the grave and go to live with the ancestors. The haldi is then tied in a cloth and, after an offering of fowl's blood, is suspended from the main wooden beam in the hut whichc is supposed to be the dwelling place of the ancestors.

The final ceremony known as 'Phul jagni' or 'Sidoli' is performed any time between four months and 15 years after death. Its object, it is said, is to lay the spirit of the departed to rest. The ceremony is to open the haldi piece tied to the beam and to deposit it in the river water. A smooth wooden stake, 24 to 30 inches, called munda, is smeared with the blood of a goat. The haldi piece is allowed to sink in the river while the munda, having symbols of the sun and the moon carved upon, it, is set up in a fixed place in memory of the departed.

Religion

Barring 27 Vhristians and two Muslims, 50,050 Korkus in Melghat tehsil returned Hinduism as their religion in 1961. Their village god (Muthawa gomaj) is worshipped during all social ceremonies, and festivals. A community puja is held on Dasara when food, fowl and goats are offered and a common feast is held. Some of their other gods are Kuta gomaj (the mother goddess), Akhadi gomaj (the god of prosperity), Bhum gomaj (the god of crops), Kulla gomaj (the Vaghdev or tiger god), and Dongar gomaj (the god of the hills). All these deities are found in each Korku village.

The Korkus also worship Hindu gods like the sun, the moon, Hanuman and Mahadev. Milk and coconuts alone are offered to Hanuman and Mahadev. A white goat is sacrificed to the sun once a year. Mata gomaj is worshipped whenever there is an epidemic or disease. Bhum gomaj is worshiped at the time of sowing and harvesting. Akhadi gomaj and the village God (Muthua gomaj) are worshipped on all social or religious occasions. The Korkus also worship their ancestors. The main supporting wooden beam of the hut is supposed to be their dwelling place and is worshipped on all occasions.

Their priests are known as Bhumkas. They are present at and conduct all pujas or sacrificial offerings. Their office is hereditary. An average village has one or two Bhumka households.

There is yet another class of people known as Padyals who claim to have mystic, magical and curative powers. The Korkus have strong faith in them and consult them in the event of disease or any other calamity. The Padyals know many herbal medicines but always link the disease or calamity to the wrath of one or the other local deities and persuade their clients to perform some puja or sacrifice. Both the Bhumkas and Padyals are paid at harvest time.

The Korkus celebrate Dasara, Divali, Holi and Nag Panchami. Pola is celebrated on Shravan Amavasya when their bullocks are washed, decorated and given rest. Six important fairs are held in Melghat in honour of Mahadev, Maghnath and Dhoroba (all Hindu Gods) which are attended by hundreds of Korkus.

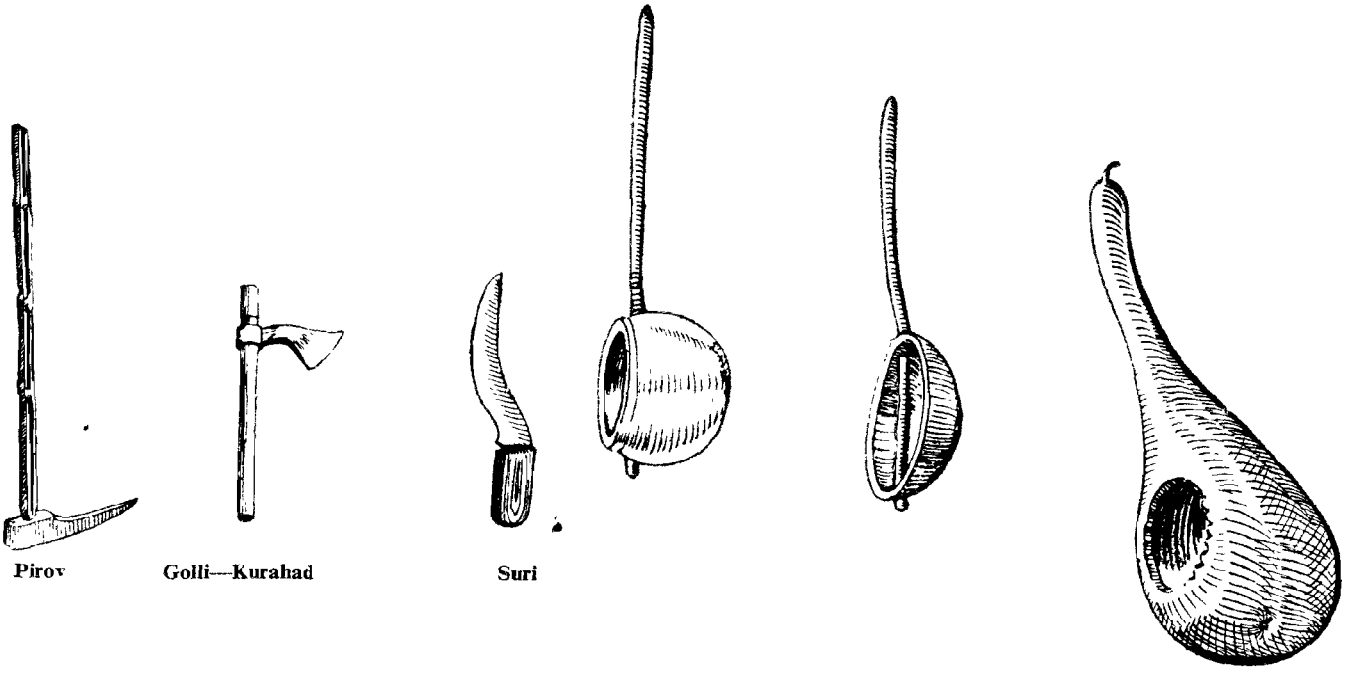
The Korkus treat Nihals, Mahars, etc., as untouchables. They do not accept water from these communities of lower status.

Each Korku village has a panchayat consisting of members of the tribe. They used to have a village headman, but that institution has faded now and the whole group works as a panchayat and decides local disputes. Members are expelled from the community or admitted to it by the panchayat. Each village has a chaudhari who is a servant of the panchayat. He does all physical labour at the time of social ceremonies and also attends to guests or officers visiting the village. There is a jat-patel (community headman) for a group of villages. His office is hereditary. The Korkus do not have any other tribal or community organisation beyond the village limits.

The Korkus appear to be much attached to their womenfolk. A Korku never leaves his wife alone and takes her with him wherever he goes to the field, the weekly bazar, a fair or even to the law court. Women are treated well and on an equal footing with men.

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Pirov Golli—Kurahad Suri Dabli Dab Dab

Household utensils and farm instruments.

DHANKA

The Dhankas, comprising the Tadvi, Tetaria and Valvi, are a Bhili-speaking scheduled tribe in Maharashtra. They were declared as a scheduled tribe under the Constitution (Scheduled tribes) order, 1950 without any division or section; later the amended act of 1956 included Tadvi, Tetaria and Valvi in the Dhankas. This ethnographic study of the Dhankas conducted at Kakar pada and Ankushvihir, villages in Akkalkuwa tehsil of Dhulia district, indicated that the Tadvi, the Tetaria and the Valvi were divisions of the Dhanka tribe. The Tadvi section consider itself socially superior to the other two and it does not admit marital relations with these sections. The Tadvis and the Tetarias who are living in the above two villages call themselves as Dhankas or Tadvi Dhankas and Tetaria Dhankas and the people of the region also identify them by the same names. A few style themselves as Tadvi and Tetaria in place of Tadvi Dhankas and Tetaria Dhankas. They, however, acknowledge that Tadvi and Tetaria as divisions of the Dhankas.

In the present list of scheduled tribes the Tadvi are also mentioned as a sub-division under the Bhils and the Valvi as a sub-division under the Gamits, Gamtas or Gavits. The Tadvi Dhankas consider themselves different from the Tadvi Bhils; according to them, Valvi Dhankas are also separate from the Valvi section of Gavits. They neither accept food from these people nor do they allow any marital relations with them. Similarly the Dhankas, including Tadvi, Tetaria and Valvi, regard themselves as a distinct tribe from the Bhils as well as Gavits. They say they are superior to the Bhils in status and neither accept food from the Bhils nor allow marital relations with them.

Enthoven (p. 321) considers the Dhankas as a sub-division of the Bhils. Nearly 70 per cent of the Dhanka population in the State speaks Bhili as its mother-tongue. The Dhankas do not have any knowledge of their origin. While they do not reject the idea of their association with the Bhils in the past, they now regard themselves as socially distinct from the Bhils.

Ninety per cent of their population in the State is concentrated in Dhulia district which adjoins Gujarat State which has highest population of Dhankas among all the states in India (128,024). The possibility of their migration from Gujarat cannot be ruled out.

Distribution

In Maharashtra, the Dhankas are included in the list of scheduled tribes in the 13 districts of western Maharashtra, including Greater Bombay. In the 1961 census, they were returned from only four districts of this region. Of the total population of 48,089 persons (24,235 males and 23,844 females) Dhulia accounted for 43,166 (89·76) persons. Within Dhulia they were found mostly in Akkalkuwa (15,912), Nawapur (11,479), Nandurbar (9,506) and Taloda (5,309) tehsils adjoining the eastern border of Gujarat. The other three districts from where they were returned were Jalgaon (4,822), Greater Bombay (68) and Nasik (33). Only 1,182 (2·46) were found in urban areas and 46,907 (97·54) were in the rural areas of the State.

The population of Dhankas in the present districts of Maharashtra in the earlier censuses which is available for the census years 1931 and 1961 shows a phenomenal rise in their population from 2,225 in 1931 to 48,089 in 1961. This increase may be partly explained by inclusion of the Tadvi, Tetaria and Valvi among the Dhankas and partly by better coverage during 1961 compared to earlier censuses.

The 1961 sex-ratio for the Dhankas was 984 as against 936 for the State's general population. The age composition of the Dhanka population of rural areas showed that the proportion of children (0-14) was more than corresponding proportion of the general rural population while that of age group 45 and above was less than that of the general rural population. Out of the 48,089 individuals returned. 22,279 (46·33) were in the age group 0-14, 20,175 (41·95) in the age group 15-44 and 5,623 (11·69) in the age group 45 and above. Twelve could not state their age.

Family and kinship

The Dhanka family is patrilocal with patronymic designation. A newly married couple stays in a separate house set up by the husband or maintains a separate establishment in the house of the husband's parents. A study of 112 households from Dhulia revealed that 42 of them consisted of father, mother, unmarried sons and daughters; in four households, married sons were living with their parents. The remaining 66 households consisted mostly of married sons who were living separately from their parents. The average size of the households was 5·8. Only seven out of the 112 households had women as their heads.

The property of a Dhanka is divided equally between his sons. Married or unmarried daughters do not get any share. But at the time of partition, some provision is made for the marriage of unmarried sons and daughters.

The Dhankas have exogamous kuls. All the kuls are treated as equal in social status as well as in all other matters.

Dwelling and dress

The two investigated villages, Kakarpada and Ankushvihir are at a distance of about three and five miles respectively from Akkalkuwa, the tehsil headquarters, and are connected with it by a road on which jeeps and carts ply. These villages are inhabited mostly by Bhils and Dhankas. Other hamlets belong to Marvaris, Pardeshis, Muslims, Kachhis and Harijans. The houses of all these communities are found side by side in the same locality. They are however detached from one another.

The Dhanka house is either square or rectangular in shape. Most of the houses are constructed on a simple earth foundation with walls of bamboo or karvi reeds plastered with cow dung on both sides The majority of the houses have two or three rooms, a verandah at the front, three or four doors but no windows. The room at the back is used as a kitchen, the middle one is for storing grain and other household belongings and the front one is utilised for al other purposes. The earthern floor is always kept clean by applying cow dung frequently. The houses have no enclosure though they have open space around them. Men bathe in the river or at the well. Women bathe on a stone kept in front of the house.

The Dhanka man wears a dhoti, a bandi and a feta. He puts on sandals when he goes for field work. Younger persons wear a shirt in place of a bandi and a white cap instead of a feta. Women wear a sari and a bodice. Men keep short moustaches and short hair on the head. Women do their hair by parting it in the middle and tie it behind in a knot.

Dhanka women are fond of personal adornment. Sometimes we see them decorated from head to toe. The ornaments are made of silver and brass. Vihilya and dul (ear-rings), kalle (on the legs), bele (toe-rings), ahadi and kidayu (necklaces), kade, wakadi and waki (armlets) and bangles and gotu (bracelets) around the wrist are among them. For day-to-day use, they have glass bangles, a necklace like kidaya, ear-rings like vihilya or dul and a nose ornament (kata).

Tattooing on forehead and forarm is common among men and women. The designs include crosses and a branch of a mango tree on the forehead and a peacock on the forearm. Men prefer crosses or flowers.

Food

The staple food of the Dhankas is dadar or jowar. It is consumed in the form of bhakri with tur dal; sometimes they have a vegetable (ambadi) in place of dal at marriages or when there are guests in the house. Milk and milk preparations are not uncommon but these are consumed by very few families. They occasionally take mutton, fowl, fish and eggs, but abjure beef and pork. Drinking country liquor is a common habit. It is generally taken in the evening after retiring from the day's work. Morning tea has become common in a few families.

The Dhankas use earthen and metal pots for cooking and eating. These include plates, pots, dishes, glasses and buckets. They keep a stone hand-mill, a wooden pestle, a small wooden or stone mortar, soops, baskets, lanterns or wall lamps and fishing traps and nets.

Hygiene and sanitation

There are no latrines in these villages and no sweepers for removing garbage. The Dhankas keep the surroundings of their houses neat and clean by removing the garbage every now and then. They also keep the floors of their houses and cattle sheds tidy by periodical application of cow dung. They clean their teeth regularly in the morning with dung-ash or burnt tobacco powder or a neem or babul twig, bathe frequently and wash their clothes regularly. In illness they go to a bhagat for treatment and advice. Nowadays some Dhankas from the investigated villages approach a doctor at Akkalkuwa for treatment.

Language and literacy

In the 1961 census the Dhankas returned 16 mother-tongues. Bhili was spoken as a mother-tongue by 33,406 persons (69·47), Marathi had the second largest number (5,881) and Gujarati (5,497). Only 375 spoke Dhanki as a mother-tongue. Tadvi and Valvi were spoken as mother tongues by 206 and and 117 persons respectively. A few persons (1,756) reported knowledge of nine other languages in addition to their mother-tongues; of these, 29 persons including three women, knew English as a subsidiary language. The principal subsidiary languages spoken by them were Hindi (808) and Marathi (716). The Dhankas who are settled in Kakarpada and Ankushvihir regard Gujarati as their ancestral language and speak it among themselves. They use Bhili with

outsiders. Many individuals of their community can speak Marathi also. The younger generation usually understands Marathi but cannot speak it. None of them is reported to speak Dhanki, Tadvi or Valvi.

Only 5,631 (11·71) out of 48,089 persons were returned as literates in 1961. In rural areas out of 46,907 individuals, 5,296 (11·29) were literates. In urban areas out of 1,182 individuals, 335 (28·34) were literates. Comparison with the numerically important neighbouring tribes like Bhils (6·48), Koknas (9·52), Gamis (11·23) and Naikdas (8·91) shows that literacy among the Dhankas is higher.

The following table shows the break-up of the population of the Dhankas by educational standard.

Only one Dhanka has studied up to a university degree and 26 persons have reached the matriculation or higher secondary level During the survey, it was noticed that their children were attending school in a fairly good number. Girls usually study up to the primary stage only as the Dhankas think that if the girls are educated beyond that level they may not get equally qualified boys in the community for marriage.

Area	Illiterate		Literate without educational level		Primary or junior basic		Matriculation or higher secondary		University degree or post-graduate degree other than technical degree		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Rural ..	18,900	22,711	3,134	463	1,536	154	9	..	..	..	23,579	23,328
Urban ..	379	468	83	32	179	23	14	3	1	..	656	526
Total ..	19,279	23,179	3,217	495	1,715	177	23	3	1	..	24,235	23,854

Economic life

The hereditary calling of the Dhankas is husbandry and forest labour. They still follow agriculture and depend more upon it than on any other economic activity. Out of 48,089 persons in the state 28,212 (58·67) were returned as workers in 1961. The sex-wise break-up of workers showed that 14,471 (59·71) out of 24,235 males and 13,471 (56·47) out of 23,854 females were workers. Out of 19,877 persons (9,764 males and 10,113 females) returned as non-workers, 2,358 (1,887 males and 471 females) were full-time students or children attending schools, 11 (10 males and 1 female) were seeking employment for the first time and nine (7 males and 2 females) were employed before but were then out of employment and seeking work. The remaining 17,499 persons (7,860 males and 9,639 females) were dependents.

More than 95 per cent of the workers depended on agriculture for their livelihood—about 61 per cent as cultivators and 34 per cent as agricultural labourers. As they do not have enough land, they have to cultivate others' lands on lease contract and also work as labourers. A study of 1,117 Dhanka households from Nandurbar tehsil showed that 668 (59·80) owned or held land from government for cultivation, 43 (3·85) cultivated others' land on lease either on cash or on crop share and 406 households (36·35) did not hold any land for purposes of cultivation. Out of the 43 households who cultivated others' land on lease, eleven households cultivated it in crop share and 32 on cash payment. Six out of the 668 landholders studied owned land less than an acre, 492 held land between 1 acre and 14·9 acres, 127 had land between 15 acres and 24·9 acres and only 43 landholders had lands measuring 25 acres and above. The average size of ownership holding worked out to about ten acres. As lease-holders they had to pay 4 to 6 times of the land revenue and in addition meet all the expenses of cultivation.

In the investigated villages they grow dadar, jowar, cotton, tur and groundnut. Wheat, mug and urid are also grown to some extent. These are minor crops and are grown just to meet the food requirements of the family. The nagar (for ploughing) and vakhar (for weeding) are the implements commonly used by them as well as the other communities of the region.

The industrial classification of workers according to the 1961 census was as follows :—

Category	Total			Rural			Urban		
	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I	17,337 (61.45)	9,170 (63.37)	8,167 (59.44)	17,332	9,165	8,167	5	5	
II	9,826 (34.83)	4,376 (30.24)	5,450 (39.66)	9,662	4,303	5,359	164	73	91
III	356 (1.26)	339 (2.34)	17 (0 12)	344	327	17	12	12	..
IV	104 (0.37)	90 (0.62)	14 (0.10)	104	90	14	..	..	..
V	34 (0.12)	34 (0.23)	..	14	14	..	20	20	..
VI	56 (0.20)	48 (0.33)	8 (0.06)	9	7	2	47	41	6
VII	109 (0.39)	91 (0 63)	18 (0.13)	74	63	11	35	28	7
VIII	66 (0.23)	60 (0.32)	6 (0.04)	21	21	..	45	39	6
IX	324 (1.15)	263 (1.82)	61 (0.45)	240	188	52	84	75	9
Total workers	28,212 (100.00)	14,471 (100.00)	13,741 (100.00)	27,800	14,178	13,622	412	293	119

Agricultural operations begin in May when land is first ploughed and made ready for sowing with a wooden plough and pair of bullocks. Sowing is done in the second half of June after the rains set in. The seed is carefully broadcast over the land with a pambar for jowar and groundnut and a moghad for dadar and wheat. Round about December the crop is ready for cutting and threshing: it is brought home in a cart or as headloads. The wages for farm labourers were Rs. 1·25 a day per man and Rs. 0·75 per woman. Some persons work on a yearly contract. They are paid at the rate of Rs. 300 plus clothes.

Many Dhankas have now started using improved varieties of seed, dusting pumps and chemical fertilisers.

Persons working in the non-agricultural sector constituted only 3·72 per cent of their working population in the State. Among them some were reported to be working as talathis, teachers, forest-guards, peons, hotel boys and house-maids. Some of the important subsidiary occupations in which they get themselves engaged temporarily are gathering of wild fruits, tendu leave, roots and honey, cutting forest wood, plying carts, transport of wood, etc. As forest labourers they are paid Rs. 1·50 a day. A few go to the neighbouring Gujarat state for seasonal work.

In the investigated villages, agriculture and forest labour, plying carts, and transport of forest produce are some of the supplementary occupations of the Dhankas. A few keep poultry and goats and rear cattle; some sell milk, but the income they get from these activities is uncertain.

The following table gives an idea of the annual expenditure of a household of ten persons in Kakarpada. It is based on discussion with the heads of the household as Dhankas do not keep accounts.

Income	Rs.	Expenditure	Rs.
(1) From cultivation of jowar, dadar and cotton.	350 00	(1) Cost of foodgrains required for home consumption.	450·00
(2) From carting ..	150·00	(2) Grocery	200·00
(3) From labour	150·00	(3) Clothes	75·00
(4) From sale of milk .	100·00	(4) Expenses on cultivation . ..	75·00
		(5) Travelling, drinks, etc.	25·00
Total	750·00	Total	825·00
		Deficit	75-00

In case, there is a marriage in the family, the deficit may be three to four times more and involves the household in heavy debt.

Life cycle

Among the Dhankas a pregnant woman does not observe any restrictions on her diet. She goes for outdoor work till the last moment. Generally delivery takes place at her husband's residence. A midwife of the tribe (hoyani) is engaged. In case, she is not available, a hoyani of any other caste is engaged. At Ankushvihir, a Bhil hoyani is invited on this occasion. In difficult cases, help is sought from a trained midwife of the nearest maternity centre. The hoyani cuts the nal of the child with a boru or a bamboo reed. She buries it in a pit or outside the house and keeps a stone over it. She is paid a rupee or two for her services. If it is a male child, she is paid more. For a few days after childbirth, the mother is given a gruel prepared from the flour of dadar, banti or bajra. Infants who have lost their mother are fed on cow's milk. The mother is held unclean for five weeks from child birth. Thereafter she resumes her normal activities but does not go for outdoor work till she regains her usual health.

On the fifth day after child-birth, the mother takes a bath. The hoyani lights a lamp and worships it. The stone kept on the pit is also worshipped. Gur or sugar is distributed. The child is named on the same day and its first hair is removed after some months. No rites are performed on these occasions.

If premarital sex life takes place, the persons concerned are simply made to marry each other. The Dhankas do not regard such cases with horror. Premarital sex life outside the community is however strictly prohibited.

Marriage

A Dhanka girl is usually married at the age of 15 to 18 and a boy at the age of 18 to 20. In the 1961 census, only 51 Dhanka males out of 11,334 and 91 Dhanka girls out of 10,945 were returned as married in the age group 0-14. A study of 125 married couples of the tribe from Nandurbar tehsil showed that the husband was older than his wife by one to five years.

The Dhankas do not permit marriage with mother's brother's daughter, mother's sister's daughter, father's brother's daughter and father's sister's daughter and sister's daughter. Marriages within the same kul are prohibited. Monogamy is practised but they have no serious objection to polygyny.

Marriage takes place at the bride's place. At Kakarpada, it is celebrated before sunrise on any convenient day of any suitable month excepting Paush, Falgun and the rainy season. In case it is celebrated after sunrise, the parties concerned have to pay a fine of Rs. 5 or so. At Ankushvihir it is celebrated after sunset and preferably in the months of Chaitra and Vaisakh. The dej varies. At Kakarpada, it is Rs. 201 ; at Ankushvihir it is Rs. 51 among the Tadavis and Rs. 125 among the Tetarias. The father of the boy also gives a sari and a blouse and some ornaments to the girl.

Marriage talks are initiated from the boy's side. The boy's father goes to the girl's father. Relatives and elders from both the sides discuss the proposal. Some influential persons from both the sides act as go-between or mediators. If the proposal is accepted, a kumkum mark is applied on the forehead of the girl and a five coloured thread is tied around her right wrist as well as around the right wrist of all present. They are then entertained to liquor.

Marriage celebrations start with applying haldi to the body of the boy and the girl in their respective houses. This takes place some days prior to the marriage day. On this occasion, they go to the temple of Hanuman in a nearby village, pour sweet oil on the image and offer milk and coconut. Then they arrange haldi to the boy and the girl. At Ankushvihir, after worshipping Hanuman they draw a picture of Ganpati on a wall, worship it and then start the ceremony. A mandav is erected in the front yard of the house on the same day. This booth has normally nine poles of any tree, to two of which are tied a branch of a kakad tree with a thread of ambadi. On the roof of this booth are spread some leaves of a jambhul tree and at the entrance is tied a toran of mango leaves with ambadi thread.

On the day of marriage, the boy wears a dhoti, a shirt, a feta and sandals, takes a knife in his right hand and goes to the girl's place either on foot or in a cart in a procession accompanied by tribal musician who play on the dhol, shahanai and nagara. They rest near the village boundary and then go to the bride's residence. The bride's unmarried sister goes on the roof of the booth, sprinkles water from there, gets down and washes the feet of the bridegroom. The bridegroom then enters the booth and takes his seat on a cot, the girl is made to sit on another cot kept there in the same line. Both get up from their seats, the bride's sister ties the ends of their garments into a knot. She unties this knot only when she receives a promise of a sari or a goat from

the bridegroom. The boy leaves the booth, goes into the house and takes his meals. When he is about to come out, the bride's sister closes the door of the house from outside and opens only when she receives a rupee or so from the bridegroom. This completes the marriage ceremony. There may be dancing and merry making. The bridegroom's party returns to its village. The bride goes afterwards along with a few persons from her side. A male priest of the caste conducts the marriage ceremony. He does not recite any mantra or verse but supervises the celebrations. When a brahman priest conducts the ceremony, he recites marriage verses, a homa (sacred fire) is lighted and the couple walk five times round the sacred fire At Kakarpada, they mostly engage a priest of their own caste whereas at Ankushvihir, they prefer a brahman priest.

At Kakarpada, marriage expenses on the boy's side in the case of an average family amount to Rs. 500 (Dej Rs. 200 ; clothing Rs. 75 ; ornaments Rs. 75 ; food Rs. 100 and miscellaneous Rs. 50).

The Dhankas allow a widow to re-marry a man of her choice. She can marry the younger brother of her deceased husband if she desires so, but it is not obligatory. No rites are performed excepting a tea party or a feast which has to be given by the man marrying the widow. At Kakarpada, a man desirous of marrying the widow has to pay dej of Rs. 101 to her guardians.

Divorce is permitted. It may be initiated by either side. During the 1961 census, 87 men and 107 women in the age group 15-44 were returned as divorced and separated. Taking another man's wife, keeping sexual relations with another man, quarrelsome nature of man or woman, careless management of the household and incurable disease are some of the grounds on which a divorce can be granted. A woman can also seek divorce if her husband is impotent. It is allowed only with the consent of the caste panchayat. Divorce is called farkat or farkati. In case a woman leaves her husband and marries another man the latter has to pay a fine varying from Rs. 301 to Rs. 501 to her first husband. If a man asks for a divorce without any fault on the part of his wife, he has to pay a fine of Rs. 101 to the latter as compensation. At the time of granting a divorce, a divorce deed is executed in the presence of caste elders.

Death

The Dhankas generally cremate their dead. When a person breathes his last a coin, preferably of silver, is placed in his mouth. As far as possible, the funeral is not postponed till the next day. The body is bathed and dressed in new clothes if possible and placed on a cot with a piece of cloth spread over it. In case the deceased has a wife, her bangles are broken, the kumkum mark on her forehead is removed and the necklace of black beads is taken off her neck. In some cases, the wife removes these ornaments from her body at the visava. The corpse is carried on a cot in a sleeping position by any four men related to the deceased. The chief mourner, preferably the eldest son of the deceased, walks in front with some cooked food tied in a cloth and an earthen pot in which is kept burning dung cake. When the procession reaches the visava, the cot is lowered, a datwan (a babul or a neem twig) is rubbed on the teeth of the deceased and some quantity of cooked food is placed in its mouth. The cot is lifted and carried to the cremation ground for disposal. It is reported that in former days, the wife of the deceased used to accompany the deceased upto the visava sitting on the same cot.

At the cremation ground, the corpse is kept on the pyre along with the cot or in a pit if it is to be buried. After rubbing the datwan on the teeth of the deceased and putting some cooked food in his mouth, the corpse is covered with firewood. In case of burial, the pit into which it is lowered is filled in with earth. The chief mourner then lights the pyre and goes round it five times with an earthen pot in hand which he dashes on the ground at the end of the last round. In case of burial, he moves around the pit and dashes the pot on the ground at the end of the fifth round. Persons attending the funeral wait there till the corpse is completely burnt. They distribute sugar or gur among all. All these persons then leave the cremation ground and go to house of the deceased. There they take a mouthful of water from an earthen pot, wash their faces and go back to their houses.

On the third day after death, they go to the cremation ground, rub datwan on the place where the body was cremated and keep there an earthen pot along with some cooked food. In case of burial, they rub the datwan on the pit and leave there an earthen pot with some cooked food. Post-death impurity is observed for 12 days and funeral rites are performed on the 12th day by offering a feast to castemen. In some cases, post-death impurity is observed for five days and castemen are feasted on the 13th day. They shave their heads and faces on the 10th day or on the 12th day. It is said that some persons do not shave or observe any post-death impurity.

Small children are carried on hand and buried. No post-death impurity is observed for them. Similarly no rites are performed for them. At Kakarpada, unmarried males and females are buried but married males and females are mostly cremated.

While they have no clear idea of where the soul of a person goes after death they believe that a soul may not get peace after death in case the dead person's wishes remained to be fulfilled during his life-time. They therefore try to fulfil all the wishes of a dead person so that they may not incur the wrath of his spirit and suffer hardship.

Religion

At the 1961 census, 4,185 persons from among them were returned as Muslims as against 43,465 Hindus. Christian Dhankas numbered 439.

The followers of the Hindu religion have accepted the gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon and observe the leading Hindu festivals of the locality. Their special tie is, however, with goddess Kalankadevi of Akkalkuwa. Among the other deities worshipped by them are Ganpati and Hanuman. At Kakarpada, they regard Kalankadevi as their family deity in whose name they light a lamp in their houses on every festival day and worship it with an offering of a coconut, hen or goat. The blessings of this deity are invoked at the time of epidemics and during illness in the family. Hanuman whose temple is situated at Akkalkuwa is also worshipped, especially at the time of marriage. At Ankushvihir, Ganpati and Hanuman are said to be their chief objects of worship on such occasions. Kalankadevi, Ganpati and Hanuman are the most popular Hindu deities who are worshipped very frequently by the non-tribal communities of the region. Though they respect and honour the tribal gods like Vaghya (Tiger god), Shivaya (Boundary god) and Dongardev (Hill god) they are particularly attached to the above three Hindu deities.

At Ankushvihir, some Dhankas are found to be followers of a saint whom they regard as guru. This guru is reported to be a Koli by caste and his headquarters are said to be somewhere in Gujarat where his followers go to see him every year in Magh. The followers of this guru keep a picture of Karuna Sagar in their houses and bow before it every day. They however regard themselves as Hindus and observe the same rituals as other Dhankas.

The Dhankas do not worship trees but regard the kakad tree as sacred and consider objects like the sun, the moon and the sky as divine. Their ideas about heaven and hell are the same as those of caste Hindus.

Belief in spirits, ghosts and witches form part of their out-look. When a member of the family falls ill or calamity befalls them, they believe that it is because of an evil act of a spirit or a witch. In such cases, they generally consult a bhagat.

Festivals

The Dhankas celebrate Padva, Naga Panchami, Pola, Dasara, Divali and Holi on the same lines as caste Hindus.

They look upon Padva as an auspicious day for embarking on any enterprise. On Naga Panchami, a few of them observe a fast. On Dasara, which they celebrate on the tenth day of the bright half of Asvin, they keep a jowar plant and some apta leaves on the roof of their houses. They go to Akkalkuwa to worship Hanuman. Divali which falls on the last day of Asvin and the following two days is an occasion for merry making. They do not perform any rites on this occasion, but enjoy the festival in drinking liquor, singing and dancing. A few well-to-do families decorate their houses and light earthen lamps in the evening. Children wear new clothes and set off crackers.

Holi is celebrated on the full moon day of Falgun. Some observe a fast on this occasion and take their meals only in the evening after worshipping the Holi. The next day they drink liquor, dance and make merry. In the investigated villages, they have a common Holi for all the community living. It is first lighted and worshipped by a Bhil. The office is not hereditary.

As they do not keep any image of a household deity in their houses, they light a lamp on every festival day and worship it with haldi, kumkum, and flowers.

Drinking country liquor, smoking bidis and chewing tobacco are the main forms of relaxation for them. March, April and May bring them more leisure as they are then mostly free from agricultural operations. While dancing they play on the dholki and the tutari. Both men and women participate in these dances, but they dance separately. It is said that nowadays the Tadvi section of the tribe discourages its women from participating in such dances.

Women's recreational activities are singing folk songs and dancing. They enjoy these at the time of marriages and festivals like Divali and Holi.

A vast majority of the Dhankas are Hindus by religion. About eight per cent of them are Muslims and Christians are only 439. Persons belonging to these three religions do not intermarry with each other even though they recognise one another as belonging to the same community. The Hindu Dhankas do not accept food from the Christian and Muslim Dhankas. The Christian Dhankas however accept food from Hindu Dhankas, but not from Muslim Dhankas.

Ritually the Dhankas do not suffer any social disability in the region. They receive traditional services from the barber, the washerman and the brahman priest. They fetch water from the public wells without any restrictions. They enter the temples of caste Hindus. Their entry into houses of caste Hindus, excepting the kitchen, is also not restricted. They attend Satyanarayan puja, marriages and other social and religious ceremonies at the houses of caste Hindus who also attend the same if celebrated by the members of the community.

The Dhankas consider themselves superior to the Bhils, the Naikdas, the Koli Dhors and the Katkaris as also to the Mahars, the Mangs, the Chambhars and the Bhangis. They do not accept food from any of them. Some tribal communities like Koli Mahadev, Koli Malhar, Koknas and Gavits consider the Dhankas to be lower in status than they.

Social control

The Dhankas have panchas (caste elders) to settle the social disputes of the community. These panchas are mostly at the village level. It is their duty to see that the community is not lowered in the eyes of others and its prestige is in no way impaired. They take note of all activities which are not in accordance with the caste rules and punish the offenders. Disputes within the family are settled by the elders. Disputes between the relatives are also settled by elders related to the family concerned. Disputes involving other members of the community are referred to the caste elders. The office of these panchas is not hereditary. Generally experienced persons who carry some influence because of their character and knowledge are looked upon as panchas. The chief of these panchas is called dnyati patel or karbhari. His office is also not hereditary.

The chief functions of these panchas are to listen to the complaints pertaining to caste matters and settle them. Marriage customs, breaches of marriage and food rules, divorces, are the main complaints which come up before the panchas. On receipt of such a complaint, the karbhari convenes a meeting of the panchas. After hearing the complainant, the accused and the evidence they offer, the panchas try to settle the issue amicably. In case no compromise is arrived at, the party at fault is fined from Rs. 5 to Rs. 25. The amount of fine is spent mostly on drinks. There is no higher panchayat or authority beyond the village level to which an appeal can be made. In case the panchas' decision is not acceptable, then the parties concerned are allowed to approach a court of law if they so desire.

The statutory village panchayat concerned with general administration of the village or group of villages does not interfere in the social problems and the social disputes of the community.



A Raj Gond temple in Kinwat (Nanded)

PARDHI

The Constitution (Scheduled tribes) order, 1950 notified Pardhi, including Advichinchar and Phanse Pardhi as a scheduled tribe in the 13 districts in the present Bombay and Poona divisions of Maharashtra, in Melghat tehsil of Amravati district and the Sironcha and Gadhchiroli tehsils of Chanda district. Pardhi was notified as a scheduled tribe without any synonym under the same order. Under the Scheduled castes and scheduled tribes order (amendment) act, 1956, Kelapur, Wani and Yeotmal tehsils of Yeotmal district were added to the area wherein the tribe was deemed to be a scheduled tribe. This position continues unaffected by the Bombay reorganisation act, 1960, with the exception that in the tehsils of Malghat, Gadhchiroli, Sironcha, Kelapur, Wani and Yeotmal, "Bahelia or Bahellia, Chita Pardhi, Langoti Pardhi, Phanse Pardhi, Shikari, Takankar and Takia" are included in Pardhi.

According to Russell and Hira Lal, the Pardhis have a large number of endogamous groups. The principal sub-castes appear to be (i) Shikari or Bhil Pardhis who use firearms, (ii) Phanse Pardhis who hunt with traps and snares, (iii) Langoti Pardhis, so called because they wear only a narrow strip of cloth round the loins and (iv) the Takankars The other groups in the tribe are the Chitavale, who hunt with a tame leopard, the Gayake, who stalk their prey behind a bullock, the Gosain Pardhis who dress like religious mendicants in ochre cloth, the Shishi-ke-telvale, who sell crocodile oil and the Bandarvale who go about with performing monkeys (p. 260).

Enthoven says the word Pardhi is derived from Paradh (hunting) ; phanse means a noose and adivichanchar is derived from atavi (forest) and sanchar (wanderer). The name, like Phanse Pardhi, is descriptive of the life of the tribe (p. 169).

In the Caste Index of 1891, the tribe has been classified as "hunters and fowlers". Bahelia, according to Russell and Hira Lal, is the caste of fowlers and hunters in northern India (p. 344).

In Janve village of Amravati tehsil of Jalgaon district where the field study of this tribe was conducted, the tribe calls itself by the name Pardhi and other people in the village also call it by that name. The Pardhis of Janve say they were Rana Rajputs whom Rana Pratap wanted to exterminate on the suspicion that they had helped Akbar, the Mogul emperor. They therefore fled to Gujarat and styled themselves as Pardhis. Their forefathers are said to have migrated from Gujarat to Janve and settled there 250 years ago. Their Gujarati origin is confirmed by the fact that they worship Ambika of Junagadh.

In the 1961 census, the majority of Pardhis were returned from the districts of Jalgaon (6,295), Sholapur (5,064) and Dhulia (3,775). They returned a population of 21,417 (10,768 males and 10,649 females), Their sex ratio was 989. Of their total population, 46·01 per cent was in age-group 0·14 years ; 39·48 per cent in 15-44 years and 14·36 per cent in 45 years and above. Their population in the earlier censuses was reported as under :—

Census			Population
1911	...	...	11,958
1921	...	...	13,958
1931	...	...	17,637

Family and kinship

The family among the Pardhis is patrilocal with patronymic designation. After marriage the woman goes to stay with the husband. In some cases the couple stays with the boy's parents. A study of 29 households of Pardhis in Janve revealed that the average number of persons per household was 4·5. The exogamous divisions among the Pardhis were Solanki, Pavar and Chavan. These are actually surnames. They do not know of any other division. Persons with the same surnames or whose maternal uncle's surnames are the same cannot inter-marry.

The Pardhis live side by side with other Hindus. There is a regular pattern for their houses. They have mud walls and a flat roof of mud locally called dhaba. The houses touch one another. They are rectangular in shape with four to six khans (compartments) of 5′ × 5′ in a row. Those who are better off have houses of bigger compartments. The compartments are not necessarily separated from one another by walls nor is there a separate entrance for each khan. The houses have only one door in front. They have no windows. The Pardhis bathe in front of the house in the open, though the place is screened. They grow

a tulsi plant in front of their houses like other Hindus in the locality. The cattle are tethered in front of the house.

Men wear a dhoti and vest or a shirt. On special occasions, they wear a dhoti, a shirt and a feta. Young men wear caps. All men and women wear chappals while going out. Women wear saris and cholis. One end of the sari (padar) is taken over the shoulder and the end of the skirt is taken between the legs and tucked behind.

Men do not wear ornaments. Married women wear a garsoli, a nath on the nose, brass karnaphuls and bugadis of silver or brass on the ears, velas of silver on the forearm and goth (bracelets) of copper or brass.

Language and literacy

In Janve the Pardhis speak a corrupt form of Gujarati among themselves; they speak in Marathi with outsiders. In the 1961 census, the Pardhis returned 16 mother-tongues. The main tongues were Marathi (10,717 persons), Gujarati (6,636 persons), Pardhi (1,711 persons) and Ahirani (1,618 (persons). The census data showed that the Pardhis mostly speak Marathi in Jalgaon and Dhulia districts and Gujarati in Sholapur district. Out of the 21,417 Pardhis 5,884 reported knowledge of subsidiary languages. The principal subsidiary languages spoken were Marathi (4,432), Hindi (668), Gujarati (386), and Kannada (358). Only 26 persons returned English as their subsidiary language.

The Pardhis do not take much interest in the education of their children nor do they take advantage of the literacy classes started in the village. Out of the 12 boys and ten girls of school-going age in Janve, only three boys and four girls were found attending school.

Of the total Pardhi population, 89·56 per cent was illiterate in 1961. Of the 10·44 per cent literate population, 6;71 per cent were literate without any educational level, 3·65 per cent had reached the primary or junior basic stage of education and only 19 (0·09) were matriculates or those who had reached the higher secondary stage. The percentage of literacy was 17·17 among males and 3·64 among females.

Among them, 5,506 males (51·13) and 4,233 females (39·75) were workers. Of the 5,262 males and 6,416 females not at work, 765 males and 214 females were full-time students.

The industrial classification of Pardhi workers is given below :—

Category	Total persons	Males	Females
Total	9,739 (100·00)	5,506	4,233
I	2,137 (21·94)	1,275	862
II	4,833 (49·62)	2,197	2,636
III	930 (9·55)	698	232
IV	341 (3·50)	242	99
V	262 (2·69)	210	52
VI	363 (3·73)	266	97
VII	152 (1·56)	71	81
VIII	99 (1·02)	93	6
IX	622 (6·39)	454	168

The traditional occupation of the Pardhis is reported to be cutting stones, working as masons and cultivation.

Of the 29 Pardhi households found in Janve at the time of the field study in 1965, four were cultivators. 24 were agricultural labourers and one a stipendiary village kotwal (inferior servant). Six out of the agricultural labourers and the village kotwal also reported cultivation as their subsidiary occupation. The eleven cultivators were found to hold among themselves about 47 acres of land. Many of them did not possess sufficient land and so migrated to Bulsar in Gujarat State for work after their agricultural work in the village was over and returned in the last week of May. When need arises, they generally borrow money from caste Hindu moneylenders. Sometimes they also take loans from Government or from co-operative societies. Repayment of loan is made either in cash or in kind or both. They do not sell or mortgage their land for repayment of loan.

Life cycle

A daughter goes for her first delivery to her parents. A midwife from another caste is engaged as no woman from the tribe works as a midwife which is deemed "low work". The midwife attends the woman only

for a day, gives her a bath and goes away. Pachvi is observed on the fifth day with Satvi worship in the evening. An oil or ghee lamp is lighted in one half of a dried copra and is worshipped by the delivered woman. The child is named on the fifth day. No priest is consulted for selecting a name for the child.

For the first nine days after delivery, the mother is given wheat shira made in oil or ghee, after which she is given bajri pancakes, vegetables and onions. Thereafter she takes her normal food. The child is fed for the first three days on goat's milk which is let into its mouth with a bola (cotton ball).

The mother is held impure for nine days after delivery. She is assigned a separate place in the house for five weeks during which she cannot enter the kitchen. On the tenth day, she is given a bath and all her clothing is burnt. On the same day, the child's first hair is cut and it is bathed. At the end of five weeks the mother is presented with a sari and from that day, water is accepted from her. The mother is allowed to cook food only after two and a half months.

The Pardhis have no devaks or totems. They have however exogamous divisions based on surnames. A person can marry his mother's brother's daughter who is deemed a preferential match, but not his father's sister's or mother's sister's daughter. Girls are generally married at the age of 14 to 15 and boys at the age of 17 to 18. If it is disclosed even after marriage that the girl and the boy could not marry according to the marriage rules of the tribe, the marriage is dissolved even though the girl may have given birth to children. If a girl is seduced by a tribesman, he is compelled to marry her after she has been purified by a brahman. He and the girl's father are fined and are made to give a dinner to the tribesmen. If the seducer belongs to another caste, high or low, the girl and her father's family are excommunicated. No such instance was however reported from Janve.

The offer of marriage comes from the boy's father who has to pay dej of Rs. 24 to the girl's father ; he has also to give a sari, a choli and ornaments to the girl. Sakharpuda is performed a few days before marriage when a sari and a khan (cloth for the choli) are given to the girl. Her lap is filled with auspicious materials and sugar is put in her mouth. The boy's party is given a dinner. The bridegroom does not attend this ceremony. The bride's father goes to the bridegroom's house and presents him with a cap, a towel and a coconut.

On the day preceding the marriage, a couple who has been chosen in consultation with a brahman priest to apply haldi to the boy and the girl fetch twigs of bor, shami and arathi. They tie a root of haldi, jowar and rice grains in a yellow cloth. This piece of cloth is then used to tie the twigs to a pot filled with water.

Haldi is first applied to the boy and what remains (ushti haldi), a sari and a khan are sent to the bride. Haldi from the bride's house is similarly brought to the bridegroom.

The marriage takes place at the bride's house. Rukhwat (sweetmeats) is carried to the bridegroom when he comes to the village. Their bhagat waves a light before the family deity and then before the bridegroom ; he applies sandal-wood paste and akshata to the boy's forehead. He feeds the bridegroom with gur and ghee and leads him to the mandav. The bridegroom holds in his hand a katyar and a coconut. A Brahman priest conducts the marriage ceremony. The boy and the girl stand on pats facing each other, the bride facing east and the bridegroom west. A curtain is held between them by their maternal uncles. A "laja homa" (sacrificial offering of parched grains) is then performed. The couple goes round it seven times. This is called "Saptapadi". The couple then exchange seats. Kanyadan (formal giving away of the girl) is then done by the girl's father. Presents are given to both the parties.

The Pardhis permit widow re-marriage. A widow can marry her father's sister's son, but not mother's sister's or mother's brother's son. She is allowed to marry a younger brother of her deceased husband, but cannot marry her elder brother-in-law. If the widow has no children by her first husband, her intending husband has to pay her a sum of Rs. 250 to Rs. 300 but if she has children, a smaller amount (Rs. 100 to Rs. 125) has to be paid. This amount has to be paid to her father, brother or, in the absence of both, the widow herself.

Widow re-marriage is performed when the moon is not shining in the sky. The widow and her new husband dress in new clothes and are seated on pats, the woman to the right of the man, and the ends of their garments are tied into a knot by a brahman priest. The priest applies kumkum to their foreheads. The woman feeds the man with gur and ghee and then man feeds her likewise. The brahman priest then knocks their foreheads together and recites marriage hymns. Suvasinis do not attend the ceremony, but only elderly persons and widows. There is no other ceremony

such as homa. The pair then go to the village border, keep betel and nut there and return to the bride's place. Next morning they return to the bridegroom's house. Musicians are not engaged. A bachelor cannot marry a widow without first marrying a finger ring by regular form of marriage.

A husband can divorce his wife if he cannot agree with her or if her conduct is bad. A wife can seek divorce if the husband is impotent or is suffering from an incurable disease. In both cases, sanction of the tribal panchayat in the village is required which levies a fine of Rs. 10 to 20. If the wife seeks divorce, nothing has to be paid to the husband; but if the husband seeks divorce, he has to pay Rs. 50 to his wife's father. The deed of divorce is prepared on stamped paper and is registered with the sub-registrar. A bachelor can marry a divorced woman after marrying a ring first.

The Pardhis bury their dead. Woman dying in child birth and persons who have visited the shrines of their family deity are cremated. A person is not allowed to breathe his last on a cot, but he is taken down and his son takes his head on his lap. Sandalwood paste and rice are applied to his feet. If a person dies at night, the body is not taken out till the next morning. If it is an elderly person, a bhajan is performed. The body is bathed and robed in a dhoti or a sari and choli. If it is a suvasini, the body is decorated with all the ornaments, the hair is combed and the body is covered with a white cloth The body is carried on shoulders to the graveyard, its legs in front. The sons, husband, nephew and other relatives belonging to the same family (ek-sutki) can alone give the 'khand', i.e., carry the dead body. A son or other relative carries the fire on a cow dung cake kept on an earthen pot at the head of the procession. When an elderly person dies, the body is carried to the grave with music. The corpse is lowered and kept on the ground at the visava. Handful of wheat flour and coin, which had earlier been tied to the hem of the shroud, is untied at the visava, kept on a banyan leaf and a small stone is kept on it. Then they change khands (shoulders) and carry the corpse to the cemetery. They dig a grave pit seven to eight feet long, two feet wide and three feet deep. A portion of the pit is carved inside to protect the deceased's face from the earth thrown to fill the grave. The face is also covered with rui leaves. The body is placed with head to the south, feet to the north and face turned to the east. Every one throws in the grave handfuls of earth. The grave is filled till it raises one foot above the ground. The bier is burnt at the feet of the deceased. The chief mourner carrying the fire pot bathes at nearest water source, fills his pot and comes to the grave, accompanied by one man who also has bathed. He takes the pot on his right shoulder and the man accompanying him knocks the pot with a small stone making a hole in it. The man with the pot goes round the grave and throws the pot at the back at the head of the deceased and cries out. Then the funeral party bathe, eat the pharal (sweets) carried to the graveyard, return to the deceased's house where they sit then on the verandah for a while and then go to their houses.

Women and children do not accompany the funeral party. A man whose wife is pregnant cannot give 'khand'. The kumkum of the deceased's wife is wiped off, her bangles and mangalsutra are broken when the corpse is laid on the bier outside the house. This is done by a man in the funeral party. No woman can do this. The piece of bangles and mangalsutra are buried with the deceased.

Impurity after death is observed for ten days by the whole family for Bhaubands (cognates) who are married. On the eleventh day they take a bath and are deemed pure.

On the tenth day, the deceased's sons are shaven by a barber near a water source, after taking a bath. They again take a bath after kshaur (shaving), put on dry clothes and offer pindas (rice balls) to the crows under a brahman's guidance. The brahman is paid a dakshina (fee) of Rs. 1·25 and sidha (uncooked food). On the twelfth day, there is a caste dinner (vegetarian). Cooked food is offered near the grave and then all dine. No ahers or dukhavatas are given. It is not binding on the mourners to go to a temple. They commemorate their dead on 'Pitar Amavasya' (Bhadrapad vad 30) by offering cooked food to crows and the fire, in their names. They do not worship their ancestors.

If a woman dies in child birth within nine days of delivery, no person from the caste touches her. The body is not bathed. Unmarried boys wearing only langotis lift the body, put it on a cart and carry it to the graveyard. They bury the corpse in a grave which they dig themselves. The family does not observe sutak (death impurity) for the woman. The boys who carry the corpse are then shaved and cow's urine is sprinkled on them. No divas (obsequies) are performed in such cases.

Religion

In the 1961 census, all except seven women among the Pardhis returned Hinduism as their religion

The seven women did not state their religion. The Pardhis worship the Devi and Khandoba. They offer coconut and goats to these deities. They visit the temple of Maruti, Mahadev, Bhairav, Vithal Rukhumai and Bhavani in the vilage. Their family deity at Janve is goddess Ambika, whose silver image is kept in the household of the head of the family and worshipped. Other members of the family go to that house for worshipping the deity. They worship the deity with full rites on Chaitra sud 14 on which day there is a fair at Junagadh and on Ashvin sud 7 and 8 and any other day on which any person has made a vow to oger a goat for the cure of his children, etc. They do not touch the deity on any other day. They go to the Saptashringi fair at Vani in Nasik district. At Janve, they do not perform Satyanarayan Puja themselves, but attend it if invited by caste Hindus.

They engage Hindu priests for marriage and death rites. Their ideas about heaven and hell are the same as those held by caste Hindus. They believe that after death a person goes to heaven or hell according to the good or bad deeds he has committed during his lifetime. They also believe in re-birth. They believe that if a person's desires remain unfulfilled during his lifetime, he is re-born in the same family in order to see that his wishes are carried out at least after his death. They believe in ghosts, but do not believe in sorcery and witchcraft.

The Pardhis observe the Hindu festivals of Gudhi Padva, Akshaya Tritiya, Pola, Navratra, Divali and Shimga. On Padva, a Gudi is erected at the house where the family deity is installed and worshipped and at no other place. Ten to twelve days before Akshaya Tritiya (Vaishakh sud 3) they germinate wheat seed in the house where the family deity is worshipped. On Akshaya Tritiya day, a new earthen vessel is obtained from a potter and it is kept on a handful of wheat in front of the family deity. The deity itself is kept in a brass box tied in a red silk cloth and suspended from the roof in a cotton cloth bag. The pot is filled with water and a smaller pot filled with water is kept on it. Male members of the family go to the deity with Naivedya (offering). There are family deities in two households in Janve village, one of Solanki and another of Pavar, where members of their family go to worship the deity. A bhagat worships the deity, the family members offer the naivedya and return to their houses. There is no other ceremony.

On Pola day, the bullocks are washed in the morning and taken out for grazing. They are decorated and painted at the cattle stand. They are brought to the village temple and then taken to the house. A cot is placed in front of the house and all the implements are kept on the cot. The bullocks are worshipped and a sweet dish prepared in the house is shown as naivedya. Cows are worshipped on the next day.

Navaratra festival is celebrated in the first fortnight of Ashvin when a lamp is lighted. On the seventh and eighth day of the month, the family deities are worshipped and a sweet dish is prepared.

There is no programme during Divali except lighting. They observe Bhaubij on the second day of Kartika when the sisters go to their brothers' houses. They wave a ghee lamp before their brothers and the brothers offer them money or a piece of cloth in return.

Leisure and recreation

Dancing is the Pardhis' ceremonial as well as recreational activity. They dance at marriages and festivals, especially at Holi and Divali. Only men dance.

The Pardhis are allowed to visit Hindu temple. They are also allowed to draw water from the common well. A Brahman priest conducts their marriage ceremonies and also perform their death rites. They are not required to render traditional service to any caste. They accept water from all castes except Mahars, Mangs, Chambhars, Bhangis and Musalmans. They do not however associate themselves with or touch Phanse Pardhis.

The tribe is organised in a group in each village. Some respectable members from the tribe act as panchas. There is no headman of the panchayat. The decisions are taken by majority. The panchayat hears complaints regarding caste matters and decides them. Questions regarding divorce, aultery and food rules are the main complaints referred to it. If a person is found guilty by the panchayat, he is fined Rs. 25 and the amount is spent on giving a feast to the caste people.

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A Phanse Pardhi of Poona

NAYAKA

The Nayakas are notified in the President's order 1960 as "Naikda or Nayaka, including Cholivala Nayaka, Kapadia Nayaka, Mota Nayaka and Nana Nayaka". The field study of the tribe conducted at Karanji Khurd (in Nawapur tehsil of Dhulia district) revealed that the Nayakas of that village called themselves as Naytalas or Naikdas and the people of the region also knew them by the same names. According to them, Naikda is a synonym of Nayaka and Cholivala Nayaka, Kapadia Nayaka, Mota Nayaka and Nana Nayaka were sections of the tribe known under the common name Nayaka or Naikda. Of these four sections, Kapadia Nayaka and Mota Nayaka are considered to be higher in the social scale. Next to them are Cholivala Nayakas whereas Nana Nayakas are regarded as the lowest of them all. According to Enthoven (p. 120), the name "Naikda" or "little Naik" is probably accounted for by the notion of their being considered inferior to the Broach Talabadas who were formerly known as Naiks.

The ancestors of the Nayakas were said to have been grooms in the service of the Musalman nobles of Champaner. They took to a plundering life when the city became deserted. Another account states that they are the descendants of the Naiks, attendants sent by the Raja of Baglan with his daughter on her marriage with one of the Rajas of Champaner (Bombay gazetteer, V. VI, Rewakantha, p. 34). They are also described as degraded Kolis as well as a primitive stock much mixed from various sources (Enthoven, p. 121). About 61 per cent of the total population of Naikdas in Maharashtra speak Bhili as their mother-tongue. This may show some connection or affinity of the tribe with the Bhils. The Naikdas of Karanji Khurd do not know any story about their origin. They also do not recognise any kind of affinity, present or past, either with the Kolis or with the Bhil.

Distribution and population trend

The Naikdas or Nayakas are notified as a scheduled tribe in the 13 districts of western Maharashtra. During the 1961 census, they returned a population of 11,731 persons (5,854 males and 5,877 females) from all those 13 districts. Of these, 10,310 persons (87·89) were returned from rural areas and 1,421 (12·11) from urban areas. Their greatest concentration of 9,253 (78·88) was in the district of Dhulia. Thana (956), Greater Bombay (753), Nasik (295), Jalgaon (166) and Poona (126) together accounted for 19·57 per cent of their total population in the State. The rest were distributed in the other seven districts. Their sex ratio was 1,003. It was 1,021 for the rural population and 887 for the urban. The age composition showed that 5,156 (43·95) fell in the age-group 0-14; 5,123 persons (43·67) in the age-group 15-44 and 1,434 persons (12·22) in the age-group 45 and above.

During the previous censuses, the tribe returned the following population in the present notified districts of Maharashtra :—

Census year	Population
1911	.. 466
1921	.. Not mentioned in the present notified districts.
1931	.. 2,011
1961	.. 1,173

The increase from 2,011 in 1931 to 11,731 in 1961 may be partly due to the natural growth in their population during the last three decades and partly to the changes made in the President's order, 1956 which included Cholivala Nayaka, Kapadia Nayaka, Mota Nayaka and Nana Nayaka into the "Naikda or Nayak", the formerly declared name of the community.

Family and kinship

The Nayaka family is patrilocal with patronymic designation. A girl goes and stays with her husband when she gets married. A study of 52 Nayaka households from Nandurbar and Nawapur tehsils of Dhulia showed that 23 of them consisted of father, mother, un-married sons and daughters. Married sons were found living with their parents only in seven households. The average number of persons per household was 5·4. Only two of the 52 households were found to have female heads of households. These two women were above 54 years. Sons inherit the property of their father in equal shares.

The Nayakas have a number of exogamous kuls like Bhil, Barodiya, Dondya, Dabhadiya, Kadariya, Katkari, Gavit, Naik, Nayaka, Pavar, Savare, Thokre and Vagh. Names like Bhil, Gavit and Katkari also

occur as distinct caste names in the same area. Names like Pavar and Vagh are also common among the Koli Mahadev and the Varlis respectively.

Karanji Khurd is inhabited by Mavchis (125 households), Gavits (70 households) and Nayakas (80 households). It has six hamlets which are situated at some distance from each other. The caste composition of each of these hamlets indicates that only Mavchis and Gavits are the Nayakas' neighbours of importance.

House types

A Nayaka hut has walls of bamboo strips or karvi reeds plastered with clay and cow dung. It has a sloping roof of grass or palm leaves. There being no windows, the interior of the house is always dark. In most cases, the hut is a single-room structure with a partition dividing it into two compartments, the rear one utilised for cooking and the front one for all other purposes. A bigger hut has two or more rooms and at least two doors, but no windows. A few big huts have a closed verandah and an enclosure around. In many cases, the hut has some open space, but it is rarely used for growing vegetables. As most of them are forest labourers, they do not own any cattle. A few keep goats and fowls. They are generally housed in the living room itself.

Dress

Nayaka men wear a dhoti, a shirt and a cap. Old men often wear a bandi instead of a shirt and a feta. Boys wear shorts and shirts. Women wear a sari and a bodice (dagli). Girls use frocks and petticoats. Men shave the beard and trim the hair and moustaches. Women part the hair in the middle and tie it in a knot at the back. Some old men wear a ring on the finger and balis (ear-rings). Women were a gathi (a necklace of black beads) around their neck and bangles around the wrist. They also wear kap in the ears, fuli on the nose and sakara or kalla around their legs. Widows do not generally wear ornaments.

Tattooing is popular among girls only. In most cases, this is done at eight to ten years of age on cheeks, forehead, chin and wrists. Popular among these are dots, stars and crosses on the cheeks, forehead and chin and pictures of Ambaji and leaves of trees on wrists.

The Nayakas are non-vegetarian. They eat mutton, fish, fowl and eggs, but abstain from beef. This food, however, does not form a part of their daily diet. Their chief food is jowar, pulses (tur and urid) and occasionally rice. When dal is not available, leaves of edible plants are cooked as vegetables and eaten with jowar bhakri. They also consume wild fruits like umber, jambhul, tembhur, karvand, avala, mahua and bor. Those who have some land and milch cattle have occasionally milk and milk preparations. Like the other tribes of the region, they take country liquor liberally and on many occasions go to the stage of intoxication. Tea is the next important drink.

The Nayaka family has a few earthen and metal pots for cooking and eating. These are purchased at the weekly market at Nawapur which is three miles from the village. They also keep soops, baskets, buckets, lanterns or wall lamps and one or two wooden cots, in addition to a fishing rod and some musical instruments like a tur and a thali. A stone handmill, a long wooden pestle, a small wooden or stone mortar are also found in some families. Those who work as agricultural labourers and ply carts keep a digging stick, a hoe, an axe, sickles, a pair of bullocks and a cart. A few have a goat or two and some fowls.

The surroundings of their houses as well as hamlets are not always clean. The open space around their houses is full of garbage and dirt. The lanes and kachha roads in the hamlets are not cleaned regularly. They neither bathe nor shave regularly. They do not wash their clothes frequently.

For treatment of diseases they go to a bhagat of their community. They will take the herbal medicine he may give or make a sacrifice to please the god or the spirit he names. Sometimes he ties a thread round the wrist or the neck of the patient. The office of the bhagat is not hereditary.

Language and literacy

Most of the Nayakas in Maharashtra speak Bhili as their mother-tongue. During the 1961 census, they returned twelve mother-tongues. Bhili was spoken as a mother-tongue by 7,233 persons (61·66), Marathi by 2,114 and Gujarati by 1,741, Mawchi by 246 and Banjari by 201. A few (343) reported knowledge of eight other languages in addition to their mother-tongues. Three persons knew English as a subsidiary language. The principal subsidiary languages spoken by them were Marathi (153), and Hindi (138). At Karanji Khurd they speak Gujarati at home; with outsiders they speak either in Mawchi or in Bhili. Gujarati is their ancestral language; Mawchi and Bhili are the languages spoken by their dominant neighbours. They also understand Hindi

and can speak it. Out of a population of 11,731 persons, only 1,045 (8·91) were returned as literates in 1961. The table below gives their break-up by educational standards :—

Area	Illiterate			Literate without educational level			Primary or junior basic			Matriculation or higher secondary			Above matriculation or higher secondary			Total		
	P	M	F	P	M	F	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	14	15	16	17	18	19
Rural ..	9,424	4,314	5,110	611	538	73	271	245	26	4	4	..	..	.	..	10,310	5,101	5,209
Urban ..	1,262	623	639	101	78	23	51	45	6	6	6	..	1	1	..	1,421	753	668
Total ..	10,686	4,937	5,749	712	616	96	322	290	32	10	10		1	1	..	11,731	5,854	5,877

At Karanji Khurd they did not appear to be much interested in the education of their boys and girls. They said their children of school-going age were an economic asset to them as they supplemented the family income by working in the field.

Economic life

Enthoven recorded in 1922 that the Nayakas were labourers and wood-cutters and only a few owned bullocks and ploughs and tilled (p. 125). During the 1961 census, 6,906 persons (58·87) were returned as workers. Out of 5,854 males, 3,658 (62·49) were workers. Out of 5,877 females, 3,248 (55·27) were workers. The industrial classification of the workers of the tribe in 1961 census was as below :—

Category	Total			Rural			Urban		
	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I ..	2,538 (36 75)	1,290 (35 27)	1,248 (38·42)	2,534 (41·31)	1,289	1,245	4 (0·51)	1	3
II ..	2,935 (42·50)	1,404 (38·38)	1,531 (47·14)	2,871 (46 80)	1,365	1,506	64 (8·29)	39	25
III .	170 (2·46)	141 (3·85)	29 (0·89)	145	121	24	25	20	5
IV .	29 (0·42)	13 (0 36)	16 (0·49)	26	10	16	3	3	....
V ..	612 (8 86)	421 (11·51)	191 (5 88)	177 (2·88)	154	23	435 (56·34)	267	168
VI ..	103 (1·49)	42 (1·15)	61 (1·88)	78	18	60	25	24	1
VII ..	61 (0·88)	37 (1·01)	24 (0 74)	11	8	3	50	29	21
VIII .	88 (1·28)	75 (2·05)	13 (0 40)	35	35	....	53	40	13
IX ..	370 (5·36)	235 (6 42)	135 (4·16)	257	159	98	113	76	37
Total workers .. (I to IX) ..	6,906 (100 00)	3,658 (100 00)	3,248 (100 00)	6,134 (100 00)	3,159	2,975	772	499	273

A significantly large number (79·25) depended on land for their livelihood, 36·75 per cent as cultivators having some kind of rights on land and 42·50 per cent as agricultural labourers. A study of 577 Nayaka households from Dhulia and Thana indicated that 279 (48·35) owned or held land from government for cultivation, 23 households (3·99) cultivated others' lands on lease or contract basis and 275 households (47·66) did not hold any land for cultivation. Among the 279 land-holders, two held land less than one acre, 143 households held lands between one and 9·9 acres, 51 households held land from ten to 14·9 acres and 64 households owned land rising from 15 to 24·9 acres. There were 19 households holding 25 acres and above. Among the same 279 land-holders, there were ten households who leased out their entire land to others for cultivation. There were 16 households who cultivated their own land and also took others' lands on lease for cultivation. Lease-holders paid 4 to 6 times the land revenue as rent and met all expenses of cultivation.

Among the 4,825 returned as non-workers. 453 were full-time students or children attending schools.

At Karanji Khurd the hereditary occupation of the tribe is reported to be forest labour. The survey showed that most of them still worked as forest labourers either with the forest department or with forest contractors. Some of them also worked as agricultural labourers and some in saw-mills. Only three households were reported to be cultivators. One held 12 acres and the other two about seven acres each. These three cultivators grow jowar, paddy, varai, tur, maize and chilli in their lands and carry on farming with tools like a wooden plough, a pamar (sowing), a kudal (clod-breaker) and sickles Collecting forest produce like wild fruits, roots, honey, gum, lac, wax and leaves for bidi-making; cutting wood for fuel and selling it in the market and plying carts are some supplementary occupations Fishing provides a supplementary food to a few of them. Fishing is generally done with a rod. They hunt with an axe or a stick. Indebtedness appeared to be wide-spread. Loans were taken mostly from village merchants or private money-lenders. The rate of interest was more than 25 per cent. A cultivating household also gets a loan from Government in the form of tagai. Sometimes co-operative societies finance them. Of the five households studied, three were found indebted to the extent of Rs. 25 to Rs. 300. Of them, two had taken loan from Government as well as from a co-operative society for purchase of bullocks and other agricultural purposes and one from a private money-lender for household or domestic requirements. All these three households were of cultivators.

Life cycle

Nayaka women observe menstrual impurity for four or five days and are deemed to be purified on the fourth or fifth day after taking a bath. During the days of menstruation they are not allowed to cook food or fetch water though they may go out for field work. No rite marks a girl reaching puberty or a married woman conceiving for the first time. A pregnant woman takes her usual food and attends to her daily work till the time of delivery. Generally she is confined at her husband's house. A midwife of the tribe is engaged. In difficult cases, a trained midwife from the nearest maternity centre is also called in. When the child is born, the midwife cuts its nal with a bour reed. The placenta is buried in a pit outside the hut and a stone is kept over it. The midwife serves mother and child for five days and is paid Rs. 2. The mother is held unclean for twelve days. In some families, she is held impure for five weeks. The child is fed on its mother's milk. Infants that have lost their mother are fed on goat's or cow's milk. The mother is given light food like rice pej for a week or so, after which she gradually starts taking her usual diet. In well-to-do families she is given shira (a sweet dish of wheat flour) for a week or so. She resumes her normal duties after five weeks but does not go for out-door work till she regains strength.

The child is named on the fifth day of its birth without any ceremony. The name is generally selected by the women of the family. Bachhu, Mohan, Chiman, Nana, Dhanu, Dharma, Arvind, Parbhu and Ramu are a few names of their male children as against the names of old men like Budhya, Koyala, Kika, Siba, Zinka, Narsi, Manga, Dhedya and Lallu. Similarly Babi, Savita, Savali, Ravali, Mankr, Bachhi and Sitali are a few names of their female children as against the names of old women like Jamni, Gajari, Motli, Kiki, Ukedi, Lenaki, Arakhi, Pihili and Somli. The child's first hair is shaved by its maternal uncle on any convenient day six weeks after its birth. A goldsmith pierces the lower lobes of its ears on any suitable day twelve months after its birth.

The Nayakas are not very strict in matters of pre-marital sex relations. The boy and the girl are generally permitted to stay together as husband and wife without going through marriage rites, provided the boy's father pays some amount to the girl's father as directed by the panchas of the tribe.

At Karanji Khurd it was observed that a girl was married at the age of 16 or 17 and a boy between the age of 18 and 20. According to the 1961 census,

only 19 males out of 2,514 (1·95) and 44 females out of 2,642 (1·66) were married in the age-group 0 to 14. As a rule the husband was older than the wife; in a majority of cases, the difference varied from one to five years.

Marriage within the kul is not permitted. Marriage with mother's brother's daughter, father's sister's daughter or with one's own sister's daughter is also not allowed. Marriage with wife's younger sister or elder brother's widow is permitted. Marriage takes place at the boy's or the girl's place, whichever is suitable, on any day of any month and the service is conducted by a male priest of the tribe who plays on a dhol (drum). In Waki pada of Karanji Khurd, it is celebrated at the girl's place preferably in the morning between 10 and 12.

The offer of marriage comes from the boy's father who, along with some elders, goes to the girl's father. If the girl's father agrees, guests from both the sides are served liquor. The marriage day and the date for payment of dej are fixed. At Karanji Khurd, the dej Rs. 45 is paid to the girl's father a few days prior to marriage.

At the time of marriage, the bride and the bridegroom sit on pats side by side facing east. The girl sits to the left of the boy. A woman of the tribe, called Ritkarin, takes a stick in her hand and keeps another one over it so as to form a cross. She then changes the position of these sticks. That which is kept over the first stick is kept below it. She repeats this action five times before the bride and the bridegroom. Next, the priest ties the garments of the bride and the bridegroom into a knot after keeping a coin in it. The bride and the bridegroom then sit on a cot. The knot is united by the priest and the marriage is over. The coin that was tied into the knot is given to the priest. Enthoven says that the bride and the bridegroom move four times round a fire (p. 123). This practice is not followed by the Nayakas living in Karanji Khurd.

Sometimes a boy and a girl decide to stay together as husband and wife. At times, a girl on her own accord goes to a boy whom she likes and stays with him as his wife. Sometimes it happens that a girl is forcibly taken away by a boy and his party. In all such cases, the boy's father has to pay dej to the girl's father as directed by the panchas of the tribe and thereafter they are permitted to stay together as husband and wife without marriage rites. The girl's consent is necessary where she has been carried away by the boy. In certain cases, a boy serves his would be father-in-law for a period of three or five years if he is poor and unable to spend on his marriage. He is then married to the girl at the expense of the girl's father without dej.

Widow re-marriage

A widow is permitted to marry a man of her choice. She may marry the younger brother of her deceased husband if she wishes. There are no rites in this marriage and no priest is needed. Guests from both the sides are entertained to liquor or tea and the marriage is over. Sometimes the intending husband has to pay Rs. 25 to the parents of the widow as dej.

Divorce is permitted. Both husband and wife can ask for a divorce when they are not agreeable to one another, or on the ground of cruelty and ill-treatment on the part of the husband and adultery on the part of the wife. If a woman leaves her husband without a specific cause or fault on his part, she has to pay Rs. 101 or the marriage expenses to the latter. She is then free to marry a man of her choice if she desires so. In case the husband is found guilty, the matter rests with the panchas whether he is to be compensated or not. In case a husband leaves his wife, he has to pay Rs. 101 to the latter. At the time of granting a divorce, the necklace worn by the woman round her neck is broken and a divorce deed is executed on stamped paper. A divorced woman is allowed to re-marry a man of her choice; it takes the form of window re-marriage.

Death

The Nayakas follow both burial and cremation. Small children are buried. The body is washed with warm water and dressed in new clothes, kept on an adi (a bamboo bier) in a sleeping position with a piece of new cloth spread over it and carried to the cremation ground by four relatives or tribesmen. If the deceased leaves a wife, her bangles are broken before the body is shifted from the house. At the visava, the body is kept on the ground for a while. The old clothes of the deceased are thrown there and the necklace of black glass beads is removed from the neck of his wife. The body is carried to the cremation ground for disposal. The eldest son of the deceased walks in front with an earthern pot in which is kept a burning dung cake. At the cremation ground, water is sprinkled with an umbar twig on the heads of all present. The spot where the body is to be cremated is washed with cow dung and a few grains of jowar thrown on it. A pyre is arranged and the corpse placed on it. The chief mourner lights it and then dashes the earthen pot to

pieces. The bier which carried the corpse is broken to pieces and kept by the side of the pyre facing the head of the deceased. The party waits till the corpse is completely burnt ; they drink liquor, take a bath at the nearest water place and return. The same procedure is followed when the body is buried.

Funeral rites are observed on the 12th day of death. On this occasion two reeds of erandi are filled with milk and two with rice gruel. Of these, one of milk and one of gruel are kept at the visava, the other two are kept at the cremation ground. The tribesmen are then served with tea or liquor. No post-death pollution is observed.

Religion

Enthoven recorded in 1922 that the tribe was animistic by religion (p. 124). Most of the tribesmen, however, consider themselves to be Hindus by religion. Excepting 67 persons who returned Christianity as their religion all the other tribe people (11,664) reported themselves to be Hindus during the 1961 census. At Karanji Khurd their chief objects of worship are Marimata, Kakabalia and Devlimadi, the stone images of whom are said to be on a hill at Dasavada in Gujarat where they go for worship. They also believe in spirits and witchcraft. If anybody is possessed by a spirit or a ghost or falls a prey to an evil act of a witch, they seek the advice of a bhagat who is said to be capable of calling the spirits and speaking to them. The sun and the moon are considered as divine. They have, however, no clear idea of heaven or hell.

Of the festivals they celebrate, Divali and Holi are more important. Divali is celebrated on the last day of Ashvin and the first day of Kartik. They do not perform any rite on this occasion, but drink, dance and enjoy themselves. Holi is celebrated on the full-moon day of Falgun. It is celebrated in every hamlet collectively by all the castes and tribes living in that hamlet. They do not light a separate Holi. Lighting of the common Holi fire, drinking and dancing mark the day.

Most of the Nayakas of Karanji Khurd are forest labourers. Some of them are agricultural labourers. They get leisure mostly in the evening after their meals. This time is spent by them in smoking bidis, chewing tobacco and taking snuff. Those who are accustomed to drinking take country liquor. There is dancing at marriages, and festivals like Divali and Holi. Tur and the thali are the musical instruments on which they play during their dances.

The tribe is divided into sections like Cholivala Nayaka, Kapadia Nayaka, Mota Nayaka and Nana Nayaka. According to the residents of Waki pada of Karanji Khurd, the Mota Nayakas enjoy a comparatively higher social position in the community. Kapadia Nayakas are also reported to enjoy a superior status. These two sections accept food from each other and also inter-marry. The Cholivala Nayakas rank next to them. Persons belonging to the first two divisions accept food from the Cholivala Nayakas but do not marry with them. The Nana Nayakas come last. None of the other three groups accepts food from them. Relations between these different sections appear to be cordial and friendly.

The tribe is allowed to fetch water from public wells along with caste Hindus and have free access to their temples. Their entry into the houses of caste Hindus is not prohibited. Barbers who serve the higher castes also serve them. They regard themselves to be socially superior to Mawchis, Gavits and Bhils, but inferior to Dhodias. Mawchis and Gavits, however, consider the Nayakas to be inferior to them. They do not accept food from the Nayakas.

Their social disputes are settled by panchas. In Waki pada, the head of these panchas is called agewan. The panchas hear complaints pertaining to caste matters and settle them by effecting a compromise or by imposing fines. Questions of marriage customs, divorces, breaches of marriage rules, adultery and eating food at the hands of lower castes are the main complaints which are referred to these panchas If the dispute lies between members belonging to different hamlets or villages, the panchas of these hamlets gather together and settle it. The office of a panch or that of a chief is not hereditary. The fine levied depends mostly on the nature of the offence and it is spent either on drinks or on caste feasts. Decision is given unanimously.

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RATHAWA

The Rathawa are a scheduled tribe found chiefly in Sholapur district. In the President's order, 1960, this tribe is notified as Rathawa without any synonym. In Kadabgaon, a village in Akalkot tehsil in which they are highly concentrated, the community calls itself as Rathawa and it is also known by other people by that name.

The tribe has not been mentioned in the caste index of 1891. It did not figure in the censuses of 1911 and 1921 of Bombay presidency. In the census of 1931, its population in the entire presidency was only seven (two males and five females). It was enumerated under the name 'Rathawa' and was returned from the West Khandesh (Jalgaon) district.

This note has been prepared from the 1961 census figures, material gathered from 130 census slips of Rathawas (79 males and 51 females) in Akalkot and on the basis of information collected from a field study conducted at Kadabgaon. An unpublished note of Shri D. P. Khanapurkar has been drawn upon to supplement the material.

In the 1961 census, the Rathawas were returned from all the districts of Bombay and Poona divisions, except Ratnagiri and Satara. Their total population was 2,874 with 1,510 males and 1,364 females, out of whom 2,417 (84·10) were living in rural areas and 457 (15;90) in urban areas.

The following table shows the distribution of Rathawas in Maharashtra :—

State/district	Rural/ Urban	Total	Males	Females
Maharashtra State	....	2,874	1,510	1,364
	Rural	2,417	1,275	1,142
	Urban	457	235	222
Sholapur district	....	2,533	1,310	1,223
	Rural	2,162	1,119	1,043
	Urban	371	191	180
Greater Bombay, Thana, Kolaba, Nasik, Dhulia, Jalgaon, Ahmednagar, Poona, Sangli, Kolhapur.	....	341	200	141
	Rural	255	156	99
	Urban	86	44	42

The table shows that the Rathawas are highly concentrated in Sholapur district in which 88·14 per cent of the total population were enumerated and the remaining 11·86 per cent were spread over ten districts. In Sholapur district, 1,890 (78·20) were found in Akalkot tehsil. Their 1961 sex-ratio was 903. In the rural area, the ratio was 896 females and in the urban area 945. The sex-ratio for the general population of Maharashtra State is 936, for the rural and urban areas, it is 995 and 801 respectively.

The following table provides the age and sex composition :—

Age-group	Persons	Males	Females
0—14 ..	1,486 (51·70)	794	692
15—44 ..	1,071 (37·27)	531	540
45 and above ..	317 (11·03)	185	132

Houses and utensils

There are no separate villages entirely occupied by Rathawas, but they live away in separate hamlets (padas) in a village. A Rathawa hut is a rectangular or square structure built on a simple earth foundation. It has only one door and no window. Generally their houses have thatched roofs, but some houses have roofs of tiles. The walls are made of bamboo ribs and are plastered with mud and cow dung on both sides. Very few houses have walls of bricks. The house consists of one room divided into two parts by a bamboo partition. The rear part is used as a kitchen and the front part for all other purposes. Cattle are also kept in the front part. Women and children bathe on a slab kept outside the hut. Men bathe at a common well or in the nearby river.

The Rathawas have only a few articles in their houses. At Kadabgaon, they have a few earthen and metal pots for cooking and a few plates for eating food. Only a few have cups and saucers.

Their farm implements include a plough, a tiphan (drill plough), a kolpa (hoe), an axe and a favada. Some of them have a cart. They do not keep poultry, but some keep she-goats. Their main crop and staple food is jowar. A few of them occasionally take vegetables like brinjals, onions and potatoes in their diet. They grow chillis and most of them eat chutni prepared from cillis with jowar bhakri. Some times they use tur dal in their food. A few take tea in the morning. Wheat and rice are reserved for special occasions. They are very fond of meat and fish. They eat all kinds of fish, fowl and mutton. They do not eat beaf, pork or carrion.

Rathawa men wear only a small piece of cloth round the waist or a short dhoti at home; while going out, they wear a dhoti, a shirt and a feta. Women wear a petticoat and a choli. A separate piece of cloth is used as odhani, one end of which is tucked in front in the petticoat and the other is taken over the shoulder. They wear ear-rings, nose-ring, saree (a necklace), a string of glass beads round the neck, bangles made of enamal and wood, and brass anklets. Girls are generally tattooed on their cheeks, chin and forehead with dots and crosses. The Rathawas of Kadabgaon clean their teeth daily in the morning with neem or babul twigs. They chew tobacco and drink liquor, men smoke bidi but women do not. They do not use snuff. Generally they do not take pan or betel nut.

At Kadabgaon, the Rathawas dance in groups during Holi and marriage festivals. At Holi, men and women dance together through the night to the accompaniment of song and dhol (drum). After a marriage feast is over, women and girls dance together to the accompaniment of songs.

Occupation

Details about the Rathawa working population as reported in the 1961 census are given below :—

	Total persons	Males	Females
Workers ..	1,380 (48·02)	766 (50·73)	614 (45·01)
Non-workers ..	1,494 (51·98)	744 (49·27)	750 (54·99)
Total ..	2,874 (100·00)	1,510 (100·00)	1,364 (100·00)

The percentage of workers in the general population of Maharashtra is 47·91. The percentages of male and female workers are 57·09 and 38·10 for the general population and 61·54 and 55·83 for the scheduled tribe population of the State.

The following table gives the distribution of Rathawa workers by nine categories of economic activity :—

Category	Total persons	Males	Females
I ..	242 (17·54)	168	74
II ..	883 (63·98)	412	471
III ..	49	36	13
IV ..	9	7	2
V ..	47	42	5
VI ..	9	9	..
VII ..	12	12	..
VIII ..	15	15	..
IX ..	114 (8·26)	65	49
Total ..	1,380	766	614

With 81·52 per cent working on land, the Rathawas are mainly dependent on agriculture and agricultural labour for their livelihood. They use only cow dung manure. They sell their produce in the Akalkot market. They cut forest wood for fuel and collect seasonal fruits by way of supplementary occupation.

In the 1961 census, the Rathawas reported eleven mother-tongues. Lamani was spoken by 2,033 (70·74) and Banjari by 290 (10·09). Other languages were Gujarati (228), Rajputani (25), Marwari (130), Marathi (68), Bhilli (51), Telugu (19), Kokani (12), Kannada (10) and Hindi (8).

Education

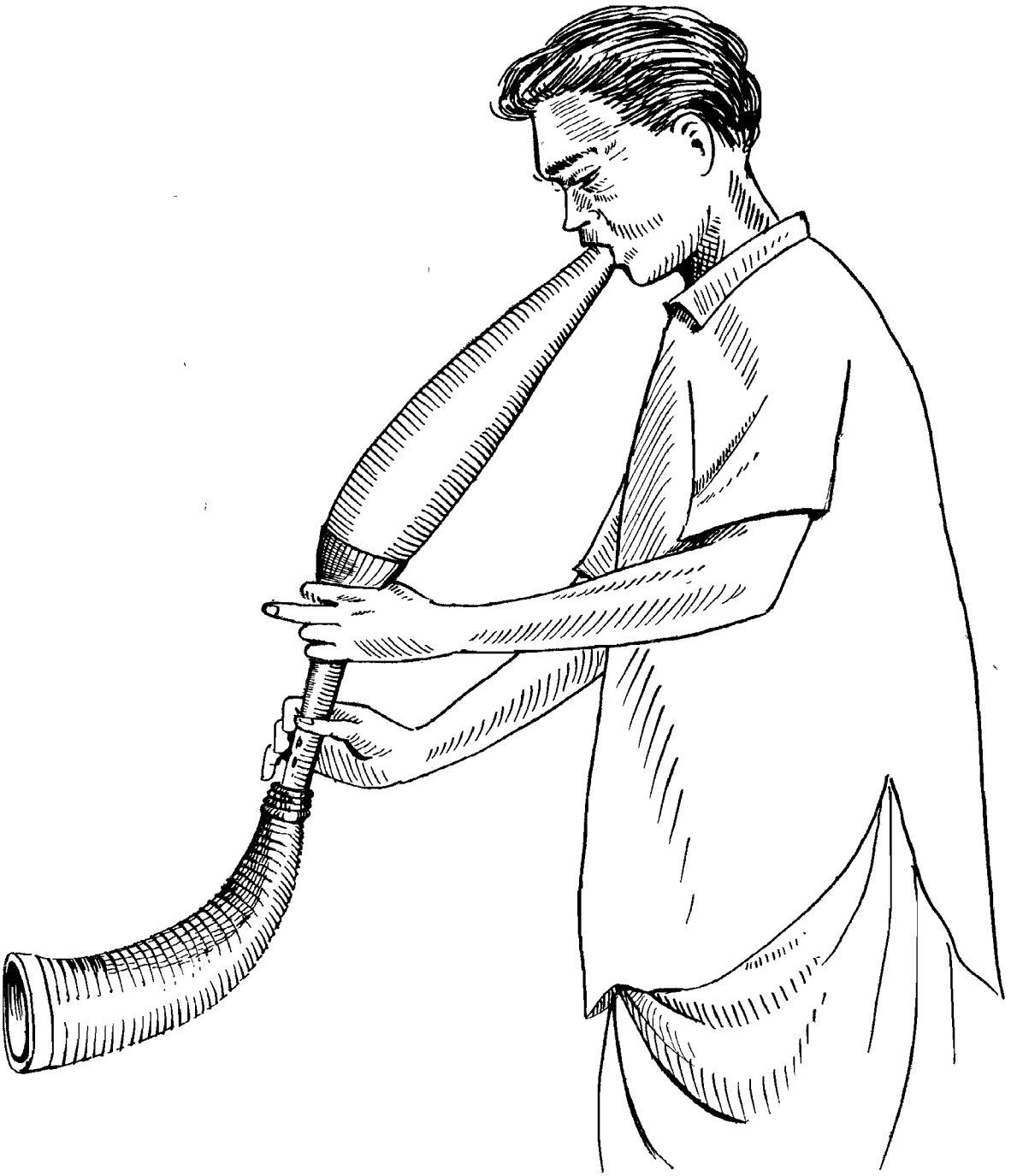
The literacy standard of the Rathawas according to 1961 census is given in the following table :—

Educational standard	Total population	Males	Females
Illiterate ..	2,696 (93·81)	1,351 (89·47)	1,345 (98·61)
Literate ..	178 (6·19)	159 (10·53)	19 (1·39)
Literate without educational standard.	117 (4·07)	103	14
Primary or junior basic ..	60 (2·09)	55	5
Above matriculation or secondary.	1 (0·03)	1	....
	2,874	1,510	1,364

The general literacy among the Rathawas is 6·19 per cent as against 29·82 per cent for the general population and 7·21 per cent for the total scheduled tribe population. There was only one matriculate among the Rathawas and he was working in an urban area.

Religion

All the Rathawas returned Hinduism as their religion in 1961. At Kadabgaon, they worship Hanuman and the goddess Ambabai. They worship them with sindur, rice, kumkum, haldi and flowers. Sometimes they make them offerings of fowls and goats. They believe in witches and witchcraft. When any person, specially a child, suddenly takes ill, they believe it is owing to the evil eye of a witch. They consult a bhagat who is looked upon as a great enemy of witches and follow his advice. They hold the cow in reverence and consider the sun, the moon and the sea as diving. Trees like bel, pipal, banyan, mango and the tulsi plant are regarded as sacred.



Tarpa—a tribal musical instrument

Ya 4692—13*a*

At Kadabgaon, they celebrate Holi, their important festival, like other Hindus. They light a bonfire at a central place and worship it with sindur, kumkum, haldi, flowers and coconut. They drink, sing and dance through the night. Next day, they douse one another with coloured water.

Life cycle

Among Rathawas at Kadabgaon, a dai (midwife) who is generally a woman of their own community is engaged at the time of delivery. Delivery takes place in the hut. The dai cuts the child's nal with a stone chip and buries it in a corner of the room in which the child is born. She gets a choli and an odhani for her services. The mother of the child is given jowar pej for the first three days after delivery. Thereafter she is given her normal food. Sati puja is performed on the fifth day if the child is a male, and on the third day if it is a female. On this day a fire is worshipped and gur, sugar, ghee and wheat flour are poured into the fire. The children of neighbours and relatives are invited to a feast. The child is named either on that day or on the day following. A Brahmin priest is consulted about the name. No other ceremony is performed on that day.

The Kadabgaon Rathawas allow marriage with mother's brother's daughter, father's sister's daughter or with one's own sister's daughter. A person can also marry his wife's younger sister during the life time of his wife or after her death. The offer of marriage comes from the boy's father. He has to pay a dej of Rs. 31 or Rs. 41, two cows and two bullocks. If he cannot afford to give cows and bullocks, he has to pay another Rs. 200. Among the families with the clan names of Jadhav, Pavar or Chavan, the bride price is Rs. 41 and among Rathod families it is Rs. 31. A mandav (pandal) is erected at both the bride's and the bridegroom's houses. The marriage takes place at the girl's house and lasts two or three days. The boy goes to the girl's house in procession and is received by the girl's father. The ceremony is conducted by a priest of their own caste who is called Jadhav. Akshata is thrown on the head of boy and the girl by those who attend the ceremony. The ends of their garments are tied and their hands are joined.

The Rathawas dig two holes at the place where the marriage is to be performed and put two pestles in them. At each of the four corners round the pestles, five earthen pots are arranged in a column. The pots are tied with strings and rui leaves are kept inside them. The bride and the bridegroom go round the pestles. This rite concludes the ceremony. The girl's father and the boy's father give a joint feast. Women and girls dance through the night.

The Rathawas practise adult marriage. Widow re-marriage is allowed. Formerly at Kadabgaon, they used to allow the widow to marry the younger brother of her deceased husband, but that system is stopped now. The widow simply goes and stays with the man whom she wants to marry. Divorce is generally allowed on grounds of incompatibility or the woman's inchastity.

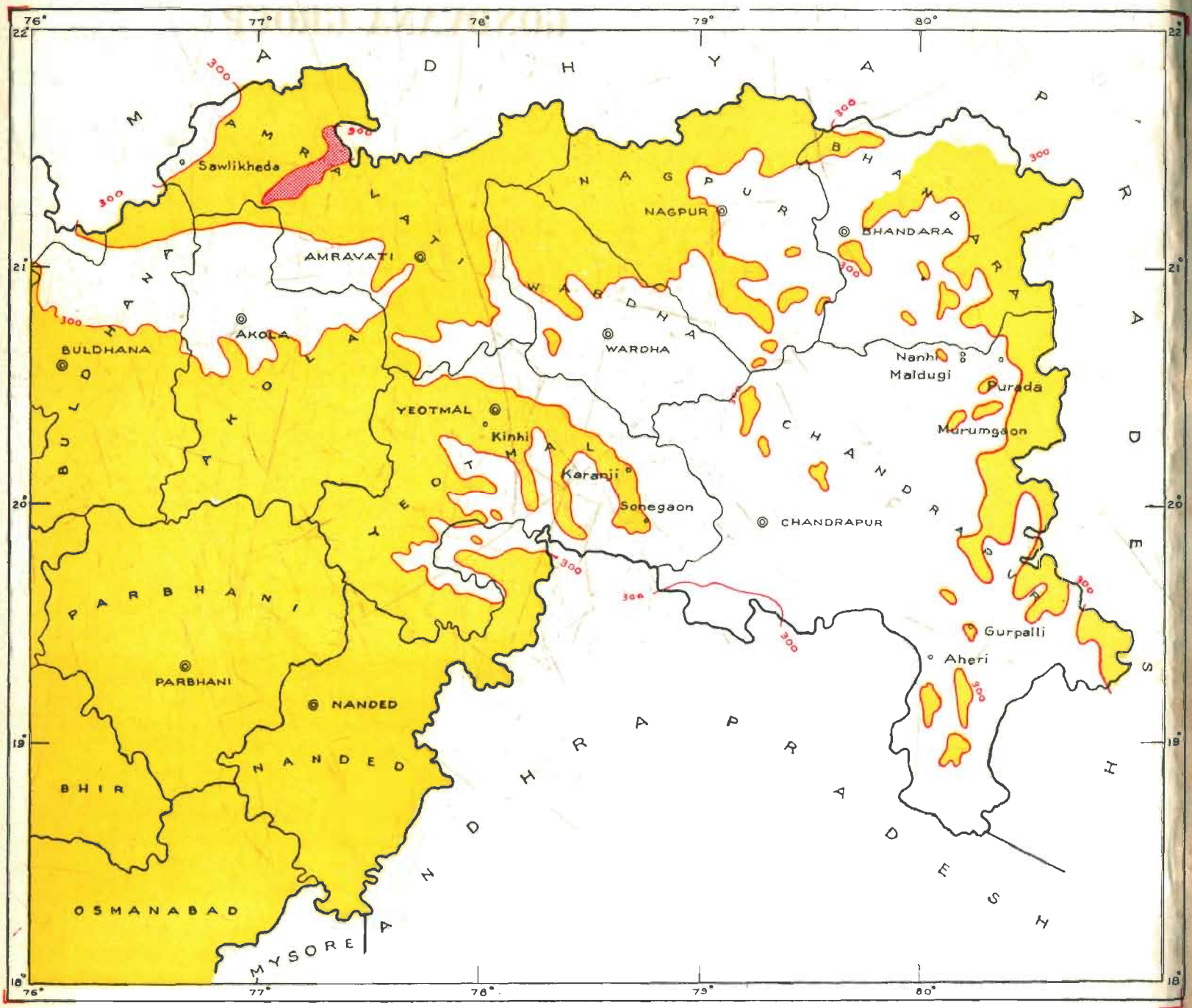
The Rathawas either burn or bury their dead. Married persons are generally burnt and unmarried persons are buried. The body is anointed with haldi and oil, bathed in warm water and then dressed in new clothes. The chief mourner kindles the pyre. The Divas (obsequies) is performed on the third day. They believe that a person's soul goes after death to heaven or hell according to the good or bad deeds he had done during his lifetime. They also believe in re-birth. If a person's wishes are not fulfilled during his life-time, he is born again to see that his wishes are carried out by his children or relatives who remain behind.

Caste panchayat

The caste is organised in each village in a panchayat. Its leader is known as a naik. It attends to complaints regarding caste matters and decides them. If a person is found guilty, the panchayat imposes a fine upto Rs. 200. This amount is spent in giving a feast to the caste people. There is no other organisation beyond the limits of the village.

The Rathawas consider themselves as superior to Harijans and do not accept water from them. They eat and drink with higher castes, but not with Mahars and Chambhars. They do not eat the leavings of higher castes. Some of them visit Hindu temples.

GONDVANA GROUP



Villages surveyed in connection with the study of Eastern Maharashtra tribes are shown in this map.
District headquarters towns are also marked.
Altitude in metres. Contours are approximate.

GONDS

The Gonds, with a population of 272,564 (135,867 males and 136,697 females) ranked third in 1961 among all the scheduled tribes of the State.

The area restrictions for the tribe and its various synonyms are as below :—

(*a*) as "Gond or Raj Gond" in the 13 districts of western Maharashtra comprising the Bombay and Poona divisions;

(*b*) as "Gond including Arakh or Arrakh, Agaria, Asur, Badi Maria or Bada Maria, Bhatola, Bhimma, Bhuta, Koilabhuta or Koilabhuti, Bhar, Bisonhorn Maria, Chota Maria, Dondami Maria, Dhuru or Dhurwa, Dhoba, Dhulia, Dorla, Gaiki, Gatta or Gatti, Gaita, Gond Gowari, Hill Maria, Kandra, Kalanga, Khatola, Koitar, Koya, Khirwar or Khirwara, Kucha Maria, Kuchaki Maria, Madia (Maria), Mana, Mannewer, Moghya or Mogia or Monghya, Mudia (Muria), Nagarchi, Nagwanshi, Ojha, Raj, Sonjhari Jhareka, Thatia or Thotya, Wade Maria or Vade Maria" in

(*i*) Melghat tehsil of Amravati district,

(*ii*) Gadhchiroli and Sironcha tehsils of Chanda district and

(*iii*) Kelapur, Wani and Yeotmal tehsils of Yeotmal district and

(*c*) as "Gond including Naikpod or Raj Gond" in the five districts of the Aurangabad division and Rajura tehsil in Chanda district.

The population of Gonds returned in the State in the 1961 census was from the above areas. Gonds or their sub-divisions, if any, residing in other parts of the State were not covered by this count.

This tribe has been classified as "V-Forest tribes", "17-Gond" with a population of 3,061,680 at page 4 of the Census of India, 1891, v. II, according to the caste index of 1891.

The Gond tribe has been regarded by Russell and Hira Lal as the principal tribe of the Dravidian family and perhaps the most important of the non-Aryan or forest tribes in India. The Gonds were also returned from seven other States in India among which Madhya Pradesh (3,094,613), Orissa (445,705), Andhra Pradesh (143,680) and Bihar (33,521) had heavy concentrations. In Mysore, West Bengal and Gujarat their number was small.

This note has been prepared on the basis of data collected during the 1961 census and the field study conducted in four villages—(1) Sonegaon in Wani tehsil (Yeotmal) having 159 households of 15 different castes and tribes including Raj Gonds and Gond Gowaris with 52 and 8 households respectively; (2) Purada in Gadhchiroli tehsil (Chanda) having 130 households of 17 different castes, including Raj Gonds, Gaita Gonds and Gond Gowaris, having 12, 33 and 15 households respectively; (3) Gurupalli in Sironcha tehsil (Chanda) having 38 households of seven different castes and tribes including Madia and Raj Gonds, having 12 and 10 households respectively; and (4) Sawalikheda in Melghat tehsil (Amravati) having 176 households of different castes and tribes including Thotya Gond of four households. A field study was also undertaken in two other villages, Maldugi and Nanhi in Gadhchiroli tehsil (Chanda). As the population of Gonds in the 13 districts of western Maharashtra (1,886 or 0·69 per cent of the total Gond population) and five districts of Aurangabad division (14,211 or 5·21 per cent of the total Gond population) was not substantial in comparison with the total Gond population and because this small population was scattered over all the districts of the area, no village in the Bombay, Poona or Aurangabad divisions was selected for this study.

According to Russell and Hira Lal (pp. 42-43), Gond is the name given to the tribe by others as they call themselves Koitur or Koi. The Raj Gonds of Sonegaon do not know why they are called Raj Gonds. The Gond Gowaris of Sonegaon also do not know why they are called Gond Gowaris. The Thoti Gonds of Sawalikheda say the name "Thoti" is not a name of tribal division, but is an indicative name for a person engaged in cattle-grazing. They, however, claim to belong to the Koitur Gond sect. The Gaita Gonds of Maldugi and the Dhurwa Gonds of Nanhi have been living in these areas in Chanda for generations but do not know anything about their origin, name or legends.

The Gond tribe is sub-divided into 40 sub-divisions. At the 1961 census, the following 15 sub-divisions were represented in Maharashtra :—

(1) Raj Gonds, (2) Dhur or Dhurwa Gonds, (3) Madia Gonds, (4) Gaita Gonds, (5) Thotya Gonds, (6) Bhuta or Bhima Gonds, (7) Koye

Gonds, (8) Gond Gowari, (9) Mannewar, (10) Mana, (11) Ozha Gonds, (12) Dhoba, (13) Sonjhari Jhareka, (14) Moghiya and (15) Koitur Gond.

The Gonds of Sonegaon have four sub-divisions depending upon the number of gods worshipped. There are households which worship four gods (and hence called char deve); those which worship five gods (panch deve); those which worship six gods (saha deve); and those which worship seven gods (sat deve). Among the Raj Gonds of Sonegaon, marriage cannot take place between two persons if they are of the same kul and also if they worship the same number of gods.

The Gonds of Yeotmal and Nanded districts are quite distinct from the Gonds of Melghat (Amravati). Even within Chanda district, we find a marked difference between the Gonds of Gadhchiroli tehsil and those of Sironcha tehsil.

Distribution and population trend

The 1961 Gond population in Maharashtra (272,564) was made up of 135,867 males (49·85) and 136,697 females (50·15). The sex ratio was 1,006 females. They were heavily concentrated in rural areas (267,844 or 98·27 per cent) in comparison with urban areas (4,720 or 1·73 per cent).

The Gonds were declared as a scheduled tribe in 22 out of the 26 districts of Maharashtra for the 1961 census. Yet we find this tribe concentrated in the following four districts which together accounted for 99·26 per cent of the total Gond population of the State in 1961 :—

District		Population
Chanda	..	166,266 (61·00)
Yeotmal	..	85,803 (31·48)
Nanded	..	14,078 (5·17)
Amravati	..	4,398 (1·61)
Other district	..	2,019 (0·74)
Total	..	272,564 (100·00)

It was only in Nanded district that the Gonds were treated as a scheduled tribe in all the tehsils. In the other three districts, the Gonds were treated as a scheduled tribe in the following areas only :—

Chanda—Gadhchiroli and Sironcha (out of six tehsils).

Yeotmal—Kelapur, Wani and Yeotmal (out of five tehsils).

Amravati—Melghat (out of six tehsils).

The Gonds of Yeotmal speak Marathi mainly; those of Chanda speak Maria. As Yeotmal is more accessible than Chanda or the Melghat tehsil of Amravati, the Gonds of Yeotmal have adopted more of the customs and traditions of other communities of the area.

Gadhchiroli and Sironcha are not adequately served either by motorable roads or by railway, with the result that they are cut off in July, August and September. Both the tehsils have a considerable area under forest (60·91 per cent of the area of Gadhchiroli and 84·25 per cent of the area of Sironcha). The percentage of gross cropped area to total geographical area is 16·44 for Gadhchiroli and 5·77 for Sironcha tehsil. There is only one railway station in Gadhchiroli (Wadsa) and none in Sironcha tehsil. The area under forest in Yeotmal, Kelapur and Wani tehsils of Yeotmal district is much less, 23·50, 21·75 and 19·19 respectively. The percentage of gross cropped area is 55·52 in Yeotmal, 52·53 in Kelapur and 54·57 in Wani. Though Yeotmal and Wani have only one rail link each (narrow gauge) and none in Kelapur tehsil, yet they are served by roads.

The area under forests in Nanded district is 7·53 per cent and most of it is concentrated in Kinwat tehsil. The rainfall is not uniform in all parts of the district. The average annual rainfall of Deglur is 1178·2 mm. while Mukhed gets 876·4 mm. The principal food-crop is jowar. The total gross cropped area of the district is 69·7 per cent of the total geographical area.

In Melghat, 78·21 per cent of the total geographical area is under forest. The percentage of gross cropped area to total geographical area is 7·65 per cent. Jowar is the principal crop. The metre gauge railway line from Akola to Khandwa passes through the western part of the tehsil and there are two stations on it in that tehsil. Road transport facilities are also very poor.

The following table shows the distribution of Gonds among rural and urban areas :—

		Persons	Males	Females
Total	..	272,564	135,867	136,697
Rural	..	267,844	133,459	134,385
Urban	..	4,720	2,408	2,312

The following table shows the distribution of the Gond population by broad age-groups :—

Age-group	Persons	Males	Females
All age-groups ..	272,564 (100,00)	135,867 (100·00)	136,697 (100·00)
0-14 ..	109,793 (40·28)	54,644 (40·22)	55,149 (40·34)
15-44 ..	120,414 (44·18)	59,861 (44·06)	60,553 (44·30)
45 and above ..	42,222 (15·49)	21,288 (15 67)	20,934 (15 31)
Age not stated ..	135 (0·05)	74 (0·05)	61 (0 05)

The age-composition of the Gonds of Maharashtra in 1961 was not very different from that of the general population. The proportion in the age-group 45 and over was less among the Gonds than among the general population which may indicate a lower standard of living and health. However in relation to Kathodis, another scheduled tribe of the State, this population was quite high. The proportion of population (40·28) of the age-group 0-14 was slightly less than that of the general population (40·65). The population was thus youthful though not as young as other scheduled tribes such as Gamit and Dhanka.

The percentage of Gonds in urban areas (1·73) was much less in comparison with other important scheduled tribes as Dubla (51·0), Dhodia (49·9), Koli Dhor (24·7), Pardhi (15·7) and Naikda (12·1).

Sex Ratio

The 1961 census sex ratios for the Gonds, all scheduled tribes and the general population of Maharashtra for total, rural and urban areas are as follows :—

Classification	Sex ratio		
	Total	Rural	Urban
General population .	936	995	801
All scheduled tribes ...	978	981	911
Gond population ..	1,006	1,007	960

On the whole, there are comparatively more females among the scheduled tribes than among the general population and among the scheduled tribes, the sex ratio for the Gonds is high. Next to the Kolam (1,043), the sex ratio of the Gonds is the highest among the 14 numerically large scheduled tribes.

Family and kinship

The following table based on a study of 4,657 Gond households from Amravati, Yeotmal and Chanda districts presents the average size of a Gond household :—

Household size	No. of households
All sizes ..	4,657 (100·00)
One member ..	224 (4·81)
2 to 4 ..	2,091 (44·90)
5 to 7 ..	1,748 (37·54)
8 to 10 ..	450 (9·66)
More than ten ..	144 (3·09)

The following table shows the distribution of 4,669 households from three districts of Vidarbha :—

Composition	No. of households
All types ..	4,669 (100·00)
Single-member ..	263 (5·63)
Husband, wife, unmarried sons/daughters.	3,102 (66·44)
Husband, wife, married sons and daughters-in-law.	591 (12·66)
Husband, wife, married sons, daughters-in-law and other relatives.	46 (0·98)
Husband, wife and other relatives.	667 (14·29)

Of the 263 single members, 115 were males and 148 were females. Males were heads of households in respect of 4,262 households. Females were heads of households in 407 households only.

The Gonds are divided into divisions or groups, each worshipping a different number of gods and possessing a totem. There are eight such divisions : (1) Undor, (2) Chindor, (3) Kandor, (4) Nalven, (5) Sayaven, (6) Sawen, (7) Yerves, and (8) Tore. The first three were considered to be inferior sub-divisions and the remaining five were considered to be superior sub-divisions of the tribe. Each sub-division claimed a separate lineage and a certain number of gods. The totems of exogamous Gonds were birds, animals and trees. Sub-divisions 4, 5, 6 and 7 now-a-days take food from others, but it was not so in the past. They, however, do not take food from Mahars and Pardhans. They attend the marriage ceremonies of other castes.

The Gonds view each sept or got of each division as Bhaubands (brothers and relatives) ; Gonds belonging to one group, i.e., worshipping the same number of gods, are said to be descended from one and the same ancestor and they do not marry within their own division. Their surnames are

derived from the names of their gots, commonly known as kuls. The surnames of the Raj Gonds of Sonegaon village are Kodape, Yerkade, Shidam, Nayatam, Atram, Meshram, Surparn, Dhurve, Kohchade and Tekam. The surnames of Gond Gowaris are Nagosha, Rawoot and Nyahare.

Dwelling and food

There are no villages exclusively inhabited by the Gonds in the districts of Amravati, Yeotmal, Nanded and in the 13 districts of western Maharashtra. They live side by side with other groups in the villages in the plains. They have huts of thatched roof with walls of bamboo or other twigs plastered with mud on both sides. They divide the house into two by putting a wall across the middle, the front portion being used as a verandah and the rear portion as a kitchen-*cum*-all purpose room. The houses usually have no door at the rear side.

Construction of a new house is generally begun on a full-moon day, Monday, Wednesday, Friday or Sunday, but never on a Tuesday or Saturday. The main pole which supports the house is erected at the centre. It is usually of sag and is worshipped. The adhe is also worshipped and is smeared with haldi. A few coins, haldi and akshata are tied to the adhe. Thereafter the remaining portion of the house is constructed. The statement below shows the 1961 percentage distribution of houses in rural areas of some tehsils according to the material used for walls and roofs.

The table has been prepared for the tehsil/district as a whole and not necessarily for Gond or even scheduled tribe households as such. The variations in the use of material are primarily due to the climatic conditions obtaining in each tract and also due to the local availability of material. Grass and leaves are extensively used as a material of wall in Melghat, Sironcha and Kelapur. Mud is the predominant material of wall in Wani, Yeotmal and Gadhchiroli. Stone is a major material of wall in Nanded district. As far as roof material is concerned, grass and leaves are important in Sironcha, Melghat and Gadhchiroli tehsils. Tiles are extensively used in Nanded district and Wani and Gadhchiroli tehsils. Corrugated iron sheets, though costlier than either grass, leaves or tiles, are used in substantial proportion in Wani, Kelapur and Yeotmal tehsils.

The Dhurwa Gonds of Nanhi village worship Badadev and Muladev and apply sindur to an iron trident before commencing construction of a house. The walls of their houses are of bamboo, plastered with mud, and have a sloping roof with country tiles thereon. In front of the house, there is a courtyard with a tulsi vrindavan. The backyard is called wadi and is used as a kitchen garden. The entrance is usually at the north or east. The cattle-sheds are near the houses. The house is usually a single rectangular room (8′ × 12′) with only one door in the front. It has no verandah. A part of the interior is screened for use as a kitchen. The rest of the house is used as a bedroom-*cum*-storeroom.

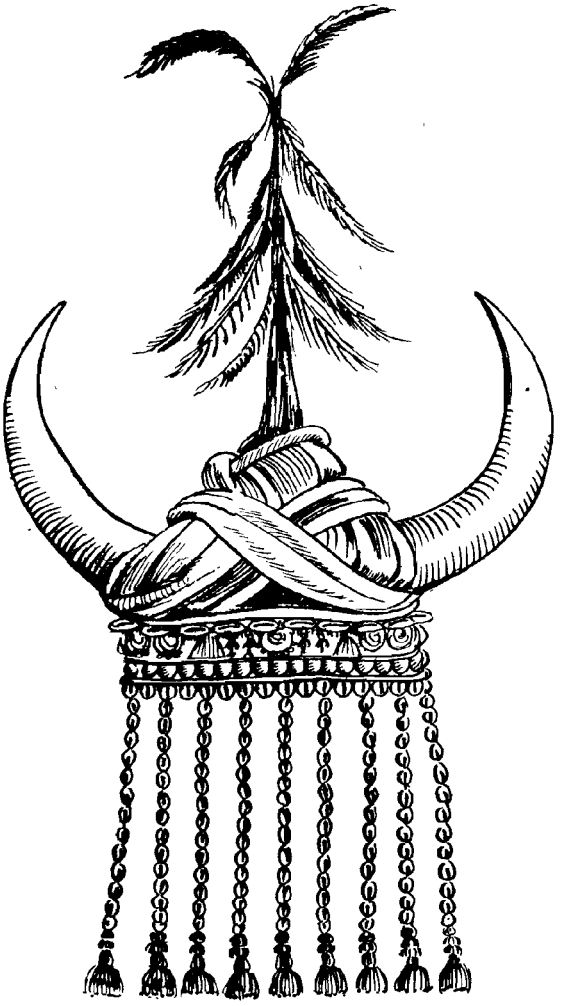
The main items of furniture in the Gond household consist of wooden or bamboo cots and pats. Tables and chairs are used by very few households.

Paddy or other grains are stored in bamboo kothis (cylindrical baskets) also called dholis. The Madia Gonds of Chanda store paddy in dindwas which are prepared out of twisted grass-rope. Water is stored in earthen pots or in brass vessels called gundas. Dried hollow gourds are used as a container for water.

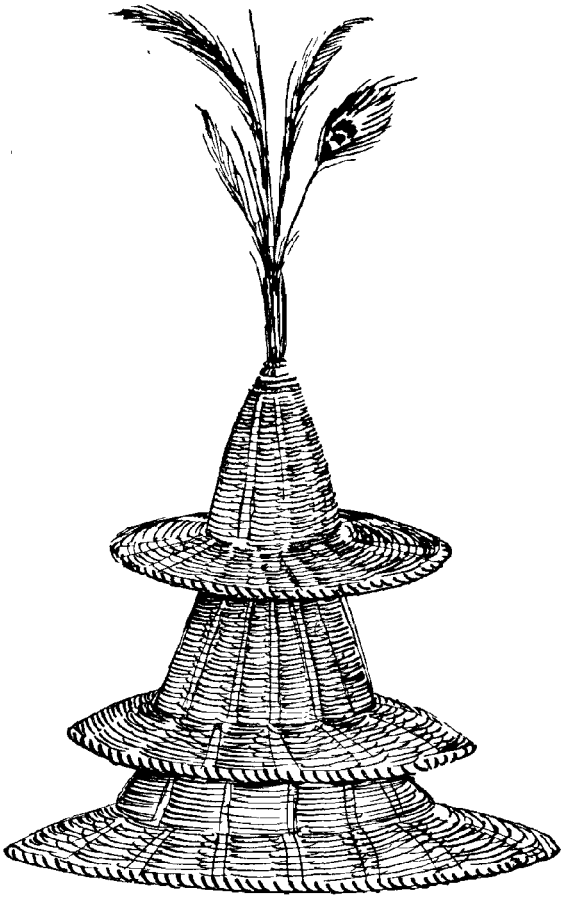
The Raj Gonds of Sonegaon use earthen, aluminium and brass vessels for storing water as well as for cooking. They use pats for sitting. The Gond Gowaris of this village use only earthen utensils for cooking.

Statement showing percentage distribution of houses according to the material used for walls and roofs in rural areas

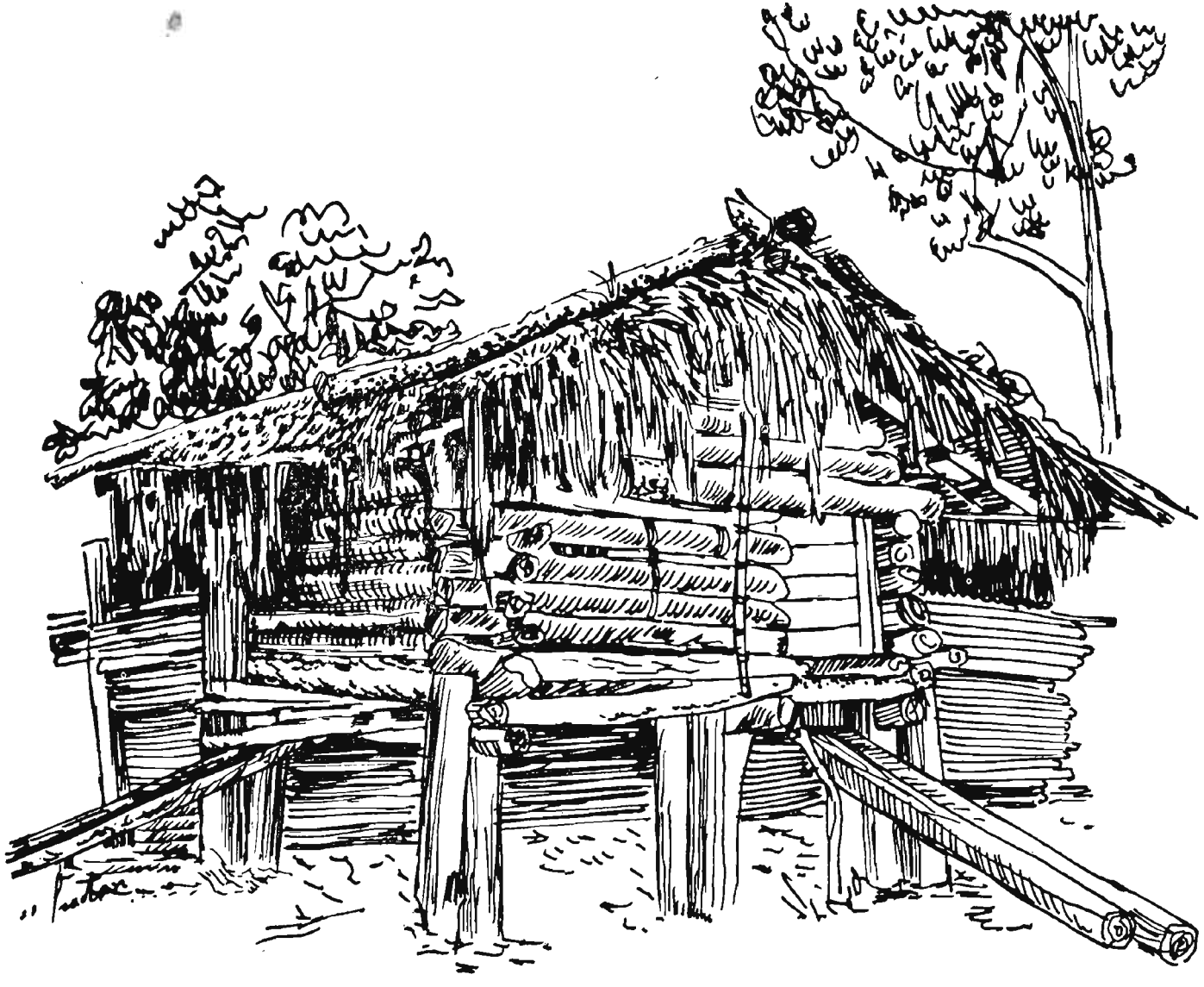
District/Tehsil	Material of							
	Wall				Roof			
	Grass, leaves	Mud	Unburnt bricks and burnt bricks	Others	Grass	Tiles	Corrugated sheets	Others
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Gadhchiroli tehsil ..	48·51	42·22	5·88	3·39	59·71	38·77	0·29	1·23
Sironcha tehsil ..	64·25	26·17	5·84	3·74	85·39	14·36	0·14	0·11
Yeotmal tehsil ..	47·49	49·62	2·26	0·63	44·41	33·34	21·54	0·71
Kelapur tehsil ..	61·37	33·17	2·52	2·94	48·97	25·89	24·97	0·17
Wani tehsil ..	40·67	50·31	3·54	5·48	31·88	39·99	27·98	0·15
Melghat tehsil ..	89·58	5·05	2·65	2·72	77·15	14·94	7·70	0·21
Nanded District ..	11·8	30·7	2·4	55·1	20·6	59·9	16·6	2·9



A ceremonial head dress (bison horn) worn by Gonds



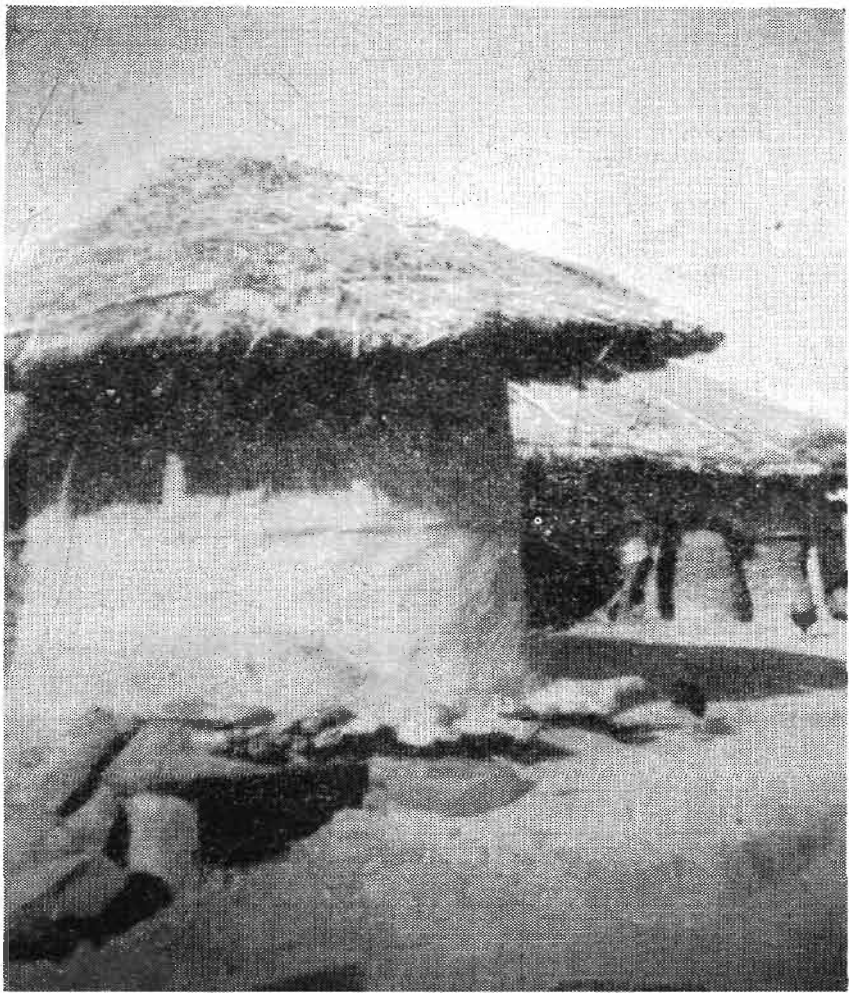
Head-gear worn by Raj Gonds while dancing



A Madia hut in Chanda



Kawars with fishing traps and nets (Chanda)



A Dholi for storing grain



Kolam houses (Yeotmal)



Kolam women by the side of a bin for storing grain (Yeotmal)

The staple food of the Gonds is kodo, kutki, rice, jowar and vegetables. The Raj Gonds of Sonegaon take food thrice a day—breakfast (nyahari) in the morning, lunch at 12 noon, and dinner after nightfall. The menu is generally the same—jowar bhakri, tur dal varan and chutni. On festival days, they prepare sweet dishes like puranpoli and karanjya. They are non-vegetarians, but do not eat pork, beef or carrion. The Gaita Gonds of Nanhi eat bamboo shoots and kadu kanda (bitter onion).

No festival, wedding, childbirth or death can be observed by the Gonds without offering and consuming liquor. Liquor prepared out of mahua flowers and toddy from the date-palm are generally favoured.

The Raj Gonds of Sonegaon and Thoti Gonds of Sawalikheda consume liquor. The Gond Gowaris of Sonegaon said that neither in the past nor at present were they addicted to liquor. Tea drinking is spreading among the Raj Gonds and the Gond Gowaris of Sonegaon. They use gur instead of sugar. Raj Gond males and females chew tobacco. Their men smoke bidis which are prepared by themselves. They also eat betel leaves and betel nuts. The Gond Gowaris of Sonegaon chew and smoke tobacco and offer them to their guests also. They purchase bidis. Their women neither chew nor smoke tobacco though both males and females eat betel leaves. The Thoti Gonds drink liquor, chew and smoke tobacco. Their womenfolk neither smoke nor chew tobacco.

Dress and ornaments

In Sonegaon, the Raj Gond males dress like the kunbis (an agriculturist caste). Men wear a dhoti of 4½ yards, a bandi and a cap. Women use a nine-yard sari which reaches right upto the ankles or knees. Those whose saris reach the knee do not take the end of the saree over heads while others do it. Women of the older generation do not wear a bodice but cover the upper part of the body with the end of the sari. The Gond Gowari males of Sonegaon also dress like the kunbis and use footwear. Their women wear a nine-yard sari like other kunbi women. They wear it according to the kasota style, wherein the front side of the sari is taken in between the thighs and is tucked behind at the waist. One end of the sari is taken over the head from the left shoulder. They wear a bodice (choli). They also use footwear. In Nanhi village, the Dhurwa Gond males use a dhoti (4½ yds.) and a bandi (in place of a shirt); a few wear caps. Women wear a six-yard sari (lugade). The Thoti Gonds of Sawalikheda wear a dhoti and a shirt. A piece of cloth is worn around the head. Their women use a sari and a blouse.

Gond males generally wear (*a*) an anguthi (ring) of silver, brass or copper; (*b*) a kada (a bracelet) of silver on the wrist (a few well-to-do Gonds prepare it out of gold also); (*c*) a bali (a pair of ear-rings) made of gold or brass on the upper lobes of the ear; (*d*) a pair of lukada (ear-rings) made of brass or gold on the lower lobes of the ears; (*e*) a silver kardoda (a chain) round the waist anl (*f*) a dumme (necklace) made of coloured beads. The dumme is generally worn by Madia Gonds of Chanda.

Women's ornaments consist of (*a*) a sikka muda (a ring made of silver rupee or half-rupee coin) on the finger, (*b*) wàre (bangles made of glass, brass, silver), (*c*) silver kada (a hollow bracelet) round the wrist, (*d*) patalyas (a solid bracelet made of silver) round the wrists, (*e*) a bahuta on the arms, and (*f*) dumme (necklace) made of coloured beads.

The Raj Gond males of Sonegaon wear a silver kardoda round the waist and a kundale (ear-ring). Their women wear valas, patalyas, bahutas, birya, basar, jodvi, masolya (all of silver), bangles of glass, silver. Married women wear garsolis of black beads. The absolutely essential ornaments for a woman are glass bangles, garsoli, vela, birya, besur, jodvi and masoli.

The Gond Gowari males of Sonegaon wear gold bali (ear-rings), silver mundi (ring), silver kardoda (waist chain), and silver kada (bracelet) round the wrists. Their women have silver velas and glass bangles for wrists; jodvi, masolya for toes; and garsolis of black beads and saree for the neck; a nose-ring (for married women only). Some have koparkhalyas for the elbows.

The ornaments of Thoti Gond women of Sawalikheda consist of (*a*) a bakad for the elbows, (*b*) a tagoli or saree and kali poth as a necklace, (*c*) a pair of karnaful (ear-rings), (*d*) a zal bindi for the forehead, (*e*) bangles for wrists, and (*f*) tode for ankles.

The Dhurwa male Gonds of Nanhi wear mundis (rings). Their women use kada, haraiya and patta on their forearms; a bahuta on their arms; saree, kali poth (black bead necklace) and rupayachi mal (a necklace made of rupee coins) round their necks; biri for ears; painjan for anklets; and bisiya (jodivi)

on their toes. All the ornaments are made of silver. The kali poth is worn by married women as well as by unmarried girls.

Tattooing is quite common among Gond men and women. Men have tattooes on the outer side of the legs at the knee and the upper arm. The most popular signs with women are stars, crosses, figures of men, animals etc. These figures are tattooed on their legs, toes, chest, shoulder, arms, etc. Even the image of a baiga (priest) and his wife are reproduced. They believe that that tattoo marks protect the person from evil spirits and ghosts. Gond women get themselves tattooed before marriage, if possible. The women of Gond Gowaris of Sonegaon have tattoo marks on their forearms only. Their men do not get tattooed. The women of Thoti Gonds of Sawalikheda have tattoo marks on their forehead, cheeks, forearms and legs. Their men do not get themselves tattooed. The women of Dhurwa Gonds of Nanhi get themselves tattooed on chin, cheeks and forcheads and on shoulders and arms in case of married women. Their males do not get tattooed.

Sanitation and hygiene

The house of a Gond is exceptionally clean inside, though its surroundings may not be so clean. The Gonds have no built latrines. The Raj Gonds of Sonegaon bathe daily, but do not use any toilet soap. Washing soap is used for cleaning clothes. They clean their teeth with cow dung ash as soon as they get up.

The floor of the house is smeared with cow dung once or twice a week and is made very smooth. It is also swept at least twice daily; the garbage is dumped in a corner of the courtyard and is subsequently used as manure. The walls of the house, if made of mud, reeds or bamboo, are also plastered with cow dung. The housewife takes great pride in keeping her house very clean. The household utensils are cleaned after meals are prepared and exceptionally great care is taken to keep the water containers absolutely clean. There is always a wooden ladle for pouring water in a glass for drinking; in no case is the glass dipped in the container.

Women wash their hair once a week; for this, they use soapnut or a particular type of mud, which is locally available. After the bath, the hair is loosely tied at the end and allowed to dry in the sun.

Whenever a Gond falls ill, the cause of the illness is generally attributed to some bad spirit or the "evil look" of some persons. They offer prayers and in extreme cases take a vow before a god to sacrifice a fowl or a goat in the event of recovery. They consult their baiga (priest) for this purpose and follow his instructions. Only when the illness is really serious do they consult a doctor or take the patient to the hospital. Indigenous medicines prepared from roots, leaves and herbs are commonly used.

Language and literacy

The language of the Gonds, Gondi, is described by Russell and Hira Lal "a Dravidian language having a common ancestor with Tamil and Canarese, but little immediate connection with its neighbour, Telugu; the specimens given by Sir G. Grierson show that a large number of Hindi words have been adopted into the vocabulary of Gondi and this tendency is no doubt on the increase". They add, "the gospels and the book of genesis have been translated into it and several grammatical sketches and vocabularies compiled" (p. 139).

In 1961 as many as 26 languages were recorded as mother-tongues of Gonds. The most important were Gondi (154,111), Marathi (73,920), Maria (31,597), Telugu (5,621), Govari (2,520), Hindi (1,925) and Chattisgarhi (1,200). The Conds of Chanda speak Gondi (57·28), Maria (19·00), and Marathi (17·02). The Gonds of Yeotmal speak Marathi (50·44) and Gondi (59·36). In Nanded, 91·82 per cent of the Gonds and in Amravati, 72·21 per cent speak Gondi. Not a single Gond of Yeotmal, Nanded and Amravati districts has recorded Maria as his mother-tongue. This language has been returned as the mother-tongue of Gonds in Chanda alone. The Madia Gonds of Sironcha (Chanda) speak this language which differs slightly from Gondi. A few specimen of words and sentences of this language are given below:—

Words

Koitur	Man
Ancha	Woman
Anchal or Asku	Women
Mujjo	Husband
Muttee	Wife
Peda	Son
Pedi	Daughter
Tamo	Younger brother
Herre	She-goat
Padi	Pig
Kor	Hen
Gongud	Cock
Yeru	Water

Pal	Milk
Duaal	Tiger
Konda	Bullock
Mure	Cow
Kutu	Cot

Some sentences

Hike ta	Bring here
Hake om	Take there
Ni parol batal ?	What is your name ?
Mureta palata	Bring the milk of a cow.
Nim beke daini	Where are you going ?
Nawa dandite wajing panditano.	We grow paddy in our fields.
Maku gedate mandal girada wasta.	We like to live in forests very much.

The Gonds of Yeotmal who have returned their monther-tongue as Gondi can also speak Marathi. Out of 42,356 Gonds whose mother-tongue is Gondi, as many as 29,252 can speak Marathi. Fifty-eight males can speak English while 50 males and eleven females can speak Urdu.

The Thoti Gonds of Amravati generally speak Gondi. Some words of Gondi language as spoken by Thoti Gonds of Sawlikheda (Amravati) are given below along with English equivalents. (1) Water-Eta, (2) Milk—Pala, (3) Jowar bhakar (bread)—Jonna Sadi, (4) Rice—Unji Padc, (5) Jowar—Jonna, (6) Wheat—Gokana, (7) Tur dal—Tolina kusali, (8) House—Rona, (9) Oven—Saidal, (10) Eating plate—Dhanya, (11) Boy or girl—Tula, (12) Old woman—Sheno, (13) Old man—Sena, (14) She-goat—Eti, (15) He-goat—Bokalal, (16) Cow—Tali, (17) Bullock—Dobal, (18) Buffalo—Adani.

Samples of their sentences are : (1) What is your name ?—Nya Palol Balang ?, (2) Where are you going ?—Ema Bega Hantoni ?, (3) Going to Nagzira—Nagzira Hantona, (4) Bring rice to eat—Unji Jowali Tara Nindale.

The Dhurwa Gonds of Nanhi village (Gadhchiroli) speak Chattisgarhi but can also understand Hindi or Marathi. A few specimens of the language spoken by them are given below :—

Tor nav ka have ? ..	What is your name ?
Te kahan rathas ? ..	Where do you stay ?
Tor umar ka have ? ..	How old are you ?
Ye gharah matake ..	This is a mud house.
Ye kandale ..	This is lantern.
Avad jad lagan hai. ..	Today it is colder.
Ye gharah char koli hai.	It has four rooms.
Morme dandu bail have.	I have two bullocks.
Gadame dhan bharke ahese.	Paddy has been brought in a bullock-cart.
Mor nav ..... ave ..	My name is .....
Me Nanhi rathau ..	I stay in Nanhi.

The literacy rate among the Gonds is very low. The 1961 returns showed that of the 272,564 Gonds in the State, 254,376 (93·33) were illiterate. In villages, the percentage of illiteracy was 93·60 as against 77·90 in urban areas. Among males 119,293 (87·80) were illiterate while 135,083 females (98·82) were illiterate. Of the total literate population of 18,188 Gonds, 101 had studied upto matriculation or above and of them only two Gonds (one male and one female) of urban areas had obtained university degrees. All the Gond women found in the urban area of Dhulia and Ahmadnagar districts were illiterate. Similarly all Gond women recorded in the rural areas of Poona, Sangli and Osmanabad districts were illiterate.

Economic life

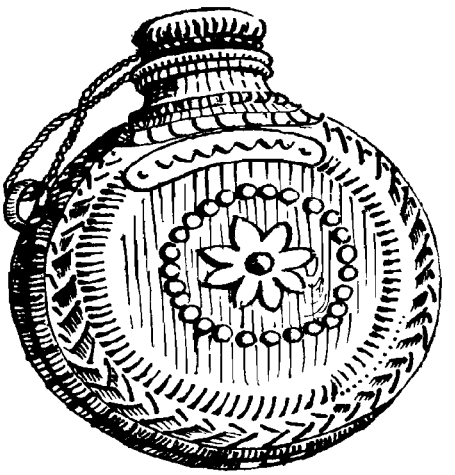
As 98·27 per cent of the Gonds live in villages, agriculture is their main occupation. According to the 1961 census, out of 272,564 Gonds of Maharashtra, 62·17 per cent Gonds were workers and 37·83 per cent were non-workers. The following table shows the percentages of workers for total, rural and urban areas for males and females among Conds and the general population :—

	Total	Rural	Urban
Gond total population ..	62·17	62·47	44·94
Males	65 09	65 25	56·48
Females	59·27	59·72	32·92
General total population ..	47·91	52·42	36·43
Males	57·09	58·07	54·84
Females	38·10	46·74	13·45

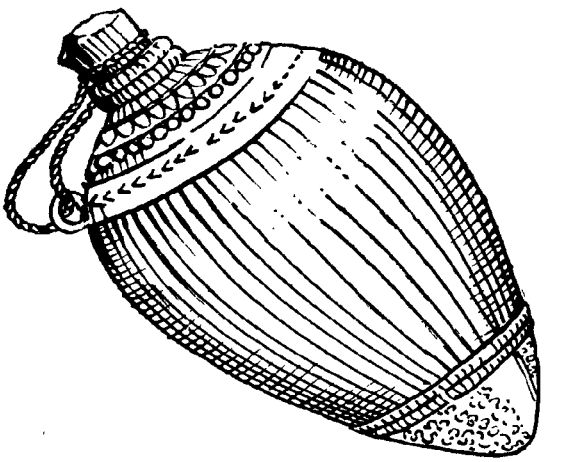
The high participation rates among Gond males and females may be due to the fact that they are living a life of subsistence level and agriculture is their main occupation. Even children and women can work in it, besides attending to their domestic duties. As education has not spread among Gonds as yet, children who ought to be in school are working in fields and forests to augment the family's income.



A Gond from Chandrapur



A tobacco box



A tobacco box



A Pawara playing the Bori

The following table shows the proportion of Gond workers separately for males and females among nine broad industrial categories of workers as per the 1961 census :—

Category	Persons	Males	Females
Total ..	100·00	100·00	100·00
I	54·66	56·09	53·11
II	39·63	35 33	44·29
III	2·20	3 79	0·48
IV	0·90	1·18	0 58
V	0·14	0·23	0·06
VI	0·10	0·16	0 03
VII	0·18	0 29	0·07
VIII	0·07	0 13	....
IX	2·12	2·80	1·38

As many as 94·29 per cent Gonds were working in agriculture—54·66 per cent as cultivators and 39·63 per cent as agricultural labourers. To get a clear idea of the distribution of Gond workers in broad categories, one can see their proportion in respect of the four major districts which account for 99·26 per cent of the Gond population of the State. The following table shows the distribution of Gond workers of these districts in some major categories of industrial classification :—

District	I	II	III	IV	V to VIII	IX	Total
Chanda ..	71 31	22·58	2 11	1·02	0·30	2·68	100·00
Yeotmal ..	24·60	69·01	2·11	0 67	1·37	2·24	100·00
Nanded ..	39·99	56·64	0·65	0 57	0 20	1·95	100·00
Amravati ..	48·31	32 52	12·68	2 18	2·33	1·98	100·00

The regional differences are glaring as far as categories I, II, III & IV are concerned. Whereas 71·32 per cent Gond workers of Chanda are cultivators, only 24·60 per cent Gond workers are cultivators in Yeotmal, while the proportion of agricultural labourers is highest among the Gonds of Yeotmal. As many as 12·68 per cent Gond workers of Amravati are engaged in forestry, fishing, hunting, etc., when in Chanda and Yeotmal districts, the percentage is 2·11 per cent each and in Nanded it is 0·65 per cent.

Landholding pattern

A study of 53,326 Gond households was undertaken to find out the landholding pattern among them. These households were drawn as follows :—

District	Tehsil	No. of households
Yeotmal ..	Yeotmal ..	5,249
Do. ..	Kelapur ..	8,634
Do. ..	Wani ..	4,845
Chanda ..	Rajura ..	4,540
Do. ..	Sironcha ..	11,175
Do. ..	Gadhchiroli ..	18,883

A study of these households revealed that 23,060 households (43·24) neither owned nor possessed any land. Of the remaining 30,266 households, 25,232 (47·32) owned and cultivated the land themselves. The land holding pattern of these 25,232 households is as follows :—

Acres of land owned	No. of households
All sizes ..	25,232 (100·00)
0·01 to 2·4 ..	2,804 (11·11)
2·5 to 4·9 ..	4,930 (19·54)
5·0 to 7·4 ..	5,007 (19·85)
7·5 to 9·9 ..	3,016 (11·95)
10·00 to 12·4 ..	3,021 (11·97)
12·5 to 14·9 ..	1,413 (5·60)
15·0 to 29·9 ..	3,879 (15·37)
30·00 to 49·9 ..	883 (3·50)
50 and above ..	279 (1·11)

About 50 per cent of the households owned land less than 7·5 acres each. The proportion of households owning more than 15 acres was about one-fifth of the total number of Gond households owning some land.

There were 4,786 Gond households which did not own any land, but took it on lease either on cash (4,324 households) or on crop share basis (462 households). There were 248 households which owned some land, but had leased it out entirely to other households for cultivation.

In Sonegaon, the area of land under cultivation was 941 acres 17 gunthas. It was owned by 40 khatedars (say, households). Of these 40 khatedars, seven were Raj Gonds and one Gond Gowari. The seven Raj Gond khatedars owned 162 acres 3 gunthas, while the Gond Gowari khatedar owned 35 acres 13 gunthas of land.

The Gonds' method of cultivation does not differ much from that followed either by other scheduled tribes or other cultivators. They now use a nangar (plough) mostly wooden with an iron blade (in a few cases, there is the iron one also), a bakhar (harrow), a dawara, a sarata (for sowing) an axe and a sickle. The Gonds generally use cow dung collected from the fields and household garbage as manure. Only two Gond cultivators of Sonegaon used fertilizers supplied by the Government. The quality of the land possessed by Gonds is generally poor and is situated on hill slopes. They are reluctant to take full

advantage of the activities of the community development department. In Yeotmal district, they grow jowar, tur, mung, urid and some cotton. The cultivation of paddy and wheat depends upon rain. The Gonds of Chanda raise paddy, mung and kodo. They grow vegetables and a little tobacco in the kitchen garden (badi). The Gonds of Amravati grow jowar, paddy, urid, tur, kodo, sawa (inferior millets) and cotton.

The Sonegaon Gonds sell cotton at times in the Wani and Ghonsa markets at a distance of 14 and two miles respectively from Sonegaon. They do not sell foodgrains as they are required for their own consumption and for payment of wages. The Gonds in the other villages also generally follow the same practice. Some however sell their produce to merchants coming to their door. The Gonds in the four selected villages visited were heavily in debt. Their borrowing was mainly for marriage and death ceremonies for which they pledged their cattle, ornaments, lands and sometimes personal services. They, however, did not mortgage their standing crops. The Gonds of Gurupalli generally do not borrow from non-tribal persons. They help each other. Very few of them resort to borrowing. There is no instance in any of these villages where a debtor had to sell his land to the creditor.

The market value of the land possessed by the Gonds in Sonegaon in 1961-62 was Rs. 80 to 150 an acre for poor soil and Rs. 700 to Rs. 800 an acre for good soil; in Sawalikheda, it was Rs. 300 to Rs. 350 an acre for black fertile soil and Rs. 25 to Rs. 30 an acre for murmad soil.

The study of Gond households from selected villages like Sonegaon and Sawlikheda reveals that their economic conditions are poor. Thus the wages of a Thati Gond of Sawlikheda who is a cattle grazer are Rs. 2 or 3 per head of cattle per month. He receives in addition bhakri. In case no bhakri is supplied, then the wages are Rs. 4 to 6 per head of cattle per month.

The land of Nanhi village is not fertile at all. However there is forest around this village. The wages of Gond agricultural labourers are Rs. 1·25 per day or three pailis of paddy. The financial position of Dhurwa Gonds, however, is quite sound.

The number of Gonds working in mining, quarrying, livestock, forestry, fishing, hunting and plantations according to the 1961 census is 3,737 (3,343 are males and 394 females). Of the total Gond workers of the State, the proportion of Gonds engaged in this sector is 2·21 per cent only and this proportion is meagre, considering the general notion that the Gonds are engaged in hunting and other forest activities. The proportion of workers in mining, quarrying, etc., among all scheduled tribes is 4·68 per cent for males and 2·65 per cent for females. In the case of the Gonds, the figures are 3·78 and 0·49 per cent respectively. Logging and felling of trees, making charcoal and gathering of minor forest produce like gum and honey are some of the activities in which they engage.

The combined proportions (1·14 per cent) of IV (Household industry) and V (Manufacturing other than household industry) are very low not only for the Gonds but for the combined population of scheduled tribes. In all, 1,939 Gonds were engaged in these categories.

The slips of rural areas for the Gonds were classified according to the industry in which they were engaged at the time of the 1961 census and the break-up is as given below :—

Category	Persons
I. Cultivators ...	88,140
II. Agricultural labourers ...	61,531
III. Mining, quarrying, etc.—	3,606
(1) Production and rearing of live-stock (large heads only) mainly for milk and animal power such as cow, buffalo, goat.	12,887
(2) Plantation, replanting and conservation of forests.	349
(3) Felling and cutting of trees and transportation of logs.	195
(4) Quarrying of stone (including slate), clay, sand, gravel, and limestone.	72
(5) Production of fuel including charcoal by exploitation of forest.	49
(6) Other industries ..	54
IV. Household industry—	
(1) Manufacture of material from cork, bamboo, cane leaves and other allied products.	798
(2) Making of textile garments including rain coats and head gear.	106

Category	Persons
(3) Manufacture of structural wooden goods (including tracted timber) such as beams, posts, doors, windows.	95
(4) Manufacture of wooden industrial goods other than transport equipments such as bobbin and similar equipments and fixtures.	85
(5) Other household industries ..	366
V Manufacturing other than household industry—	
(1) Production of rice, atta flour etc., by milling, dehusking and processing of crops and food-grains.	38
(2) Manufacture of lime ..	37
(3) Manufacture of structural stone goods, stone dressing and stone crushing.	25
(4) Making of textile garments including rain coats and headgear.	24
(5) Other manufacturing industries	114
VI Construction—	
(1) Construction and maintenance of building including erection, flooring, decoration construction, electrical and sanitary installation.	82
(2) Construction and maintenance of roads, railways, bridges, tunnels, etc.	59
(3) Construction and maintenance of waterways and water reservoirs such as bund embankments, dams, canals, tanks, tubewells wells.	11
VII Trade and commerce—	
(1) Retail trading in cereals, pulses, vegetables, fruits, sugar, spiecs, oil, fish, dairy products, eggs, poultry.	105
(2) Retail trading in medicines and chemicals.	56
(3) Retail trading in food stuffs like sweet-meats, condiments, cakes, biscuits, etc.	19
(4) Retail trading in animals ..	19
(5) Other trading. ..	69
VIII Transport, storage and communication—	
(1) Postal, telegraphic, wireless and signal communication.	40
(2) Transport by railways ..	22
(3) Transporting by men such as carrying of luggage, handcart driving, rickshaw pulling and cycle rickshaw.	19
(4) Other transport, storage and communication.	33
IX Other services—	
(1) Services rendered by organisations or individuals not elsewhere classified.	2,241
(2) Public service in administration departments and office of state government.	341
(3) Educational services such as those rendered by colleges, schools and similar other institutions of non-technical type.	285
(4) Services rendered to households such as those by domestic servants, cooks.	192
(5) Public health and medical service rendered by organisations and individuals such as by hospitals, sanatoria, nursing homes, maternity and child welfare clinics, also by hakimi, unani, ayurvedic, allopathic and homœopathic practitioners.	63
(6) Other services not elsewhere classified.	262

Leaving out the Gonds engaged as cultivators and agricultural labourers, there were 9,212 Gonds who had the following occupational classification :—

Description of occupation	Persons
1. Miscellaneous labourers in different industries.	2,443
2. Farm workers, rearing of animals, birds and insects.	2,985
3. Basket weavers and related workers	713
4. Village officials ..	270
5. Carpenters, joiners, pattern makers (wood).	237
6. Log fellers and wood cutters ..	198

Description of occupation	Persons
7. Working proprietors, retail trade ..	193
8. Butlers, bearers, waiters, maids and other servants (domestic).	171
9. Teachers—middle and primary schools	155
10. Millers, pounders, huskers ..	155
11. Forest rangers and related workers..	149
12. Unskilled office workers (peons, daftaris).	117
13. Tailors, dress makers and garment workers.	109
14. Blacksmiths, hammersmiths, forgemen	42
15. Bricklayers, plasterers, masons ..	41
16. Salesmen and shop assistants—wholesale and retail trade.	33
17. Messengers including dak peons ..	20
18. Postmen	17
19. Animal drawn vehicle drivers ..	15

Non-workers

Of the total Gond population of 272,564 in Maharashtra, 103,113 (37·83) were non-workers. Of these, 47,431 were males (46·00) and 55,682 (54·00) were females. On the basis of the 1961 census data, they can be classified as follows :—

Type of work	Population		
	Persons	Males	Females
All Gond non-workers ..	103,113 (100.00)	47,431 (100.00)	55,682 (100.002)
Full time students ..	8,438 (8.18)	7,130 (15.03)	1,308 (2.35)
Persons seeking employment for the first time.	85 (0.08)	80 (0.17)	5 (0.01)
Persons employed before but now out of employment and seeking work.	94 (0.09)	77 (0.16)	17 (0.03)
Others	94,496 (91.65)	40,144 (84.64)	54,352 (97.61)

The percentage of students among the non-workers can be compared with those of the general population and of all the scheduled tribe population as follows :—

	Persons	Males	Females
General population ..	22.74	36.41	12.61
Scheduled tribe population ..	8.71	15.02	3.10
Gonds	8.18	15.03	2.35

The number of students expressed as a percentage of total Gond non-workers of the district separately for males and females was as follows :—

District	Males	Females
Chanda	12.18	1.41
Yeotmal	20.02	3.94
Amravati	17.10	3.76
Nanded	17.18	3.06

Life cycle

The Raj Gonds of Sonegaon bring their daughters home for their first delivery. But Gond Gowaris of Sonegaon do not follow that custom.

The Raj Gonds of Sonegaon engage a dai (midwife) from the Pardhan tribe for delivery. In case she is not available, they bring a dai from another caste. She receives 1½ kudavs (12 seers) of jowar, in case a female child is born, and 2½ kudavs (20 seers) in case of a male child is born for her services to mother and child for six days. In a Raj Gond family, the dai cuts the nal with a sickle. The placenta is buried in a pit dug in the lying-in room near the mother's cot. The mother and the child are bathed on this pit. Raj Gond women have no special diet during pregnancy or after delivery. On the fifth day, the bathing pit is filled and worshipped in the evening by the dai, after keeping a lamp on it. The child is not given anything till the mother starts breastfeeding it. In the case of a Gond Gowari, the dai cuts the nal with a sickle and buries the placenta in a pit under the mother's cot within the house. The mother and the child are given a bath on this place for five days. The bath water is not allowed to flow out of the pit, which is filled on the fifth day and worshipped by the dai. Thereafter, a burning lamp is kept on it. The mother is fed on rice, dal and linseed oil for 12 days from the day of delivery. The child is fed on water till its mother starts feeding it at her breast.

The period of impurity after child-birth is of five days in the case of Raj Gonds and of 12 days in respect of Gond Gowaris of Sonegaon village. At the end of the period, they take a bath and consume a little of cow's urine. During the period of impurity, the child's father does not shave and no auspicious work is undertaken, not even the daily puja of the family gods.

The Thatia Gonds of Sawalikheda do not bring their married daughters home for the first delivery. A dai of any caste is engaged to serve the delivered woman and the child for five days. She cuts the nal with a bamboo chip. The nal and the placenta are

buried in a pit dug in a corner of the room where the mother and the child stay on a cot after delivery. The mother and child are bathed at this pit till the nal drips off. On the day on which this occurs, the mother and the child are bathed at the pit for the last time and then the pit is worshipped by the dai. The mother's food after delivery consists of pej, prepared out of wheat or jowar with salt or gur. The child is not given anything till it gets nourishment from its mother.

The Gaita Gonds of Maldugi segregate a woman for five weeks during her confinement. A dai belonging to their own tribe is engaged for the delivery. In case a dai of their own tribe is not available, one from a Mahar or Burud caste is engaged. She cuts the nal of the child with a knife and buries the placenta near the cot of the mother. She serves the woman and the child till the nal falls off. For her services, she receives boarding and lodging in the house or, in lieu thereof, one seer of rice per day till the nal falls off. She is also given a rupee or more. In case of difficult deliveries, the relatives of the woman offer a coconut to Badadev.

The Gaita Gonds observe the period of impurity after child-birth for five months. During this period, nobody accepts water or food from the delivered woman. When the period ends, the floor of the house is washed with cow dung and all members of the household take a bath. Cow's urine is sprinkled in the house and on the body of all members of the household. On this day, the maternal uncle cuts the first hair of the child with a pair of scissors. The delivered woman is then free to do all the household chores.

After the period of impurity is over, men and women of the Gaita Gond tribe are invited to the delivered woman's house. Rice is cooked. Some grains of cooked rice are stuck to the two ends of a small palas stick and placed in the child's hands. They then call out the name of the ancestor who is believed to have been reborn in the form of the child. If the child lifts up the hands with the stick in them, then the particular ancestor is believed to have been born in the family in the form of that child and the child is given his or her name in consultation with the women gathered there.

The Dhurwa Gonds of Nanhi engage a dai from a Mahar caste; she bathes the child and the mother for five days or till the nal falls off. The placenta and the nal are buried in a pit. The dai receives rice, dal, chillis and a rupee or two for her services. The period of impurity lasts for five days or till the nal falls off. At the end of the period, water and cow's urine are sprinkled in the house. The mother is given water, in which Kultha (a pulse) is kept for some hours, to drink on the fifth day. She is given rice and tur dal to eat once a day for 15 days from the fifth day. Thereafter, she takes her normal food.

The Gonds in general worship goddess Satvi on the fifth day of the child's birth. The midwife keeps a stone at the place where the nal has been buried. She draws five lines with haldi, kumkum and angar. The stone is worshipped and cooked food is kept near it. The Raj Gonds of Sonegaon do the panchvi worship when five children or five women are fed. The Thatiya Gonds of Sawlikheda bathe the mother and the child on the day when the nal falls and worship the Shashti. The women lead the mother to the kitchen to show that her impurity has ended that day. The Thatiya Gonds feed men and women on this day and name the child. The dai is given her remuneration for five days on this day which consists of Rs. 5 for a female child and Rs. 2·50 for a male child, one or two seers of grain and a present worth about Rs. 4. She is also provided with free board for the five days of her service. The grains are put in a soop and the child is rolled in it. The dai then puts the child in a cradle, collects her wages and presents and goes.

The Gonds believe that a barren woman can conceive by worshipping Badadev and observing a fast. They also consult the bhumka or the baiga who suggests the propitiation of some spirit that may be the cause of her barrenness. In some cases, the barren woman obtains the first hair of a child of another woman or its nal so that "she can transfer the mother's fertility to herself" (Russell and Hira Lal, p. 88).

The Raj Gonds of Sonegaon village cradle and name the child on the 12th day. The Gond Gowaris of Sonegaon do this on the 13th day. In other respects, their practices are similar to those of the Raj Gonds. They pierce the child's ears when it is two years old. The Thatia Gonds name their new babies on the 12th day. Some common names for male children are Sakharam, Gokharu, Mithia, Rangu, Chunni, Birsa, Mangol, Santu and Zabbal. The names for female children are Rukhama, Muni, Ganga, Ladku, etc.

In the case of the Raj Gonds and the Gond Gowaris of Sonegaon, the child's first hair is cut by a barber with scissors and no ceremony is performed. The hair is thrown in flowing water in the case of Raj Gonds and in the bath pit in the case of a Gond

Gowari child. The Thatiya Gonds of Sawalikheda get the first hair of a child cut by its maternal uncle when it starts walking. The maternal uncle, after invoking the blessings of the god on the child and wishing it a long and happy life, cuts a lock or two with scissors when it is on its mother's lap. If a child is male, a pigtail is kept. The maternal uncle receives a present from his sister on this occasion.

When a girl comes of age, it is considered an important event in her life. Gond women observe a period of impurity for five days. On the sixth day, they take a bath and return to their normal work. during these days, they do not perform any household work such as cooking, bringing water from the well, washing clothes and utensils, etc. Raj Gond women are free to work in the fields but not at home. The Thatiya Gonds of Sawalikheda also observe an impurity period for five days and stay apart within the house. In exceptional cases when there is no other woman to attend to household duties and there are small children to be fed and looked after, the woman will take a bath on the second day and attend to household work.

The impurity period among Gayata Gonds is four days only and the woman lives in a separate hut meant for this purpose only. Food and water are given by others. On the fifth day, they apply earth to their hair and take a bath and go home. Among Dhurwa Gonds of Nanhi, the period of impurity is for three days and the woman lives a secluded life.

Marriage

Among the Raj Gonds of Yeotmal, boys are married when they are 20 to 22 years old and girls at the age of 16 to 18. The Gaita Gonds of Maldugi marry their boys and girls at the age of 14 to 16 and 10 to 12 respectively. Among Dhurwa Gonds of Nanhi, the boys are married at 10 to 12 years of age and girls between 7 and 8 years of age. Among the Thatiya Gonds of Sawalikheda, the custom of child marriage seems to be prevalent. According to the 1961 census, the proportion of married boys and girls of age-group 0-14 to the total population of that age-group for the four districts of Chanda, Yeotmal, Nanded and Amravati is as follows :—

District	Percentage	
	Males	Females
Maharashtra ..	0·87	3·07
Chanda ..	0·94	2 76
Yeotmal ..	0·32	3·36
Nanded ..	3·44	5·50
Amravati ..	0·21	1·71

A study of 4,497 couples, selected from Chanda, Yeotmal and Amravati revealed no instance of a husband who was younger than his wife. He was usually older by about five years.

The Raj Gonds of Sonegaon village attach importance to the family and economic status of the boy and the girl rather than to their personal qualities. They also enter into marriage alliances with families staying at a considerable distance. Marriages cannot take place between persons of the same kul and also among families who worship the same number of gods. A boy's marriage with a daughter of his mother's brother is permissible but not with the daughter of his father's or mother's sister. Among the Thatiya Gonds of Sawalikheda, marriage is prohibited among two families having the same gotra. The gotras are Dhurwa, Porte and Tejam. A boy can marry a maternal uncle's daughter as also a paternal aunt's daughter. A widower can marry his wife's younger sister, but not the elder one. Two brothers can marry two real sisters. The boys of Dhurwa Gonds cannot marry daughters of their mother's brother or father's sister or mother's sister. Marriage outside the tribe is prohibited.

Among the Raj Gonds and Gond Cowaris of Sonegaon, the boy's father takes the initiative. Accompanied by tribal elders, he approaches the tribal elders of the village where the girl lives. A message is sent to the girl's father and the girl is shown to them. If the girl is approved by the boy's father and the party, the boy's father applies kumkum to her forehead and the party returns to its village after taking tea. Then the girl's father visits the boy's village along with the village karbhari and close relatives and applies kumkum to the forehead of the boy if the boy is not known to him. In case he is already known, then this will not be done. The girl's party is then offered tea and returns. After some days, the boy's party visits the girl's village for sakharpuda (betrothal). The party brings with it a sari, a blouse, some grain, dried dates, almonds, haldi, roots and betelnuts. These articles are used to 'fill the lap of the girl'. The question of dej 'bride price), clothes and ornaments to be given by the boy's father to the girl are discussed and settled before sakharpuda. A dej of Rs. 60, a sari, a blouse, ornaments like patalya, vela, jodavi, masolya, besar, and biryas (all of silver) and ekdani and garsoli of gold have to be given by the boy's father. When the dej is settled, the boy's father presents the sari and the blouse to the girl, who puts them on and bows to all those assembled at the party. The sakharpuda is performed when the girl's lap (oti) is "filled". A vegetarian dinner is

served to all. The expenses of this dinner are shared by the boy's and girl's father in the proportion of 2 : 1.

Among the Raj Gonds of Sonegaon, the marriage takes place in the boy's village, but the Gond Gowaris of Sonegaon celebrate it at the girl's. The marriage is usually celebrated in the morning. Tuesday, Saturday, new moon and full moon days, as also eclipse days, are inauspicious. So is the entire month of Paush.

About eight days before marriage two persons from the boy's side, called muraris, deliver the dej to the girl's father. Two days prior to marriage, haldi is applied to the boy and the girl at their respective villages by women, among whom at least one must be a suvasini. Two mandavs are erected, each of nine salai poles, one in front of the boy's house and the other in front of the janosa ghar where the girl's party will be accommodated during marriage.

Two muraris go to the girl's village, a day prior to the marriage, to fetch the girl and her party to the boy's village. All of them leave the girl's village in such a manner that they would reach the boy's village at about seven in the morning of the marriage day. The girl's party goes to the temple of Maruti where the boy's party receives it. They are given a breakfast consisting of ambil (a preparation of jowar) or bhakri and water. The girl's party, thereafter, moves to the janosa ghar where tea is served. A piece of dhoti (made yellow by applying haldi to it) and ornaments are sent to the janosa ghar for the girl by the boy's party. Another piece of dhoti of similar type is kept ready for the boy at his house.

On the marriage day, the girl is given a bath by her female relatives and she puts on the coloured dhoti and the ornaments. The boy too puts on the dhoti after bath. He goes to the Maruti temple, bows to the deity and then proceeds to a place known as the akhara (resting place for cattle) on the outskirts of the village. As soon as the boy's party has left the temple, the girl and her party, accompanied by music, enter the temple. The girl bows to the deity and proceeds to the akhara where the boy and his party have already assembled. The boy stands facing east and the girl facing west, with an antarpat held by two persons between them. There is no priest. The boy's father washes the girl's feet and the girl's father washes the boys feet. The antarpat is then removed. The girl moves and stands by the left side of the boy facing east. The boy ties a marriage necklace of black beads around her neck. The two then throw akshata on each other, followed by those assembled at the function. A suvasini ties the hems of their garments, and the two then leave the akhara for the mandav in front of the boy's house. The boy's mother receives them, waves lamps made of dough before their faces and washes their feet. The two are led into the mandav and made to sit on the bohole by the side of each other, facing east. The women of the village apply haldi to the couple. The boy and the girl leave the bohole and stand in the booth for bath. After the bath, the bridegroom's party offers presents of sari and other clothing meant for the bride. These are accepted by the bride's mother who keeps them on her shoulder and bows to the assembly. The articles are then showed to the mahajan of her village who checks whether they are according to the terms agreed upon. Tea is served to all and the girl's party retires to the janosa ghar. It once again returns to the boy's booth in the night for a dinner. After the dinner is over, the dhanasa dance, in which only males participate, is held. In this dance the main musical instruments are either drums or flutes. In the morning, tea is served to all and the girl's party leaves the boy's village.

The Raj Gonds of Sonegaon village do not perform homa (sacrificial fire worship) and the bridal couple do not garland each other. The newly married girl stays at her husband's place for four to eight days and the mahajan of her father's village brings her back. She stays at her parent's place for 15 to 20 days and goes back to her husband.

The Gond Gowaris of Sonegaon generally follow the same pattern except that they celebrate the marriage at the girl's village on any day at sunset from Panchami, following Shimga (Holi) till the rains start. The boy is carried to the marriage booth by another man when the marriage is performed. On the day after marriage, the groom's party leaves the village in a procession called varat with the bride. The Thatiya Gonds perform marriages on any day except Saturday in Paush, Chaitra and Vaishak and upto Jiroti. Among them also, it is the boy's father who takes the initiative; he has to give dej to the girl's father and to the girl ornaments.

The marriage among the Thatiya Gonds of Sawalikheda is celebrated at the village of the boy. A mandav of 12 salai poles is erected in front of his house on the day following the sagai (bethrotal). In the centre of the booth and around the central pole, a bohole is constructed. Two small branches of a mahua tree, not blossomed, and a branch of

an umbar tree and a coconut are tied to this pole. A thread is passed round the bohole four times. The girl and her party arrive at the boy's village on the day following the day on which the mandav is erected so as to reach the boy's village at sunrise. The girl's party is received at the village border by the boy's father and relatives. The women from the boy's party go to the house where the girl's party is accommodated and apply haldi to the girl. The girl is then carried by her elder sister's husband upto the entrance of the marriage booth. In the same manner, the boy is carried by the husband of his elder sister and is made to stand by the side of the girl. The lagrya (marriage performer) binds the ends of the clothes worn by the boy and the girl in a knot. He then holds the boy's hand who, in his turn, holds the girl's hand and all the three then enter the marriage booth. The lagrya makes them walk round the bohole three times. They sit on the bohole facing east, the girl on the boy's left side. Thereafter, the friends and relatives offer aher (presents) to them either in cash or in kind. When this is over, the knot of the clothes is untied.

On the day of the marriage, a sari is given to the girl and her mother from the boy's side. A non-vegetarian dinner is given on the next day by the boy's father. Thereafter the girl's party leaves the village, leaving the girl at her husband's house. She, however, goes to her parents on Bhavai day, stays there for 2 or 3 days. Tradition requires that the girl should stay, after her marriage, in her husband's house even though she is a minor.

The Gayata Gonds of Maldugi village follow generally the same custom of settling the marriage as narrated above. The marriage is not performed on a Saturday or new moon day. Some Gayata Gonds observe a ceremony known as payadhuni. The boy's father washes the feet of the girl on a day 4 to 8 days prior to the day of marriage and gives her a sari, a rupee, a kuvari pot and a pair of verand patelya.

The girl's party, called varhadis, go to the boy's village for marriage and are accommodated in a janosa ghar. Soon after their arrival, suvasinis from the boy's side wash the feet of the bride. A girl from the boy's side takes a small pot containing water and some coins in it on her head and stands before the bride and sprinkles water from the pot on the bride. The small girl gets the coins in the pot as a present. Thereafter, a got ambil is taken to the boys side and is distributed among the relatives of the boy. This is called 'ambil dene'.

The mandav which is erected in front of the boy's house consists of a munda of salai or mahua tree, nine small poles of ven tree and branches of a jambul tree. The priest from the tribe takes a branch of the jambul tree, dips it in two pots filled with water, and sprinkles it around the booth to rid it of all evil. The bridegroom holds the little finger of the bride's right hand and stands facing east. The priest sprinkles water from the pot on the couple with the jambul branch. The bridegroom then takes the bride to the opposite side of the priest and both bow to him. The assembled persons then sprinkle water from the two earthen pots over the couple. Thereafter, oil, haldi and perfumes are applied to the couple and they are given a bath. Thereafter, they put on a new dress and get ready for the marriage. The bridegroom stands facing the east, opposite to him stands the bride facing the west and an antarpat is held between them, the side facing the groom is made yellow by haldi, while the other one facing the bride is white. Both of them hold rice, betel leaves and nuts in their hands and hold them over each other's heads. The ends of the girl's sari and the boy's dhoti are tied in a knot. The priest sings mangalashtaka and at the end of each verse, the assembled persons throw akshata over the couple. The bride and the bridegroom also throw on each other the rice, betel leaves and nuts from their hands. The marriage ceremony ends at noon. Thereafter a non-vegetarian meal is served by the boy's side.

The Dhurwa Gonds perform marriage ceremonies in two ways. The boy goes to the girl's village and a marriage is performed at the girl's village. Such a marriage is called mothe lagna (big marriage) while in the other the girl is taken to the boy's house and the marriage is celebrated. This type of marriage is called lahan lagna. In both types of marriages, the bride and the bridegroom stand in front of each other at a spot where lines of flour are drawn and the bridegroom's sister's husband ties the hems of their clothes. The couple takes a little of water in their mouths while they stand. The bridegroom's sister's husband then brings the heads of the couple near each other so that they can spill water in their mouth on each other's body. This ceremony completes the marriage. The Dhurwa Gonds do not engage a brahman priest. In fact, the priest's role is played by the groom's bother-in-law. After marriage, the girl stays with her husband. If she is a minor, she stays with her parents. On attaining puberty, she goes to her husband's house. There is a custom of ghar javai (Dhagalya) among the Dhurwa Gonds. A would-be son-in-law stays

with his would-be father-in-law and works in his fields for 3 to 4 years. Thereafter, the girl's father get his daughter married to the boy who has served him so far. The girl's father usually gives his son-in-law a piece of land, a pair of bullocks and implements so that he can cultivate the land independently.

The marriage expenses among Gonds vary according to the economic condition of the two parties. In rare cases, the expenses go beyond Rs. 1,000 for one party.

The following table will show the range of expenses that are incurred by the two parties :—

Sub-tribe	Expenses (in rupees) incurred by	
	Girl's father	Boy's father
Raj Gond	100 to 150	400 to 500
Gond Gowari	400	600
Thatiya Gond	Practically none	500 to 700
Gayata Gond	120	900 to 1,000
Dhurwa Gond	50 to 60	700 to 800

Widow marriage

A widow can marry, among Raj Gonds, her deceased husband's mother's sister's son but not her husband's mother's brother's son. She can also marry her husband's younger brother, but not his elder brother. So is the case with Gond Gowaris. Among Thatiya Gonds, a widow cannot remarry within one year of her husband's death. The preference among Thatiya Gonds is for the husban'd younger brother.

Among Raj Gonds, the pat (widow re-marriage) is performed in a separate place in the bridegroom's house. Invitees for such a marriage are generally persons who have married more than once. The widower ties the mangalsutra round the widow's neck and then both apply kumkum and akshata to each other's forehead. This completes the ceremony and is followed by a dinner. Among Raj Gonds, the tribesmen do not generally see the faces of newly married couple by pat on the following day. If a bachelor wishes to marry a widow, he is first required to marry a ring (mundi) by a regular marriage and then only he can marry her. This system is followed among Gond Gowaris also.

Among Thatiya Gonds, the widow and the widower (who wish to marry each other) go to the panchas and express their desire. A she-goat that has put forth young ones and at least one of which is yet living, is sacrificed on the occasion and the meat is cooked and served as dinner.

The pat is performed among the Gond Gowaris on a night when the moon is not shining in the sky. Among the Thatiya Gonds, it is performed on any day of the year except Thursday. The Dhurwa Gonds perform a widow remarriage on any day except Saturday and new moon days at the house of the widow's father.

Divorce is allowed among the Gonds if the husband is a drunkard or ill-treats his wife or is not earning anything to maintain his wife or is impotent. Divorce can be obtained by husband as well by wife. The Raj Gonds of Sonegaon village obtain the divorce through the tribe panchayat. The aggrieved party approaches the panchayat, and after hearing the grounds on which divorce is demanded, the panchayat permits the divorce. The terms and conditions of the divorce are written down on paper. One of the terms relates to the compensation to be received by the aggrieved party. The panchayat of Gond Gowaris levies a fine of one or two rupees on both or either of them who approaches for a divorce. So is the case with Thatiya Gonds among whom the amount of fine is Rs. 5 on the person who is found guilty. The panchayat can also direct the wife to return the amount of dej to her husband.

A divorcee can re-marry in the same manner as a widowed person.

The Gonds allow polygyny but not polyandry. The main reason for having more than one wife is to have children if the first wife happens to be barren.

Death

Field enquiries showed that different sub-divisions of the Gonds followed different death rites. The main features followed by the Gonds in general are as follows :—

(i) The person when he is about to breathe his last is laid on the floor, (ii) The body is cremated by well-to-do families; otherwise, it is buried, (iii) It is first given a bath and is wrapped in a new piece of white cloth and a rupee or a few coins are inserted in its mouth, (iv) The Raj Gonds and the Thatiya Gonds generally carry the body to the place of cremation or burial on their hands but the Madia and Gaita Gonds carry it on a cot or a bamboo bier, (v) Only tribe members are allowed to touch the body, (vi) Among Madia Gonds, even females and children accompany the funeral procession; but with Raj Gonds and Gaita Gonds, males only are allowed in the funeral procession, (vii) The Raj Gonds and Thatiya Gonds place the corpse in the grave-pit, with its head to the south and legs to the north and

its face upward. The Gaita Gonds place the corpse in the grave-pit on its back, face upwards, with head to the east and legs to the west, (viii) The Gonds offer the body the articles the dead person liked most (e.g. tobacco, liquor) and these articles are kept under the head of the corpse, (ix) The chief mourner first throws a handful of earth into the grave and other follow him, (x) After the disposal of the corpse, all members of the procession take a bath. They then go to the house of the dead where liquor is sprinkled on their bodies and some is given to them for drinking. The Madias do not take a bath, but return to the house of the dead from the cemetery where, after sprinkling and drinking some liquor, they consider themselves pure.

The Raj Gonds of Sonegaon do not allow a dying man to breathe his last on a cot. When his relatives notice signs of approaching death, they remove him from the cot and keep him on the floor. His near relative keeps his head on his lap and puts milk, sugar water or ambil in his mouth. If a person dies at night, his corpse is not disposed of till the next day and the relatives keep awake during the whole night. They apply oil and haldi to the body, wash it with hot water and then dress it in a white cloth. Then they cover it in a new white shroud, if male, and in a yellow sari if female and place it on a bamboo bier with its feet in the front and head at the back. Some jowar flour, rice, and a few coins are tied in the shroud. The bier is carried by four members of the tribe on their shoulders to the cemetery. The corpse is also carried on hands instead of on a bamboo bier. The wife or the son of the deceased carries a new earthen pot at the head of the procession. The bier is lowered at the visava, the pall-bearers exchange places and resume their journey with the bier on their shoulders. A pit is dug in the cemetery in a north-south direction. The wall of the pit at its bottom is carved at the side where the head and legs would rest, in such a way that earth would not fall directly either on the head or on the legs when the pit is being filled with earth. The corpse is taken round the pit and then is laid in it, head south, legs north and face upwards. Its garments are loosened, palas leaves are kept on its face, navel and private parts. The bangles and the garsoli of the wife of the deceased are broken and buried with his corpse in the pit and her kumkum is wiped off. Then the pit is filled and the new earthen pot brought to the cemetery along with the procession is broken at the head of the grave. Grass, stones and thorns are kept on the grave and the bier is kept by its side. No fire is taken to the cemetery.

The funeral party takes a bath at a nearby water source and goes to the house of the deceased. A woman from that house comes out with water in a pot in which she puts a live charcoal. She pours water on the hands of every one in the funeral procession, which the latter sprinkles over his head and feet. The members of the funeral party go to their houses and take a bath. They come back to the house of the deceased where they are served with liquor or tea in leaf cups which they drop on the ground in the name of the deceased. The party is then treated to liquor or tea whereafter they leave for their places. A vegetarian dinner is served to the pall bearers in the night.

The Raj Gonds of Sonegaon do not perform shraddha or pindadan. They perform only devkaran in honour of the deceased at any time after death, even after some months or years as may be convenient. They do not raise memorials. They perform devkaran in a booth erected in their courtyard. A booth with four poles of an anjani tree and with anjani twigs at top is erected. It is 4 to 5 feet high. Depending on the dead being an adult male or female, a he or she-goat is tied in the booth. All the relatives and guests assembled for the rite apply akshata to the goat and feed it with jowar bhakri or grain. It is then sacrified in the booth and made into two halves. One half is kept in the house for consumption of women and the other half is taken under a mahua tree outside the village site where it is cooked and consumed by men.

The Gond Gowaris of Sonegaon bury or cremate their dead. They bury children below 12 years of age. They have no restrictions in respect of a particular direction in which the legs and head of the corpse should be placed. The corpse is not unclothed before its burial or cremation. The chief mourner does not move round the pyre or grave with the earthen pot. He only breaks it at the head of the corpse after the grave is filled with earth or the pyre is lit. Stones and thorns are kept on the grave. The mourners take a bath at some water source and return to the house of the deceased when the son of the deceased pours some tea on the ground in the name of the deceased and then offers it to the members of the funeral party and others. They then go back to their houses. On the third day, the ashes are collected and water sprinkled on the cremation spot. The ashes are thrown into running water. The chief mourner then gets shaved. On this day they prepare varan and rice and feed crows and the khandekaris (pall-bearers). No other rites even devkaran, are performed in memory of the

deceased on this day or any other day. No impurity period is observed in the family. The Gond Gowaris do not perform masik (monthly) or varshik (annual) shraddha (food offering to ancestors). The son, however, feeds a man and his wife, if his father and mother are dead and feeds a man if his father only is dead, and a woman if his mother only is dead. He washes the feet of these persons, worship them and then treats them with food.

The Thatiya Gonds of Sawalikheda remove the dying person from the cot and keep him on the floor. They do not put anything in his mouth just before he breathes his last. They do not dispose of the body during the night. They do not bathe it and do not apply haldi and oil to it. They keep the naked body on the reverse side of a cot or on a bamboo bier with its head towards the front and wrap it in a white shroud. Some rice or jowar daubed with haldi is tied to the end of the shroud. The chief mourner leads the procession, carrying fire add some pej of jowar or rice or wheat. Only members of the tribe carry the bier. Before lifting up the bier, the bangles and (ornaments) of the wife of the dead person are removed. The ornaments are kept in the house and the bangles are taken to the cemetery. They keep the bier at the visava for some time; they take out a thread from the shroud and tie it to a ber tree and then lift up the bier and proceed to the cemetery.

The Thati Gonds follow burial. The pit is dug in a north-south direction. Some jowar, rice and coins are offered to the place where the pit is to be dug. The body, with clothes on, is lowered into the pit with its head towards the south and legs towards the north and face upwards. The son puts some pej in the mouth of the dead and the others do the same. After filling the pit with earth, the chief mourner lights a fire and breaks the pot containing pej. The bangles are kept at the head side of the pit. The mourners bath in a river or at some water source and return to the house of the dead. They chew and smoke tobacco and the chief mourner distributes gur among them.

The Thati Gonds do not observe impurity after death. All members of the tribe are called to the house of the deceased on the first anniversary of the dead (Din Pani). All the tribesmen and inmates of the house, women and children, go to a river accompanied by a priest under whose auspices the chief mourner performs the rite. A goat is sacrificed there in the name of the dead and a feast is held; when they return to the house, another goat is sacrificed. All participate in the feast and go back to their houses.

If any person of the tribe dies in the village of Sawalikheda on the day on which a first anniversary is being observed, then the relatives of the newly deceased and of the deceased person whose first anniversary is being observed bring stones and instal them under a tree and worship them on festival days. Generally, they prefer to bring stones from the Tapi river, and instal them under a mahua tree.

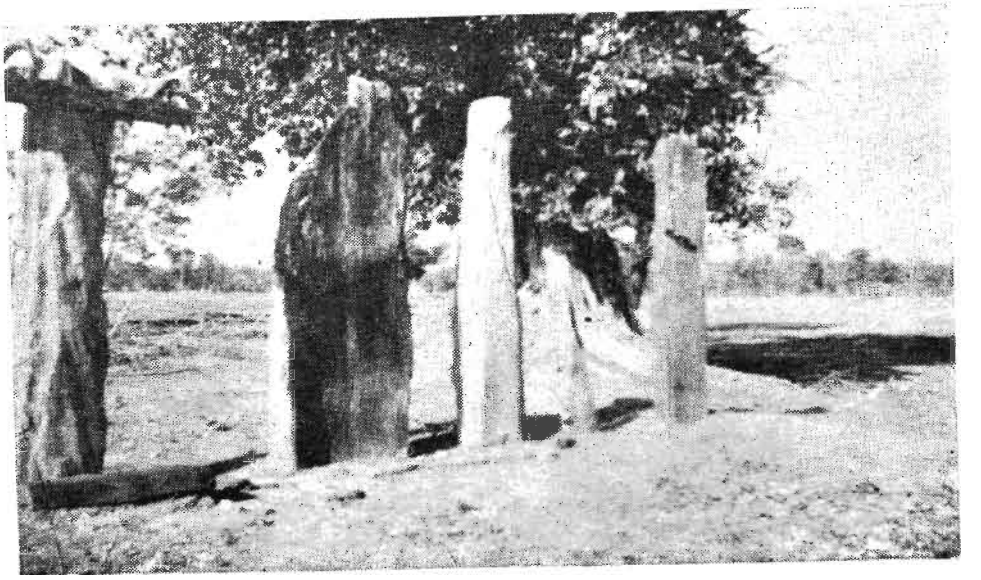
The Gayata Gonds of Maldugi remove a person about to die from his cot and keep him on a cloth on the ground. They put some food, or water, or sugar in his mouth just before he breathes his last. They prepare a bamboo bier. They bathe the corpse and apply haldi and gur to it. The bangles and mangalsutra of the wife of the deceased (in case he was married) are taken away from her. Then they place the corpse on the bier. The elder son or some nearest relative carries an earthen pot with a fire of cow dung cakes in it and walks in front of the bier when it is lifted and carried by four persons on their shoulders. Other relatives who accompany the procession take paddy, rice and a few coins in a soop and they throw them over the bier while it is being taken. The bier is kept for rest at a chowkuli (a spot where four streets meet) and paddy is kept at its four corners. The khandekaris (pall-bearers) exchange places. This is called khandebadal. The Gayata Gonds bury as well as cremate their dead. A pit is dug in an east-west direction. When cremation is adopted, they set fire to the pyre from east to west. Before burying, they carry the bier round the pit five times and then keep it on the ground. They spread a shroud in the pit, place the corpse therein on its back with head towards the east. The chief mourner throws some earth over the corpse and then the rest throw down the earth to fill up the grave. The mourners take a bath and the brother-in-law of the deceased takes an axe in an inverted position, dips it in water held in his palm and gives it to the mourners who let it fall in honour of the dead. He also gives the mourners oil for applying to their bodies when they arrive at the house of the deceased. The relatives of the deceased take meals in the house Next day a dish of kheer is served in the cemetery On this day, the earth on top on the grave is levelled by the mourners who afterwards take a bath and go to the house of the deceased where oil is given to them. They take meals and then place ambil at the chowkuli. Women accompany men up to this place and return home with the mourners.



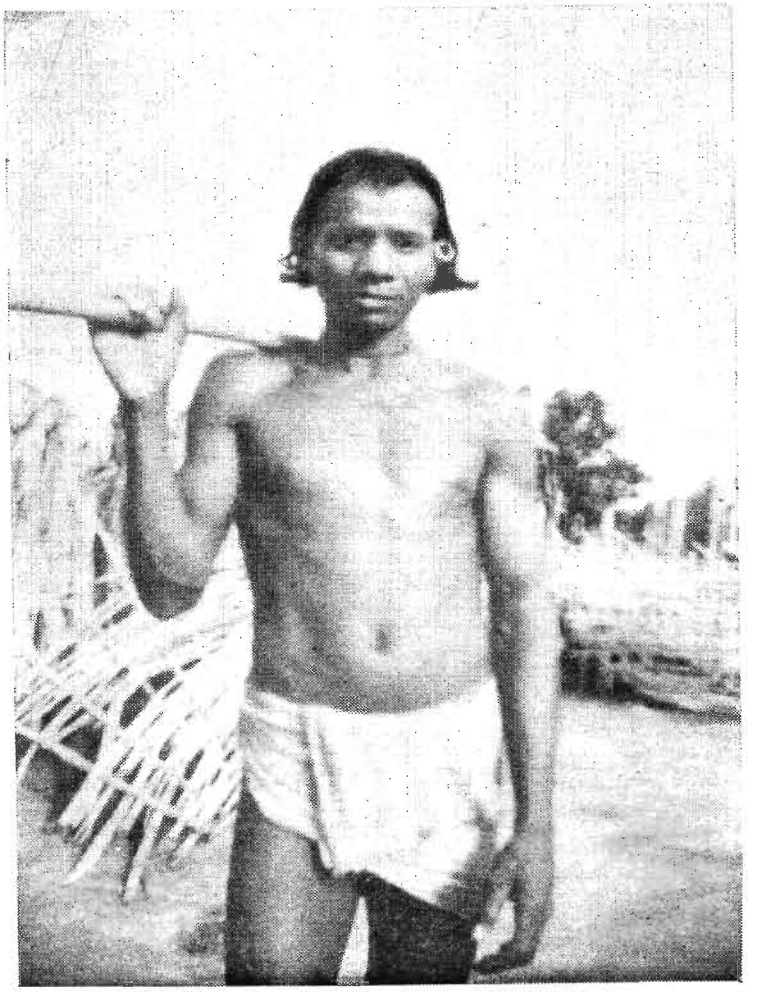
A Gond woman from Nagpur



Madia Gond girls from Chanda fetching water



Graveyard stones of Madia Gonds (Chanda)



A Madia from Chanda



A Madia hut (Chanda)



Madia girls with their ornaments (Chanda)

The Gayata Gonds do not perform pindadan or any other ceremony after the deceased is buried or cremated. If cremated, a samadhi (a memorial tomb) is erected in honour of the deceased. They worship it on holy days and festivals. They however perform a karasan or shraddha (a food-offering feast in honour of the deceased) 12 months after death.

The Dhurwa Gonds of Nanhi practise both burial and cremation. The well-to-do cremate the dead and the poor bury them. The Dhurwa Gonds apply haldi mixed in oil to the body of a male and only haldi to the body of a suvasini. They do not apply kumkum to her forehead. They do not bathe the corpse of a male, a suvasini, a son and a daughter. They do not prepare a bier to take the corpse to a cemetery. They use the cot on which the person expired or any other cot for this purpose. They dress a male corpse in a white dhoti and a female corpse in a white lugade and spread a white shroud over it and place it on the cot with head to the front and feet at the back. If the dead be an old male, his sons or relatives and, in their absence, the members of the tribe from the village carry the corpse. In the case of an old female, her husband, relatives or members of the tribes carry her body. In case of cremation a new earthen pot containing fire and, in case of burial, a new earthen pot containing water is carried with the procession by the son or a relative of the dead. Some paddy, rice, cotton and a few coins are taken with the procession by a son, a relative or a tribesman. When the procession goes on, the paddy, rice, cotton and coins are thrown over the corpse. The bier is placed on the ground at a chowkuli (visava) where again paddy, rice, cotton and coins are thrown in the four directions. Four sticks are fixed in the ground and white thread is wound around them 5 or 7 times. The pall-bearers do not change their places.

A pit (in case of burial) or a pyre is made in the cemetery in a north-south direction. The pit is cleaned with cow dung. The relatives bring a white cloth. Pieces of this cloth are distributed among the mourners at the cemetery which they tie either to their head or waist. Then the cot with the corpse on is taken five times round the pit. Thereafter the body is laid in the pit with its dress on, its head toward the north and legs towards the south. The son or a relative of the dead puts grass at the northern side of the pit and sets it on fire. He takes the burning grass in his hands and throws it back over his shoulders. Then he throws some earth in the pit and thereafter others do so and fill it up completely. The grave is cleaned with cow dung after making the earth even. An earthen pot is kept on the grave at the side of the head of the buried. Paddy, rice, cotton and few coins are thrown on the grave. Then all go to a river or a water source, take a bath, and go to the house of the dead. Other families from the tribe bring food to this house for its inmates. The other mourners then go back to their respective houses. The tribe families bring food to the bereaved family for three consecutive days.

The Dhurwa Gonds observe sutak (post-death impurity) for three days. They perform a ceremony on the evening of the third day in the house of the dead to end the sutak. Other tribesmen bring rice from their houses to the house of the deceased and prepare meals in a hut near it. They serve the meals to the inmate of the house of the dead on patravalis (platters of palas leaves). A portion of rice is taken from each patravali and kept on another patravali. The eldest son of the dead takes this patravali to the chowkuli (visava) when all persons accompany him, taking with them the rice served on the patravalis. A pat is kept near the chowkuli facing north. A handful of rice is kept on each of the four corners of the pat. A lamp is kept in the centre of the pat and, in front of it, on the northern side, a cow dung fire is kindled. Ghee is poured over this fire and then the food, brought from the hut by the persons, is kept there. All call the dead loudly by his name and invite him to eat. All then return to the house of the dead and eat the food.

On the fourth day, one male from each family of the tribe gets his beard shaved or nails cut by the barber. The sons of the dead too get their heads shaved. Then all go to a water source for taking a bath. They take with them rice cooked in the courtyard of the deceased's house and also some bhakri and rice and cow dung fire. After bath, the son or a near relative of the dead faces east and throws the cooked rice on the fire and lets water on the ground by a piece of shroud cloth brought from the cemetery and the others repeat it. Those not belonging to the tribe throw uncooked rice grains on the fire. All then return to the house of the deceased.

By then, one of the tribesmen would have brought a pot of water after taking a bath and put haldi in it. On the mourners' return from the cemetery, he pours a little of this water on the chief mourner's little finger who then enters the house. This process is repeated in respect of others returning from the

cemetery and they enter the deceased's house. They then go back to their respective houses and change their wet clothes. The inmates of the house of the dead put on clothes brought by a washerman. Then each tribesman takes a member or two of the deceased's house to his house for meals. In the evening, all the tribe people cook food at the house of the dead and partake of the food with the inmates of the deceased's household.

The Dhurwa Gonds neither observe the 13th day nor perform the shraddha. In case of children, the obsequies are performed on the day of death only. If a husband is dead, the bangles and mangalsutra of the wife are removed and broken. If a father or a mother is dead, then the Dhurwa Gonds cremate him or her near a place where there is a samadhi of some important persons. A watch is kept for four days over the ashes. On the morning of the fourth day, all tribesmen go to the cremation ground where they get themselves shaved by a barber. The son of the deceased collects the bones and ashes and puts them in an earthen pot covered with an earthen lid and prepares a small mound of earth at the place. All go with the earthen pot to a water source for bath. The son gets himself shaved by the barber. He takes a bath and keeps the earthen pot on a tripod of sticks and ties that tripod to a long string which is tied to a branch of a nearby pimpal tree. The chief mourner pours a potful of water on the pot of ashes suspended from the tree and others also do it till a total of 360 potfuls of water are poured on the pot. The earthen pot with bones and ashes is then brought to the house of the deceased and is buried near the tulsi plant in the courtyard of the house. The bones and ashes so buried are worshipped till they are removed and taken to the Ganga (or any other river) for immersion. After about four to six months of worship, some portion of the bones and ashes are tied in a cloth which is kept around the neck of the son of the deceased. Other portions are distributed among some members of the tribe in the village who tie them in a piece of new cloth and keep them with themselves. When the son goes to the Ganga or any other sacred river on an auspicious day accompanied by a brahman priest and relatives with the bones and ashes, the villagers accompany him upto the outskirts of the village. After worship of the bones and ashes, the son immerses them in the Ganga and returns home with his associates. A feast is then given to the villagers.

A ceremony called karasad is performed by some Gonds. It is intended for merging the spirit of the dead in the family of the ancestors and also in the gods of the sept and to give it peace and happiness. This ceremony is very costly and is done at any suitable time. This ceremony is not to be performed in cases of abnormal deaths and deaths of children. This ceremony consists of a great feast accompanied by drinking, singing and dancing. The baiga of the village conducts it.

If one or two persons died in a family in a year the Gond family would abandon the house by getting out through a hole made in the back wall and not through the door. This is strictly followed in cases of deaths due to epidemics.

Religion

All Gonds except seven males returned their religion as Hinduism at the 1961 census. The seven returned Buddhism.

The Gond Gowaris of Sonegaon worship silver images of Badadev, Hivsen and Vaghoba in their houses after taking a bath. They also revere Hindu gods. The tribal gods are kept in a red cloth over a wall of their houses. The Gond septs depend upon the number of gods worshipped by each of them. They sacrifice a fowl or a goat before the gods. They have a firm belief in spirits and ghosts and in these matters follow the advice of the bhagat strictly.

The Thati Gonds are Hindus by religion and worship Hindu gods. However, their women do not apply kumkum on their forehead as Hindu unmarried girls and married women do. The Dhurva Gonds of Nanhi worship Badadev and Duladev. Badadev is of stone and is kept under a saj tree. Before harvesting the crops and in Kartik, they apply sindur to it, burn sandalwood sticks and worship him. A coconut is also broken. They also attend the fair of Chhota Mahadev which is held on Shivratri day in Magh. They perform Satyanarayan puja on Magh Poornima and worship Lord Ganesh on Ganesh Chaturthi in Bhadrapad. A brahman priest performs the puja. On other occasions, the worship is done either by another member of the tribe or by the brother-in-law of the person.

The Raj Gonds and Gond Gowaris do not employ a brahman priest in their religious ceremonies. The Gonds of Sonegaon, Purada, Gurupalli and Sawalikheda similarly do not engage a brahman priest for their religious and social ceremonies. They do not perform Satyanarayan puja in their own houses but attend one in the houses of other Hindus, if invited. The Gonds of Purada participate in the namsaptah

and bhajans in the village. The Gonds generally worship their tribal gods and goddesses as well as some Hindu gods and goddesses, but those of village Gurupalli do not worship any Hindu god or goddess.

If a Gond finds a cat crossing the road at the start of a journey, he will wait for a moment and then proceed. A hen that lays eggs in the night is considered inauspicious. The Gonds will kill such a hen and eat it. If a child falls ill because of some charm or magic, its parents will hold a chappal or a shoe near its nose so that it should smell it. It is their belief that thereby they can get rid of the charm or magic.

The Gonds celebrate all the major Hindu festivals though in a different manner and in a different atmosphere. They observe Naga Panchami, Ganesh Chaturthi, Dasara, Divali, Holi (Shimga), etc. They have special tribal festivals of their own.

One of the important Raj Gond tribal festivals is 'Bhavaicha San' which is celebrated in June. Small boys tie a frog in the centre of a pestle and move about from house to house singing songs. Housewives throw bucketfuls of water at them and then give them some grains, chillis, etc. These boys collect the articles of food till mid-day, go to a place outside the village site cook the provisions they have collected and consume the food. This festival is essentially for boys.

Another Raj Gond festival is in honour of Motha Dev (Badadev). The hair of a nil gai (a wild cow) is put in a silver socket and the socket is pressed so that a chamari-like shape is given to it. The socket is then kept in a new earthen pot after wrapping it in a kharva cloth. The earthen pot is tied to a mahua branch. The bhagat, who is also known as katola, worships it. On the festival day, the son-in-law or a guest of the katola climbs the tree on which the earthen pot is tied and throws it down. The katola washes the feet of the person and collects the socket which symbolises the dev. The dev is placed on a woollen blanket (kambale) and carried in a procession to the village to the accompaniment of music. From there the dev is taken to the river, bathed in its waters and worshipped by the katola. A goat is sacrificed. The dev is taken back in procession to the mahua tree by the katola's guest (or son-in-law) and restored to the branch as before. The dev is again brought down in the month of Bhavai. The katola normally worships the dev twice a month on full moon day and new moon day by standing below the tree, but the dev is not brought down.

The Gond Gowaris of Sonegaon observe Hindu festivals like Pola, Dasara, Divali, Til Sankrant and Holi. They do not observe Gudhi Padva, Akshaya Tritiya, Hanuman Jayanti, Ram Navami and Gokul Ashtami. They do not celebrate any tribal festival which can distinguish them from other Gonds or scheduled tribes.

To the Thati Gonds of Sawalikheda, Divali and Holi are the most important festivals. Divali is observed for 10 days. They sing songs to the accompaniment of flutes and paijan. Men and women participate in the singing. They move from village to village singing songs and collect money and grains during the ten day period. On the last day, they light small earthen lamps and worship the deity of Akhadi. They also worship buffaloes and other cattle on the outskirts of the village. The grain and money collected are spent on a feast and also on liquor. The Thati Gonds celebrate Holi by setting fire to a heap of wood collected from their households or from the jungle. They worship the fire (Holi) and prepare sweet dishes on the occasion.

The Gayata Gonds of Maldugi observe Dasara, Divali and Shimga (Holi) but not Pitar Amavasya.

The Dhurwa Gonds observe Gudhi Padva, Hanuman Jayanti, Ram Navami, Jivati (Shravan Poornima), Ganesh Chaturthi, Pola and Shimga (Holi). Divali and Shimga are by and far the most important. During Holi, the Dhurwa Gond men dance and sing.

The Raj Gonds of Sonegaon have a bhagat (a priest) from among them. He is also called a katola. He is their medicine man also. This office is a hereditary one. He is invariably consulted by them in almost all matters affecting their lives and they follow his advice in every detail. They take charms and herb medicines from him for their ailments.

Inter-community relationship

The tribe Panchayat plays an important part in regulating the social life of the Gonds. Each subtribe has a separate panchayat and generally the jurisdiction of a panchayat is restricted to a village. The village panchayat of one village often seeks the advice of another panchayat on major issues.

The Raj Gonds of Sonegaon have a tribe panchayat which is composed of a karbhari, a mahajan, a ghatya and a bhumak. The bhumak acts as a peon of the panchayat to whom each Gond family gives two payalis of grain a year for his services to the

panchayat. The karbhari and the mahajan play an important role in settling marriages when the two parties belong to two different villages. The panchayat takes decisions on all matters relating to the tribe's affairs which are brought before it. It levies a fine on persons found guilty or excommunicates them if the offence is of a serious nature. If a girl of the tribe is found guilty of illicit relations with a boy of the same tribe, they are married, with the panchayat's approval, after a fine of Rs. 100 levied by the panchayat is paid. The money is spent in entertaining the tribesmen. On the other hand, if a girl or a boy of the tribe is found guilty of having illicit relations with a boy or girl of another tribe or caste, he or she is expelled from the tribe till the fine levied by the panchayat is paid. If such illicit relation result in the birth of a child, then the parents of the child are expelled from the tribe for ever.

The Gond Gowaris of Sonegaon have a separate panchayat of a karbhari, mahajan and ghatya.

The Thati Gonds of Sawalikheda have a tribe panchayat. Its chief is called patav. The post is a hereditary one. He has two or three assistants who are elected by the tribesmen. If a Thati Gond boy or girl is found guilty of having illicit relations with another girl or boy belonging to a different tribe or caste, however high or low he or she may be, the person is expelled from the tribe and is required to live a segregated life.

The Dhurwa Gonds of Nanhi have a tribe panchayat but in their case a panchayat has a jurisdiction over four or five villages. The head of the tribe is called mudadar. If a boy marries a girl who does not belong to the tribe, a fine of Rs. 50 is levied and if it is paid, both are admitted to the tribe. On the other hand, if a girl marries a boy outside the tribe, she is excommunicated.

The social status of Gonds is much better than that of other scheduled castes or tribes. Thus all persons of Sonegaon village except the brahmans accept water and food from Raj Gonds. The latter, however, do not accept food or water from persons who belong to Pardhan, Mahar, Chambhar, Bhangi, Thoti, Holar and other groups. They also take food and water from illegitimate Gonds (who are called as Lanhantate). They, however, do not marry with such persons.

The Gonds enter Hindu temples and attend marriage ceremonies. The Gond Gowaris of Sonegaon do not marry with the Raj Gonds. The Brahmans, Kunbis and other caste Hindus do not accept water or food from Gond Gowaris though others accept from them. The Gond Gowaris do not touch the Mahars and Chambhars.

The Thati Gonds of Sawlikheda do not take water from Mahars, Mangs and Chambhars. They however, accept food from the Raj Gonds and the Korkus who regard them as inferior.

Brahmans, Marathas, Pardhans and Kalals do not accept water or food from Dhurwa Gonds who are also not allowed to draw water from the village wells. The Dhurwa Gonds, in their turn, do not take water and food from Mahars and Chambhars.

The Gond Gowaris of Sonegaon have a bhagat of their own and it is believed by them that god Khandoba possesses the bhagat on Gokul Ashtami when the Gond Gowaris place before him their difficulties and seek his guidance. They even offer sacrifices if advised by him. He is their medicine man and a spiritual guide.

The Dhurwa Gonds of Nanhi have a priest of their own who is called a baiga. He is a medicine man, soothsayer and a sorcerer. They consult him on almost all matters and act according to his advice. The office of the baiga is a hereditary one.

Reference—

Russell, R. V., and Hira Lal. The casts and tribes of the Central provinces of India, 1916.

ANDH

The Andhs appear to be a non-Aryan tribe of the Andhra country from which they are reported to have derived their name. According to Russell and Hira Lal, it is possible that this designation may have been given to them after migration (p. 38). The Andhs of Kini in Yeotmal where this study was made did not know whether they were a branch of Gonds as reported by Hassan. On the other hand, they regard themselves as distinct and separate from the Gonds and look upon the Gonds as inferior to them.

Distribution

The Constitution scheduled tribes order, 1950, as amended by the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes orders (amendment) act, 1956, and the Bombay reorganisation act, 1960, has notified the Andhs as a scheduled tribe only in a few tehsils of Nagpur division and in all the five districts of Aurangabad division in Marathwada as indicated below.

Melghat (Amravati), Gadhchiroli, Sironcha and Rajura (Chanda district); Kelapur, Wani and Yeotmal (Yeotmal district)—Nagpur division.

Aurangabad, Parbhani, Nanded, Bhir and Osmanabad districts of Aurangabad division.

As per the 1961 census, the Andhs totalled 60,261 persons, comprising 30,163 males and 30,098 females. Of these, only 80 were returned from urban areas and the rest from rural areas. The tribe was concentrated (93·00) in two districts—Parbhani (34,242) and Nanded (21,558). Within Parbhani, the concentration was in Kalamnuri (17,909), Hingoli (5,676) and Jintur (5,117); in Nanded, Hadgaon (9,263) and Kinwat (8,948) had the largest number.

Out of the 60, 261 Andhs, 26,990 (44·79) fell in the age group 0—14, 25,843 persons (42·88) in 15—45 and 7,400 (12·28) in 45 and above. The sex ratio was 998.

The Andh family is patrilocal with patronymic designation. The Andh girl leaves her parents' place and goes to stay with her husband after marriage. A study of 98 Andh households from Yeotmal showed that 69 consisted of father, mother, unmarried sons and daughters. Married sons were staying with their parents in only four households. At Kinhi a newly married couple is reported to stay with the husband's parents for about 10 years from marriage after which it gets separated. The average number of persons per household was 4·02. The male is generally the head of a household. Of the 98 households studied, only five had female heads of households. The father is the head in almost every household. In his absence, his widow or the eldest son manages the household affairs. Sons inherit the property of their father in equal shares.

The Andhs have a number of exogamous kuls, some of which were Bansale, Dukre, Deokar, Fafare, Gohade, Khairkar, Khadke, Magre, Mitkari, Natkar, Nagmoti, Pardhi, Sakharkar, Tadche, Thote, Umare and Vaghmare. The Andhs use kul names as their surnames. A perusal of the names shows that a few of these are associated or based on the names of certain trees and animals. Umare appears to have been derived from the umbar tree, Magare and Dukare from animals like crocodile and pig respectively. Nagmoti and Vaghmare appear to have been named after Nag (serpent) and Vagh (tiger). Pardhi is the name of another caste.

The Andhs are divided into two sections or groups Vartati (pure) and Khaltati (illegitimate). The Vartati section is considered superior to the Khaltati. Vartatis do not inter-marry with Khaltatis. Both the sections however accept food from each other. All Andhs in Kinhi village were Vartatis. Khaltatis were reported to be living in villages situated in the neighbourhood.

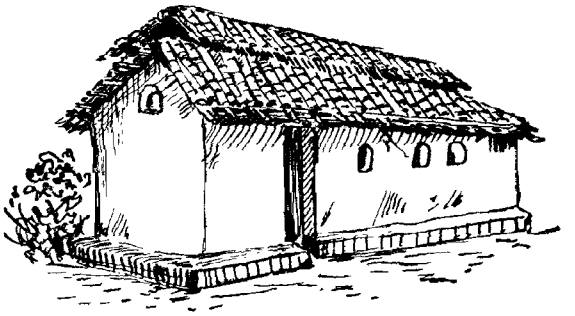
Dwelling

Kinhi has 50 Andh households, in addition to 50 Teli households and 41 of Kolams. The houses of Andhs are constructed in a separate block (mohalla). All the communities in the village live in the same locality. But their houses are constructed in separate blocks which are not far off from one another.

An Andh house is well-built with walls of mud, wooden doors and roofs, either tiled or thatched with grass. A typical house has two rooms, a kitchen and a living room, with a door in front but no windows. Well-to-do Andhs have spacious well-built houses (wadas) within a walled compound, with an open verandah at the front, a kitchen, a store room, a retiring room and separate cattle-sheds. Most of the houses are detached from one another.

One sketch and three diagrams of Andh houses belonging to a poor, a middle class and a well-to-do Andh family are given on page 220.

Diagram I is the house of an agricultural labourer. The walls of his house are made of sindi leaves and plastered with mud on both sides. The house has a thatched roof, only one door but no windows. Diagram II shows the house of a tenant cultivator who has 12 acres of land. His house has mud walls with a roof of tin sheets. The house has a verandah in front, a kitchen and living room but no windows. It has a separate shed for cattle and a bath. The house shown in Diagram III is of a well-to-do cultivator. His house has mud walls and a tiled roof. The house is surrounded by a compound wall of mud. It has a kitchen, a verandah in front, a retiring room and a store room and two indepedent sheds for cattle. Besides, it has an open space (angan), within the compound wall.



An Andh house in Kinhi (Yeotmal)

Diagram I

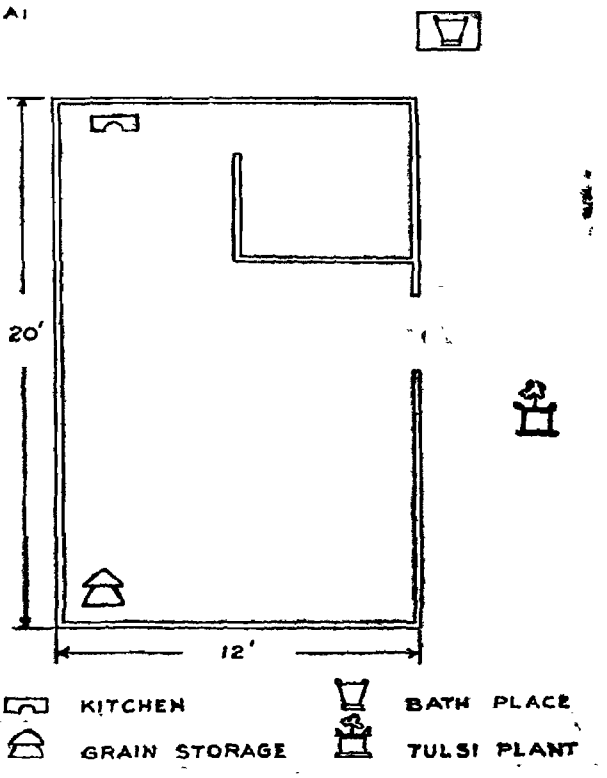


Diagram II

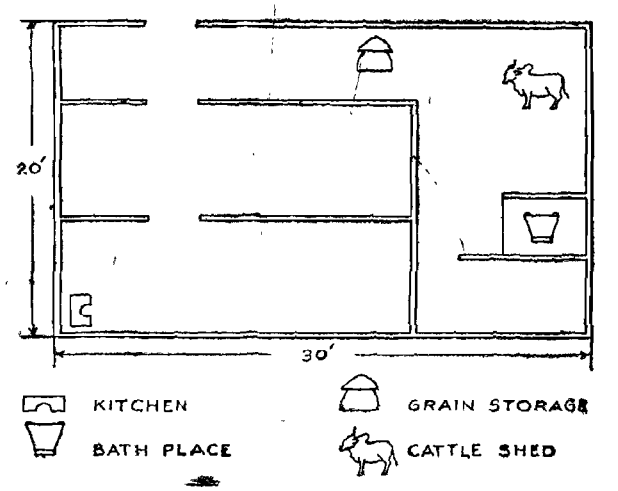
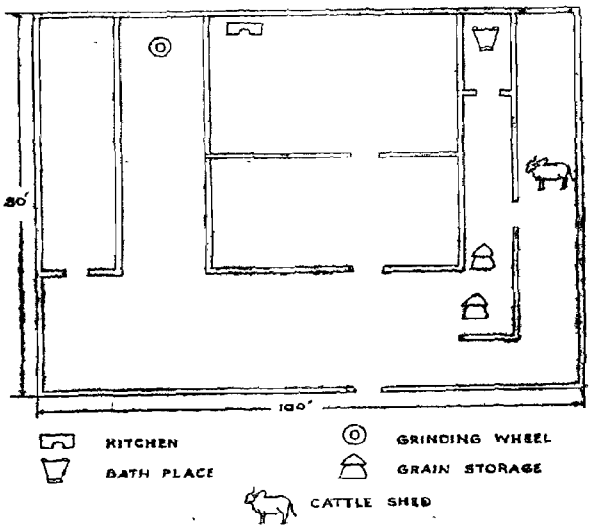


Diagram III



Dress

An Andh male wears a dhotar a kudta (shirt), a bandi (short waist-coat) and a pataka or pagote (turban) or a topi (cap). Their women wear a nine-yard lugade and a choli. In the past men wore a big red or white pagadi (turban) but it is now replaced by a white pataka or a cap. Young men prefer caps to fetas. Men and women put on country chappals.

A few men wear anguthis (rings), kadas (bracelets) and balis (ear-rings). Women wear bangadya (bangles) and patalya round the wrists, koparkhalya on the arms and jodave on the toes. A few wear tode on the legs. They wear mangalsutra, saree, got and ekadani round their necks. Excepting bangles, mangalsutra and jodave, the other ornaments are worn by them only on ceremonial occasions. Widows do not generally wear ornaments.

Women get tattooed on forehead, chin, cheeks and on the left forearm. A dot on the forehead, chin and cheeks and a picture of the tulsi vrundavan plant and Sitachi nahani (Sita's bath-room) on the left forearm, are the common designs. It is done in childhood by Thoti Gonds who occasionally visit their villages for the purpose.

Food

Their staple food is jowar. They take jowar bhakar with varan (a liquid preparation of pulse). Sometimes they cook vegetables also. Tur, urid and mug among the pulses, val, chavali, pumpkin and onions among the vegetables are the common items in their diet. Those keeping a cow or buffalo also consume ghee and such other milk preparations, though not daily. They take three meals a day, at 7 a.m. before going out for work, at 12 noon and between 8 and 9 p.m. They eat fish and meat but abstain from beef and pork. Well-to-do persons have a meat diet, once or twice a week on any day except Monday and Saturday.

Their utensils are of copper, brass, aluminium, kasa and iron. They include parat (flat plates), gunj (round pot for cooking) lota or tambya (for drinking), thali or tat (eating plate), gundi (a pot for fetching water), tawa (a flat iron for baking bhakri), wati (a dish for holding dal or other liquid article) and chamcha (spoon). They also have soops, baskets, buckets, lanterns and wooden cots. A cultivating household possess a few cattle, a goat or two and some fowls. Foodgrain is stored in kangis of different sizes. A kangi is made of bamboo matting. Besides, a grinding wheel (jate), a wooden pestle (musal), and a small wooden or stone mortar (ukhal) are also found with some families.

The surroundings of Andh houses appear to be clean and tidy. The garbage is removed at regular intervals. The cattle sheds and the floors of their houses are kept neat and clean by periodical application of cow dung. They are also very keen on personal cleanliness. They clean their teeth with dung ash or burnt tobacco regularly in the morning, bathe daily, apply oil to the hair frequently and wash their clothes occasionally. For treatment of diseases, they go to any doctor of the tehsil town as there is no other medical aid available in the village. Besides, they get themselves inoculated and vaccinated when medical personnel visit their village.

Literacy

The Andhs are a Marathi-speaking scheduled tribe in Maharashtra with as many as 60,021 out of 60,261 returning Marathi as their mother-tongue in the 1961 census. Lamani (207), Telugu (17), Gondi (6), Hindi (4), Pardhi (3), Banjari (1), Marwari (1) and Urdu (1) were the other mother-tongues returned. A few (716) spoke some subsidiary languages in addition to their mother-tongue—Hindi (510) and Urdu (97). Knowledge of English was reported by five persons. The Andhs from Kinhi speak Marathi among themselves and with outsiders. Marathi is their ancestral language and also the language of the dominant neighbours in the region. Their rate of literacy in the 1961 census was 5·55 per cent. For males, it was 10·69 per cent and for females 0·39 per cent. Out of 60,261 Andhs, only 3,342 were returned as literates in 1961. The statement below shows the break-up of their population by educational standards :—

Serial No.	Educational standard	Total			Rural			Urban		
		P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	Illiterate	56,919 (94·45)	26,938 (89·31)	29,981 (99·61)	56,875 (94·51)	26,922 (89·40)	29,953 (99·62)	44 (55·00)	16 (33·33)	(87·50)
2	Literate without educational standard.	3,028 (5·03)	2,915 (9·66)	113 (0·38)	3,013 (5·01)	2,903 (9·64)	110 (0·37)	15 (18·75)	12 (25·00)	3 (9·38)
3	Primary or junior basic ..	312 (0·52)	308 (1·02)	4 (0·01)	291 (0·48)	288 (0·95)	3 (0·01)	21 (26·25)	20 (41·67)	1 (3·12)
	Matriculation or higher secondary.	2 (0·00)	2 (0·01)	.. ..	2 ..	2 (0·01)	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..
	Total ..	60,261 (100·00)	30,163 (100·00)	30,098 (100·00)	60,181 (100·00)	30,115 (100·00)	30,066 (100·00)	80 (100·00)	48 (100·00)	32 (100·00)

Only two men had reached upto the matriculation or higher secondary level but none had studied beyond that. Only four women had reached the primary or junior stage of education. Out of 31 boys and girls of school-going age in Kinhi only 14 were attending school regularly. The remaining 17 had domestic duties to attend to.

Economic life

Russell and Hira Lal describe the Andhs as a cultivating caste (p. 38). During the 1961 census, 35,903 Andhs (59·58) were returned as workers. Sex-wise, 19,137 males (63·45) and 16,766 females (55·70) were workers. The Industrial classification of these workers was as follows :—

Category		Persons	Males	Females
I	..	19,664 (54·77)	11,142 (58·22)	8,522 (50·83)
II	..	14,799 (41·22)	6,827 (35·67)	7,972 (47·55)
III	..	531 (1·48)	525 (2·74)	6 (0·04)
IV	..	154 (0·43)	144	10
V	..	7 (0·02)	7	....
VI	..	90 (0·25)	58	32
VII	..	55 (0·15)	54	1
VIII	..	5 (0·01)	5	....
IX	..	598 (1·67)	375	223
Total	..	35,903 (100·00)	19,137 (100·00)	16,766 (100.00)

The Andhs' participation in agriculture is more as cultivators (54·77) than as agricultural labourers (41·22). A study of 1,024 Andh households from Yeotmal showed that 669 households (65·33) did not hold any land for the purposes of cultivation, 115 households (11·23) cultivated others' lands on contract and 240 households (23·44) owned or held land from Government for cultivation. Out of the 115 households which cultivated others' lands on contract, 93 did so on cash payment while 22 did so on crop share. Out of the 240 landholders, 77 households held lands rising from one to 9·9 acres, 57 households held lands from 10 to 14·9 acres and 65 households held lands from 15 to 29·9 acres. There were 41 households with lands 30 acres and above.

In the non-agricultural section, 531 persons were reported to be working in mining, livestock and forestry.

From among the 24,358 persons returned as non-workers during the 1961 census, 1,837 were full-time students or children attending schools.

The traditional occupation of the Andhs in Kinhi is agriculture which they still follow. Out of 50 households of Andhs, 20 cultivated land as owners or as tenants while the rest worked as agricultural labourers. Small cultivators having limited holdings also work as agricultural labourers as a subsidiary occupation and those who are landless as forest labourers in addition to their chief occupation of agricultural labour. The village has 2,759 acres of land under cultivation and the same is owned by 113 khatedars of whom eight are Andhs who among them own about 215 acres. The other khatedars are Teli, Gosavi, Shimpis, etc. Jowar and cotton are the major crops and tur, mug and urid are the minor crops. The use the nangar to plough the land, a wakhar for removing roots and stalks and as a drill for sowing cotton. The dawara is used to weed the area between the lines of cotton and jowar crops. Two Andh khatedars use iron ploughs. Agricultural labourers work either on a yearly contract or on daily wages. Those working on yearly contract are paid Rs. 200 to Rs. 300 a year in monthly instalments. In a few cases, six month's wages are paid to them in advance in times of need. They are also given two maunds of jowar, 16 seers of tur and one kamble (blanket). Those working on daily wages are paid Rs. 2·50 a day in the rainy season and during the harvest days and Rs. 2 a day in the summer. They are also given 2 to 14 pailis of jowar during the harvest period. For picking cotton, they are paid Rs. 1·25 to Rs. 1·50 a maund. As forest labourers they are paid Rs. 1·50 to Rs. 2 a day.

Life cycle

Andh women observe impurity for three days during menstruation. On the morning of the fourth day, they bathe after applying black earth to the hair. During menses, the woman does not do any household work though she can go out for field work. The first delivery of a woman generally takes place at her father's place. In Kinhi, a midwife of the Holar caste is engaged. She cuts the nal of the child with a sickle. The placenta is buried in a pit near the cot and the mother and the child are bathed there on. The pit is worshipped on the fifth day in the evening by the midwife. An oil lamp (divanal) is lighted and five young boys are fed with dal and bhakar. The mother is given light food, preferably rice with jawas oil, for the first seven days after which she gradually starts taking her normal food. The child is fed on gur water for the first three days till the mother starts feeding it. The midwife serves the mother and the

child for seven days and is paid 16 kg of jowar in the case of a male child or eight kg of jowar in the case of a female child. The mother and the child are deemed unclean for seven days. On the seventh day she is bathed, the house is cleaned, the clothes are washed, cow's urine is sprinkled in the house. For five weeks after delivery, the mother does not attend to household or out-door work.

The child is named on the 12th day after birth after it is cradled by five suvasinis. Well-to-do Andhs give a dinner to caste people on this occasion. But there is no rite The first hair of the child is shaved after five weeks. The mother takes the child on her lap and its maternal uncle cuts a few locks. The hair is later thrown in running water. The uncle is presented with gur and a kardoda (a chain of thread to be tied round the waist).

A boy is generally married at the age of 18 and a girl when she is 12. It is not necessary that a girl should get married before she comes of age. During the 1961 census, 213 males out of 13,557 (1·57) and 915 females out of 13,433 (6·81) were returned as married in the age group 0—14. The husband is always older than the wife ; in a majority of cases, the difference is from 5 to 9 years.

Marriage between members of the same sept name or between first cousins is prohibited except that a person can marry his mother's brother's daughter. A man may marry two sisters, so also may two brothers marry two sisters. Exchange of daughters, called satawata, is allowed. Marriage takes place at the girl's residence mostly at the time of sunset on any convenient day in Magh or Falgun, preferably in the fortnight following Holi Poornima. The service is conducted by a man of any caste who knows the marriage rites.

Marriage negotiations are initiated by the boy's father. In case he receives a favourable reply, discussion regarding the bride price (hunda) and the clothes and ornaments to be given to the girl and the boy takes place. In Kinhi, the boy's father is required to pay Rs 80 to Rs. 90 as hunda to the girl's father in addition to three maunds of wheat, one maund of tur and one maund of rice. He has to give five saries, five bodies and some silver ornaments to the girl. He also gives three saris to the girl's mother and a dhoti to her father. Of these clothes, a sari and bodices are given to the girl on the day of sakharpuda (betrothal). Hunda is also paid on this occasion. Ornaments and the other clothes are given on the day of marriage. The girl's father presents only a few clothes to the boy which include a dhoti, a shirt, a feta and an uparna. These clothes are given to the boy when he leaves the bride's place for his village after marriage.

On the day of sakharpuda, five or ten men from the boy's side go to the girl's place. The younger brother of the bridegroom washes the feet of the bride with water from a copper ghangal, applies kumkum on her forehead, presents a sari and a bodice to her and fills her lap (oti) with a coconut, areca-nuts, dates, a rupee coin and some grains of rice and wheat. Hunda is paid. After distributing betel leaves among the guests present and fixing the date for marriage, the bridegroom's party returns.

The marriage ceremony starts with 'halad lavane', which is performed at both the places a day or two prior to the day of marriage. At the boy's place, it is performed two days prior to the marriage day while at the girl's place a day prior to it. On this occasion, the bride and the bridegroom are rubbed with haldi by five suvasinis. The mandav is also erected at both the places on the same day. At the girl's place, this booth has seven poles while at the boy's place it has nine. One of these posts is of a salai tree and one of mui. Twigs of mango, jambhul and umbar are tied at the entrance of the booth and above these twigs there is a toran (festoon) of mango leaves. The erection of the mandav is followed by a feast, called hirva mandav jevan.

On the day of marriage, the bridegroom and his party go to the girl's place in a procession and reach there by about 4 p.m. The bridegroom alights at the village Maruti temple where his party is received by the girl's father. Guests from both the sides then exchange vidas (betel leaves), after which guests from the bridegroom's side move to the place fixed for their janosa. The bridegroom stays behind in the temple. After resting for a while, the boy's father and his party go to the girl's residence. The boy's father applies kumkum on the forehead of the bride and presents her saris and ornaments. A party from the bride's side then goes to fetch the boy from the temple. On his arrival, he is presented with a dhoti smeared with haldi which he wears. The bride's mother (if a suvasini) or any other suvasini in the family washes his feet and waves an earthen lamp before him. The boy presents a rupee or two as ovalni (present) to the lady. He is then carried into the mandav by his maternal uncle on his waist and made to stand on a pat with his back towards the entrance. The bride is brought there by her maternal uncle on his waist and made to stand on another pat, facing the bridegroom. The two respective maternal uncles stand behind the boy and the girl. An antarpat (screen of cloth) is held between them and their hands are joined. Akshata is distributed among the persons assembled. The priest then recites marriage verses and at the end of each verse, akshata is thrown on the

heads of the bride and the bridegroom. When the singing of marriage verses is over, the bride and the bridegroom exchange places and sit opposite each other. One of the two bashings (marriage coronets) which were till then tied around the head of the bridegroom is untied and is tied around the head of the bride. Five garlands of thread to which betelnuts and haldi roots are fastened are tied around the neck of bride and seven around the neck of the bridgeroom. Then all present take akshata from the priest paying him some money according to their capacity and throw it on the heads of the bride and the bridegroom and knock their heads together. The priest ties the ends of their garments into a knot. The girl is then given a new name in consultation with members of the boy's family. The bridegroom's party, villagers and relatives are later on entertained to a feast.

Next day the boy's party leaves for its village in a procession with the bride. At the time the bridal pair leaves in procession for the bridegroom's house, the bride's father washes her feet, applies kumkum and haldi and presents the bridegroom a dhoti, a shirt, a feta and an uparna. This rite is called 'tambul karne'. The marriage is then over. At the boy's place, the boy's mother waves a lamp before the boy and girl. They are then taken into the house and bathed. If possible, Satyanarayan puja is performed on the day or on the next day and castemen are entertained to a feast. Next day, the girl goes back to her father's house and returns after stay of three or four days. She also goes to her father's house for every festival till one year after marriage. The boy goes there only on Akshaya Tritiya when both are treated to a feast.

Expenditure on a boy's marriage is about Rs. 800 made up of (1) Hunda, Rs. 90, (2) grain to be given along with hunda Rs. 75, (3) clothing Rs. 275, (4) ornaments Rs. 200, (5) food Rs. 100 and (6) miscellaneous Rs. 60.

In the case of a well-to-do family, it may go beyond Rs. 1,500.

Widow remarriage (pat) is permitted with the consent of the widow's father or brother. A man wishing to marry a widow has to pay half the usual hunda to the widow's guardian. He has also to offer a sari, a bodice and a few ornaments to the widow. This marriage is performed at night at the widow's place when the moon is not visible in the sky. Haldi is applied to the man and the woman by the widow's brother. The widow and her intending husband sit on pats side by side in the courtyard. Any other widow applies kumkum to the forehead of the widow. After dinner, both go to the husband's house immediately in the night so that nobody should see their faces on the morning of the next day. A widow is not allowed to remarry her brother-in-law, either younger or older. She also cannot marry a man belonging to the clan of her deceased husband. A bachelor must first marry a rui plant by a regular form of marriage.

Divorce is permitted when husband and wife do not agree with each other or there is lack of affection, impotency, excessive drinking or beating on the part of a man. A divorce deed is executed on paper and signed by the persons of the tribe or of any other caste as witnesses. A divorced man or woman is allowed to marry again.

Death

Most of the Andhs practise burial. A dying man or woman is taken down from the cot and kept on the floor on the lap of the nearest relative (eldest son or the husband) who pours a few drops of sugar water into his mouth with a tulsi leaf. The body is bathed, wrapped in new cloth available, a small piece of gold or a pan-vida is put into its mouth and it is then laid on a bamboo bier with some jowar flour, tur dal and two copper coins tied in the shroud and carried to the burial ground by any four relatives or members of the tribe. The bier is lowered for a while at viseva. Some grains, jowar flour, tur dal and copper coins which were tied in the shroud are thrown on the floor and, after a few minutes' rest, the bier is lifted and carried to the place of burial. The pit dug is about three feet deep and at the bottom it is carved so that the earth should not fall on the face directly. The corpse is laid in the pit in a sleeping position. After keeping rui and bel leaves on the face of the deceased, the chief mourner does muthmati, i.e. casts earth into the pit. All members attending the funeral also throw in handfuls of earth into the garve. The corpse is buried naked. If the deceased is a woman, her garment is loosened. After filling the grave, the bier and the clothes of the deceased are burnt by the side of the grave with fire brought by the chief mourner. The chief mourner walks round the grave once with an earthen pot in an anti-clockwise direction and at the end of the round throws the pot towards the head of the corspe. Later, all return to the deceased's house, wash their hands and feet there, give water to all the mourners in the family, go home and take a bath. In case the deceased has left his widow behind, her bangles and necklace are broken and the kumkum on her forehead is wiped off when the body is being placed on the bier. Generally women do not go to the cemetery, but there is no such restriction on old women.

Pollution is observed for 10 days except when Amavasya (new moon day) intervens in which case it is observed only upto Amavasya. If the deceased is an un-married person, post-death impurity is observed only for three days. On the day on which the impurity ends, the chief mourner goes to a water source and bathes. He gets his head and face shaved. The caste elder drops water in his palm with his thumb, which the chief mourner sips. He then bows before the caste elder after which he is deemed to be pure. The water is then carried to the house of the deceased and given to other members of the deceased's family. In the evening, relatives and men of the tribe are fed after keeping some portion of the cooked food on the grave. Besides, 13 balls of wheat flour are kept on palas leaves at a water source for crows to eat. If the crows do not touch the balls, they are thrown into the river. On Gokul Astami, a silver image of the deceased, male or female, is installed among family deities after worship and four to five children are fed. This is done in case of married persons only. Unmarried persons are not commemorated On Akshaya Tritiya, they feed their son-in-law and daughter or some other couple in memory of their ancestors. They also feed a crow on this day and put some portion of the cooked food in the family hearth.

Religion

All the Andhs in the State returned Hinduism as their religion during the 1961 census. The Andhs of Kinhi do not worship any tribal deity. They worship Maruti, Mari-ai Mata, Bhivsen, Vaghmai, Khandoba. Kanhoba and Bhavani. Maruti is the god of of all the communities living in the village. He is worshipped on any Saturday, especially at the time of a marriage in the family. Mata is a small-pox goddess and Mari-ai is the deity of diseases. The former is worshipped at the outbreak of small-pox and the latter at the out break of cholera. Khandoba and Bhavani are family deities. These are worshipped on festival days and at the time of marriages. Images of ancestors embossed on metal plates are also honoured by them along with family deities. While worshipping the deities, coconuts, hens, milk, sugar or gur are offered. A few Andhs perform Satyanarayana puja like other caste Hindus of the region and engage a brahman priest for it. They link their sufferings and calamities to the wrath of some god. On such occasions they make vows to the gods and sacrifice a goat or a hen to them in fulfilment of their vows.

The Andhs of Kinhi celebrate most of the Hindu festivals. These include Nag Panchami, Pola, Dassara, Divali and Holi. All these festivals are observed by them on the same days and in the same manner as other Hindus of the region.

Leisure and recreation

Smoking bidis and chewing tobacco mark their leisure. Sometimes they arrange a bhajan saptah (week). A visit to a cinema show has now a days become a common recreational activity. When they go to a taluka or district place, they do not fail to visit a cinema show. In case a cinema show is exhibited in their villages they attend it in large numbers. A few Andhs are also fond of hunting birds and animals.

In the social set-up of Kinhi, the Andhs occupy a lower status than the Kunbis, Gaolis, Gosavis and Wanis. Members of all these castes, however, invite the Andhs to their houses on occasions like Satyanarayan puja and marriages and also attend their marriages and such other ceremonies. Barbers serve them. They fetch water from public wells along with caste Hindus. Similarly they have free access to Hindu temples. They consider themselves to be superior to Gonds and Kolams. Consequently the neither accept food from them nor attend their marriages. Relations between all the castes and tribes in the village are cordial.

In Kinhi, the Andhs refer their social disputes to the headman (pudhari) of the community. The post of the headman is not hereditary. Any man who commands respect and honour from the members of the community is looked upon as headman. On receipt of a complaint, the headman enquires into the matter and tries to end the quarrel by way of a compromise. In case no compromise is arrived at, the person at fault is fined from Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 and the amount is spent on a caste feast. In case of adultery, persons at fault are fined and, after recovering a fine from them, they are taken back into the community. In case persons of different villages are involved in any issue, headmen of these villages meet together and settle the matter.

References—

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KOLAM

The Kolams are treated as a scheduled tribe in the Vidarbha and Marathwada regions from which they returned a population of 43,788 in the 1961 population census. This note is mainly based on the material collected in the 1961 census and the field study conducted in Kinhi village in Yeotmal tehsil of Yeotmal district.

The President's order 1956 (as modified in 1960) notified the Kolams as a scheduled tribe in Melghat tehsil of Amravati district, Gadhchiroli and Sironcha tehsils of Chandrapur district, Kelapur, Wani and Yeotmal tehsils of Yeotmal district against the name of Kolam and in the districts of Aurangabad, Parbhani, Nanded, Bhir, Osmanabad and Rajura (which is now a tehsil of Chandrapur district) against the name Kolam (including Mannervarlu). The Kolams of Kinhi reported that they did not know the Mannervarlu and had no relations with them.

Enquiries during this investigation got the reply that the Kolams were not a sub-tribe of the Gonds. Their languages were altogether different. The Kolams take food and water from the Raj Gonds and *vice-versa* in daily life and in marriages ; but they do not accept food and water at birth and death rites.

The Yeotmal district gazetteer says the Kolams are a Dravidian tribe akin to the Gonds but distinct from them. The Wardha gazetteer records the Kolams as a local sub-division of the Gonds apparently belonging to the Telugu country as they speak a Gond dialect mixed with Telugu words. Mr. Hira Lal suggests that the Kolams may be connected with the Kolams, a tribe akin to the Todas who regard the Kolamalai as their original home. According to Grierson, the Kolami dialect is the same as that of the Naik Gonds of Chandrapur. The headman of a Kolam village is known as Naik, and it is possible that the Kolams may be connected with the so called Naik Gonds (Russell, and Hira Lal pp. 521-522).

Distribution

The Kolams are declared as a scheduled tribe in Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh also. In 1961, they returned the highest population of 43,788 (21,436 males and 22,352 females) in Maharashtra. Of these 41,013 persons (20,086 males and 20,927 females) were returned from Yeotmal district, 1,516 (778 males and 738 females) from Chandrapur district, 1,251 (569 males and 682 females) from Nanded district and eight (three males and five females) from Osmanabad district.

The Kolam population is concentrated (93·66) in the Yeotmal, Kelapur and Wani tehsils of Yeotmal district which constitute a compact area of about 2,855 square miles forming the eastern part of the district bounded by the Wardha river in the north and north-east and the Painganga river in the south.

According to the 1961 census, the principal tribes in Yeotmal district were Gond (85,803), Kolam (41,013), Pardhan (22,280), Andh (4,313), Pardhi (1,236) and Halba (674). At Kinhi, Telis, Banjaris, Nhavis, Kunbis, Kumbhars and Muslims are their non-tribal neighbours.

The Kolams returned a population of 43,555 composed of 21,303 males and 22,252 females (99·47) from rural areas and 233 composed as 133 males and 100 females (0·53) from urban areas in 1961. The sex ration was 1043. The tribe had 18,060 (41·24) persons in the age-group 0-14, 19,099 (43·62) in the age-group 15-44, 6,610 (15·10) in the age-group 45 years and above. Three males and sixteen females could not state their age.

Physical characteristics

The Kolams of Kinhi are dark in complexion and possess more or less the same characteristics as the Andhs and Kunbis who are their neighbours engaged in cultivation. It is very difficult to distinguish the Kolams from the Andhs and the Kunbis on the basis of physical characteristics.

Family and kinship

The Kolam family is patrilocal with a patronymic designation. It was reported that there was a tendency among married sons to stay with their parents for a year or so after marriage and then form separate households. Out of 931 sample households 698 (74·97) consisted of the head of household, his wife and unmarried children. Married sons were staying with their parents only in 88 households (9·45). Among the 35 Kolam households in Kinhi, married sons were staying with their parents in two households (5·71). The study of the 931 households with a population of 4,130 showed that the average size of a Kolam household was 4·4. Only 60 (6·44) of the households were found to have female heads. The heads of households were generally found to be between 25 and 54 years of age. The property of a father is equally divided among his sons ; daughters

either unmarried or married have no right of inheritance of property. If there is no son in the family, then the property is equally distributed among daughters, if any ; the eldest daughter stays with her husband in her parents' house after marriage.

The Kolams are divided in exogamous divisions. Some clans reported in the field were Asola, Atram, Arjal, Bodhe, Bhose, Chandekar, Dadhe, Ghumte, Ghati, Junghare, Kumbhekar, Kapre, Kasarkar, Khadse, Rungse, More, Meshram, Pipre, Rajurkar, Sidam, Sile, Tekam and Vatola. The Kolams have no separate surnames. Marriage of persons belonging to the same clan or having the surname is prohibited.

Dwelling

Kinhi is five miles away from the district headquarters, Yeotmal, with which it is connected by a good road. The Kolam houses are away from the gaothan. In Kinhi, their settlement, which is called a Kolam pod, is two furlongs from the gaothan. The other communities staying in the village are Andh (a scheduled tribe), Teli, Gosavi, Kunbi, Gawali and Wani. Though they form a separate hamlet, the Kolams live side by side with Banjaris and Telis. Villages having a considerable Kolam population have two or more Kolam hamlets detached from one another. Their hamlets are usually at a distance from the main village site. In each Kolam hamlet, there is a chavdi in the centre and a Devi shrine in front of it.

The Kolams have generally one hut for one household. Those who hold cattle have another hut for tethering cattle. The residential hut faces east as other directions are not supposed to be equally auspicious. In some villages, their huts also face north. There are one or two holes in the rear wall for ventilation. The huts do not have an open yard. They are built on a layer of stone and murrum. Their walls are of wooden ribs or interlaced bamboo strips plastered with mud and cow dung on both the sides ; their roofs are thatched with leaves and grass. A few huts have country tiles for roof. They store their agricultural produce in big kothis made of bamboo plastered with mud and cow dung from the outside. The kothis containing grain are kept in the open during summer as a precaution against fire. The tulsi plant is found in front of their houses.

Poor Kolams do not burn lamps at night. They keep a fire burning in the centre of the hut during the rains and in winter ; members of the family sleep around it. Only a few well-to-do families have lanterns and blankets. No furniture except a cot is seen in a Kolam hut. Earthen pots or aluminium utensils are used by them. At Kinhi village, they do not use earthen pots for cooking. They store water in earthen pots. A few families have brass gundis for this purpose. They bathe on a slab kept outside the house.

The Kolams begin construction of a house generally on a Monday or a Wednesday. While digging, a puja is performed and a coconut is broken. When it is time for setting up the central pole (dharan), a pit is dug for it and worshipped and a piece of jowar bhakri is put in it. A supari (betelnut) and askshata (rice grains) are tied to the upper end of the pole in a piece of cloth smeared with haldi. The vastu ceremony is performed when the house is complete. There is a puja and five to ten persons of their own tribe and prominent persons from other castes are served with food. No priest is engaged for this ceremony.

A mason is paid Rs. 3·50 a day and a carpenter Rs. 5.

Dress

Men wear a white dhoti with a small border, a shirt or bandi and a white cap. When they go to the weekly market or to their relatives, they wear a dupatta. Kolam women wear a nine-yard lugade (sari) and a khan choli (bodice). One end of the sari is drawn over the head and drops in the Maratha style on the right shoulder.

The Kolam wear new clothes at the time of Gao Bandhani which is their tribal festival, Dasara, Divali and Holi. Kolam women prefer saris and blouses of red and green. They do not generally use saris and blouses of yellow and white. A yellow coloured sari is worn at marriage and while worshipping Devi during Gao Bandhani.

Ornaments

Some Kolam men in Kinhi wear a silver angathi (ring) on the small finger of the right hand, a brass angatha (ring) on a left toe and bhikbali (ear-rings) in the upper lobe of the left ear. Formerly they used to wear bhikbali in both the ears and a kada on the left arm. Boys wear mudaka and bhikbali in their ears. Kolam women wear bangadya (glass bangles) on the wrist, poth (necklace of coloured beads) and gold or brass biryas (ear-rings). The ornaments most popular among them are silver kadas (hollow bracelets) and silver patalyas (solid bracelets) on the wrist ; silver koparkhalyas at the elbows, a silver saree (a thick ring), a silver or brass sakhali (chain) and an ekdani (a necklace of gold-plated beads) ; a pair of anguthas (rings), jodave, masolis, and fulis worn on the toes. Gold nose-rings with cultured pearls and coloured beads are worn by women of well-to-do families. The poth

(necklace of black beads) is worn by suvasinis. They part their hair in the middle and tie it behind in a knot. Suvasinis wear kumkum on their foreheads.

Men generally get tattooed on upper arms with trees like tamarind, mango, katsavar and avali. Figures of gods Shri Rama, Lakshman and Maruti and animals like tiger and lion are tattooed on their chest. Women get tattooed with dots on their foreheads, cheeks and chins and with the figures of Shri Rama, Lakshman, tulsi plant, scorpion, on their fore-arms. There is a practice that every girl must be tattooed after one year of age and before marriage ; a boy is tattooed when he is 15 years. Formerly Gonds who used to visit their hamlets in summer used to tattoo them ; now-a-days, they get tattooed by machine by paying 25 paise for each figure when they visit the weekly market.

Food and drink

In Yeotmal where jowar is grown, their staple food is jowar bhakri with tur dal or vegetables. In Chandrapur, they take pej (gruel) of rice flour with vegetables and chutni. Tur and mug in Yeotmal and urid and lakholi in Chandrapur are common. Poor Kolams who cannot afford dal, eat kodo kutki or jowar bhakri with chutni or with leafy vegetables or roots of various edible plants among which ratalu, matalu, surankhand, karukand, and gadda (bamboo shoots) are common. The Kolams in Kinhi eat thorkakadi and ghorkakadi which are wild roots growing in the jungle. The fruits of tendu, char, mango, tamarind, avala, jamun, bel, umbar, mauha and ber are popular. When they have no stock of grain, they eat these fruits and flowers. It was reported in Kinhi that they did not stock mauha flowers owing to prohibition by Government. The use of rice in Yeotmal and wheat in Chandrapur is confined to occasions like marriage and festivals.

The Kolams of Kinhi are reported to eat pigs, hare, ghorpad, deer, rola, bataru and tilar. They do not eat beef or carrion. They eat boiled meat with salt and chilli. Their breakfast is of jowar bhakri, chutni or vegetables. The second meal is at noon. They again go to the fields after resting for an hour and return in the evening. The third meal is in the evening. The menu is more or less the same. At feast, they have chicken or mutton curry and liquor. On holidays and festivals, puran poli (a cake of tur or gram pulses mixed with gur or sugar) is prepared. They offer their new crops to their family deities and then alone start eating them.

Kolam women and grown up girls are engaged in household duties and prepare the meals using cotton, jowar and tur stalks as fuel. Firewood from the jungle is also used. Generally the meals are served by women to their household members and nearest relatives ; when guests or outsiders come, the food is served by men. During the five days of impurity which women observe during menstruation the male member in the household has to prepare the meals if there is no other woman member in the family.

Chewing and smoking of tobacco is common among men. Kolam men smoke bidis and chillims (clay pipes). It is reported that a man does not smoke upto his marriage ; he is given a chillim at the end of marriage and then starts smoking. Offenders are fined Rs. 2 to 5 by members. Kolam women are not used to smoking. If the woman has stomach trouble, she approaches the panchas. She is allowed to smoke after paying a fine of Rs. 5 which is spent on tea. Women however chew tobacco and pan supari.

The Kolams take tea daily in the morning with gur. Aluminium lotas and thalis are used for taking tea. Some well-to-do households use porcelain cups and saucers. Guests and visitors are honoured by serving tea.

Brass gundis, ganj, thalis, parat, tava, lotas, cups and saucers and earthen pots are the household articles in general use, ganj, parat, tava and earthen pots are used for cooking food ; gundis and earthen pots are used for fetching drinking water. They take their meals in thalis ; lotas are used for drinking water. Wooden cots are used by elderly persons for sleeping. Guests are asked to sit on them during daytime.

Hygiene and sanitation

The Kolam dwelling houses and surroundings are neat and clean. Kolam women are very particular about cleaning the floors of their huts daily and a patch of 10 to 12 feet in front of their huts is smeared at least twice a week with cow dung and earth. The roads in the Kolam habitation are cleaned by them daily. They tether their cattle in separate cattle sheds. Pits for cow dung manure are dug outside their habitation. Though there are no latrines in the village, there is no sign of any sort of dirtiness in the Kolam habitation.

Kolams from well-to-do families send their clothes for washing and ironing to laundries at Yeotmal. Others wash their clothes at home twice a week. Kolam men bathe daily at the wells ; women have their daily bath at the place provided near their houses. Some of them use toilet soap. They apply coconut oil to their hair on alternate days. The children are given a bath once in two days. There is a barber in the village to shave the men. Men shave their heads once a month. Male children get their head shaved once in two months. They clean their teeth daily in the morning with charcoal. Many Kolams know and use

various types of herbal medicines. In difficult cases, they go to a doctor in the nearby area for treatment.

Language and literacy

The majority of Kolams in Maharashtra speak Kolami. Kolami, according to Grierson, is "a minor dialect of Berar and the Central provinces which occupies a position like that of Gondi between Canarese, Tamil and Telugu. The Kolami, the Bhili spoken in the Pusad tahsil and the Naiki of Chandrapur agree in so many particulars that they can almost be considered as one and the same dialect. They are closely related to Gondi. The Kolami dialect, however, differs widely from the language of the neighbouring Gonds. In some points it agrees with Telugu, in other characteristics with Canarese. There are also some interesting points of analogy with the Toda dialect of the Nilgiris, and the Kolams must from a philological point of view, be considered as the remnants of an old Dravidian tribe who have not been involved in the development of the principal Dravidian languages, or of a tribe who have not originally spoken a Dravidian speech" (Russell and Hira Lal, p. 521).

The regional language of the area from which the Kolams have been returned predominantly is Marathi. The Kolams in Kinhi village speak Kolami among themselves and speak in Marathi with outsiders.

In the 1961 population census, the Kolams returned nine languages as their mother-tongues.

Out of the 43,788 Kolams, 33,507 (76·52) reported Kolami and 9,033 (20·63) reported Marathi as their mother-tongue. Besides, 22,271 (50·86) Kolams also reported knowledge as a subsidiary language of Marathi (20,862), Gondi (564), Hindi (81), Telugu (74), Kolami (688) and Urdu (2). Out of the 33,507 who spoke Kolami as mother-tongue, 20,145 (60·12) also knew Marathi. Thus 29,895 (68·27) of the Kolams spoke Marathi either as a mother-tongue or as a subsidiary language.

In the 1961 census, 99·47 per cent of the Kolam population was returned from rural areas. In the field of education, the Kolams lag behind their tribal neighbours like Andh, Gond and Pardhan.

The classification of the Kolam population by educational levels is given below :—

Educational level	Persons	Males	Females
All standards ..	43,788	21,436	22,352
Illiterate ..	42,639 (97·38)	20,387 (95·11)	22,252 (99·55)
Literate (without educational level).	943 (2·15)	845 (3·94)	98 (0·44)
Primary or junior basic	203 (0·46)	201 (0·94)	2 (0·01)
Matriculation ..	3 (0·01)	3 (0·01)	....

The literacy percentage of the Kolams is 2·62, 4·89 and 0·45 for total, males and females, respectively. The respective percentage for the State is 29·82, 42·04 and 16·76 for the general population and 7·21, 12·55 and 1·75 for the scheduled tribe population of the State.

Economic life

The Kolams in Kinhi reported that they were formerly engaged in the manufacture of baskets and mats from bamboo strips and also from the remnants of cotton which are locally called paratya. This traditional occupation is still practised as a subsidiary vocation though their principal occupation is cultivation and agricultural labour. Russell and Hira Lal describe the Kolams as a tribe of cultivators and labourers (p. 526). Setu Madhava Rao has said that some Kolams are good at basket-weaving and that appears to be their subsidiary occupation. They sell jungle produce and baskets.

In the 1961 census, 28,647 Kolams (65·42) were returned as workers. Their industrial classification is given below :—

Category	Total population			Rural population			Urban population		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I ..	9,637	5,513	4,124	9,605	5,493	4,112	32	20	12
II ..	17,974	7,886	10,088	17,917	7,862	10,055	57	24	33
III ..	489	447	42	487	445	42	2	2	....
IV ..	280	232	48	280	232	48	....	....	....
V ..	21	18	3	14	14	....	7	4	3
VI ..	6	6	....	4	4	....	2	2	....
VII ..	14	12	2	13	12	1	1	....	1
VIII ..	5	5	....	5	5	....	....	....	....
IX ..	221	165	56	204	151	53	17	14	3
Total workers ..	28,647	14,284	14,363	28,529	14,218	14,311	118	66	52
Non-workers ..	15,141	7,152	7,989	15,026	7,085	7,941	115	67	48
Total population ..	43,788	21,436	22,352	43,555	21,303	22,252	233	133	100

The table shows that 96·38 per cent of Kolam workers were engaged in the agricultural sector as cultivators (33·64) and agricultural labourers (62·74). Only 489 were engaged in raising livestock, forest labour and allied activities. The household industry in which 280 Kolams (9·77) were engaged was manufacturing baskets and mats from paratya. Fishing and hunting provided some of them with supplementary food as well as income.

Among the 221 Kolams engaged in " other services " five men were working as teachers in middle and primary schools, one man was a village official, one man was a clerk, three men were peons, eleven men and four women were domestic servants. Among the non-workers, 430 males and 45 females were full-time students.

Of the 2,759 acres of land in Kinhi village held by 113 khatedars, only 39 acres (1·4) were owned by two (1·77) Kolam khatedars; the other khatedars were Telis, Gosavis, Shimpis, Muslims and Andhs.

Of the 9,322 Kolam households of Kelapur, Wani and Yeotmal tehsils from which the Kolam population was predominetly returned, 5,643 (60·53) households did not own or cultivate land. Only 1,719 (18·44) households held land and were engaged in its cultivation; 1,956 (20·98) were cultivating land taken on lease in cash or kind. Four households owned land but leased it out. Of the 1,719 households owing land, 59 (·43) held landless than 5 acres 264 held 5 to 10 acres, 501 between 11 and 15 acres, 694 held 16 to 30 acres, 177 held 31 to 50 acres and 24 owned 51 acres or more.

Owing to poverty, lack of resources and the poor soil, the Kolams do not raise good crops. They do not use cow dung manure, but sell it to non-tribals. They use the same implements as non-tribals—wooden ploughs (nangar), harrow (wakhar), weeding hoe (dawara) and sowing implement (sarata). The wakhar is a surface plough drawn by a pair of bullocks and used for removing the roots and stalks of old crops from the soil. A daware is a hoe which is like a harrow. It is used to weed the interspace between two lines of crops.

Jowar and cotton are the main crops of Kinhi village. The average yeild per acre for jowar is 12 to 15 maunds and for cotton 10 to 12 maunds.

Of the 41 households of Kolams in Kinhi village, 37 were engaged in agricultural labour either on yearly contract or on daily wages. Under yearly contract, they were paid Rs. 200 to Rs. 300 a year in monthly instalments. Besides they were given two maunds of jowar, 16 seers of tur and one blanket. Some were also given foot-wear. Daily labourers were paid Rs. 2·00 to Rs. 2·50 a day in the rainy season and harvesting season. In summar, a slack season, they got Rs. 1·50 to Rs. 2·00 a day. They also got 2 to 4 pailis of jowar during harvesting. Plucking of cotton begins in November. Labourers engaged in plucking cotton are paid Rs. 1·25 to Rs. 1·50 a maund. The Kolams maintain poultry and work as labourers under the P. W. D. and Forest Department in addition to making mats either from bamboo chips or from paratya. Those who work as casual labourers under the P. W. D. are paid Rs. 1·50 to Rs. 1·75 a day.

Workers who are engaged on a yearly contract have to work all days in the year. When they have no work on the fields, they are given other work like rope-making. If any worker remains absent from duties for a couple of days, his wages are deducted at the rate of two pailis of jowar a day. It is not binding on an employer to continue him in service upto the end of the agricultural year. A worker can be discontinued from service at any time without prior notice

Discussions with four households about their income and expenditure showed the following pattern :—

Serial No.	Head of household	Class of household	Size of household	Total monthly income	Total monthly expenditure	Monthly expenditure			Per capita expenditure
						Food	Clothing	Other	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Bajirao Diwanya Kolam	.. Middle	.. 6	150·00	76·00	42·00	14·00	20·00	12·67
2	Babya Sonba Kolam	.. Middle	.. 3	58·33	49·00	24·00	10·00	15·00	16.33
3	Buka Tukaram Kolam	.. Middle	.. 4	50·00	51·00	28·00	8·00	15·00	12·75
4	Rama Nimba Kolam	.. Poor	.. 5	41·75	64·00	32·00	12·00	20·00	12·80

Life cycle

Kolam women observe five days of menstrual impurity. Formerly they were made to live in a separate hut in the field outside the 'magic line' of the village during their periods. The marked 'magic line' is the boundary line drawn round the Kolam settlement at the time of the Gao bandhani ceremony. This was done in the past in the villages of Wani and Yeotmal tehsils. In Kinhi village, a woman in menses stays separately in the hut and does not engage in household duties for the five days.

The first delivery of a woman generally takes place at her father's house. The delivery takes place in the residential hut away from the hearth. The confined woman is attended to by a Mahar or Mang mid-wife. In Kinhi, a dai of the Holar caste attends the woman and the child for five days. She is paid 16 kg of jowar if the child be male and eight kg if it be female. The nal is cut by the mid-wife with a sickle. The placenta is buried in a pit dug by the mid-wife in the corner of the lying-in room and the mother and the child are bathed on that spot. For digging the pit and for other work the mid-wife is given Rs. 2·50 to 3·50 and two kg of Jowar. Pollution is observed for five days from child's birth. The whole family is deemed to be impure. On the fifth day, they wash their clothes, clean the house, smear cow dung on the floor, sprinkle cow's urine in the house and bathe. Earthenware used for cooking during this period is thrown away after the period of impurity is over. In Kinhi, the delivered woman's husband goes to the village chavadi and offers a chillim (smoking pipe) to the naik (headman): then the family is deemed to be pure. On the fifth day, the pit is filled and Pachavi worship is done by keeping an earthen lamp (divanal) of sweet oil on the pit. Some elderly woman in the household worships the Pachavi. The child is placed before it and the mother bows to it. The child is then named by the women without any rite. Til-gul is distributed by the karbharin or naikin among the women and children and they are feasted. No priest is consulted about the children's name though it is customary to name it after a deceased ancestor. Popular names are Sonu, Lakshman, Shamrao, Shankar, Namdev for boys and Sushila, Sarasvati, Sarada, Kashi and Kusum for girls.

Five days after child-birth, the delivered woman can enter the kitchen; but normally she does not work either in the house or in the field for five weeks after child-birth. For 8 to 15 days after delivery, she is given jowar 'ambil' instead of her normal diet of jowar bhakri and dal. Ambil is prepared by mixing jowar flour in boiling water and preparing a thin paste. For test, they add salt or gur. Some linseed oil is also added. Normal food is allowed after 8 to 15 days. The infant is not fed till the mother starts breast-feeding it.

The first hair of the child is cut by its grand-father or some elder male member in the family with a pair of scissors on the seventh day after birth. In some cases, the first hair is cut by a barber who is paid Rs. 2·00 to Rs. 2·50 for this purpose. There is no rite.

In Kinhi, boys are married at the age of 17 to 19 and girls between 12 and 14 years. In the 1961 census, 18,060 persons were in the age-group 0-14, of whom 352 persons were married. Marriage between persons having the same kul names is prohibited. They do not know any other sept restriction. Marriage with mother's sister's daughter is not allowed. Marriage with mother's brother's or father's sister's daughter is permitted.

A widow cannot re-marry her deceased husband's brother or her father's relative. She can re-marry her paternal aunt's son. A bachelor cannot marry a widow without first marrying a rui plant in regular marriage form. Widow re-marriage is performed at night when the moon is not shining in the sky. It takes place at the widow's father's house. The widow and her intending husband sit on pats side by side. The widow is dressed in new clothes given by the intending husband. Only two widows attend the ceremony. They apply kumkum to both the widow and her intending husband, throw akshata, tie the hems of their garments in a knot and the re-marriage is complete. After dinner, they leave for their house in the night so that nobody should see their faces in the morning.

Marriage negotiations are initiated by the boy's father who goes to the village of the girl's father for the purpose. If the girl's father approves, then the date for sakharpuda is fixed and the party returns after tea.

At times a girl takes a fancy for a boy and stays with him as his wife without performing any rite. They are then regarded as husband and wife. Bride price is not paid in such cases. In case of pre-marital relations between a boy and a girl of the tribe or with a girl or a boy of higher social status, the tribunal panchayat regularises the union by imposing a fine of Rs. 5 to 10 on both. The amount is spent on tea to be given to members of the tribe. In case of such a relation with a person of inferior social position, the person concerned is excommunicated and never re-admitted to the tribe.

In the case of a girl who has no brother and her father wants his son-in-law to stay in his house, the boy does so after marriage as a ghar-jawai.

A dej of Rs. 20, one maund of jowar and four pailis of tur-dal has to be paid to the girl's father.

On the date fixed for sakharpuda, the boy's father, the naik (headman of the tribe), the karbhari, the mahajan, the ghatya and others go to the girl's house in the morning with a sari, a blouse and a sugar parcel for the girl. Two suvasinis go with him. They apply haldi to the girl and she is bathed. The girl wears the sari and blouse brought by the bridegroom's party. All members of the party then apply kumkum to her forehead. Her lap (oti) is then filled by the boy's elder brother with the sugar parcel, haldi and dry dates ; he applies kumkum to her forehead and puts one rupee in her lap. The sakharpuda is performed in the evening. The party is then entertained to non-vegetarian food in the night and they return the next morning after fixing the date of marriage.

The marriage is performed at the boy's house. On that morning haldi is applied to the boy and the marriage mandav is set up in front of the boy's house. The mandav has nine wooden poles with a salai pole at the bohala (altar). Umbar twigs are spread on the mandav. Hirava jevan (dinner) is given to persons who help in setting up the mandav.

On the day of wedding, the girl is bathed at her house and haldi is applied to her by two suvasinis. The bride's party reaches the boy's village at about sunset on the day. It is received at the place of the boundary god, Mari-ai, of the caste, treated to tea and taken to the janosa, the house fixed for their temporary stay. After resting for a while the girl is brought to the mandav in front of the boy's house by her brother, maternal uncle, sister's husband or uncle on his waist and made to stand near the bohala (altar). The boy is all the while sitting in front of the Devi in the village. He is then carried to the mandav by anyone on the waist. At the entrance of the mandav, the bride and the groom wash each other's feet. The girl is given one sari and a choli by her father-in-law and her father respectively. The boy is given one shela (a piece of cloth) by his father-in-law. The bride's parents are presented with two saris and two cholis and a pair of dhotis by the groom's father. The bride and the groom wear the new dress and stand on pats of salai or umbar wood facing each other, the girl facing east. They sit down and tie bashings to each other's forehead. A loom thread is wound round them by the groom's elder brother and his wife. The elder brother must be married but he should not be re-married. If he is disqualified on these grounds, some other relative of the bridegroom does it. The loom thread is wound round them five times ; their garments are tied into a knot by the bride herself. Their heads are knocked together and the marriage ceremony is over. The pair is then led by a suvasini into the house and made to stand before the family deity, where some jowar is heaped. They return to the mandav for a vegetarian dinner. The girl's party leaves the village the next day, leaving the girl at the boy's house. After eight or ten days, the girl's father and mother go to fetch the boy and the girl to their house where the boy is presented with a shela and the girl with a choli. Then the boy and the girl leave for the boy's house.

Expenditure on a boy's marriage is Rs. 500 to Rs. 600 and on a girl's marriage Rs. 50.

Divorce is allowed with the permission of the tribal panchayat on grounds such as that husband and wife do not pull on well, that the husband is impotent or keeps extra-marital relations with others. The party at fault is fined from Rs. 5 to Rs. 10. The divorce deed is signed by four panchas. It is written in two parts, one of which remains with the husband and the other with the wife. A divorced woman can re-marry another man. A bachelor wishing to marry a divorced woman has first to marry a rui plant or a ring.

Death

The Kolams do not let a person to die on a cot. At the time of death, a person is taken on the lap by his or her near relative. Sugar water is let in his mouth by a son or a relative. The body is bathed in warm water after applying oil, covered with a white shroud, a rupee coin is tied in the shroud near the feet and it is then put on a bamboo bier. If the deceased is a male, then his elder son has to do all these things and, in his absence, his wife. In case the deceased leaves his wife, her bangles and mangalsutra are broken at the cemetery and the kumkum is wiped off from her forehead. The bath is given by women if the deceased is a female. Elderly women and the deceased's wife accompany the procession upto the cemetery. The body is carried to the burial ground without any halt at the visava. A pit is dug by the tribesmen. The corpse is laid with head to the south and face eastwards. Palas leaves are put on the face. The chief mourner throws earth into the pit, next followed by all members attending the burial. After the grave is carefully filled, thorns and boulders are kept on it. The bier is burnt. The chief mourner goes round the grave with an empty earthen pot in his hand and breaks the pot at the end of the round. All return to their houses, bathe and go to the deceased's house where they are served with tea. In Kinhi, death impurity is for one day only. A tea is prepared in

the house of the deceased and served to all tribesmen and then they are deemed to be pure. There are no obsequies or shraddha. In the month of Paush, the chief mourner has his head shaved by a tribesman. Then the tribesmen are fed. In the month of Magh, they have a Dev-karan vidhi when they make a silver image of the deceased and instal it among their household deities.

Among the deities worshipped by the Kolams is Vaghoba. He is represented by a stone smeared with sindur and oil. He is installed in the jungle and worshipped by the panchas on Ashadh Ekadasi. The Kolams believe that by doing so their cattle will be protected from tigers. They offer Vaghoba a fowl on Ashadh Amavasya. On this day, they make a wooden tiger, place it before Vaghoba, apply sindur to the Vaghoba, break a coconut and then sacrifice the fowl. It is cooked and eaten there. Only males take part in this rite.

Daul Malik is represented by a Nal (a semi-circular ring) made of silver and is installed among the household deities. He is worshipped daily and during the Muharrum festivals. In Muharrum, person from all castes and creeds offer prayers and worship it.

Bhivsen is represented by a stone smeared with sindur and installed in the jungle. He is worshipped in Ashadh with an offering of a goat. The offering is taken home and eaten. This deity is worshipped before observing the Gao bandhani festival.

Jaitur is also installed in the jungle in the form of a stone smeared with sindur. He is worshipped after Pola by the tribal bhagat at the time of Gao bandhani along with other members of the tribe. Sindur is applied, coconut is offered and camphor burnt. A fowl is sacrificed and cooked there only. Women have no part in this worship. Jaitur is also worshipped in Vaisakh before the advent of rains in the same fashion.

The Devi is represented by three stones installed in the village opposite to the chavdi. She is worshipped at the time of Gao bandhani. On this occasion, the bhagat does Gao bandhani at night by drawing a line with his bhala (spear) round the village and burying hens, eggs, lemon, pieces of haldi and kumkum at the boundary. Then they worship the village gods and dance the whole night after eating puranpoli. No one is allowed to enter the village with footwear on for five days and fines are imposed on defaulters. No one from the village including the guests is allowed to go out of the village on the day of Gao bandhani. The next morning, a goat is sacrificed and the meat distributed and everybody has a feast in his house. The ceremony of Gao bandhani is performed by collecting contributions from members of the tribe and the occasion is celebrated with dancing, singing, feasting and drinking. It is learnt at Kinhi that Gao bandhani is restricted to the Kolam hamlet only and does not extend to the whole village.

Bahiram is worshipped with an offering of a fowl or coconut in Magh on a day fixed by the Kolams. The fowl is then cooked and eaten. Women join in this.

The Kolams worship and respect all Hindu Gods. They do not perform Satyanarayan puja, but attend it if it is performed by others. They perform bhajans. They believe in heaven and hell and in re-birth. Some of them engage a Brahman priest for conducting marriages. This apart, Brahmans have no part in any of their social or religious activities.

Monday is considered inauspicious day as their ancestors are worshipped on that day in the month of Paush. The Kolam is forbidden to beg by the rules of the tribe and he looks down on the Mahars and Mangs for indulging in begging. A Kolam must not swear by a dog or a cat and is expelled from the tribe for killing either of these animals.

The Kolams observe all Hindu festivals and have no tribal festival. During Divali, they decorate their huts and arrange the 'Dandar dance'. Only men take part in this dance but they wear saris and cholis while dancing. They beg for jowar, dal and coins and then a common dinner is arranged. They put on masks made of paper of Ganapati, tiger, etc., at the time of the dance. In Kinhi 'Krishna dandar dance' is common. They enjoy Holi by feasting, singing, dancing and drinking liquor.

In the 1911 and 1921 censuses, all Kolams were returned as animists. In the 1931 census, 19,373 were returned as Hindus and 12,389 as tribals. In the 1961 census, all the 43,788 Kolams returned themselves as Hindus.

Leisure and recreation

The Kolams have two musical instruments, the tapate (Daf of a big size) and the wass (a bamboo flute). They dance at the time of Divali, Gao bandhani and in marriages. Women stage the phugadi (a type of dance) on Kojagiri Poornima.

Inter-community relationship

The Kolams have cordial relations with other castes. They have free access to temples, water sources, hotels and all other public places. The village barber and other balutedars serve them as to others. They have not to render any traditional service to any community.

The pod or settlement of the Kolams in a village has a panchayat committee consisting of three elected members of the tribe. The criterion for election is that the panchas must be good workers and tribesmen must have faith in them. The head of the panchayat is called a naik and his two assistants as karbhari and mahajan. They are elected every year or after three years as members of the tribe decide. The ghatya works under them. His duty is to invite people for meetings, collect fines and do any other work assigned by the naik and his colleagues. All the four from naik to ghatya sit as panchas and give decisions in caste matters. If a person defaults in paying a fine imposed by the panchayat, he is excommunicated from the tribe. In 1965, a tribesmen had extra-martial relations with a woman from the tribe. He was fined Rs. 100 by the naik. Out of this money, a dinner was given and some utensils were purchased for use at the time of marriages and other ceremonies. If the panchayat members do not reach an agreed decision, then all members of the tribe are consulted. Kolam women do not participate in panchayat proceedings. The tribal panchayat is not as powerful as it was in the past because some Kolams are now members of the gram panchayat and they advise tribesmen to settle their disputes through the village panchayat. The Kolams do not have any tribal or community organisation outside the village.

The bhumak, working as a chowkidar at the chavdi, does all physical labour at the time of social ceremonies and also attends to guests and officials visiting the village.

Before the abolition of the jagirdari system the jagirdar had a strong influence on the Kolams in the district mainly because of his authority. The jagirdar used to collect land revenue from the villagers and deposit it with the Government. He used to give land on lease to the villagers in cash or kind. The jagirdar of the area was considered as the supreme authority by the Kolams therein and appeals against the decision of their panchayat committees were preferred to him and his decision was honoured.

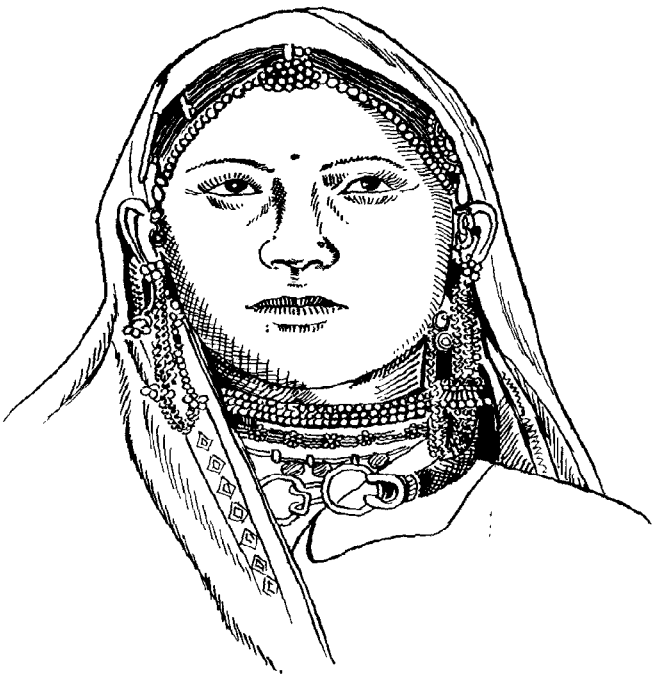
The growing impact of Hindu social customs can be seen from the fact that in some cases the Kolam bridegroom goes to the bride's house for marriage and in some cases, the Kolams perform the death rites according to Hindu tradition.

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A Kokna girl from Nasik

PARDHAN

The Constitution (scheduled tribes) order, 1950, notified the Pardhan as a scheduled tribe in the Melghat tehsil of Amravati district, the Sironcha and Gadhchiroli tehsils of Chandrapur (Chanda) district and in the districts which constitute the present Aurangabad division. Under the Scheduled castes and scheduled tribes order (amendment) act, 1956, additions were made to the name of this tribe as well as to the area already notified in the Nagpur division. Yeotmal, Kelapur and Wani tehsils were added to the scheduled area and the tribe was named as Pardhan, Pathari and Saroti.

Aheri village in Sironcha tehsil (Chanda), Karanji village in Kelapur tehsil (Yeotmal) and Sonegaon village in Wani tehsil (Yeotmal) were selected for the study of this tribe as part of the 1961 census.

Russell and Hira Lal say the name 'Pardhan' is of Sanskrit origin and signifies a minister or agent. The Pardhans of Sonegaon say the name is derived from the word 'Pradhan' signifying a minister. They say that there was a king who had two sons. When the king could not attend to his duties owing to old age, he asked his elder son to look after the kingdom. The elder son, who came to be called Raj Gond, in his turn asked his younger brother to attend to some official duties and the younger brother became Pradhan (minister or agent). The younger brother was not however satisfied with the duties entrusted to him and wanted to become a king himself. The younger brother was defeated by his elder brother. The elder brother retained his position as king and entrusted some minor duties to his younger brother. The Pardhans are supposed to be inferior to Raj Gonds.

Hivale (pp. 10-11) notes that the Gonds and Pardhans have the same clans, have the same mythology and follow the same religious practices and festivals. The Pardhans often act as genealogists to the Gonds. When Gonds and Pardhans sit together at marriages or such ceremonies, they behave as if they belonged to the same family. But the Gonds treat the Pardhans as inferior in status. They do not take food from the Pardhan or intermarry with the Pardhans.

Though the Pardhans with Saroti and Pathari are notified in the President's order, enquiry during field study revealed that they were not aware of the alternate names. In Aheri, Karanji and Sonegaon (Wani), the tribe calls itself by the name Pardhan and is recognised by other people also by same name. The Pardhans of Sonegaon village say that Patharis are not Pardhans, but they are either Korku Gonds or Thotis.

Russell and Hira Lal say the Pardhans are an inferior branch of the Gonds who act as priest and minstrels of the Gonds. The Pardhans of Sonegaon denied that they ever played such a role; but some Gonds insisted that the Pardhans were employed by the Gonds. It appears that the Pardhans, though identical with the Gonds, are a distinct community. Russell and Hira Lal refer to a story related by the Gonds that the Pardhans were the descendants of the youngest of the seven sons of their god, Bada dev. As the Gonds had no inferior branch to pay homage to them, it was agreed that the youngest brother and his descendants should be deemed as inferior to the others and make obeisance to them. According to another story, the Pardhans are descendants of the youngest of the seven Gond brothers who pleased god by playing a musical instrument and brought him down on the earth for being worshipped and that was why the Pardhans who were the descendants of the younger brother continued to play on the kingani (lyre) which is their distinctive instrument. The Pardhans of Sonegaon say that they are the descendants of the second son of Bada dev and that the Thotis are the descendants of the seventh son. They, however, do not know any other legend of their origin. They also denied that they ever played on the kingani. According to them the Patadis or Korkus play on the kingani before the houses of Gonds and Pardhans and beg.

Distribution

The Pardhans are included in the list of scheduled tribes in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. During the 1961 census they were returned in the largest number from Madhya Pradesh (52,531). Next came Maharashtra (32,237). Only 9,701 Pardhans were returned from Andhra Pradesh. The 1961 census showed that Yeotmal (22,280) and Chandrapur (7,145) absorbed 91·28 per cent of their total population in the State. The Pardhans, if any, living in the remaining non-declared areas of the State were not included in the 1961 census as they were not recognised as scheduled tribe in those areas.

In Yeotmal district which returned 69·11 per cent of the Pardhan population in the State, the two adjacent tehsils of Kelapur (9,159) and Wani (8,249)

had large concentrations. The rainfall in this part is about 1,125 mm. In Wani, the sail is coarse in texture and reddish in colour. In Kelapur, it is gravelly or friable in texture and is of a colour varying from light brown to grey. Jowar and cotton are the main crops of this area. Agriculture is the main economic activity of the region. The 1961 percentage of the tribal to the general population of Kelapur and Wani tehsils was 31·34 and 24·19 respectively. Gond and Kolam are the other predominant tribes returned from the two tehsils. Marathi is the principal language of the region. It is reported that weekly markets are held at 72 places in Kelapur and Wani. Fairs are held at eleven places, the fair held at Wani in honour of Shri Ranganathaswami being the biggest in the area. These fairs are generally attended by large numbers of tribals and non-tribals and provide the poor classes with almost all their wants. Medical facilities like hospitals, dispensaries and maternity homes are provided only at a few places specially at tehsil headquarters.

The Pardhan population returned from rural areas in 1961 numbered 31,110 (96·50) and only 1,127 (3·50) were found in urban areas. Their sex ratio of 1,001 was higher than the 995 of the general population in rural areas of Maharashtra. The sex ratio of the tribe for urban population was 988. Its age structure was not different from that of the general population. Out of the 1961 population of 32,237—16,109 males and 16,128 females—12,993 (40·30) made up of 6,455 males and 6,538 females were in the age group 0-14 ; 14,421 (44·73) made up of 7,146 males and 7,275 females in the age group 15-44 ; 4,812 (14·93) made up of 2,502 males and 2,310 females in the age group 45 and above. Eleven persons could not state their age. The proportions of these three age groups for the rural areas of the State were 42·09, 41·90 and 16·01 respectively.

The Pardhans are usually short and slightly built. Hivale says, " Physically it is often possible to distinguish a Pardhan from a Gond simply by his appearance. The Pardhan is more wiry, more alert ; his features are finer drawn. On the whole, I think he is a smaller type than the Gond. It is very difficult, however, to distinguish the women of the two tribes until you talk to them." (p. 12).

Family and kinship

The family among the Pardhans is patrilocal with a patronymic designation. A girl after marriage goes to stay with her husband. Married sons in general form separate households. A study of 613 households from Yeotmal and Chandrapur districts showed that 68 households comprised husband and wife, 40 households were single-member ones, 347 household had father, mother, unmarried sons and daughters. In only 53 households married sons along with their children were living with their parents. Other relatives (married brothers, widowed sisters, sons-in-law, mothers-in-law) were found in 105 households. The average household size worked out to 4·39 which was less than the rural State average (5·14). In these 613 households, 216 heads of households were in the age group 15-34, 332 were between 35 and 59 and 64 were in the age group 60 and above. In only one case a person in the age group 6-14 was declared as head of household. The Pardhans generally prefer the eldest male member of the household as the head, in his absence, the eldest female member is considered as head of the household. Among these 613 households, 76 were found to have females as heads of households.

Property, inheritance and reckoning of descent are along the male line. Property is equally distributed among the sons but the property from the mother's side goes to the daughters. If a sister is willing to give the property which is received from the mother's side, she has to execute a document called bakshispatra. A person who has no son can adopt a son of his brother or of any other nearest relative as his heir. The ceremony is called " Dattak ghene ". Relations between separated sons continue to be healthy and co-operative after partition.

The clan and sept names of the Pardhans are similar to those of the Gonds. Some of their surnames are derived from the names of their gotras. A few examples reported in the 1961 census were Ade, Atram, Bedu, Chandekar, Kursange, Kelkar, Meshram, Naitam, Surpam, Tekam, Winke and Yerme. The Gonds have reported their surnames as Atram, Kursange, Meshram, Naitam, Surpam, Tekam, etc.

Every clan (kul) forms an exogamous divisions. Kin on the mother's and the father's side have ritual and social roles to play, especially during marriages. The maternal uncle carries the bride on his waist to the marriage mandav. The girl's brother's wife ties the hems of their garments. The boy's sister-in-law or aunt washes the bride's feet and applies kumkum to her forehead when she reaches the mandav.

Language and literacy

In the investigated villages, the Pardhans reported that they spoke Marathi among themselves as well as with outsiders. The Pardhans of Sirancha tehsil can speak Telugu well. Hindi is generally understood by them, but it is not in common use among them. The mother-tongues of non-tribals staying in Sonegaon are Marathi, Hindi and Telugu, but the Pardhans of this

village know only Marathi which is their mother-tongue. The regional language of the area in which the Pardhans are notified as a scheduled tribe is Marathi.

In the 1961 census, the Pardhans of Maharashtra returned ten mother-tongues. Marathi was reported by 31,017 (96·22), Gondi by 780 (2·42). The other mother-tongues reported were Paradhi 243, Telugu 84, Gujarati 66, Pardhan 17, Hindi 15, Marvari 11, and Chhattisgarhi 1. In addition 4,784 (14·84) reported knowledge of 14 subsidiary languages. Of these, 1,784 spoke Gondi as a subsidiary language, 1,074 spoke Telugu, 863 spoke Hindi. Other languages were Marathi 695, Maria 241, Urdu 56, Kolami 25, Gujarati 18, English 14, Banjari 4 and Govari, Halabi and Lamani/Lambadi 2 each.

While writing about the Gonds of Adilabad, Setu Madhava Rao says (p. 70) that the Pardhans in Adilabad spoke Marathi as their mother-tongue and even in the Telugu part of Laxatipet tehsil they spoke corrupt Marathi among themselves. He adds that no Pardhan had Gondi as his mother-tongue and they used Gondi only when they talked to the Gonds. (p. 74).

The 1961 percentage of literacy among the Pardhans was 13·31 as against 29·82 for the State in general. It was higher than the literacy rates of the neighbouring tribes such as Gond (6·67), Andh (5·55), Kolam (2·62) and slightly lower than that of the Koli Dhor (13·90). Out of the Pardhan population of 32,237, literates amounted to 4,290 persons (13·31), Among these, 2,927 were literate without any educational level, 1,355 had attained primary or junior basic standard and only eight persons were reported as matriculates. Out of the total Pardhan population of 31,110 returned from rural areas, only 4,011 (12·89) were literates. Out of the 1,127 persons returned from urban areas, 279 (24·76) were literates. The distribution of the Pardhan population by educational standards for rural and urban areas is as shown below.

In Sonegaon out of 24 children of school-going age, only four were attending school. The remaining children, either did not attend school because they had to attend to household work when their parents were out for work or had to seek gainful occupation and supplement their household income.

	Total			Rural		Urban	
	P	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Total	32,237	16,109	16,128	15,542	15,568	567	560
Illiterate	27,947	12,322	15,625	11,972	15,127	250	498
Literate without educational level ..	2,927	2,525	402	2,439	366	86	36
Primary or junior basic	1 355	1,254	101	1,125	75	129	6
Matriculation or h gher secondary ..	8	8	....	6	....	2	....

Sanitation and hygiene

Most of the houses of the Pardhans are kachcha houses. Though they are within the jurisdiction of village panchayats, there are no service latrines or arrangement for removal of garbage. The surroundings of their houses are generally insanitary, specially during the rainy season. They drink water from kachcha wells which is responsible to some extent for stomach complaints. The interior of their houses and cattle sheds are always kept clean and tidy by periodical applications of cow dung. They bathe every day, clean their teeth with the ash of cow dung. They wash their clothes daily Out of 25 households in Sonegaon, 22 households used washing soap for cleaning their clothes and three households were found using toilet soap. Their women dress their hair with coconutu oil and wash it every fortnight.

The Pardhans believe in magic and witchcraft. The Pardhan magicians are known as Guniyas, Siyanas, Baigas and Devars in different localities and are respected by other tribes and communities also. Though they depend more on their medicine-men or magicians, they also take advantage of medical facilities provided by official agencies.

Local investigation showed that there were no villages exclusively inhabited by the Pardhans. They, however, stayed in areas apart from the houses of others. These areas are called tolas in Chanda district and mohallas in Yeotmal district. The Pardhans in Sonegaon village stay at the end of the gaothan at the east side. They have their own public well. Other Hindus do not allow them on their water source. The Pardhans in their turn deem the Mahars and the Chambhars as untouchables. They however, allow

them to live in their tola or mohalla, though apart, and to draw water from the same source. The other castes staying in Sonegaon are Hindu and Nava Buddha by religion. Besides 25 Pardhan households, there are 52 Raj Gond households, 18 Mahar households, 16 Marar or Mali households, 15 Dhangar households, nine Lohar households, eight Gond-Gowari households, four Kalal households, two each of Kunbi, Gawli and Nhavi and one each of Panchal, Telanga, Yelme, Thakur, Koshi and Nava Buddha.

The houses of Pardhans stand separate from each other. They are usually huts though some houses have mud walls. The huts are generally constructed on a plinth of stones, murum or earth. The walls are of wooden or bamboo splits plastered with mud and cow dung from the inside. In general, the roofs are of thatched grass or leaves of teak or palas trees.

In Chanda, three separate huts within one compound generally constitute the house of Pardhan. The main hut is used as a kitchen and bed-room. The deo-ghar where family deities are kept is in front and the cattle shed behind. But in Sonegaon, they have one hut only. In some cases, huts are divided into two parts with a bamboo partition. The main residential hut generally has two rooms formed by a partition. There is one door made of bamboo splits or of tin plates fixed in a wooden frame. The houses of well-to-do Pardhans have wooden doors. There are two or three holes at the back side for ventilation. The material used for roofs in some houses is corrugated iron sheets.

In Sonegaon, out of 29 houses of Pardhans, 23 had walls of grass, leaves, reeds or bamboo, the remaining six houses had mud walls. The roofs of 23 houses were of grass, leaves, reeds, wood or bamboo. Corrugated iron or other metal sheets were used for roofing in four houses, country tiles in two houses.

Their houses have fenced-in open yards either in front or at the back where they grow vegetables, maize and beans during the rainy season. Their houses do not have laterines and bath-rooms. They take a bath on a stone kept in front of the house. Pardhan women are very particular about cleaning the floors of huts daily with cow dung. Cattle sheds have generally unplastered walls of wooden slats and roofs of grass.

The Pardhans build their houses in February-May when they are mostly free from field work. Construction starts on any day except Saturdays and Tuesdays. They perform puja at one corner of the plot ; coconut, flowers and akshata are offered and incense is burnt. Gur or sugar is distributed as prasad to those present. After the walls come up, the dharan (central pole) either of sag, dhawada or khair tree is erected in the pit which is worshipped with flowers and coconut. A piece of cloth smered with haldi and containing betelnut, haldi, akshata and two coins is tied to the top. Cooked food is offered as naivedya. Then the adhe (horizontal beam) of sag tree is fixed in position.

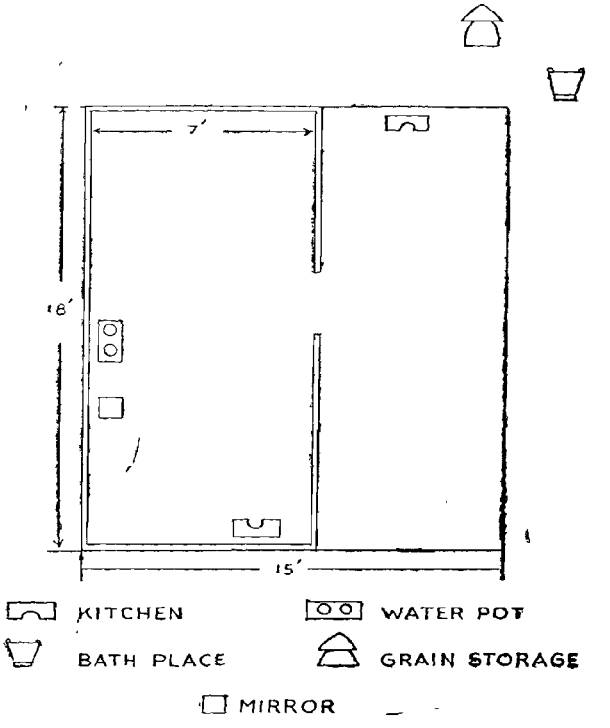
While in general the Pardhans do not perform any ceremony when moving into the new house, it is reported that some well-to-do Pardhan households celebrate vastu or griha pravesh (opening ceremony) on any day excepting Tuesdays and Saturdays. They perform Satyanarayan puja and a community dinner is served to members of the tribe.

Material required for the construction of a house is either locally collected or purchased from nearby markets. The family member generally erect the house, engaging the services of skilled labourers like masons and carpenters. A person belonging to the Beldar community is asked to build the mud walls. If he is not available the Pardhans themselves construct the walls. The Beldar is paid on a contract basis.

Their houses face north or east and not south or west.

A Pardhan house from Sonegaon is shown in the sketch below :—

Sketch—1



The house is 18 feet long, 15 feet wide and 7 feet high. It stands on a plinth ; all its four walls are of mud, excepting a small portion of the front wall which is of bamboo mats. The 18′×7′ verandah is covered with bamboo mats. The main door of the house faces east ; another door on the north opens to the verandah. The doors (6′×2′) of the house are made of wooden planks. The roof of the house is of country tiles. There is only one big room which is used for all purposes. Two holes, one each in the northern and southern walls, are provided for ventilation. The verandah in front is mainly used as a sitting room by members of the household and by the guests ; it is occasionally used for sleeping. The bathing place is screened by bamboo mats. This house is said to have cost between Rs. 1,600 and 2,000.

Dress and food

A Pardhan male generally wears a dhoti or a langoti, a bandi, a feta (turban). It is reported in Aher and Karanje villages that they wear a langoti and a bandi while working on the fields or doing any physical labour. In Sonegaon, they do not wear a langoti. They put on a dhoti on all occasions. The feta is gradually yielding place to the cap. The younger generation is taking to trousers, pyjamas and manilas. They do not wear caps. Male children of 6 to 12 years are seen with shorts, shirts and caps.

The dress of Pardhan women in Sonegaon consists of a lugade and a choli. They wear the nine-yard lugade in the Maratha fashion. It is tied round the waist and one end of it is carried up across the shoulder over the head and brought down on the right shoulder. They have no special ceremonial dress. On such occassions they wear saris and cholis of a better quality. Girls between 3 and 9 years use a zaga (long skrit) and chaddi. Girls of 10 to 12 wear lahenga (parkar) and zampar (blouse).

Pardhan males wear a silver or gold anguthi (ring) on the left hand, a pair of gold or brass balis in the lower lobes of the ears and silver kardoda (chain) round the waist. Poor people wear copper rings and a pair of brass balis. Every married Pardhan woman must wear a garsoli (necklace) of black beads strung on a thread or horse's hair, round the neck and glass bangles on her wrists. They wear a pair of patalya (solid flat bracelets) on the wrists and a pair of bajuband or bohutas (armlets) on the arms. The ears are decorated with silver or gold balis or biryas (ear-rings). Nose-rings are worn by some in Chanda district ; in Yeotmal they wear besar (nose-stud) of gold or sliver. The toes are decorated with a pair of jodave (toe-ring) of sliver and a pair of masolis (another toe rings in the shape of a fish) made of silver. Silver payapattis (anklets) are also worn. Making charges of silver ornaments were reported to be 25 paise a tola.

Tattooing is limited in the case of males only to a figure representing a tree or a god like Rama, Hanuman or Lakshman. Boys are tattooed at the age of eight. Women have tattooes on the hands and arms representing a tulsi plant, a vad tree and a dot each on the forehead, chin and cheek. Girls are tattooed at the age of 5 to 7 years. The tattooing is done by a Thotia who charges 12 to 25 paise. In some cases he is paid in kind.

The Pardhan males shave off the beard and trim the moustaches. Only old men keep a shendi ; others get their hair cropped in the western style. Pardhan women wear kumkum on their forehead and apply coconut oil to their hair. They do their hair by parting it in the middle and tie it behind in a knot.

The Pardhans of Chanda where rice is the main crop take pej (rice-gruel) with some vegetables and chutni. The Pardhans of Yeotmal where jowar is the main crop, eat jowar bhakri with pulses or vegetables. The poor cannot afford pulses or vegetables daily ; they take jowar bhakri with linseed oil, salt and chillis. The use of rice in Yeotmal and of wheat in Chanda is restricted to special occasions. When pulses or vegetables are not available, they eat edible roots, leaves, flowers and bamboo shoots. The use of ratàloo mataloo, surankand, karukand and bamboo shoots is common ; fruits like tendee, char, mango, tamarind, avala, jamun and ber are popular among them. Dried mahua flowers are stored and consumed in great quantity when there is scarcity of food. The Pardhans of Sonegaon reported that they used to store mahua flowers in the past, but not now as it was prohibited.

The Pardhans are non-vegetarian. In Chanda they eat fowls, goat, pig, deer, sambar, hare and fish. Formerly they use to take beef but in deference to Hindu feelings, they have now given up eating beef and carrion. Cows and bullocks are not deliberately killed for the sake of meat ; but the flesh of a cow or a bullock killed by a tiger is taken and relished as a meat by the Pardhans living in the forest area. On the other hand, the Pardhans of Sonegaon reported that they do not eat pig, wild hog, squirrel, rat, cat, dog or any other animal which other caste Hindus do not eat. They do not also eat beef and carrion now and they never eat cattle killed by a tiger. In Sonegaon they use condiments. At the time of a feast, they prepare mutton or chicken curry as a special dish. In Aheri, the Pardhans generally boil the meat with a little salt and chillis. They reported that fish was a necessary item on festival days. However, the Pardhans of Sonegaon take only vegetarian food on festival days. They said they had

given up drinking liquor completely since prohibition. No illicit liquor was distilled or available. Tobacco chewing, smoking and chewing pan with supari are common among them. Bidis are generally preferred to chilims (clay pipes). Pardhan women in Sonegaon do not smoke, but chew tobacco and take snuff.

Of the 25 Pardhan households of Sonegaon 20 households were drinking tea with gur.

The Pardhans of Sonegaon take three meals a day. From Shivaratri to Mriga when they are engaged in field work, they have a breakfast at 7 a.m. and the daytime meal at 12 noon. During the rest of the year, they take their main food at 9 a.m. without a breakfast at 7 a.m. They take evening meals at 8 p.m. when they return from the fields. The nyahari (breakfast) consists of jowar bhakri and chutni or besan (tur dal flour). The noon and evening meals consist of jowar bhakri, varan (boiled pulses) and vegetables.

On occasions like Gudi Padva, Holi, Dasara and Divali, puran polis (pancakes made with gram or tur dal mixed with gur or sugar) are prepared. On other occassions they take wheat cakes, rice and mug vadas. Jawas or linseed oil is generally used in cooking. Some Pardhans who are religious-minded observe fasts on Ashadhi and Kartiki Ekadashis and on Maha Shivaratri when they do not take food other than milk, butter, bhagar (a coarse cereal), rataloo (sweet potato), groundnut seeds and pend-khajur (green dates), etc.

Food is prepared in a metal pot on an earthern chula. Those who are very poor prepare their food in an earthen pot. Cow dung cakes and fire-wood collected from nearby forests are used as fuel. Some also use the husk and stalks of jowar, cotton and tur crops as fuel. They are now realising the value of cow dung as manure. None of the households studied was using charcoal as fuel. Of the 25 households in Sonegaon, only one used kerosene as fuel.

Most of the utensils are earthenware. A big pot for storing drinking water, a small pot to boil tur dal and to prepare vegetables and a ghagar (pot) to fetch water from a well are commonly used. A tava (iron pan) for baking bhakri, aluminium plates, ladles and vessels are used by them. Some households had brass and copper utensils. A chopper for cutting onions, chillis and vegetables, an axe for cutting fire-wood, a stone slab with a stone crusher for grinding chillis and condiments, a stone grinding wheel, hurricane lantern, a small lamp, tins for storing grains and bottle for storing oil are other articles in use. Gunny bags, ghongadi (rough blanket) and quilts made of old clothes are used for sleeping.

Usually the mother-in-law of a woman prepares the food and the latter serves it to members of the family. At large feasts or when there are guests who are distant relatives, the food is served by men. It is taken from flat brass or aluminium plates. At marriages, patra valis made of the leaves of mahua tree are used for serving meals.

Barring one or two khatias (cots) for sleeping, no furniture is found in Pardhan households. Other articles in use are a musal (a long wooden pestle), a ukhal (a small wooden or stone mortar), baskets, cups and saucers and a soop. In Sonegaon, 20 households had khatias and 13 households had mirrors. One household each had a torchlight and a kerosene stove. Almost all the 25 households used hurricane lanterns for lighting. The Pardhans who live in forest areas keep a fire burning in the centre of the hut during rains and in winter to protect them from the cold ; in the night all members of the household sleep around it in a circle. While going out in the dark, they usually carry a burning bamboo in one hand and a stick in the other.

Grain is stored in a cylindrical dhali (container made of bamboo chips) five feet in height and 2 to 3 feet in diameter. It is covered with dry grass or leaves with a coating of cow dung and earth at the top. In some houses gunny bags are in use for storing grains. Those who cultivate land have a pair of bullocks and a harrow, a hoe and a wooden plough.

Economic life

Out of the population of 32,237 of Pardhans returned in the 1961 census from Maharashtra, 19,572 (60·71) were workers. The sex-wise break-up was 9,959 (61·82) workers out of 16,109 males and 9,613 (59·60) workers out of 16,128 females. Comparative figures were 57·09 and 38·10 for the general population and 61·54 and 55·83 for the scheduled tribe population of the State. In rural areas, the percentages of workers for males and females were 62·15 and 60·46, respectively as against 52·73 and 35·89 in urban areas. The distribution was as follows :—

	Category	Total	Males	Females
	Workers ..	19,572 (100.00)	9,959	9,613
I	Cultivators ..	4,346 (22.21)	2,320	2,026
II	Agricultural labourers	12,346 (63.08)	5,361	6,985
III	Mining, Quarrying, live stock, forestry, etc.	478 (2.44)	392	86
IV	Household industry ..	211 (1.08)	166	45
V	Manufacturing other than household industry.	176 (0.89)	112	64
VI	Construction ..	134 (0.68)	114	20
VII	Trade and commerce ..	143 (0.73)	115	28
VIII	Transport and communication.	58 (0.30)	57	1
IX	Other services ..	1,680 (8.59)	1,322	358

The table shows that 85·29 per cent of the total working population was engaged in the agricultural sector and 14·71 per cent in the non-agricultural sector. Within the first group, 63·08 per cent were agricultural labourers and 22·21 per cent were cultivators. The 1,680 persons (8·59) in 'other services' included teachers, talatis, village level workers, village panchayat officials as well as peons and clerks working in government, semi-government or private institutions such as village panchayat office, co-operative societies, schools and panchayat samiti offices.

The principal economic activity of the Pardhans is agricultural labour (22·0). A study of 6,167 households of Pardhans from the three districts of Amravati, Yeotmal and Chanda showed that 4,386 households (71·12) did not own or possess land. The remaining 1,781 households (28·88) held land from government or private persons. Of these, 1,366 households (22·15) owned or possessed land from government for cultivation, 380 households (6·16) were cultivating land on lease and 35 households (0·57) leased out their entire land to others for cultivation. Of the 380 households who cultivated land on lease, 342 households had taken land on cash payment and the remaining 38 households on a crop share basis. Among the 1,366 households, 780 households held land between 2·5 and 9·9 acres; 299 households held land from 10·0 to 14·9 acres; and 242 households held land raising from 15·0 acres to 29·9 acres. There were 38 households holding land 30·0 acres to 49·9 acres, and seven had land of 50·0 acres and more. Of the same 1,366 landholders, 22 landholders cultivated part of their land and had leased out the rest to others while 101 landholders cultivated their own land and also land taken on lease. These data show that the Pardhan households are mostly small holders and they have to find out other means of livelihood like agricultural labour and rearing of live-stock.

Of the population of Pardhans returned in the 1961 census, 12,665 (39·29) were reported as non-workers. Of these, 1,759 were full time students or children attending school, 29 were seeking employment for the first time; 30 were employed before but then out of employment and seeking work; and 10,847 others included housewives, children not attending school, old, sick, permanently disabled, pensioners, etc.

A study of 25 Pardhan households in Sonegaon showed that only two households had land. One household owned 30 acres of land and the other had taken ten acres of land on lease. The crops grown by the Pardhans and their practices of cultivation were the same as were followed in general by other people in the region. In the kharif season, they grow kharif jowar and cotton (the main crops) and tur, mug, urid, and other pulses (the minor crops). The main rabi crop is wheat; gram and linseed are the minor crops. In Chanda, paddy is the main crop. In the villages of Chanda district, they grow an early variety of paddy as kharif and a late variety of paddy, rabi jowar, urid and gram as rabi crops. Their crops depend upon mansoon rains as their lands do not have irrigation facilities.

The preparation of soil begins in February. In land where jowar and cotton are the main crops, harrowing is done first and the remnants of the old crops are removed from the fields. Then small bushes and grass in the fields are dug out with a kudal. Harrowing is done three times. Where paddy is grown, rab (burning the land) is carried out in May when dried leaves, grass and twigs are spread in the field and burnt. The fields are then ploughed with a wooden plough. Bunding is done around these fields for both crops to store rain-water.

Cotton sowing is done by dusa or tisa with the help of a sarata (sowing implement) in the second or third week of June after receiving sufficient rains. Two pairs of bullocks are yoked for pulling the dusa and three pairs are used in the case of tisa. A man or a women sows the cotton seeds through the sarate. Jowar is sown either in the last week of June or in the first week of July after cotton sowing has been completed. A tipan is used for sowing jowar. This is pulled by two pairs of bullocks. In Chanda, early paddy is sown in June or July either by broadcasting or in fields prepared for the purpose. The seedlings are transplated later to the fields. Weeding is done by women and children and in some cases by men also, with the help of a kurpi (a small sickle). Weeding is not generally carried out in the case of paddy. Weeding is done four to five times in respect of cotton and jowar. Cotton harvesting starts in October. Jowar is harvested from November. Cotton is plucked by women in a week or in a fortnight. Thus six to eight pluckings of cotton are done in the season. When jowar is ready for harvest, the plants are cut and kept in the fields for a week or so. Then the corns of jowar are taken to the threshing ground. Threshing is done with the help of bullocks or in some cases the grains of jowar taken out by labourers by beating the corns with sticks. After winowing, the produce is taken home. Early paddy is harvested in October with sickles; The grain is separated either by beating with sticks or by bullocks which tread on it on the threshing ground.

The rabi season starts in October. The few who hold good land sow wheat, gram and rabi jowar. The late variety of paddy is sown in August or September by transplanting. Harvesting is done in

February in the case of wheat and in December or January in case of paddy. Rotation of crop is done by some, cotton in one year is following by jowar in the next. A few grow gram or urid in the fields where paddy is grown.

The main agricultural implements are vakhar (harrow), dadara, dundi (weeding), tipan (sowing), sarate (made of hollow bamboo pipe for sowing cotton), kudal (to dig up the earth), fawada (to collect the earth), sickle for cutting the plants and grass, kurpi (small sickle) for weeding and nangar (wooden plough) for ploughing. The Pardhan purchase their implements from local carpenters, blacksmiths and from the local markets. A harrow will cost from Rs. 5·00 to Rs. 7·00, a wooden plough Rs. 10·00 to Rs. 12·00, the tipan about Rs. 8·00 and a sickle Re. 1·00 to Rs. 2·00.

Use of fertilizer or green manure is not general. Recently they have started using cattle manure in their fields which are of somewhat good quality soil. A gram sevak and other government officials are in touch with them and advising them about the use of improved implements, seeds and fertilizers. But they find they cannot afford such practices as they are poor and their lands are not of good quality.

Usually members of the household attend to cultivation. A few employ hired labourers for weeding, harvesting of jowar crops and plucking of cotton, if required. They pay one to two rupees as wages to a hired labourer in the peak period of the season and 50 to 75 paise in the slack season. Women are engaged for plucking cotton and are paid one to two rupees a maund of cotton plucked. The labourers engaged in harvesting jowar are paid in kind and corns of jowar are given to them. The same is the case with wheat and paddy.

Except for cash crops like cotton, linseed and groundnut, the production of cereals and other crops produced in their fields is not sufficient. The Pardhans do not generally mortgage standing crops but sometimes they mortgage cattle, land, ornaments or their household utensils. It is a common practice to offer personal security to the moneylender. The extent of indebtedness is from Rs. 500 to 1,000 in each household, which is abnormal.

Income and expenditure

A study of four Pardhan households—two of cultivators and two of agricultural labourers—from Sonegaon showed the following pattern.

Pandare's household of six included himself, his wife, three sons and one daughter-in-law. It had 30 acres of land taken on lease. The household got Rs. 300 a year from cultivation of the land and Rs. 950 as wages of the three sons. The annual expenditure of Rs. 1,200 does not include expenditure incurred on cultivation of land possessed by the household.

Atram's household consisted of sevent members—his wife, three sons and two daughters. The household owned 21 acres of land in the village of Surda, three miles from Sonegaon. He earned Rs. 200 from agriculture and Rs. 615 as wages earned by the head of the household and his sons.

The principal occupation of Kinnake's household is agricultural labour. He has five members. The head of the household and his wife work as agricultural labourers on daily wages from which they earn Rs. 600 annually. They do not get work throughout the year and consume wild roots and fruits when food stocks run low. The couple has one son and two daughters.

Uike's is a big household of ten, including the head of the household, his wife, five sons and three daughters. The head, his wife and the three sons are agricultural tenants. But their annual income falls short of the total annual expenditure of the household.

Life cycle

In Sonegaon, women in menses observe impurity for five days. They do not attend to household duties or enter the kitchen, but work in the fields. On the sixth day, they take a bath after applying earth, soap and shikekai and resume household work.

A girl goes for her first delivery to her father's house. She takes her normal diet during pregnancy. A woman of the Pardhan tribe attends as midwife. The nal of the child is cut with a bamboo chip or a sickle and buried in a pit dug near the cot of the mother. The mother and the child are bathed on the pit and clothes are also washed there, On the fifth day, the midwife worships the pit and the mother and the child are given a bath on it. On this day (pachavi), til and gur are distributed among those present. The pit is filled with earth in the evening and five to ten tribemen are served with meals. A sweet oil lamp is kept burning near the pit. From the sixth day onwards, the child and the mother are bathed outside. The women is deemed to be impure for twelve days after delivery. On the twelfth day, the mother takes a bath and is given cow's urine. It is also sprinkled in the house which is washed and cleaned with cow dung and earth. On this day, the child is named after consulting the caste priest. A woman in the family names it. In some cases, they refer to the panchanga (almanac) for the time

of naming. They select Hindu names for their children. A few names come across in the village are Lakshman, Dharma, Prahlad, Maruti, Saraswati, Draupadi, Mira, Vimala, Shanti and Kusum.

For the first eight or ten days after delivery the woman is given wheat or rice gruel mixed with gur or sugar ; thereafter she is allowed to take her normal food. Till the mother starts breast feeding, the child is fed with gur and water.

The dai who attends to the delivered woman and the child for twelve days is paid $2\frac{1}{2}$ and $1\frac{1}{2}$ kudavas of jowar respectively if the child born is a boy or a girl.

The first hair of the child is cut on pachavi (fifth day) by its maternal uncle.

When a girl attains puberty, her oti (lap) is filled with haldi, rice and coconut. In the villages of Yeotmal and Chandrapur districts boys are married at the age of 13-18 years and girls at 12-15 years. There is no restriction that a girl should be married before reaching puberty. According to the 1961 census there were 0·70 per cent married males and 4·47 per cent females in the age group 0-14 years. A study of 549 married couples among Pardhans in Yeotmal, Kelapur and Wani tehsils of Yeotmal district and Gadhchiroli, Sironcha and Rajura tehsils of Chandrapur showed that 29 husbands were older than their wives by 1-2 years. The highest number of husbands (236) fell in the group in which the husbands were older by 3-6 years. The wives of 205 husbands were younger by 7-10 years. Only four and two husbands were older by 21-25 and 26-29 years than their wives respectively.

Marriages within the same sept families with the same surnames are prohibited. Marriages do not take place between boys and girls having the same number of gods. They do not marry with father's sister's daughter, but prefer to marry mother's brother's daughter. A widow can remarry her deceased husband's younger or older brother, but the Pardhans of Sonegaon do not agree to this. A widow cannot remarry her mother's brother's, mother's sister's or father's sister's son. A bachelor cannot marry a a widow without first marrying a ring by a regular form of marriage. A divorced woman can remarry at any time after divorce. Palygyny is allowed among the Pardhans.

The boy's father takes the initiative in marriage. He goes with some of his relatives to the girl's house with a sari and a choli for the girl. The amount of dej varies from Rs. 60 to Rs. 70. The settlement regarding ornaments and clothes to be given to the birde is made during this visit. The ornaments to be given are silver patalya (bracelets), gold ekdani (necklace) or silver chain. If an agreement is reached, the girl is dressed in the clothes brought by her would be father-in-law who applies kumkum to her forehead. Ladies in the village fill her oti (lap) with wheat, five dried dates, five betelnuts, five haldi roots and copra. The girl bows to all and the function is over. The bridegroom's party takes meals at the bride's place and returns to its village. The ceremony is called sakharpuda or sagai. Sakharpuda is not done on Monday, Tuesday, Saturday, amvasya (new moon day), the day on which there is eclipse and in Paush. Though they coult a brahman priest or an almanac for an auspious day for sakharpuda, a brahman priest does not attend. A caste priest is engaged if his services are required.

After sakharpuda, the marriage is treated as fixed. if the bridegroom's party breaks the agreement for any reason after sakharpuda, it is fined Rs. 25 to Rs. 30 ; if the girl's father does it, he is fined double the amount at the pleasure of the tribal panchayat.

The Pardhans celebrate marriages on any week day excepting Monday, Tuesday and Saturday which are considered inauspicious. They do not perform marriages on eclipse day, amavasya (new moon day) and in the month of Paush. They consult a brahman priest or an almanac for an auspicious day for marriage. Marriages are generally celebrated at Goraj muhurta (sunset) on auspicious days between the fifth day following Shimga and the end of Vaisakha. A week or so prior to marriage, the boy's relatives, excepting his father, accompanied by another person go with the dej to the bride's house. They pay the amount to the girl's father, and inform him of the date fixed for marriage and come back after dinner there.

Marriages are usually performed in the boy's village though in some cases recently they have started the practice of celebrating it at the girl's village.

On the evening preceding the day of marriage, two persons called muraris (one his bhauband and the other a soyara relative), go to the girl's house with the jari patal (a sari), a choli and ornaments meant for the girl and three lugadis (saris) and a shela (a piece of cloth) for her parents. Women from the tribe gather at the girl's house and they visit the temple with arati carried by her bhavjai (brother's wife) and come back after worship. Four or five women, who should not be widow, apply haldi to the girl and bathe her. She is taken to four or five houses where she is again bathed and given porridge. When she comes back, she is bathed at her father's house. On the night, the villagers are invited to accompany the marriage party. The girl puts on the ornaments and takes the jari patal

along with her. The marriage party from the girl's side along with the girl who wear's new sari and choli from her parents leave for marriage at night so as to reach the boy's village the next morning. The marriage mandav is erected at the boy's house. It has ten poles, of which nine have to be salai or sag tree and the central pole (munda) is of mahua tree. It is erected with umbar or jambul twigs.

The girl's party is received at the boundary of the boy's village and led to the house fixed for janosa (resting place for girl's party) where they are treated to tea by the bridegroom's side.

Haldi is applied to the boy on the morning prior to marriage. The boy's party comes to the janosa to take the girl who is dressed in another sari from her parents for marriage and the bride goes to the mandav to the accompaniment of music by tribesmen. She is carried on the waist by her maternal uncle or some other relative. When she reaches the mandav, the boy's sister-in-law or aunt washes the bride's feet and applies kumkum to her forehead. The girl's brother's wife, who accompanies her with arati, leads her to the mandav and she is made to stand on a pat near the bohala (marriage altar) facing west. The boy stands on a pat facing east and a curtain is held before him. The girl's parents wash the boy's feet and the boy's parents wash the girl's feet. Akshata is distributed among the gathering. Before the mangalashtakas are begun, the bride and the bridegroom throw akshata on each other five times. Five mangalashtakas are recited and at the end of every mangalashtaka the gathering throws akshata on the couple. At the end of the last mangalashtaka, the bride and the bridegroom garland each other. Then the girl changes her place and stands to the left of the bridegroom. The boy ties the garsoli (necklace) round her neck. The boy's or girl's brother's wife ties the ends of their garments and they go round the bohala five times. They sit on the bohala side by side (the girl to the left of the boy) facing east. Then their relatives and friends apply akshata to their foreheads and present them with money. They also apply akshata to the foreheads of their brothers' wives holding the arati. The bride and the bridegroom worship Brahmadev and satavi in the mandav and offer narveda to them. The bride and the bridegroom and the two women holding the arati take their meals there and the marriage is supposed to be completed. After they have partaken of meals, the bridegroom's brother's wife unties the knot of their clothes. The girl's name is not usually changed after marriage. The persons from both the parties then take meals and the bride's party returns to the janosa.

The next day, the bride's party leaves for its village after taking tea. The bride is left behind in her husband's house. Then the bride and the bridegroom are bathed and the bride wears the jari patal which is given by her father-in-law. No Hindu priest is engaged for the marriage ceremony.

After six or seven days, four or five persons including the girl's father or brother go to the bridegroom's house where they stay for a day and are treated to dinner. On the next day they return to their village with the bride. The girl then goes back to her husrand's house when somebody other than her husband goes to the girl's village after a month or fortnight.

Widow remarriages are allowed among the Pardhans. They call it pat or mhotur. It is performed on a night when the moon is not shining in the sky. Widow remarriage is performed outside the house. The would-be husband and the widow are made to sit on pats side by side. The widow is dressed in a new sari given by the would-be husband and kumkum and akshata are applied to their foreheads by the remarried couple which is present on the occasion and the remarriage is complete. The newly married couple go home before the sun rises the next day as it is believed that nobody should see their faces in the morning.

As per the 1961 census, the Pardhans returned a total population of 32,237 persons of whom 14,609 (8,107 males and 6,502 females) were unmarried, 14,795 persons (7,319 males and 7,476 females) were married, 2,453 persons (528 males and 1,925 females) were widowed and 365 persons (142 males and 223 females) were divorced. Only 15 persons (13 males and two females) had not reported their marital status. Analysis by age groups showed that 12,993 persons were returned in the age group 0-14 of whom 12,639 were unmarried, 337 married, four widowed, five divorced or separated and eight of unspecified status. In the 15-44 age group, 1,864 were unmarried, 11,544 married, 713 widowed, 295 divorced or separated and five of unspecified status. Out of the population of 4,812 which constituted he age-group 45 years and above, 96 were repored as unmarried, 2,913 married, 1,736 widowed, 65 divorced or separated and two as unspecified status. Of the eleven persons who had not stated their age, one was married and the other ten were unmarried.

Divorce is allowed in the tribe and can be obtained by either party for legitimate reasons. If the wife wants a divorce from her husband who is not at fault, she has to pay compensation to her husband equal to the amount of dej paid by him at the time of marriage. The divorce deed in which the terms of divorce are

written is prepared in duplicate in the presence of the tribe panchayat. One copy is retained by the husband and the other is handed over to the wife. From then, their relation as husband and wife is taken to have ceased.

Death

Among the Pardhans of Sonegaon, a person is not allowed to breath his last on a cot. He is lifted off the bed to the ground, his head is taken on someone's lap and sugar water is poured in his mouth.

If the body is to be buried, the tribesmen dig a pit in a north-south direction. If the deceased is a suvasini, the body is dressed in a new sari and kumkum applied to the forehead. Jowar flour, coins, tur dal and jowar chapati are tied with the shroud ; a vida (prepared betel leaf) is placed on the lips.

The body is laid on a bier and carried to the cemetery by four persons. The chief mourner, who is a son of the deceased or if there is no son, any other male relative carries a new earthen pot without fire at the front. While the corpse is carried, its head is towards the house. Relatives and tribesmen, including women, accompany. The bier is lowered at the visava (resting place) and the articles tied with the shroud are kept on the ground. The persons carrying the bier change places and the body is carried to the cemetery and kept at the side of the grave. If a man dies leaving his wife, she accompanies the corpse, her bangles and garsoli are broken and the kumkum wiped off. The body is then undressed (in the case of a woman, the garment is only loosened) and it is laid in the grave on its back with its head towards the south. Palas leaves are placed on the eyes, mouth, genitals, navel and all other parts of the body which have openings. The chief mourner throws earth first in the grave and others follow him. When the grave is filled up, ber branches and thorns are pressed into the earth. Earth is again spread and stones and thorns are kept on it. The chief mourner takes up the pot and, accompanied by others, goes round the grave. The pot is broken at the head of the grave. Afterwards they bathe in the nearest river or nullah and return home. When they reach the house of the deceased, a woman brings a pot of water putting a live charcoal in it from the house. She sprinkles water on the right palm of everybody who sprinkles this water on his own feet. Then they bathe again either at the house of the deceased or at their own houses, and return to the deceased's house. In the meanwhile, the place where the person breathed his last is washed with cow dung. The chief mourner worships the spot, lights incense sticks and camphor and breaks a coconut. Then tea is offered at the place in the name of the deceased and shirni (bits of coconut) is distributed. Everybody is then given tea in a cup or a glass and it is offered in the name of the deceased. Then they go and sit in the house where they are treated to tea and bidi. The relatives of the deceased go to their houses and return back with cooked food (jowar bhakri and varan). All then take their meals and go home. The Pardhans generally bury the dead, but those who are well-to-do burn their dead. Pregnant women, children, persons who died by accident, are buried. Those who died in epidemics are cremated.

Sutak (ceremonial pollution following death in a family) is observed for three days. On the fourth day, the mourners bathe, wash their clothes, clean the house with cow dung, sprinkle cow's urine in the house and are deemed to be pure. They perform divas (obsequies) on this day when meals are served to the pall bearers. After five weeks or on any convenient day, they perform a rite called 'mala lavane' (putting garlands) at night after meals in respect of married persons only. On that occasion, they wash the floor of the house with cow dung. Grains of wheat measuring $1\frac{1}{4}$ pailis are kept at one place close to the wall. On the heap of wheat they instal a ghata (a metal pot containing water and coconut on its top). A flower garland with a betel leaf tied at the lower end is suspended up to the top of the ghata. The other end of the garland is tied with a stick. A pat with a new white cloth is placed opposite to the ghata which is then worshipped by the priest of the tribe.

The homa (sacrificial fire) is lighted and is worshipped. An image of Nandi (sacred bull) made of wheat flour is kept in front of the homa. Sticks of pimpal, banyan, sandalwood or umbar, mango and bel trees are burnt in the homa throughout the night and fire is not allowed to go out. The chief mourner keeps feeding the fire with oil and ghee. Bhajan is arranged throughout the night. Early in the morning, the party goes with bhajan to a river, well or nullah and the chief mourner accompanies them. On reaching the water place, the tribal priest worships the water. The image of Nandi is placed on the hands of the chief mourner who lets it into the water and bathes there. A coconut is broken and prasad is distributed. Afterwards they return to the accompaniment of bhajan to house of the deceased where an arati is performed and the rite is over.

It is learnt that this rite is in practice for the last 20 to 25 years. The Pardhans of Sonegaon said they used to perform Devkaran vidhi before 30 years. It was performed generally a month, a year or two years after the death in the family. On this day, a booth of anjan poles was erected in the courtyard of the

deceased's house. In the evening, a he-goat if the deceased was a male or a she-goat if female, would be kept in the mandav. All males and females would apply askshta to the forehead of the animal and feed it with cooked food. Then two relatives of the deceased, called pitra, would cut its throat in the booth. Half of the goat was cooked in the booth itself for females and half was taken to mahua tree outside the village site and cooked there by males. Offerings of cooked food and liquor were made by males and females to the deceased. The males take their meals under the mahua tree itself whereas females eat in the house. They now feed a married couple in the name of the deceased on Akshaya Tritiya (Vaishakha sud. 3) They also make offerings of cooked food to crows in the name of the deceased in the Pitru paksha or the day corresponding to the tithi (day) on which the deceased died.

Religion

The Pardhans of Sonegaon worship Bada dev, the great god of the Gonds. He is represented by the tail hairs of a Nilgai set in a bamboo tube, covered with a red kharva cloth and put inside an unused earthen pot. The pot is suspended from a mahua tree outside the village as women in menses should not go near it. The deity is worshipped collectively by all the tribesmen on Vaishakha sud 15. The katuda (tribe's priest) worship him with kumkum and haldi. The Pardhans make vows to the deity and sacrifice a goat or fowl after fulfilment of their desires. When the katuda makes an offering of a goat or a fowl all the males, Pardhans and Gonds, in the village collect there and take their food before the god. The food prepared there is neither taken to their houses nor eaten by their women who are not allowed even to have darshan of this deity. The expenses incurred by the katuda on this occasion are met from the amount contributed by the tribesmen.

A pig is sacrified to Narayan dev, the god of fertility, in Bhadrapad. Maa devi is worshipped whenever there is an epidemic. All the local deities of the Gonds are honoured by the Pardhans, but they are not allowed to touch them. They also worship Hindu gods Mahadev and Hanuman. In Sonegaon they perform Satyanarayan puja and the kotwal of the village, who is a Pardhan, recites the Satyanarayana story to members of his tribe.

Spirits and ancestors are worshipped by them on different occasions.

The Pardhans' principal festivals are Akhadi, Naga Panchami, Pola, Dasara, Divali and Holi and they are observed generally on the same lines as by caste Hindus.

The Nava (new) feast is held after the harvest of the new crop. They generally do not eat new grains unless the nava feast is performed. On this day food preparations are made as far as possible of new harvested crops.

The Pardhans of Sonegaon observe Gudhi Padva. They do not erect a gudhi like other caste Hindus, but have only a feast of wheat chapatis or puran poli. On Akshaya Tritiya, they feed a couple of their relatives in memory of their deceased ancestors. They do not perform any other worship or rite. On Vat Savitri (Jyeshta sud 15) Pardhan women observe a fast and worship a vad (banyan) tree on this day. On Rama Navami, Hanuman Jayanti, Ashadi Ekadashi, Kartiki Ekadashi, Maha Shivratri and Gokul Ashtami, they observe a fast. On Ganesh Chaturthi, some of them worship an image of Ganpati, but do not worship Gauri. On Dasara, they do not install a ghata. They go to the accompaniment of music to a shahara tree, worship it and cut a branch of the tree with a sword and come back. (This is called killing the demon, Ravana). All then go to their relatives and give shahara in token of "sone" (gold) and jowar stalks and embrace each other. There is a feast on this day.

They observe Divali for four days. Laxmi puja is performed on Ashvina vad 30. On Laxmi punjan and Bali Pratipada day (Kartika sud 1), they have a feast. They observe Bhaubij on Kartika sud 2 when the sister goes to the house of her brother and greets him with arati.

Makar Sankrant is also called Til Sankrant (January 14). On this day women worship sugad (earthen pots) and til gur (seasum mixed with gur) is distributed.

On Shimga or Holi (Phalgun sud 15), two Holi fires are lit, one for males and one for females. They pile cow dung cakes and fuel around them. They keep a green pole of bamboo in the centre, worship it and then light it. Then they go home and dine. Puran poli is prepared on this occasion.

The Pardhans' way of life is very much influenced by the thoughts and customs of Hindus and Gonds. They believe in omens. A snake or a cat crossing the path, a woman with an empty pot, a man sneezing, three persons starting for one and the same work at a time, an owl sitting on a house, are considered bad omens. On the other hand, a dead serpent, a woman carrying a pot full of water, a cow with a calf, a blue bird, a black bird and a fox crossing the road from left to right are good omens. They believe in the evil eye hurting a child, sprits and witchcraft.

In the 1961 census all the Pardhans enumerated in this State except one male who reported his religion as Buddha, returned their religion as Hinduism.

The Pardhans perform dances during Divali and Holi festivals. The Pardhans of Sonegaon perform Dhemsa or Zulva dance at marriages. Only males take part in this dance. They dance round the bohala (altar) to the accompaniment of dholak (small drum), dhol (big drum), cymbals and small bells tied round their ankles throughout the night of marriage. Their women do not take part in dance on any festival. They pass their leisure time by playing on musical instruments like dholak, nagara or tashas (small drums) which are always kept clean and in tune.

The Pardhans are invited for ceremonies like marriage and pujas by the Gonds and they attend these ceremonies. Caste Hindus do not generally invite Pardhans to attend religious and social ceremonies, but it is reported that a few Pardhans have attended the Satyanarayan pujas at the houses of their caste Hindu landlords who made separate sitting arrangements for Pardhans in the open yard in front of their houses. A brahman priest as a religious authority is totally absent from their socio-religious life. They are not allowed to enter Hindu temples of Hanuman and other gods as reported in Sonegaon village.

Though the Pardhans have cordial relations with other caste Hindus, they usually have a separate well assigned to them from which they draw water. They accept food and water from Gonds and Kolams, but the Kolams treat them as untouchables and do not return the compliment. The Pardhans regarded Mahars, Mangs, Chambhars and Thati Gonds as inferior to them and in the past were not taking food and water from them. At present this is not followed very strictly and they are taking water and food from Mahars, Chambhars and Mangs. However, they are not taking water and food from Thati Gonds ; but Thati Gonds accept water and food from the hands of the Pardhans. In many villages of Yeotmal district, the Pardhans work as village kamdars (villages kotwal). These posts are generally held by Mahars in Berar. Many of them have taken up agriculture as their principal occupation which has raised their social position.

Social control and leadership

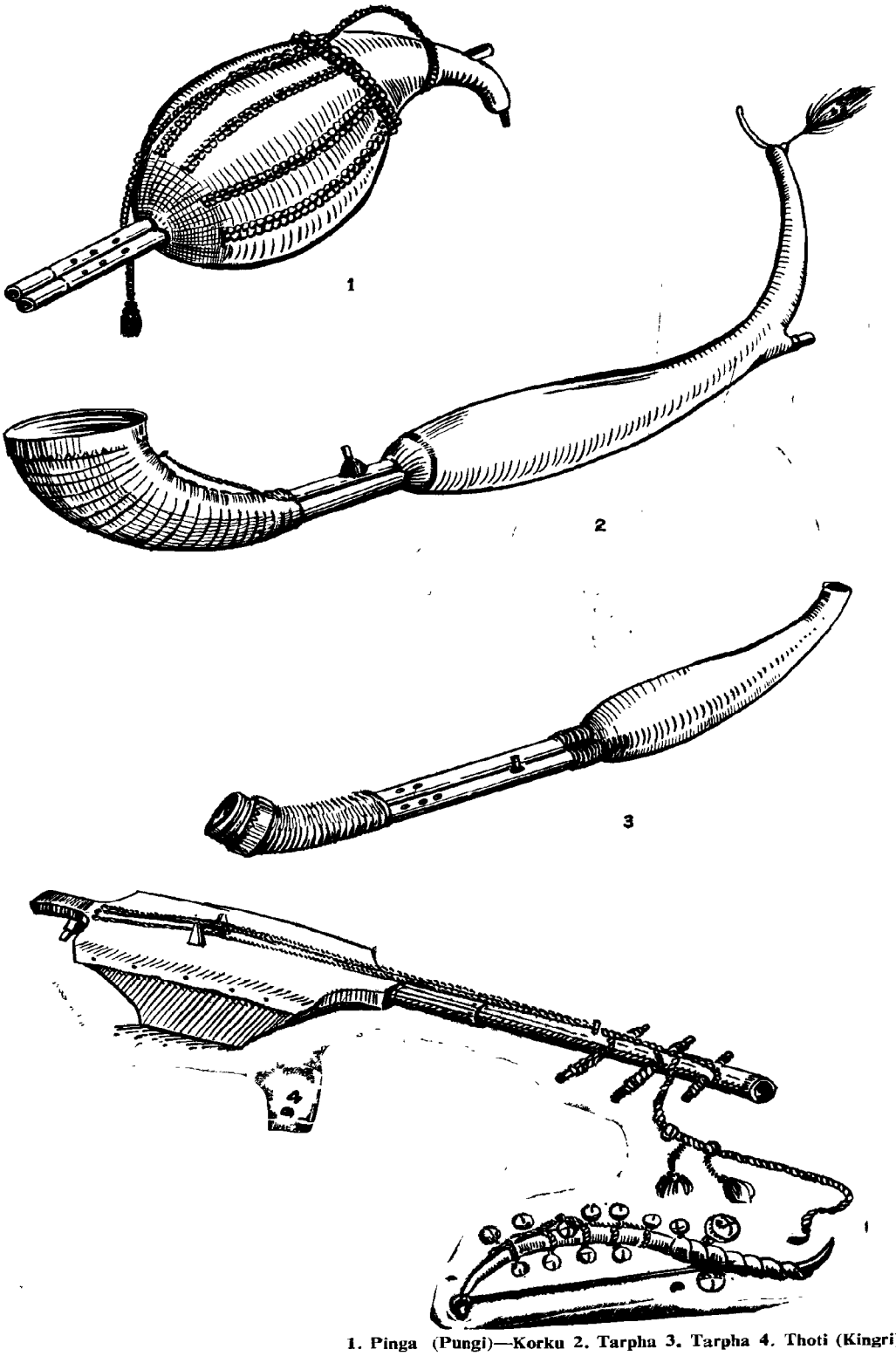
Every village has a panchayat consisting of members of the tribe. They respect the tribe panchayat and honour its decisions. Members of the tribe are expelled from the community or admitted to it by the panchayat. In minor disputes, fines are imposed on the defaulters. In Yeotmal the head of the tribal panchayat is called karbhari. His office is not hereditary. A person who is supported by all community members is chosen as karbhari. In Chandrapur, the headman of the tribe panchayat is known as shendya. His office is also not hereditary. The Pardhans of Chandrapur have also a community organisation above the village level. A group of 50 to 89 villages forms a pati and the pati acknowledges the authority of the chief religious and social headman of the group who is called shendya of the pati. The Pardhans of Sironcha (Chandrapur) consider the ex-zamindar of Aheri, who is a Raj Gond, as their supreme authority. Appeals against the decisions of the shendyas are made to him and his decisions are still honoured by them.

At Sonegaon, a person is fined for moral turpitude by the caste panchayat from Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 which is spent on purchasing utensils, etc., for the use of tribesmen. For immoral offences, a man is fined by the panchayat. If a person has illicit intimacy with a person of a lower caste, he or she is re-admitted to the tribe after paying the fine which is imposed by the tribe Panchayat. The illegitimate child is also admitted into the tribe.

Reference—

Russell, R. V., and Hira Lal. The caste and tribes of Central provinces of India. v. IV. 1966.

Some Musical Instruments.



1. Pinga (Pungi)—Korku 2. Tarpha 3. Tarpha 4. Thoti (Kingri)

HALBA

In the Scheduled castes and scheduled tribes orders (amendment) act, 1956, the tribe is notified as "Halba" or "Halbi" only in (1) Melghat tehsil of Amravati district, (2) Gadhchiroli and Sironcha tehsils of Chanda district and (3) Kelapur, Wani and Yeotmal tehsils of Yeotmal district.

G. K. Gilder cited by Russell and Hira Lal, says that the word is derived from an old Kannada word "Halbar or Halbaru" meaning "old ones or ancients" or "primitive inhabitants". The Halba dialect, however, contains no trace of Kannada (pp. 183-4).

According to another version, the name might be derived from hal, a plough, and may be a variant of harnaha, the common term for a farm servant in the northern districts. Neither of these derivations is known to the Halbas in Maldugi and Murumgaon villages of Gadhchiroli (Chanda district) which were selected for the field study of the tribe. They call themselves as "Halbas" and are also known by that name by their neighbourers.

Many Halbas were formerly engaged in preparing and selling poha (beaten rice) which for some of them is still an occupation.

There are several stories and legends prevalent about the origin of the Halbas. Russell and Hira Lal have recorded a number of these legends (pp. 182-7). One of these says that one Uriya Raja had erected four scare crows in his field to keep off the birds. One night while Mahadev and Parvati were passing by, the scare crows attracted the attention of Parvati who, out of curiosity, asked Mahadev as to what they were and, on hearing the explanation given by him, requested him to do some thing for them. Mahadev thereupon infused life in the scare crows, transforming them into two males and two females and named them Halbas as they had excited Parvati's attention as they moved in the wind. This story, according to Russell and Hira Lal, seems to have been based on the passing derivation of the word "halna" meaning to move.

According to another, their first ancestor was created from the soil of the earth on the plough (hal) of Balaram or Haladhara, the brother of Sri Krishna. This view has the support of Sir G. Grierson. Another legend recounts that one raja of Jagannathpuri (Orissa) affected by leprosy, left his capital and went to the Sihava jungles (in the old Kankar State in Madhya Pradesh) with his Halba servant whose forefathers were hereditary royal servants and stayed there. The raja constructed a temple near a spring in the Sihava jungles and the Halbas became the temple priests. They continued to be household servants of the Kankar royal family. The Kapardar family until lately held lands received by its forefathers as a rent-free gift from the Kankar ruler in lieu of the services the family had to render.

Another legend is about a beautiful Halba girl who was demanded from her father by a Muslim king. To avoid the king's wrath, the father is said to have surreptitiously fled from Bastar to the south and secured asylum with the Gond raja of Chanda who later on employed the Halbas in his service and gave them lands in Chanda and Bhandara districts.

The Halbas of Maldugi and Murumgaon do not know any legend regarding their origin or migration except that some of their tribesmen are living in Bastar. They do not know wherefrom they came and settled in these villages.

The Raipur district gazetteer says that as the Halbas settled down as agricultural workers, they came in contact with workers of other castes of the area and established marital relationship with them. As a result, there arose two divisions. Nekha (pure) and Surait (impure). Marriage barriers were raised between the two divisions and they were perpetuated by the passage of time (p. 103). Russell and Hira Lal say however that the Nekhas and Suraits are known as varpangats and khalpangats respectively. These two divisions take water from each other. The khalpangats take food from varpangats, but the latter do not return the compliment though at some places they do take food from khalpangats if that food does not contain salt (pp. 185-6). The Suraits could occasionally get Nekha girls in marriage. It was open for them to take girls as wives from other castes without fear of getting excommunicated from the Surait community. According to the villagers of Maldugi, there are two divisions among them, khalpangats and varpangats, which do not interdine or intermarry.

Distribution

In the 1961 population census, the Halbas returned a population of 5,430 (2,697 males and 2,733 females) out of which Gadhchiroli had 4,008 (73·81). Outside Maharashtra, the Halbas have returned from Madhya Pradesh a population of 130,123 persons according to the 1961 census.

The Halbas are a rural tribe as they returned a population of 5,219 from rural areas and only 211 from the urban areas of Maharashtra. Of its total population, 40·81 per cent were in the age of 0-14, 43·31 per cent in 15-44 and 15·82 per cent in 45 and above. A small percentage 0·06 did not state their age. The sex ratio of the tribe was 1,013.

The Halbas have a good physique. The average height of ten Halbas (between 20 and 60 years) observed in the field was 5′ 4″.

Family and kinship

A study of 89 households of the Halbas based on ten per cent samples from household pads of the 1961 census in Gadhchiroli (75 households) and Sironcha (14 households) revealed that three were single-member households, 17 households had 2 to 3 members, 43 households had 4 to 6 members, 23 households fell in the group of 7-9 members and only three households had more than ten members.

It was observed in Maldugi that in 70 per cent of Halba households, married sons were residing together with their parents.

The Halba family is patrilocal with a patronymic designation. The Halbas have local divisions as "Basterha", "Chhatisgarhiya" and "Marathia". The first two are so named because they have migrated from Bastar and Chhatisgarh and have settled in the parts of Gadhchiroli adjoining Bastar and Chhatisgarh. Marathia Halbas are so called because they settled in Marathi-speaking areas and speak Marathi. All the three local divisions have equal status and accept food and water from one another. The tribe is divided into a number of totemistic septs known as "got". Some of these are Thakur, Pardhan, Kotvar, Dehari, Kolhyarya, Bhoisan, Bhoyar, Ravat, Agri and Sendia. They assume these got names as their surnames but they do not know their meanings. All persons belonging to a got are deemed to be descended from the same ancestor and marriage within the same got or surname is, therefore, prohibited.

Dwelling

In Murumgaon, the Halba houses are situated in one part of the village with a few Gond houses by their side. In Maldugi, the houses of the Halbas are located half a mile away from the main village gaothan. It is locally known as Halba pada. A few houses of the Halbas are also situated in the main gaothan near the houses of Kunbis and Sonars. In both the villages, Halba houses are seen by the side of the houses of other caste Hindus, but not of the scheduled castes such as Mahar, Mang, Madgi and Chambhar.

The Halba houses are detached from one another with open areas around them where they grow seasonal vegetables like chillis, brinjals, bindi and tomato. The open space at the back, called badi or wadi is fenced with branches of trees having thorns. The open space in front is called angan (courtyard). A Halba house is generally a square structure with walls of jungle sticks plastered with cow dung and earth from both sides and a sloping roof of country tiles or of thatched grass and leaves. It usually has two rooms. One is used as a kitchen. In some cases the kitchen is marked off with a bamboo partition. The main entrance faces east or south. There is generally a tulsi plant in the open space in front of the house.

A brahman priest is consulted for selecttion of a house site and the auspicious time for beginning the work. The work is generally started in the morning of any week day excepting Saturday and Tuesday after worship at the site with an offering of coconut, kumkum, flowers and haldi. The front door frame made of sag is fixed, haldi roots, betelnut, rice and some coins are placed in a piece of cloth smeared with haldi and tied to the frame. The ridge pole (adhe) is fixed after worshipping it with coconut, haldi, til and mango leaves which are tied to it. A piece of dhoti is kept on it and the dhoti is later given to the carpenter engaged in the construction of the house. The coconut is then broken by the owner and its kernel is distributed as prasad.

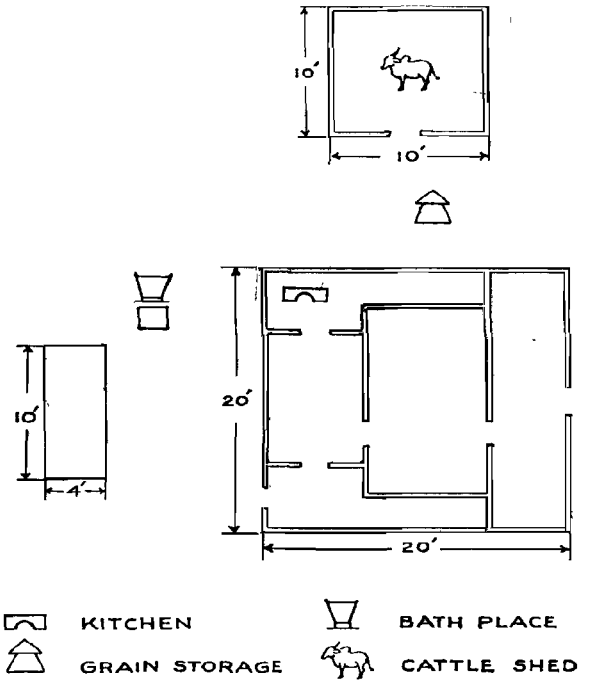
Before entering a new house, vastu puja is performed by a brahman priest. Some households arrange Satyanarayan puja. Of late, they engage a person from their own tribe for doing vastu.

A house of a middle-class Halba family in Maldugi is sketched on page 251.

The side walls of the house are of jungle sticks. The inner walls are of earth. The front portion of the house having a width of 5′ is used as a sitting room and for entertaining guests. The inner apartment is used as an all-purpose room. One of the side rooms with a small window is used as a kitchen and store room and the other as a sleeping room. There are no other windows to the house. A tulsi plant is placed in a vrindavan in front of the house; at the back, there is an open shed for preparing poha with a covered bath with a matting screen in between. To the north of the house, at a distance of about ten feet, is a cattle shed and in between a kothi (receptacle made of bamboo chips) is kept for storing grain.

A mason is engaged for building the mud walls, if needed. A carpenter is engaged on daily wages

ranging from Rs. 3 to Rs. 5. The Halba houses are single-storeyed with earthen flooring. No latrine is provided. A few houses of well-to-do families have covered bath-rooms whereas others take their bath in the open on a slab kept by the side of the house. The houses of Halbas are neat and clean. Cattle are kept in cattle sheds specially constructed by the side of houses.



Dress

The Halba male wears a dhoti, a shirt locally called kudta, a bandi and a head-dress of white cloth or a cap. The well-to-do wear a feta about 30 feet in length. Leather chappals or shoes are used by members of well-to-do households and chappals made of discarded tyres are worn by the poorer section.

Women wear white and red coloured saris (lugade) of nine yards. They use cloth of any colour for the bodice except black. They draw up their saris over their left shoulders and throw their ends over their right shoulders. Women wear chappals when they go for field work.

Halba men wear silver or gold kadas (bracelets) on each wrist, anguthi (rings) made of brass, copper, silver or gold on their left hand fingers and balis (ear-rings) made of brass or gold in their ears. They also have a tawij or tali (talisman) made of brass or silver in a black thread around their neck. Young men do not wear ornaments except a ring on their fingers.

Women wear anguthi or rings made of silver or gold on their fingers; gless chudias or bangadya (bangles) round their wrists; kada, harayya and banoriya (bracelets) made of silver, pauchis or armlets made of silver on both arms; saree (a decorated thick silver ring with hooks at its ends round the neck); a hamel (necklace) made of silver coins; poth (necklace) made of black beads; silver painjan and patti (round the ankles) and silver binyiyas (toe-rings).

Silver is generally used by the Halbas for their ornaments though a few well-to-do households have gold ornaments.

Some Halba men get their own names or of some god tattooed on their forearms. Halba women have tattooed dots on foreheads, cheeks and chin and a tulsi vrindavan on their forearms. Tattooing is done now by women of the Korku Gond tribe or by persons of other castes. A Korku Gond woman receives a kilo of rice and in some cases the clothes worn by the girl tattooed; if the payment is made in cash, it ranges from Re. 0·50 to Rs. 1·50 according to the size of the tattoo marks.

Food and drink

Rice is the staple food of the Halbas. They drink 'Basi' (cooked rice mixed with water and kept overnight). They eat fowl, mutton and pork but not beef. When food is scarce during summer and the rainy season, they eat moha, tembhurni, mango and chinch fruits and also the roots locally known as dhukar kand, suran kand, kasur kand. They also eat the meat of some animals and birds except cows, leopards, tigers and crows. Breakfast is at 7 a.m. and consists of ambil of rice, rice and chutni. Rice flour is made into a paste at night. The next morning it is cooked in boiling water. This is called ambil. The noon's meal consists of rice, varan (cooked tur dal), vegetables and ambil. At night they take rice, varan, vegetables and ambil. Wheat chapatis and sweet rice are prepared on ceremonial and festive occasions.

Gundi, thali, gani and lotas, all of brass, and earthen pots are the household utensils. They fetch water in gundis and keep it in a big earthen pot for drinking. Well-to-do households have cups and saucers, wooden cots, torch-lights, bicycles, petromax lanterns and umbrellas.

Tea is taken daily early in the morning and guests are also offered tea. Formerly they used to

smoke chilims (pipe). Now they smoke prepared bidis. Women take snuff.

Hygiene and sanitation

The Halba houses though small have large open spaces around them. They are neat and clean and their floors are washed with cow dung every alternate day.

The Halbas in Maldugi and Murumgaon villages clean their teeth daily in the morning with a powder of burnt coal or cow dung cake. They bathe daily and wash their clothes once a week. Their women observe menstruation period for three days. On the morning of the fourth day they apply oil, black earth or soap to their hair and take a bath. During this period, women attend to out-door work only but do not fetch water or enter the kitchen. The Halbas look to the bhaiga (pujari) of their tribe for treatment. He gives herbal medicines to sick persons. He is paid Re. 1·00 to Rs. 5·00 in cash or hens, eggs and coconut.

Language and literacy

The Halba dialect is a mixture of Marathi, Chhatisgarhi and Uriya languages and is known as Halbi. They usually speak in Marathi. They do not know any other language. The Halbas in Murumgaon village and around speak Chhatisgarhi. In 1961 out of their total population of 5,430 persons, 3,775 (69·52) returned Marathi as their mother-tongue. Next to Marathi, 1,099 Halbas reported Halbi as their mother-tongue. The other languages reported as their mother-tongue were Chhatisgarhi (304), Koshti (183), Hindi (28), Gowari (23), Gondi (16), and Maria (2).

Among the 615 who spoke a subsidiary language other than the mother-tongue, 317 spoke Marathi, 175 Hindi, 58 Maria and 32 Gondi. They are thus primarily a Marathi-speaking people. It is reported by the Halbas in Maldugi that the tribesmen living on the Kurkheda side of Gadhchiroli tehsil are known as Halbis and those on Murumgaon side as Halbas. The mother-tongue of Halbis is Marathi and that of Halbas is Chhatisgarhi.

Their 1961 literacy rate was 20·64 per cent. This compares favourably with that of other important regional tribes—Pardhan (13·59), Korku, (6·13), Gond (6·67), Andh (5·55) and Kolam (2·62).

The number of Halba children from Maldugi village going to school was ten or 32·22 per cent of the total children of school going age. Out of the total population of Halbas returned in the 1961 census, only 423 children were attending school. They are more inclined to get their children employed in some gainful occupation as family servants of well-to-do families or in cattle grazing.

There were 18 matriculates, all men, as per the 1961 population census. No Halba woman was educated beyond junior basic.

The Halbas are mostly cultivators and agricultural and forests labourers. The following table based on the 1961 census shows the landholding pattern of the Halba tribe in the scheduled areas of Yeotmal and Chandrapur districts :—

Details	Yeotmal			Chanda		Total
	Yeotmal	Kelapur	Wani	Sironcha	Gadhchiroli	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Halba population	370	108	4	729	4,008	5 219
Number of Halba households	75	31	1	139	807	1,053
Number of households not holding any land for cultivation.	52	24	1	40	212	329
Number of households which entirely owned or held land from government for cultivation.	13	3	....	92	567	675
Size of holding—						
(*i*) 1·1—2·4	..	..	..	17	58	75
(*ii*) 2·5—4·9	..	..	..	29	143	172
(*iii*) 5·0—7·4	..	..	..	14	138	152
(*iv*) 7·5—9·9	4	..	..	12	72	88
(*v*) 10·0—12·4	..	..	..	6	54	60
(*vi*) 12 5—14·9	..	..	..	1	33	34
(*vii*) 15·0—29·9	7	2	..	10	52	71
(*viii*) 30·0—49·9	1	1	..	1	12	15
(*ix*) 50 + ...	1	..	..	2	5	8
Number of households cultivating land on lease on cash ..	9	4	..	6	24	43
Number of households cultivating land by taking on lease on crop share.	1	..	..	1	1	3
Number of households which cultivate part of the land and lease out the remaining part.	..	..	..	..	3	3
Number of households which cultivate their own land and also take on lease land of others.	9	..	..	11	21	41

A majority of the Halba households in Yeotmal and Kelapur tehsils (69·33 per cent and 77·42 per cent respectively) do not hold any land for cultivation. In Wani tehsil, only one Halba household exists and it does not hold any land. In the tehsils of Sironcha and Gadhchiroli, many of the Halba households have lands for cultivation. The remaining households (28·78 per cent and 26·27 per cent respectively) do not hold land.

Murumgaon in Gadhchiroli has 611·09 acres of land under cultivation, owned by 58 khatedars, out of whom 48 are from the scheduled tribes who own 530·36 acres and six are from the scheduled castes who own 53·59 acres. The remaining four khatedars are from other castes owing 27·14 acres. Among the 48 scheduled tribe khatedars, there were 20 Halbas owning 248·86 acres of land. Out of the total land under cultivation, 321·50 acres are fertile, of which the Halbas hold 105 acres.

The total area of land in Maldugi is 1,339·24 acres out of which 14·74 acres are fallow, 49·73 acres are under irrigation, 814·38 acres are gaothan, forest, etc. The area of cultivable assessed land in Maldugi is 414 acres assessed at Rs. 256·05. This land is held by 57 khatedars of whom 12 are Halbas holding nearly 77 acres land assessed at Rs. 72·48. Halbi agriculturists of this village grow paddy, til, tur, kutaki, chilli, brinjals, potatoes, linseed, wheat and gram.

The Halbas use bamboo traps called 'zinkars' and steel 'gals' (hooks) for catching fish. Young boys sometimes go on a pig or hare hunt. They use axes and dogs for pig hunts and snares for hare hunts.

Workers among the Halba population in the State number 3,120 (1,646 males and 1,474 females). Of them 69 (53 males and 16 females) are working in urban areas and the rest in rural areas. The percentage of workers to the total population is 57·46.

The number of non-workers in the total population is 2,310 (1,051 males and 1,259 females). Of the non-workers 142 (59 males and 83 females) are in urban areas and the rest in rural areas.

The table in the next column gives information regarding different categories of workers and non-workers.

Agriculture, agricultural labour and household industry absorb 93·88 per cent of the Halba workers. The percentage of women among the total workers is 47·24.

Category	Total/ Rural/ Urban	Persons	Males	Females
Workers ..	Total	3,120	1,646	1,474
	Rural	3,051	1,593	1,458
	Urban	69	53	16
I ..	Total	2,101 (67·34)	1,089 (66·16)	1,012 (68·66)
	Rural	2,093 (68·60)	1,082 (67·92)	1,011 (69·34)
	Urban	8	7	2
II ..	Total	509 (16·31)	233 (14·16)	276 (18·72)
	Rural	495 (16·23)	233 (14·00)	272 (18·66)
	Urban	14 (20·29)	10 (18·87)	4 (25·00)
III ..	Total	38	34	4
	Rural	38 (1 25)	34 (2·14)	4 (0·27)
	Urban	.. .	....	....
IV ..	Total	319 (10·23)	161 (9·78)	158 (10·72)
	Rural	317 (10 39)	159 (9·98)	158 (10·84)
	Urban	2	2	....
V ..	Total	19 (0 61)	16 (0·97)	3 (0·20)
	Rural	12 (0·39)	12 (0·75)	....
	Urban	7 (10·14)	4 (7·55)	3 (18·75)
VI ..	Total	2 (0·06)	1 (0·06)	1 (0·07)
	Rural	1 (0 03)	1 (0·06)	....
	Urban	1 (1·45)	....	1 (6·25)
VII	Total	50 (1·60)	43 (2·61)	7 (0·48)
	Rural	31 (1·02)	25 (1·57)	6 (0·41)
	Urban	19 (27·54)	18 (33·96)	1 (6 25)
VIII ..	Total	5 (0·16)	5 (0·30)	....
	Rural	5 (0·16)	5 (0·31)	. ..
	Urban	....	....	....
IX ..	Total	77 (2·47)	64 (3 89)	13 (0 88)
	Rural	59 (1·93)	52 (3·27)	7 (0·48)
	Urban	18 (26 09)	12 (22 64)	6 (37·50)
Non-workers ..	Total	2,310 (42·54)	1,051 (38·97)	1,259 (46·07)
	Rural	2,168	992	1,176
	Urban	142	59	83

Many Halbas formerly prepared poha (beaten rice) for sale. This traditional occupation still continues. They were also engaged in forest work, cutting trees and bamboos, collecting tendu leaves and gathering wild roots and fruits.

The Halbas of Maldugi use iron and wooden ploughs, bakhar (harrow), fan (big harrow), patta, axe, tikas, fawda (spade) and sickle. The land is ploughed by an iron or wooden plough. Then the

patta is used to break the clods of earth. The land is harrowed with a bakhar. Before starting sowing, the land is again harrowed with a fan. This operation is called 'chikhal karane'.

Income and expenditure

The main source of income of Halbas is agriculture. Some of them breed cattle and keep poultry to supplement their income. The average annual income of a well-placed household ranged from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 5,500, that of a middle class household from Rs. 2,500 to Rs. 3,000 and that of a poor family from Rs. 800 to Rs. 1,000. It was found that the average monthly expenditure on food of a well-to-do household was 38·42 per cent, clothing accounted for 18·42 per cent, other items 23·68 per cent and servants 19·48 per cent. A middle class household spent 50 per cent on food and 22 and 28 per cent on clothing and other items respectively. The average monthly expenditure of a poor family on food was 60·60 per cent, clothing accounted for 15·16 per cent and on other items 24·24 per cent.

Life cycle

The Halbas take prenatal precautions from the time the woman enters the fifth month of her pregnancy. They are particular in satisfying her desire for any food as it is believed to be the desire of the child in the womb and the child, it is believed, would grow healthy only if its desires are satisfied. No special diet is, however, given to a pregnant woman. She is forbidden from crossing in a boat and cutting or tearing anything before or during an eclipse. She is also forbidden from seeing the eclipse. A girl generally goes to her parents' house for her first delivery. Her father presents her with a green sari, a choli and green bangles in the seventh month of the pregnancy and performs a small ceremony at which the women from their own tribe gather together.

A separate room or space in the house is earmarked for the confinement. The woman in labour sits on the ground and is attended to by a midwife (dai) of any caste who attends the mother and the child for 12 days. She is paid 12 pailis (12 kg.) of paddy and Rs. 1·25 in cash for her service. In difficult cases a trained midwife from the nearby health centre is engaged. They do not worship the 'chhatti' or 'pachavi'. The nal is cut by a knife or a pen-knife and the placenta is buried in a pit in a corner near the mother's cot. The mother and the child are bathed on this pit for seven days till the nal drops down and is also buried in the pit. Nobody is allowed to look at the nal being buried.

Pollution after child-birth is observed till the nal drops. The whole house is then cleaned, clothes are washed and cow's urine is sprinkled in the house. Water is also sprinkled in the house after immersing a golden ring in it. The child's father gets his head shaved by a barber on this day. He is forbidden from shaving during the period of impurity. Other males are not subjected to this taboo. The tribesmen and others do not take meals from the household in which the delivery takes place. Household members do not worship either the household deities or enter the village temples during pollution.

The child is not breast-fed for two or three days after birth. During this period, it is given gur or sugar water. After delivery, the woman is given soji (gruel of wheat or rice flour mixed with gur or sugar) for the first seven to 15 days, and thereafter, soft rice and varan for a month. Thereafter she reverts to her normal food.

A ceremony called 'sutak karne' is performed on the day following the one on which the nal drops. Tribal women wave a light before the mother sitting on a low pat and give her presents in cash and clothing. Younger women bow to her and kiss the child and older ones kiss her and the child. The money presented goes to the child. The women are then feasted. On the third day after birth, til-gul is distributed among the women. This is called 'til-gul vatane'. Some Halbas do not observe impurity after birth. But the mother is not allowed to work in the house for twelve days and out side for five weeks.

The child is cradled and named on the twelfth day and a feast is given to the tribesmen. A brahman or a tribal priest is consulted about the name to be given to the child. The names given in the past are being replaced by modern Hindu names of which a few example are given below :—

	Old names	New names
Males ..	Pataku ..	Ganesh
	Mahagu ..	Mohan
	Indar ..	Someshvar
	Antu ..	Ramesh
	Jondhri ..	Pandurang
Females ..	Nagu ..	Suman
	Gujobai ..	Kusum
	Bhivra ..	Indumati
	Paikabai ..	Vimla
	Netai ..	Ranjana

An unmarried girl having sexual relations with a low caste person is not ex-communicated. She is fined from Rs. 5-00 to Rs. 50-00 and taken back into the tribe and married to a caste person according to the regular form. If a child is born to her out of that illicit relation then she is not taken back into the tribe.

Marriage

A Halba can preferably marry his mother's brother's daughter, but not the daughter of his paternal or maternal aunts. The tribe observes the rule that the wife should be younger than the husband. The husband is generally older than the wife by one to ten years. In Maldugi, Halba boys generally get married at the age of 18 to 20 years and girls at the age of 14 to 16 years.

Marriage negotiations which are not conducted in the month of Paush, are initiated by the boy's father. He goes with the karbhari of his village and relatives to the girl's village and meets the mahajan of that village. The mahajan calls the girl's father and if the girl's father agrees to the proposal, the mahajan takes the boy's father to the girl's house and the boy's father applies kumkum to the girl's forehead and gives her a sari and a blouse. She puts on these presents and bows to the boy's father who then returns to his own village.

The boy's father again goes to the girl's village after 15 days or a month for the Paydhuni ceremony when matters pertaining to the proposed marriage such as dej are discussed. Women do not accompany the party. Dej is fixed at Rs. 500 cash, five khandis of paddy, three saris (one for the girl's mother, one for her maternal aunt and the third for her mother's mother) and some ornaments. The hunda (dowry) system is not in vogue. The girl's father, however, gives some presents to the son-in-law at the first Divali after the marriage.

The dej and grains are sent to the girl's father with two pudharis (leaders) from the boy's village before marriage who intimate to the girl's father the date fixed for marriage. The boy's father need not accompany. The articles are handed over to the bride's father. The karbhari of the girl's village, other relatives and the girl's father thereafter go to the boy's house with a dhoti, a ring and a coconut for the boy. Women do not accompany them. They present these articles to the boy and return after dinner. This ceremony is called 'Shalmundi'. On any day in Magh and Falgun and about a month or two before marriage, the girl's father gives her an andan (gift) of two dishes, two glasses and brass gundis.

If the boy is not in a position to pay dej to the girl's father, he serves the latter for a period commensurate with the amount of dej. There is also a custom of exchange of daughters—a person gives his own daughter in marriage to the son of the person whose daughter he wishes to have for his son. This system had forced about 15 per cent of boys of Maldugi to remain unmarried as they had no sisters to give in exchange for the girls they wanted to marry.

The mandav (marriage booth) is erected by the tribesmen on the day prior to the marriage in front of the houses of both the boy and the girl. The mandav has nine poles, the central one being of salai. Jambhul twigs are tied to the top of the central pole. A feast is given on the day of erecting the mandav. The fathers of the boy and the girl worship the salai pole in the mandav at their respective places. Mango leaves are tied to the mandav.

There are reported to be two forms of marriages among the Halbas. In Maldugi only one form, the "big one" exists. The bridegroom and his party go to the bride's village. Suvasinis, particularly his sister or paternal aunt, apply haldi to the boy before he starts. The boy and his party leave their village on the night preceding the marriage and go to the girl's villages to the accompaniment of music by Mang or Chambhar musicians. In the past, the Pardhans were engaged to play music in their marriages but now the Pardhans have discontinued the practice of doing so. The girl's party receives the boy's party. The boy gets down at the village temple and offers a coconut to the deity there, who is generally god Maruti. If there is no Maruti temple in the village, he gets down at any temple of the village deity. From there he goes to the janosa. The household where arrangement for his temporary halt is made feeds the party. The household gets a lugade (sari) from the boy's party for this gesture.

Two hours before marriage, haldi is applied to the girl on the marriage day. Clothing meant for the girl and her mother and the ornaments meant for the girl are taken by the boy's party to the girl's house to the accompaniment of music. The girl puts on the new clothes and ornaments at her house. The boy goes on horseback or in a cart to the mandav at the girl's house wearing a bashing and mundavalyas (flower garlands) with music. At the entrance to the mandav, the girl's mother waves a flour lamp before him and washes his feet. He is taken to the booth on waist by his maternal uncle or brother-in-law, and seated on a chair. The girl

comes out of the house to the booth and sits on a chair in front of the boy while an antarpat is held by two persons between them. The girl faces east and the boy faces west. The bashing is tied to the girl's head before the ceremony starts. Akshata is then given first to the bride and the bridegroom and then to the assembled persons. A priest or any person who can recite the mangalashtakas (auspicious verses) recites them. At the end of each stanza, the bride and the groom, who hold their folded right hands with akshata in them, over one another's head, throw a part of it over the other's head. The assembled persons also throw small quantities of akshata in the couple's direction. At the end of the last stanza, the akshata left is thrown by the persons at the bridal pair. The antarpat is removed and the groom and the bride garland each other. The couple is seated on pats, the girl to the boy's left, both facing east. Then the priest ties the hems of the couple's garments and the boy ties a garsoli (a necklace of black beads) round the girl's neck and her maiden name is changed. The girl's sister or aunt holds the boy's hand, the boy's sister or aunt holds the girl's hand and they go round the salai munda in the mandav five times. The marriage is then complete. The girl's father, relatives and friends offer them presents. Some Halbas have recently adopted the system of kanyadan under which the girl's father does not take dej.

After the marriage ceremony, the girl's father gives a dinner to the persons assembled and the boy's party returns to its village. The boy remains at his father-in-law's house. Next day the dhenda ceremony is performed in which the bridal couple throw gulal at each other. Thereafter, the father-in-law gives aher (present) to his new son-in-law who, in return, gives aher to him. After lunch, the boy goes to his village along with his wife and her party. The party waits at the village temple. The residents of the boy's village come with music to receive them. The girl's maternal uncle carries a special lamp with five wicks to the accompaniment of music to the boy's mandav. The boy, his wife and party are taken to his house in a procession called varat. The girl's maternal uncle carries the special lamp with five wicks. When the varat reaches the mandav, the lamp is hung in the centre of the mandav. The boy's mother waves lamps made of flour before the boy and the girl and pours water on their feet. The men go round the salai pole in the mandav five times. The bride and the bridegroom are led in the house by their respective sisters. The girl's party are then treated to dinner. They leave the next day after tea. The girl is then taken to her father's house after eight to 15 days and returns in Ashad for a stay of 15 days. Her father again sends for her and she stays with her parents till Divali. In Divali the girl's father goes to the boy's house to fetch him. He presents clothes to the boy and the girl. The boy's father goes to fetch the pair after Divali and brings them home. The boy's mother does not accompany him when he goes to the girl's village for marriage. Similarly, the girl's mother does not accompany the varat to the daughter's house.

Widow re-marriage is allowed among the Halbas. It is called Gandharva. A widow cannot marry her husband's brother or her cousin. A bachelor cannot marry a widow even after marrying a ring or a rui plant. A person desiring to marry a widow has to pay half the usual dej. A dinner is served to the villagers and guests. Then the Pat or Gandharva is performed at the house of the widow's father on any dark night when the moon is not shining, in any month except Paush and the four months of the rainy season. Suvasinis do not attend the Gandharva ceremony. One widow and males only attend it. The ceremony is performed in the courtyard. The couple sit on pats facing west. The only widow who is present puts ornaments on the bride, applies kumkum and akshata to the heads of both the bride and the groom, ties the garsoli round the widow's neck and ties the hems of the couple's garments together. This completes the ceremony. The guests from the other village return to their homes during the night only, along with the couple whose faces are not to be seen next morning.

Divorce is permitted with the tribe's consent. A fine upto Rs. 5·00 is levied on the party seeking divorce and the amount is used for some community work.

Death

Cremation is practised by well-to-do households. Some poor families also cremate their dead out of regard for him. In such cases, the poor family is helped by the well-to-do households by way of giving firewood. Mourning is observed for three days during which period the mourners do not cook at home; they get cooked food from their neighbours The purification ceremony (Teravi) is held on the second day after death if the body was buried and on the fourth day if it was cremated. On this day, a barber shaves the head of the chief mourner and other near relatives of the deceased and a washerman washes their clothes. They take a bath, clean their house with cow dung and invite

neighbours for meals in their house. On the tenth day, "dasava" is observed when a feast is given to the tribe and relatives from other villages. Water and food are offered by the household to the dead on the death anniversary every year.

In the case of cremation, a son of the dead or his nearest relative collects ashes from the pyre and further ceremonies of immersion of the ashes in the sea or in a holy river or tank are held according to Hindu practice. The Halbas believe that if a person dies with desires unfulfilled, he becomes a ghost or a witch and can do evil to his relatives and others.

A dying man is not allowed to breathe his last on a cot. He is removed to a bed on the floor, his head is taken on the lap by his nearest female relative (wife, mother, etc.) and sugar-water or water in which tulsi leaves or gold are put is dropped in his mouth before he breathes his last. If a person dies at night, the body is disposed of the next morning unless it happens to be a festival day. All the inmates of the house sit by the side of the body throughout the night.

The body is anointed with oil and haldi, given a bath and is dressed in its clothes. It is put on a bamboo bier, covered with a new white shroud and carried to the ground with feet in front. In the case of a woman her ornaments also are put on her person, kumkum is applied to her forehead (in case her husband survives). A coin is tied in the end of the shroud in the case of a married male.

Tribesmen carry the body on their shoulders. Fire is carried in front of the bier if the body is to be cremated. A small earthen pot is placed on a soop with some paddy in it and is carried to the ground by the son of the deceased who leads the procession. The bier is lowered for a while at the visava where two roads branch off. The grains from the soop are placed at the four corners of the bier. The soop and the earthen pot are put aside, the bearers change their places, lift the bier and proceed to the ground.

In case of burial, the grave is dug in a north-south direction and the body is laid in it with its head towards the south and face upwards. It is stripped of its clothes. In the case of a woman, the clothes are only loosened. Moha leaves are placed on the face, the navel and the private parts of the deceased after the body is laid in the grave pit. The clothes of the deceased are buried with him. The bier, sabhali or tirdi as it is called, is broken up and thrown by the side of the grave or burnt. If the body is to be cremated, the son or the chief mourner lights the pyre. The ashes are collected the next day for being thrown into a river. No pindadan (offering of cooked rice) is performed, but a cow is fed. No period of impurity is observed, nor are obsequies performed. They do not perform shradha on Akshaya Tritiya or on the last day of Bhadrapad. They, however, feed the crows in the name of their ancestors on Akshaya Tritiya day and Bhadrapad vad 30.

Religion

All the Halbas returned themselves as Hindus in the 1961 census. They generally worship Hindu gods and goddesses in addition to their tribal deities. They are not however regular worshippers of Hindu deities. No Hindu temples are found in their hamlets.

Their family gods and goddesses include Motha dev, Vaghdev and an earthern horse in their house. On occasions like Divali, Dasara and Chaitra Poornima, these deities are worshipped. These deities are also installed in temples. An oil lamp is lighted every day in the evening before their household gods.

When an epidemic or illness breaks out, the Halbas worship Matadevi and offer a goat or a cock in sacrifice as advised by the tribe's pujari. They also make a common offering of a goat to Thakurdev before starting threshing operations. They are very religious-minded. They offer a part of whatever they have, even a blade of grass, to a god or goddess whenever they pass by their places.

The Halbas worship their family deities on Gudhi Padva. Gudhis are not raised over the doors of their houses. On Rama Navami (Chaitra Sud 9) they observe a fast till noon when full meal is taken and thereafter nothing is eaten on that day. On Akshaya Tritiya (Vaishakh sud 3) the family deities are worshipped and crows are fed in the names of their ancestors. Vat Poornima (Jyeshtha sud 15) is observed by women with fasting and worshipping the vat (banyan tree). On Ashadhi and Kartiki Ekadashi, they observe a fast. During Shravan, some do not eat non-vegetarian food. They arrange for the granthas (sacred books) being read by some one and listen to it.

On Naga Panchami (Shravana sud 5) an image of a naga (serpent) is drawn on the wall of the house by the head of the household and worshipped. The head fasts and worships the naga twice that day. He breaks his fast after the second worship. Digging or ploughing are prohibited on this day. On

Gokul Ashtami (Shravana vad 8) an idol of Sri Krishna is worshipped and a fast is observed. Worship is done by a few but many observe the fast. On Pola (Shravana vad 30) the bullocks are washed at noon, decorated and taken to the Mahadev temple. They go round the temple five times. The head of the family worships Mahadev and offers cooked food to the bullocks. When all bullocks of the village are brought to the temple by the owners, they pray and perform arati. Thereafter an influential person of the village breaks the toran and the bullocks are taken home. The housewives worship the bullocks, do arati and feed them. A person who takes his bullocks to other houses receives cash presents from the householders. The next day, the villagers go to the boundary of the village with earthen lamps, saying "Jag marbat" and keep them on the boundary and return home. Wrestling bouts are held on that day. The villagers bring home twigs of biba, jaradi and marbat and bury them in their fields and also fix them in the roofs of their houses.

The Halbas did not observe Ganesh Chaturthi (Bhadrapad sud 4) in the past, but recently they have been observing it as a public festival.

On Pitar Amavasya (Bhadrapad vad 30), they feed the crows in the name of their ancestors.

During Dasara (Ashvina sud 10) they worship agricultural implements and land, pluck the leaves of the shahara tree and exchange the leaves in token of gold in the evening. They do it after offering worship and breaking a coconut before the village gods.

During Divali they observe Lakshmi puja (Ashvina vad 30), Bali Pratipada (Kartika sud 1) and Bhaubij (Kartika sud 2). On Bali Pratipada day, they wash their cattle in the morning and decorate them. They feed them, collect them at Akhar, move them near the gaothan and then take them to the forest for grazing. In the evening, they draw rangolis and light lamps. On Bhaubij, the sister waves lighted lamps before her brother.

On Makar sankrant (January 14) they wash their cattle at the river and eat hurda (fresh corn roasted in a dung-cake fire) and groundnuts. The next day, they organise cart races.

For Holi, they plant a small sawar tree at the place fixed for the village Holi on the evening of Phalguna sud 15 and arrange fuel around it. After sunset, this is worshipped and set on fire. The next day they throw gulal at each other and entertain friends.

Persons from well-to-do households go for cinema shows and plays in the summer. Some play card games like ladis and satpatti. They also visit fairs held in nearby villages.

Inter-community relationship

The Halbas live side by side with other caste Hindus but away from the houses of scheduled castes. They have social contacts with the neighbouring Hindu castes such as Kunbi, Sonar and Marar. They take food and water from Kunbis, Sonars and Marars, but not from Mahars, Mangs, Madgis and Chamars. It is reported that they do not accept food and water from the Pardhans (a scheduled tribe). They fetch drinking water from common wells in the village which are also used by members of the scheduled castes. The Halbas are invited to marriages in the houses of Kunbis, Sonars and Marars. The washerman and the barbar (nhavi) serve them in marriage and birth ceremonies. They are allowed to enter village temples.

Each village has a tribal panchayat headed by a "Mukhiya". His office is not hereditary. He is nominated by the Halbas and can be discharged from his post if the tribesmen lose faith in him. The panchayat's decision in social and tribal disputes is final. Disobedience involves ex-communication. In important cases, one panchayat seeks the advice of the adjoining tribal village panchayat before coming to a decision.

There is a tribal organisation known as "Halba Thakur Samaj Mahasabha" consisting of respected elders of the tribe elected from various areas. The sabha has a modern outlook. It has framed rules and regulations to modify or abolish old, undesirable social and religious customs and to introduce in their place new ones. The sabha has, however, no propaganda organisation to make these rules and regulations more effective. It is understood that there was a Suryavanshi Halbi Thakur Sabha in Maldugi village, but it has now ceased to function.

Reference—

Russell, R. V., and Hira Lal. The castes and tribes of the Central provinces of India. v. III. Pt. II. 1916.

KAWAR

More than 96 per cent of the Kawar population returned in Maharashtra in the 1961 census was enumerated in Gadhchiroli tehsil of Chanda district. In 1961, they numbered 2,915 with 1,436 males and 1,479 females. In Madhya Pradesh, they returned a population of over three lakhs. The only other State in which they were returned was Orissa.

In the Constitution (scheduled tribes) order, 1950, this tribe was named as Kawar or Kanwar and was notified as a scheduled tribe in the Melghat tehsil of Amravati and Sironcha and Gadhchiroli tehsils of Chanda which were then parts of Madhya Pradesh. In the Scheduled castes and scheduled tribes lists (Modification) order, 1956, the tribe was termed as "Kawar, Kanwar, Kaur, Cherwa, Rathia, Tanwar or Chattri". Kelapur, Wani and Yeotmal tehsils of Yeotmal were added to the notified scheduled area.

In Gadhchiroli, the tribe calls itself Kawar and is recognised by other people also by the same name. Some pronounce it with a nasal as 'Kanwar'. The villagers of Nanhi and Purada (Gadhchiroli) where field study was done do not know any other synonym for the tribe.

According to Russell and Hira Lal, the Kawars trace their origin from the Kauravas of the *Mahabharata*. Two pregnant Kaurava women are said to have fled to hills of Central India after the war and taken shelter with a rawat (grazier) and a dhobi (washerman) and the children born to them became the ancestors of the Kawar tribe. The villagers of Nanhi and Purada do not know anything about this legend.

The 1961 tehsilwise distribution of the tribe was as below :—

Tehsil	Persons	Males	Females
Gadhchiroli	2,812	1,379	1,433
Yeotmal	99	54	45
Kelapur	2	2	..
Melghat	2	1	1
Total ..	2,915	1,436	1,479

The population of Kawar as recorded in the censuses of 1891, 1911, 1921 and 1931 in the present districts of Nagpur division was as below :—

District	Population					
	1891		1911	1921	1931	1961
	H.	A.				
Wardha ..	..	..	..	..	1	..
Nagpur ..	8	19	22	..	4	..
Chanda ..	3,855	5	1,447	1,494	1,831 (+4Tr.)	2,812
Bhandara ..	625	..	940	1,959	1,382	..
Amravati ..	..	..	..	12	1	2
Yeotmal ..	..	..	..	..	..	101
Total ..	4,488	24	2,409	3,465	3,219	2,915

In the 1891 census, 4,512 were enumerated in Nagpur, Chanda and Bhandara out of whom 24 returned themselves as animists and 4,488 as belonging to Hindu religion. In 1911, 1921, 1931 and 1961, all (except 4 women in 1931) returned Hinduism as their religion. The four women had reported 'tribal' religion.

The Kawars have been notified as a scheduled tribe only in the Gadhchiroli and Sironcha tehsils of Chanda and the Yeotmal, Wani and Kelapur tehsils of Yeotmal and the Melghat tehsil of Amravti.

In 1961, the Kawars returned a sex ratio of 1,030 as against 936 for the general population and 978 for the entire scheduled tribes population in the State. Barring the Kolam (1,043), the Kawars thus had the highest sex ratio among the 14 numerically important scheduled tribes in the State.

Out of the 58 households studied in Gadhchiroli, 51 had male heads of households and seven had female heads. Among these 58 households, 3 households (5·17) had one member, 26 households (44·83) had 2 to 4 members, 25 households (43·10) had 5 to 7 members, two households (3·45) had 8 to 10 members, and 2 households (3·45) had above 10 members.

The Kawars' settlements in Gadhchiroli show that they prefer to live on plains where sufficient land for cultivation and water facilities are available.

A 'Tola' or habitation may consist of 50 to 60 houses by the side of a river or a tank. Their houses are built separated in a line along the two sides of the village street. There is an open space in front of every house, but no enclosure. The houses have wooden doors, mud walls plastered with cow dung and country tiles for roofs. The front door always faces north or east. The houses have no windows.

The Kawars are mostly cultivators or agricultural labourers. The implements they use include wooden ploughs, pavadas, axes, kudals, sickles, wooden rakes and pattas (a flat but heavy wooden plank). Rakes and pattas are used for levelling the field before sowing. They store the produce in big bamboo baskets called dholis which are plastered with cow dung on both sides. These dholis are purchased from local Buruds. Most Kawars use earthen pots for fetching and storing water, though some have brass pots. They usually cook food in earthen pots. They also keep brass and aluminium dishes and utensils. A wooden or bamboo cot (khatiya) is to be seen in every Kawar house.

Food

Their staple food is rice. They drink "Basi" (rice cooked at night, mixed with water and kept for the whole night) three or four times a day and take a full meal of rice, dal and vegetable around 8 p.m. They use urid, kulith, lakhadi, gram, and masur dal; urid and kulith are most common. A dish called 'Varha' in which urid pulse is drenched and crushed on a stone and fried in linseed or moha oil is prepared by them at community feasts. They use moha oil in cooking.

Wheat is not taken daily, but they prepare wheat rotis on festival days. Leaves of various trees and roots available in the forest are used as vegetables. Among roots most popular are surankand, karukand and kanhiyakand or the roots of the young sawar tree. Every Kawar grows surankand at the back of his house. They collect fruits such as tendu, char, mahua, mango and ber as supplementary food. They eat bulbs of kanhiyakand or the young sawar tree in times of scarcity. Mahua flowers form their food next to rice.

The Kawars are non-vegetarians. They eat fish and birds like titter and kawadi. They do not eat a particular type of fish called bodh. They store dried fish in large quantities. They do not eat pigs, fowl and beef, but eat mutton and venison. Even young children smoke tobacco. They prepare their own bidis of palas or tendu leaves. Some chew tobacco. Women do not chew or smoke.

Kawar men wear a dhoti, a shirt and a cap or a piece of white cloth round the head. They wear the dhoti upto the knees only. Women wear saris and blouses. They wear the sari upto the knees. White saris with a red border are most common. They do not wear a black sari. They take the ends of the sari from right to left over the head. They dress their hair by parting it in the middle and tie it behind in a knot.

Ornaments

Men wear silver or gold rings called mundi or anguthi on the forefinger of the left hand and solid round bracelets of silver called chura on the wrists. They wear gold ear-ring (zadap) in the upper lobe of the right ear and gold or brass ear-rings (lurkis) in the lower lobes of the ears. Some wear silver chains (kardoda) round the waist.

Women wear glass bangles, a pair of solid but flat silver bracelets (patalya) and a pair of hollow round silver bracelets (kadas) on the wrists. The kadas worn by men are solid whereas the kadas worn by women are hollow. Women wear silver rings with square or round seals on three fingers of the left hand. Rings without seals are not allowed to be used by women. On both the arms they wear a pair of hollow silver armlets called bahutas or bajuband. Round the neck they wear a sutiya, a decorated silver ring with hooks at the ends that are fastened at the neck, a hamel which is a necklace of silver coins and a mal (necklace) of coloured beads strung on a thread. A silver or gold ear-rings (zadap) and pendants (khinava) are worn on the upper lobes of the ear. The lower lobes are also decorated with silver pendants, round in shape and having various beautiful designs carved on them. As a rule, a Kawar woman does not wear a nose-ring but some women wear gold nose studs (fuli) on the right side. A thick silver lace chain (kardoda) is a prominent and costly ornament worn round the waist. They wear silver or kasa hollow anklets (paikada) and rings (panjans and machlis) on toes.

Russell and Hira Lal noted that women wore pewter ornaments on the feet and silver and pewter rings on the neck. They decorated the ears with silver pendants. As a rule, they did not use nose-rings. Tattooing used to be done on women immediately after marriage as was the custom in Chhattisgarh. Women were tattooed on the breast with a picture of Sri Krishna, on the arms with that of a deer and on the legs with miscellaneous patterns (p. 401).

In the course of this field study, it was observed that at Nanhi, tattooing of dots on legs and face is done before marriage, whereas tattooing of small squares on arms is done after marriage.

Both men and women among Kawars bathe daily in cold water either at the tank or at a well. Children upto one and a half years of age and delivered women upto seven days after child-birth take a hot water bath. They clean their teeth daily with neem, babhul or other twigs. They do not generally use soap. They do not send their clothes to a dhobi. Their women wash their hair with black earth. They dress their hair daily after applying coconut oil.

Language

In 1961, the 2,915 Kawars returned eight mother-tongues as follows :—

Chhattisgarhi 1,537 (52·73), Hindi 1,229 (42·16), Lamani 95, Marathi 33, Telugu 12, Gujarati 6, Pardeshi 2 and Gondi 1. Knowledge of other subsidiary languages was reported by 468. Among them, 170 persons knew Hindi and 279 Marathi in addition to their mother-tongue.

In the villages studied, the Kawars speak Chhattisgarhi at home; with outsiders, they speak Hindi or in broken Marathi. Young persons speak and understand Marathi also.

The following table shows literacy standards as reported in the 1961 census :—

	Persons	Males	Females
Illiterate	2,643 (90·67)	1,177 (81·97)	1,466 (99·12)
Literate without educational level.	224 (7·68)	212 (14·76)	12 (0 81)
Primary or junior basic ..	48 (1·65)	47 (3·27)	1 (0 07)
Total ..	2,915	1,436	1,479

The 1961 literacy percentage for the Kawars was 9·33 as against 29·82 for the general population and 7·21 for the total scheduled tribes population of the State. In the total scheduled tribes population there were 668 males and 37 females who had attained matriculation or higher level in 1961. There was not a single Kawar amongst them.

According to Russell and Hira Lal the tribe considered military service as their main traditional occupation, but most of them were cultivators and labourers. Rautias used to weave ropes and make sleeping cots, but the other Kawars considered such work as degrading (p. 401). At Nanhi, it was learnt that Rautias used to graze cows.

According to the 1961 census, the number of workers and non-workers among the Kawars was as under :—

Category	Persons	Males	Females
Workers	1,828 (62·71)	907 (63·16)	921 (62·27)
Non-workers	1,087 (37·29)	529 (36·84)	558 (37·73)
Total ..	2,915	1,436	1,479

The following table gives their distribution by industry according to the 1961 census :—

Category	Persons	Males	Females
I	1,495 (81·78)	744	751
II ..	299 (16·36)	135	164
III	7	7	..
IV	2	1	1
V	..	..	..
VI	2	2	..
VII	8	3	5
VIII	2	2	..
IX	13	13	..
Total Workers ..	1,828	907	921

A study of 577 households of Kawars (554 in Gadhchiroli, 22 in Yeotmal and Kelapur and one in Melghat show the following land-holding pattern of of the community :—

	Households
No. of households who entirely owned or held land from government for cultivation.	485 (84·06)
No. of households taking land on lease on cash	14 (2·43)
No. of households taking land on lease on crop share.	7 (1·21)
No. of households not holding any land for cultivation.	71 (12·30)
Total ..	577 (100·00)

Out of the 485 households owning or holding land from government for cultivation, 310 held land between 1 acre and 9·9 acres, 152 held land between 10 and 29·9 acres and 23 held land of 30 acres and above.

In the course of this field study in Purada, it was learnt that the Kawars are considered to be the best cultivators and no other tribe can surpass them in agricultural labour. Many Kawars have brought forest land under cultivation. They use cow dung manure in their fields. The implements they use include iron or wooden ploughs, bakhar, fan, patta, axe, tikas, pavada and sickle. Those who hold land by the tank grow quality paddy, the rest grow coarse paddy, lakhudi and kulthi. Paddy is sown broadcast and later transplanted; for wheat and gram, only the broadcast method is followed. Those who can afford to sell their produce sell it in the Kurkheda weekly market on cash. Their women sell hand-pounded rice at the weekly bazar on cash. The Kawars generally do not mortgage their crop. When compelled to raise a loan, they mortgage their cattle, ornaments or brass utensils. To repay the amount borrowed, they offer their personal service for an agreed period.

At Nanhi, women observe impurity during menses for three days and stay apart. If the house has only one room, arrangement is made at another house, but she keeps away from the kitchen. During this period, she can only pound rice but cannot do household or outside work. On the fourth day, she applies black earth to her hair and has a bath. There are no rites marking a girl reaching puberty.

There is no restriction on the diet of a pregnant woman. As a rule, delivery should not take place in a deoghar of the house; a separate hut in the premises is earmarked for the purpose. A midwife from any community such as Mang, Mahar or Pardhan attends the woman and the child. After birth, the midwife cuts the child's nal with a bamboo chip. The placenta is buried in a pit dug in the hut near the mother's cot and the mother and the child bathed on it. On the fifth day, the nal is also buried in the pit. Till the nal (umbilical cord attaching to the child) falls down, mother and child are not deemed pure. The midwife who serves for five days is paid Rs. 2 and also given one paili of paddy a day.

For the first four days afer delivery, the mother is given kulthi pej once a day and thereafter for 10-12 days, she is given only one meal of rice in the evening. No oil is given to her during this period. After 12 days, she is given her usual food. The child is not given anything till the mother starts breast feeding it. If the mother does not get milk, they consult a baiga and follow his advice.

On the fifth day the child's hair is cut by a barber who is paid Rs. 2. All the clothes of the woman and the child are washed by the washerman who is paid Rs. 2. The woman is given a bath and both are then deemed clean. On the evening of the fifth day, all women collect and name the child. The women are given dinner and they present the child some money. The parents also give presents to the child. They do not cradle the child but keep it on a cot. The mother is allowed to enter the kitchen and do household work after five days.

Marriage

The Kawars do not allow marriage within the sept (gotra). Persons of same surnames cannot marry among themselves. They also do not allow marriage between the children of brother and sister. A man cannot marry his wife's elder sister, but may marry her younger sister. Inter-caste marriage is not permitted; if anybody does so, he or she is excommuniciated. If a man has illicit contact with a woman of another caste, he is re-admitted on payment of a fine even if the contact be with a low caste woman. But if a woman has illicit connection with a man of low caste, she is permanently expelled.

The proposal for marriage (mangani) comes from the boy's father. If it is accepted, the members from both the parties assemble at the girl's house where the "pan gur' ceremony takes place. (As gur has to be taken to the girl's house, it is called pan gur).

At Nanhi the boy's father goes with two men to the bride's village. He goes to the house of another tribesman there and sends him to the girl's house to enquire if her father would give his daughter to his son. If the girl's father agrees to the proposal, the boy's father goes to him and presents the girl with a rupee. He then returns home without any talk. Then after a fortnight or a month, the boy's father again goes to the tribesman's house along with ten relatives. He takes two saris, one for the girl and the other for her mother, bangles and gangavan and sends word to the girl's father about his arrival for paydhuni (washing of feet). He then goes to the girl's house. The girl's father washes the feet of the guests. Both inform the assembly about the intended marriage. A lota (metal pot) is filled with paddy, an earthen lamp is kept on it and worshipped. The girl wears the new sari and bows

to all and the party leaves after dinner. The expenditure on this meal is borne by the girl's father unless he is poor.

After two or three years, the boy's father with five to ten men again goes to the girl's father with two saris, a gangavan, and churi (bangles) for the Byaha magni. Accompanied by the go-between, he meets the girl's father. The articles are given to the girl. After putting them on, the girl comes out and bows to her would be father-in-law. The boy's father and party stay in the village for 2 to 4 days and are treated by the girl's relatives. Lastly, the girl's father treats them and calls his relatives also on the occasion. Matters regarding ornaments and clothes are finalised and the date and time of marriage are fixed. The dej is paid at this time. The barat (procession) from the boy's house goes to the girl's house for bringing the girl. They are treated by the girl's father, and the girl, accompanied by children, leaves for the boy's house on the day preceding the day of marriage. Her parents do not accompany her then. When the girl is brought to the boy's house, the castemen are fed. They apply haldi first to the boy and then to the girl. Her parents and the rest of the party come to the boy's village at the time of marriage. They are received on the outskirts of the village by the boy's party with music. The villagers wash the feet of all the members in the girl's party. They are seated in a mandav in front of the boy's house. The boy and the girl are brought out and all apply haldi to them. All are entertained to dinner.

On the next day, the boy is made to sit on his aunt's lap and all women and girls apply oil and haldi to him seven times. This is done to the girl also. First, the aunt takes the boy on her lap and applies haldi. The boy goes into the house. Haldi is then applied to the girl who enters the house. It is the boy's turn again.

After the haldi ceremony, the boy sits on the lap of one of his near relatives and one man sprinkles water on him seven times and then he is bathed. This is done in a separate booth. The boy is then taken into the house. The bride and the bridegroom are fed. The girl remains in the house. The bridegroom is taken out in procession and goes to a nearby house and from there they send a sari, a blouse and ornaments as settled for the girl. The girl is dressed, the boy then comes for marriage with a woollen screen (kambal) held in front; the girl is brought from the house, also with a kambal held in front. Both parties throw akshata at each other; the kambals are withdrawn and the marriage is completed. The girl stands facing the east and the boy stands behind her, also facing the east and their hands are joined. Their mothers and aunts and other women receiving wedding gifts (aher) do arati to them with a lamp in a pot. The boy and the girl go into the house, come out and move in the mandav seven times.

The bride and the bridegroom then sit on a kambal at the front door. The boy's parents wash the toes of both and drink the water. Relatives of the girl do the same. The women who had been given aher saris by the bridegroom add a rupee to the price and put the money before the groom. All other men and women from the girl's side give him a rupee. The boy and the girl are then taken into the house and there is a dinner.

The next morning, members of the boy's party apply kumkum to the boy and give him a rupee each. Relatives and guests then do so. At night, there is a big dinner for all.

The next day the girl's party leaves. If the girl is under age, she goes along with her parents. The boy also goes with them for a month or two. After the girl comes of age, the boy's father goes to the girl's house with a sari. If the boy is deemed quite young, the girl may stay with her parents for some more time. The boy's father will again go to the girl's house to bring her after the boy becomes mature.

Polygyny is permitted. In widow re-marriage (called pat jodani or churi pahanane) the widow puts on new bangles and that completes the re-marriage. It is performed in Chaitra and Falgun only. It is said that the Tanwars, a sub-caste, do not permit widow re-marriage. If a bachelor wants to marry a widow, he has first to marry a spear. A widow can marry her younger brother-in-law, but not the elder one. She cannot also marry her cousins. Widow re-marriage has to be performed with her father's consent.

Divorce is not allowed at Nanhi. If a woman commits adultery, the caste panchayat meets and asks the man to return the woman to her husband if he wants her. The man has to give her husband Rs. 101 to Rs. 200 as decided by the panchayat. The panchayat keeps one-fourth of the amount and spends it on entertainment.

Death

The Kawars practise both burial and cremation. They allow a person to die on a cot and the body is then placed on a kambal on the ground. Burial is

at night. They do not bathe the body. They apply oil or haldi when the body is being placed on the bier and dress it in a new white cloth. The corpse is laid on a cot with its head in front and carried to the cemetery.

A male corpse is placed in the grave on its stomach, its face touching the ground ; a female corpse is laid on its back, face upwards. Cow dung mixed in water (gobar sada) is sprinkled in the grave and the corpse is then laid in it. The chief mourner first throws earth into the grave. While doing so, he asks the deceased to be born to him. The grave is then filled.

Women do not go to the cemetery. The widow's bangles are not broken while carrying her husband's body to the grave. It is done on the third day.

If the corpse is to be burnt, a burning cow-dung cake is taken. The corpse is not taken to the cemetery. It is burnt in their land or near the village. The body is carried round the pyre and then placed on it. The son or a near relative kindles the pyre. After the body is completely burnt, they bring one bone and keep it in the verandah for three or four days. On some convenient day, they take it to a teertha (a holy place) and let it in water by employing a brahman priest.

The body is lowered at the visava on the way to the cemetery at a place where two roads meet. If there is no such junction, they put down the cot by the side of the road and place handfuls of paddy at the four legs. While returning from funeral, they wash their hands and feet at a tank or take a bath and come back to the deceased's house and stay there for a while. They take food outside their houses and return to the deceased's house. They feed the family members of the deceased and sleep there. Next day in the afternoon, the castemen send cooked food to the deceased's house. In the evening, two castemen cook rice and dal in the deceased's courtyard. All bhaubands are invited for dinner. The inmates of the house and their bhaubands are served on leaves, a portion from each leaf is taken and kept aside. These persons are served only once. The leaves are kept in a basket and on the top is placed the portion taken from each leaf. All these are taken to the visava and kept there and the deceased is called. A lamp is lighted there.

On the third day after death, the barber and the dhobi are called and all the castemen get shaved. At noon, they bathe in the tank, keep rice, cooked and uncooked, and chapatis in three leaf cups and sweet oil in one leaf cup. White thread is wound five times round two bundles of grass (5" to 6" long), and they are buried near the water. This is done before bath. After bath, they kindle a cow dung fire and castemen throw the cooked rice and chapati in the fire. They apply the oil to their heads. While men stand on the bank, the women go to the tank, bathe and put rice and chapati in the fire as the men did. The women break the widow's bangles and wipe off her kumkum before going for the bath.

While returning, the chief mourner picks up a small stone with his left toes and, taking it by his left hand, he passes it on to the hands of the man behind him, who in turn passes it on the one behind him and so on till the last man throws it back. When they reach the door of the deceased's house, one man pours haldi water on the small finger of the mourner's left hand who lets it drops on his left foot. Then they go home and put on dry clothes. At noon, the deceased's family and others at their place are called for dinner by castemen. At night, all castemen go and dine at the deceased's house. The chief mourner sits on a plank in front of the door and other mourners sit around. All wave an earthen lamp before him, apply oil or akshata to his forehead and present him with some money. They advise the mourners to pull on well and then partake of food. There is no other ceremony. Next day all the persons in the deceased's family including guests go for lunch to the castemen, one to each house, and return.

On the day (tithi) in the second fortnight of Bhadrapad corresponding to the day (tithi) on which the person died falling after the first Akshaya Tritiya (Vaishakh sud 3) after death, the son performs shraddha. He goes to a tank with some rice and urid dal in a dodaka leaf ; after bathing, he offers the rice and urid along with water to the deceased, five times. The remaining rice and urid he carries back and throws on cow dung on the way. On reaching home, he washes a spot on the floor with cow dung, kindles a fire there, worships it, makes an offering of cooked food to it and also throws some cooked food on the roof of the house in the name of his ancestors for the crows to eat. He gives a feast to his castemen to which one man is invited from each house.

All the Kawars returned Hinduism as their religion. Russell and Hira Lal had reported the religion of the Kawars as entirely of an animistic character.

The Kawars, they said, had a vague idea of a supreme deity whom they called Bhagvan and whom they identified with the sun (p. 399). In the course of the present field study, it was seen that they had no well-built temple but daub sindur on stones under a tree and worship them. Their superior god is Mauli. He is installed outside the village site under some tree in the open, in the form of a stone besmeared with sindur. He is the village deity of the whole village community and not necessarily of the Kawars. At Nanhi, they offer a female goat, which has not produced any kid and which is either reddish or grey in colour, to Mauli in case of a small-pox epidemic. Thakur dev is installed near Mauli. He is given a goat by all the villagers together, before threshing operations begin. They do not offer fowl to any god as they themselves do not eat them. They worship a Ganapati image by way of community worship or in the house. While they do not engage a brahman priest for worshipping Ganapati, they do so for Satyanarayan puja.

Dulha dev and Pahad Pat, their family deities are worshipped in each house. They are represented by an iron trident installed on Dasara day in the dining hall and by it three small flags, white, red and black, are set up. They worship these deities on festival days. They offer two goats to these deities once in each generation, one before the deity and the other outside the village, on a Friday in Paush. The goat is sacrified in the field at sunrise on Friday for which they invite relatives and friends. They kill the animal, cook it in the field and eat it there. In the evening, they kill another goat in front of the deity in the house and cook it the next day.

They prepare a small booth of guava branches, three or four feet in width. Near the booth is kept an earthen pot. A new white cloth is put on it. Five small heaps of rice and an earthen lamp are placed in the booth. A metal pot is filled with paddy and five heaps of rice and is worshipped. A goat is made to eat one out of the five heaps of rice and then it is killed by the baiga (medicineman). In the evening, they put the lamp from the booth in the earthen pot, put it in a 'sika' (sling), which is hung from a stick taken by two persons on their shoulders and brought to the house where the household deities are kept. It is covered in white cloth and put before the deities. Five small heaps of rice are made and they are worshipped by the baiga. The second goat is made to eat one of the heaps and then killed and cooked the next day.

Some Kawar families have a tradition of worshipping jawara. In front of the Dulha dev and Pahad Pat, they make an earthern square on the evening of Chaitra sud 4 and sow in it seven kinds of grains. In front of it they keep a pot filled with earth and therein also they sow seven kinds of grains. They water and worship them till the ninth day. On the tenth day, the head of the household offers a goat to this. Before meals, they take the kundi and the crop sown to a tank to the accompaniment of music in procession.

The Kawars perform Satyanarayan puja and attend it at others' places. They revere all Hindu gods.

The Kawars believe that if a person's desires are not fulfilled during his lifetime, the person becomes a ghost or a witch capable of causing evils. At Nanhi, in the case of any illness or difficulty, they consult the baiga. He gets possessed and names the witch and the remedy. The tonhi (witch) is driven out. In cases of illness 75 per cent go first to the baiga and only at the last stage they consult a doctor.

At Nanhi, they deem Saturday as inauspicious for marriage. Amavasya is not inauspicious but the day of eclipse is deemed so. They have marriage talks in Magh only. Saturday is avoided for marriage talks. Marriage is celebrated in Falgun and Chaitra and it is performed at any time between 4 and 10 p.m. A brahman priest is not consulted for the time and day of marriage. The Kawar believe that a guest would come if two crows feed each other on the roof of the house. If an animal, including a cat, crosses one's path from left to right, it is deemed inauspicious; if it goes from right to left, it is auspicious. A person with an empty water pot going in any direction is inauspicious. They also deem inauspicious if a person returning from a latrine with an empty pot crosses their path.

In all their religious ceremonies, the baiga, who is generally a Gond by caste, is present. He acts as a priest in religious ceremonies. He is also physician and magician. The Kawars have great faith in him. Whenever a calamity befalls, they first consult the baiga who invariably traces them to the wrath of a god and advises them to perform puja to propitiate that god.

The Kawars celebrate the Hindu festivals of Jivati, Dasara, Bijori, Divali, Holi and Akshaya Tritiya. Jivati or Hareli is celebrated on the first day of Shravan. They worship all agricultural implements and cattle and feed the latter with uncooked balls of rice flour in the morning. The cattle are not put to work on this day which is observed as a festival.

Pola is celebrated on the 30th day of Shravan. On this day, they wash the cattle and feed them well. They give the cattle rest on that day.

Some Kawars observe Ganesh Chaturthi. They keep the Ganapati idol upto the 14th day of Bhadrapad sud. They do not observe Naral Poornima or Gokul Ashtami.

On Dasara day, they replace the three flags in front of their family god, Dulha dev, and offer him food made of the new rice. It is only after this that they start eating the new rice.

On Bijori, they offer a goat to Thakur dev near Mata devi's alter before starting threshing operations. One goat is offered by all after harvesting. Once in two three years, they also offer a goat to Thakur dev at the beginning of the monsoon.

During Divali, they worship cattle and give them cooked food on Bali Pratipada. At noon, they worship Govardhan made of cattle dung at the door and let loose the cattle. In the evening, they worship Shahadh dev outside the village site. They light lamps for one day on which they worship cattle. They do not observe Bhaubij.

Holi celebrations are held outside the village. The whole village has one Holi. They arrange fuel in a circular shape and worship it after evening meals. They offer one coconut on behalf of all and light it. They have a feast on the day following Holi. They have dal and rice and wheat chapatis on that day.

Akshaya Tritiya is observed on Vaishakh sud 3, On that morning the village headman takes about ten kilos of paddy to Thakur dev and keeps it before him. Five small heaps are made in front. The baiga offers worship and makes a fowl to eat from the heap and then kills it. He gives every cultivator a handful of paddy which he sows in his field the same evening.

Sub-divisions

The Kawars are divided into the following twelve groups—(1) Tanwar, (2) Dudh Kawar, (3) Kamalvanshi, (4) Paikara, (5) Rathia, (6) Rautis, (7) Cherwas, (8) Chanti, (9) Ghangud, (10) Rakhaud, (11) Koliha and (12) Khoma. According to Russell and Hira Lal, they had eight endogamous divisions and they were the same as those mentioned at items Nos. (1) to (8) above. Of these eight divisions, the Tanwars were the highest while the Chanti, Cherwa and Rautis were considered the lowest (pp. 390-391). The Tanwar group is said to be that to which the ex-Kawar zamindars belong. They claim to be Tanwar Rajputs and wear sacred threads. They abstain from eating fowl and widow marriage is not permitted by them. The Paikara sub-division derives its name from Paik, a foot soldier; they say their ancestors had formerly followed this occupation in the armies of the Haihayavanshi rajas of Ratnapur. Almost all Kawars in Gadhchiroli tehsil are Paikaras.

None of the sub-castes will eat together. Each sub-caste is further sub-divided into a large number of septs. The common sept names of Kawars in Gadhchiroli are Bhaisa, Kolhia, Baghaderiya, Jata, Thela, Motia, Bakhkhar, Khomba and Bhutbilai. They do not know the meaning of their sept names. They consider that all persons belonging to one sept are descended from one ancestor; marriage within the sept is prohibited.

Caste panchayat

In every Kawar village, there is a caste committee composed of one member from each household of the village. The head of this committee is called mukhiya. The committee decides social and religious disputes of tribesmen. They have also a large organisation beyond the village known as the community panchayat of the pargana comprising four to five Kawar villages. The head of this panchayat is called parganiya. As far as possible, their complaints are decided by the village caste committee; in case of difference of opinion, the matter is referred to the community panchayat. The parganiya hears both the parties and, in consultation with the members of the community panchayat, gives his decision which is considered final and is obeyed.

At Purada village, the Kawars consider themselves superior to Mahar, Chambhar, Bhangi and Kosrekalars. At Nanhi, they accept water from Gawali, Koli, Gond and other superior castes of the village. If a Kawar girl is seduced by a member of the community, she is married to him; but if she is seduced by a man of some other community, she is expelled from the tribe.

Reference—

Russell, R. V., and Hira Lal. The tribes and castes of the Central provinces of India. v. III. 1916.

18 MINOR TRIBES

THOTI

In the President's order, 1956 as modified by the Bombay reorganisation act, 1960, Thoti and Gond are mentioned as two separate tribes in all the five districts of the Marathwada division of Maharashtra in addition to Rajura tehsil in Chanda district.

In the notified areas in Nagpur division, Thotia or Thotya is mentioned as a sub-tribe of Gonds. Field investigations conducted at Bibi and Dhamangaon villages from Rajura (Chanda) show that the Thotis living there have marital relations with the Thotias or Thotyas of the Vidarbha (Nagpur) region. This may therefore suggest that Thotia or Thotya is a corrupt form of Thoti and *vice versa*.

The Chanda gazetteer (1909) describes the Thotis as a small tribe of bamboo workers who were formerly wandering musicians. It is likely that the name 'Thoti' got associated with the tribe because of its profession of making doors from bamboo mats called thattis. The Gonds who are engaged in bamboo work are called Gond Buruds or Thatias or Thotyas because they follow the profession of a Burud who makes articles from bamboos, specially thattis. They also sing Gondi songs and myths and it is said that out of these two professions two separate groups, one of bamboo workers and one of musicians, have been formed among the Gond Buruds. The bamboo workers style themselves as Gond Buruds or Thatias or Thotyas and those who sing Gondi songs and myths are called Thotis. The Thotis who act as musicians to Gonds in the two investigated villages, however, call themselves as Gond Buruds.

According to Russel and Hira Lal, Thatia is a sub-tribe of Gonds and is also called as Gaiki or Mahato in Betul. They regard Thotia and Thothia as sub-division of Gonds and Pardhans (v. I, p. 414). The Thotis from Rajura tehsil claim marital relations with the Gond Buruds and the Thatias or Thotyas who are declared as a sub-tribe of Gond in parts of the Vidarbha region. Their exogamous divisions, sept names, religious beliefs and practices are similar to those of the Gonds. Moreover all the Thotis in the State have Gondi as their mother-tongue. These factors indicate that they are an offshoot or a satellite group of the Gonds or have originated from them.

Field enquiries show that the Thotis of Rajura are immigrants from a neighbouring district of Andhra Pradesh. They are settled in Rajura for three generations now. The 1961 census shows that 25 of the 109 persons—56 males and 53 females—were born in Andhra Pradesh. Of these, 45 were returned from four villages of Rajura tehsil and 64 from seven villages of Kinwat tehsil. Their main concentration is in Dhamangaon with 29 in Rajura tehsil, and Anjankheda and Gondwadsa in Kinwat tehsil with 27 and 15 respectively.

The Thoti family is of a simple nucleated type comprising father, mother, unmarried sons and daughters. A study of 31 households comprising the 109 persons shows that 24 of them mostly consist of nuclear families. Extended families where married sons and other relatives like father's brother, divorced and widowed sisters are living are found to be only seven. The average number of persons per household is 3·37. Wife and husband both contribute to the maintenance of the family. Women are however subject to certain taboos. Consequently they are prevented from taking part in some religious and social ceremonies. Women are not always permitted to worship the Bada dev and are not allowed to take part in the purification rite which is performed on the 12th day of maternity. The maternal uncle enjoys a special position in the life of the Thotis, specially in naming the newly born child.

Like Gonds, the Thotis are divided into several endogamous divisions based on the gods worshipped by them. So also they are split into several exogamous totemic goups. Their sept names are akin to those of the Gonds. The professional groups of bamboo workers and musicians among them are considered to be of equal status for acceptance of food and water or for marital relations between them. They live in separate parts of the villages inhabited by the Gonds, in small huts consisting of a room with a door at the front and one or two holes at the back which serve as windows. These huts are erected on a plinth of stone or earth. The walls of the hut are of wooden ribs or of bamboo matting plastered with mud and cow dung. The sloping roofs are thatched with grass. A hanging bamboo mat (thatti) forms the door of the hut. A well-to-do Thoti has a verandah at the front of his house which is closed by a thick bamboo mat (kada). The huts are square in shape and stand separate from one another.

The common dress of men consists of a dhoti, a shirt and a piece of white cloth which forms the turban (pheta). Superfine dhotis, Bengali shirts, caps and footwear are becoming popular among the younger generation and also among well-to-do families. School-going boys wear shirts and chaddis (shorts) but children in arms often go without any clothes. Men have no special ceremonial dress. The usual dress of a woman comprises a lugade (sari) and choli (bodice). A sari is worn according to the local Maratha or Gond style. It is tied round the waist and its one end is carried over the shoulder and the head. On ceremonial occasions, they generally wear a new sari and choli. They do their hair by parting it in the middle and gathering it behind in a knot. Suvasinis wear kumkum on the forehead.

Men and women are fond of ornaments, mostly made of silver. A few gold ornaments are also worn. Ornaments made of copper, glass and beads are not uncommon. A ring (mundi) made of copper, silver or gold, worn on a left hand finger, a pair of solid silver bracelets (yers) on the wrists and a pair of gold ear-rings (balis) are the common ornaments worn by men. Balis and yers are not popular among the youth. These are worn by a few well-to-do men only on special occasions like marriages. The most common ornaments worn by married women are a necklace of black glass beads (kali poth) and four to six bangles of glass on each wrist. A few well-to-do women wear a pair of hollow, round silver bracelets (yers) and a pair of solid flat bracelets (patalya) on their wrists in addition to a chain of gold-plated beads on a silver thread (ekadani) round the neck, a pair of silver armlets (danda) and a silver chain (kamarpata) around the waist. Except the kali poth and glass bangles which are worn daily, the other ornaments are used only on special occasions.

Tattooing was very popular in the past, particularly among women. They used to have profuse tattoo marks on the back, arms, breast, legs and face. The most common designs were columns with alternate vertical and horizontal lines, dots, stars and crosses. Contacts with non-tribal communities have made them give up tattooing all over the body except on the forehead, cheeks and chin, where a dot or a semicircle with a dot above it denoting the moon and a star is tattooed. It is said that a young girl is not eligible for marriage unless she has some tattoo mark on her body.

The staple food of the Thotis is jowar and tur or mug dal. Sometimes they also eat vegetables. Rice and wheat are consumed on festival days or when there are guests in the house. They are fond of meat and fish, but can afford it only on rare occasions. Fish is eaten frequently. They say that they used to eat beef and pork in former days, but they have now given up this habit owing to the influence of the neighbouring communities. They chew tobacco, smoke bidi and drink liquor. Drinking tea has now become a common habit. Most of them take it without milk.

In the 1961 census, all the 109 Thotis returned Gondi as their mother-tongue. Of them, 57 persons reported a knowledge of Marathi and three had knowledge of Telugu in addition to Gondi. In the two investigated villages, they speak Gondi among themselves; but with outsiders they speak in Marathi as it is the dominant language of the area. Only three persons (males) out of 109 were returned as literates and only one had reached the primary stage of education. All females were reported to be illiterate.

Although making of bamboo articles and singing are reported to be their traditional occupations none of the Thotis returned any of the above two occupations according to the 1961 census. They are now living as agriculturists. Out of 67 persons—31 males and 36 females—who were returned as workers, 12—five males and seven females—were cultivators and 55—26 males and 29 females—were working as agricultural labourers. A study of the land holding pattern of the Thotis in Rajura show that out of 12 households there, ten had no land for cultivation. Of the remaining two, one was holding land about eleven acres and the other was cultivating land on lease contract. A few of them are either engaged as musicians in Gond ceremonies or in making bamboo articles as subsidiary occupations. Some supplement their income from agricultural pursuits by rearing animals, poultry keeping and fishing.

Among the Thotis, the delivery of a woman takes place in a separate hut constructed in the premises, and a local mid-wife from any community is engaged. The mid-wife cuts the umbilical cord and buries it at the bathing place outside the delivery hut. The mother is given light food for four days after child-birth. On the fifth day, Chhati is worshipped and from that day, she is allowed to have her usual diet. She is considered impure for 12 days and is purified on the twelth day after a rite involving participation of menfolk. On this day, the male members of the family go outside the village

and worship the Bada dev under a mahua tree with an offering of fowl and liquor according to the instructions of the family priest (kathodya). On return, some drops of liquor are sprinkled on the mother and the child and thereupon the mother is considered to be purified. A purificatory feast with non-vegetarian food and liquor is arranged. In the case of a well-to-do family, some important members of the community are invited. The child is named some time after the purificatory rite. Generally the maternal uncle of the child or the aunt names the child and the ceremoney is followed by a feast.

At Bibi and Dhamangaon, boys are mostly married between the ages of 15 and 20 and girls from 12 to 15. Marriage within the sept is prohibited. Marriage with father's sister's daughter, elder brother's widow or wife's younger sister is allowed. Marriage with father's brother's daughter or mother's sister's daughter is prohibited. The marriage takes place usually in the morning at the bridegroom's place outside the residential area of the village mostly in Chaitra and Vaishakh as all the days of these months are considered auspicious for the purpose. Generally the boy's father takes the initiative for marriage alliances. He has to pay a bride price of Rs. 12·50 to 25 in money and 4-6 saris to the girl's father. A week before the marriage day, khaja is performed at the bride's place by the bridegroom's father by presenting to the bride a sari, three seers of wheat and five pieces of betelnut, turmeric and coconut. All the guests assembled are then entertained to a feast. At the time of marriage the bride and the bridegroom stand facing each other with a cloth held between them. Some women of the tribe sing songs composed for the occasion and throw akshata over their heads. An elder ties the clothes of the bridal pair into a knot. The couple is then brought to the sacred pole (munda) in the centre of the marriage booth. There the bridegroom ties a garsoli (necklace of black glass beads) around the neck of the bride and then both walk five times around the munda. This is called bhawar. The bride and bridegroom are then made to sit on a blanket in a corner of the marriage booth where persons from both the parties offer gifts to the bridal pair after applying haldi and akshata to their foreheads. This is called mituswal and is followed by a feast and drinking. The next morning women from both sides assemble in the marriage booth and anoint the bride with haldi and oil. While this is going on, two members of the tribe, called muraris, stand on the roof of the booth and from there sprinkle cold water on the women assembled in the booth. The marriage is then over.

The system of lam zana, i.e., serving for a bride at her father's house, does not exist among the Thotis. They say they used to have marriage by capture in old days, but not now. Widow remarriage (pat) is permitted and a widow is allowed to marry the younger brother of her deceased husband if she wants to. In such a marriage, the bridegroom puts bangles on the wrists of the widow and applies kumkum on her forehead. Divorce is also permitted. Polygyny is allowed but is not common.

Burial is the usual way of disposing the dead. Cremation, a recent practice, is adopted by a few well-to-do families. The body is bathed in hot water and, after putting a rupee or a copper coin in its mouth, is wrapped in a new piece of white cloth and carried to the burial ground by any six members of the community. It is lowered into a grave with its head to the south and its legs towards the north. All the persons attending the funeral throw handfuls of earth into the grave and, after filling it carefully, take a bath, wash their clothes and return to the house of the deceased. The members from the family of the dead worship the spot where the deceased breathed his last with an offering of a fowl or a goat and liquor. Persons attending the funeral are then sprinkled with liquor after they are supposed to be purified. On the same day a feast is served to members of the community followed by drinking. In cremation, the body is laid on the pyre with the head towards the south and face upward. One of the sons, preferably the eldest, or a near relative in the absence of a son, lights the pyre. A goat is offered to the deceased. The members of the community, both male and female, cook their meals there and then eat. At the dawn of the next day, all go back and gather at the house of the deceased. A number of small earthen pots are kept there in the open yard according to the number of gods of the sept of the deceased. A goat is sacrificed and drops of its blood are put into each of the earthen pots. On the third day of cremation, members of the family of the deceased are purified by taking a bath and drinking liquor.

Water and food are offered to the ancestors once in a year and during all festivals. The deva-karan ceremony is generally performed at any time within 20 years of the death of the deceased. It is believed that this ceremony will lead the dead soul to join his ancestors who act as their gods. The kathodya (family priest) of the sept does the worship and joins the soul of the deceased with their gods. After that, they worship the dead man as

one of their gods. Deva-karan is not performed for unmarried persons and children.

The Thotis mostly worship their dead ancestors as their family gods. They also have a number of local deities such as Mata-devi (the goddess of small pox), Jagoba-devi (the goddess of disease), Waghoba-dev (the tiger god), Nag-dev (the serpent god) and the boundary god. In the event of epidemics and diseases, they sacrifice goats and hens to Mata-devi and Jagoba-devi. Waghoba-dev protects the cattle from wild animals and evil spirits; both are worshipped occasionally. They also worship Bada-dev and Bhivasen-dev, the gods of the Gonds. Bada-dev is said to reside in a mahua tree near the village in the form of a bunch of hair from a cow's tail kept in an earthen pot. He is worshipped in Vaishakh and also during all social and religious ceremonies with an offering of goats, fowls, coconuts and liquor. Bhivasen-dev is the deity of rains and is worshipped occasionally. They also respect the Hindu god, Hanuman. In all sacrifices or rituals, they engage the services of a kathodya. Every sept has its hereditary kathodya who is supposed to possess the power to invoke any god. At the time of suffering and calamities they consult the kathodya. On such occasions, the kathodya generally asked them to offer worship to the god concerned, as he attributes all suffering to the wrath of one god or the other. The kathodya also protects them from witch-craft and sorcery.

The Thotis consider themselves as Hindus. During the 1961 census, all the 109 Thotis in the State returned Hinduism as their religion. They observe most of the important Hindu festivals of the region like Naga Panchami, Pola, Dasara and Holi in the same manner as caste Hindus of the region. In addition, they worship their dead ancestors on all these festivals like the Gonds. Another difference is they celebrate Dasara on Ashvin Poornima (full moon of Ashvin) instead of Ashvin Dashami (tenth day of the bright half of Ashvin) on which it is celebrated by Hindu communities of the region. On the day of Dasara, they worship all their agricultural implements. Those who do not have them worship an axe. Holi, most important festival, is observed by them on Phalgun Poornima (full moon day of Phalgun) by lighting faggots in the open area of the hamlet. Drinking, singing and dancing mark celebration. On the next day they throw coloured water on each other, go dancing from house to house and demand a fagawa (gift in the form of cash or grain) from the villagers. The amount or the grain so collected is spent on a feast which is attended by all members of the community.

In social status, the Thotis consider themselves as inferior to the Gonds. They accept food and water from Gonds, but not from the Pardhans. The Gonds, however, do not accept food and water from either the Thotis and the Pardhans. The Thotis accept alms only from the Gonds and the Kolams and a person accepting alms from any other caste is expelled.

The Thotis have a panchyat of their own for dealing with social and religious disputes. The head of this panchayat is called karbhari. The decisions of the panchayat in the matters referred to it for settlement are generally accepted by the parties concerned. In case of disobedience, the persons concerned are excommunicated from the community. Offenders are mostly fined and the amount of fine is spent on community feasts. Temporary expulsion from the community is imposed for minor offences and the person concerned is readmitted to the tribe after he provides a feast.

VITOLIA

Vitolia, Kotwalia or Barodia, appear to be a tribe of Gujarat where they returned an appreciable population of 8,838 persons in the 1961 census. In Maharashtra they form a minor scheduled tribe with a small population of only 898 persons—439 males and 459 females. The other two States where they are notified as a scheduled tribe are Mysore and Rajasthan. They were however not returned from Rajasthan during the 1961 census. Mysore State reported only 4 Vitolias. Enthoven says that the Vitolia are also known as Vitolanas, Kotwalia of the Ghanch caste, Wansphoda, Palvada, Kotwalia and Vitoria. He feels they are a group of outcastes such as Chodharas, Dublas, Gamits and other lower castes of similar standing. The term 'wansphoda' is said to indicate their occupation of making bamboo baskets and mats (p. 457).

In the 1961 census, they were returned in Maharashtra only from four districts, seven in Greater Bombay, 90 in Nasik, 799 in Dhulia and two in Poona out of the 13 districts in western Maharashtra (including Greater Bombay) where they are declared as a notified scheduled tribe. Excepting the seven

returned from Greater Bombay, the rest of the population hailed from rural areas. Of these, 889 were returned as Kotwalia and two as Barodia. A study of some census slips from Dhulia shows that a few use Kotwalia (name of the tribe) as their surname. Some of the surnames recorded during the 1961 census were Kotwal, Kotwalia, More, Gaikwad, Pawar, Mali, Naik, Bhil, Padvi, Sonavane, Godhade, Thakare, Gavit, Valvi, Mavchi, Barde and Koli. Of these, Kotwal and Kotwalia are more common. Some of the surnames like Bhil and Gavit are the names of important tribes of the region and Padvi, Valvi and Mavchi are the names of the divisions of Gamit or Gavit of the same region. Similarly Mali and Koli also occur in the area as distinct caste names. Enthoven says that the tribe has no endogamous or exogamous divisions.

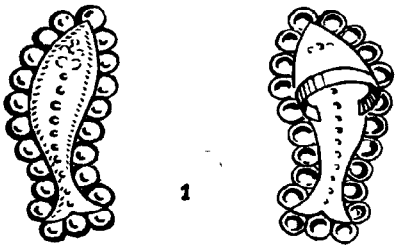
Bhili, Marathi and Mavchi, a Bhil dialect, are the important mother-tongues of the tribe in Maharashtra. In 1961 census they have returned seven mother-tongues, of which Bhili is spoken by 428 persons, Marathi by 224 persons and Mavchi by 179. The other mother-tongues reported are Kotali 59, Gujarati 6, Banjari 1 and Hindi 1. Except one person who knows Hindi in addition to his mother-tongue Bhili, none has reported knowledge of any subsidiary language. According to the 1961 census only 33 persons (3·67) are literates. Among the literates only one is a female, three persons (males) have passed the primary or junior basic standard of education; 29 males and one females are literates without any educational level.

The traditional occupation of the tribe is said to be making baskets, winnowing fans and bamboo mats (Enthoven, 459). The tribe still appears to follow this occupation. Of the 251 males and 235 females returned as workers during the 1961 census, 11 males and 7 females were cultivators and 23 males and 10 females were agricultural labourers. The remaining 435 were working in the non-agricultural sector. Of the 405 returning household industry, 402 were engaged in making mats, baskets and winnowing fans, one was working as a tailor and two were engaged in cattle rearing. Nine males and 2 females were engaged in livestock, forestry and fishing, 197 males and 208 females in household industry, 6 males in manufacturing, 2 males in construction and 3 males and 8 females in other services. Of these eleven, one was a village kotwal and the remaining ten were labourers. Thus nearly 83 per cent of the working population still follows their traditional occupation of making mats, winnowing fans and baskets. Cultivators form only 3·7 per cent of the total workers and agricultural labourers 6·8 per cent. Ten households in Nandurbar tehsil and 112 households in Nawapur tehsil both of Dhulia district, were studied to know the landholding pattern of the tribe. Only one household in Nandurbar was found to have land ranging between 15 and 20 acres. Only 3 households in Nawapur had land ranging between 7·5 and 9·9 acres, 10 and 12·4 acres and 15 and 19·9 acres respectively.

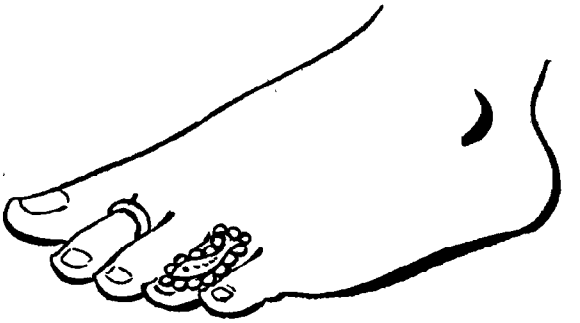
Early marriage does not seem to be common. During 1961, only 3 females of the community were returned as married out of 208 males and 223 females from the age-group 0-14. Girls are married even after they attain puberty. Marriages among them are prohibited within four degrees of relationship. The practice of paying bride price to the girl's father is in vogue. Except Saturday or Sunday any other day is considered auspicious but Monday is usually selected for this purpose. The marriage takes place at the bride's house. The god Pandar is worshipped on this occasion with an offering of toddy, liquor and goat's meat. Polygyny is permitted but not polyandry. A widow may marry her father's sister's son or maternal uncle's son or any other member of her deceased husband's family who is not older than the widow. She is also allowed to marry the younger brother of her deceased husband. Generally Wednesday is preferred for such re-marriages. No ceremony is performed on this occasion. Divorce is permissible. It may be initiated by either side. The party who seeks divorce has to pay a fine. A divorced woman is allowed to re-marry and this re-marriage is performed like a widow re-marriage. Both burial and cremation are in vogue. Small children are buried. Persons dying of cholera, small-pox and leprosy are also buried. On the second or third day, rice and pulse cooked together is placed on the spot where the body was burnt or buried and castemen are feasted. After two months, a stone smeared with sindur is placed below a tree as a memorial stone or khatran (Enthoven, 457, 459).

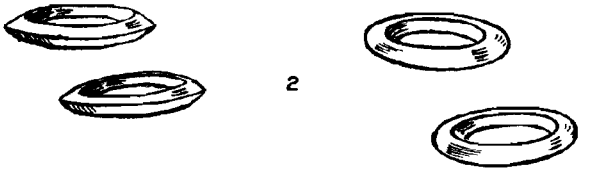
The tribe worships Dewali, Pandar-dev, Simario and Kakabalia to whom they offer liquor, goats, hens and coconuts either on Sundays or Tuesdays. They also worship the images of their dead ancestors, especially when their children fall ill or when they have taken vows. Of the festivals they observe, Divali, Holi and Balev deserve special mention. During the 1961 census, all the 898 persons of the tribe returned 'Hinduism' as their religion.

some tribal ornaments



1

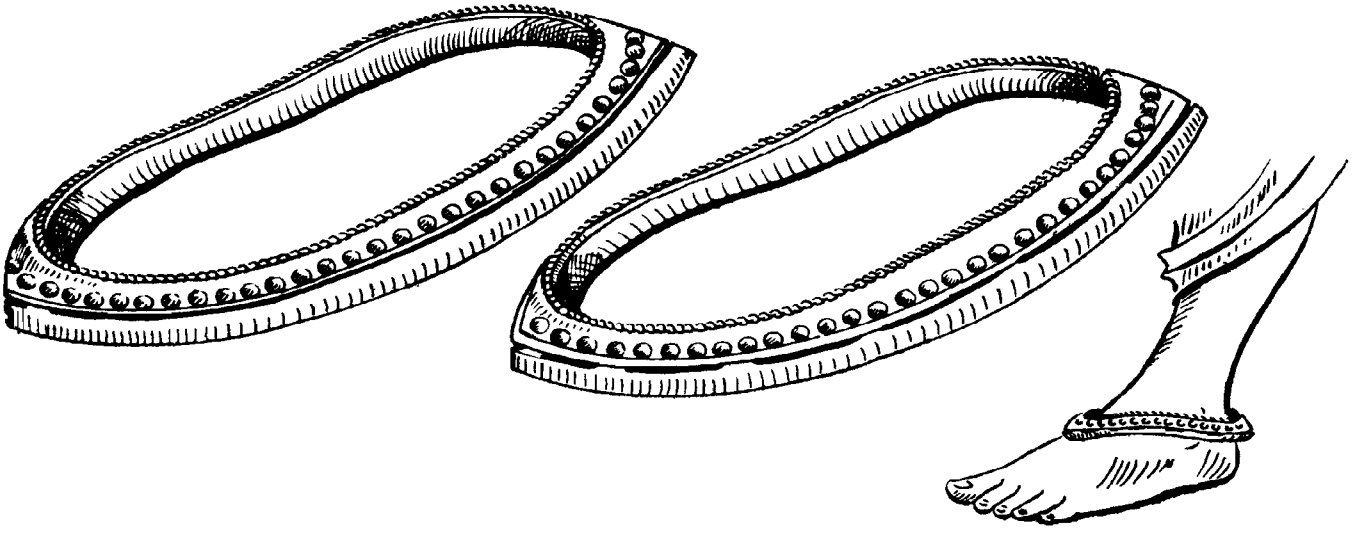




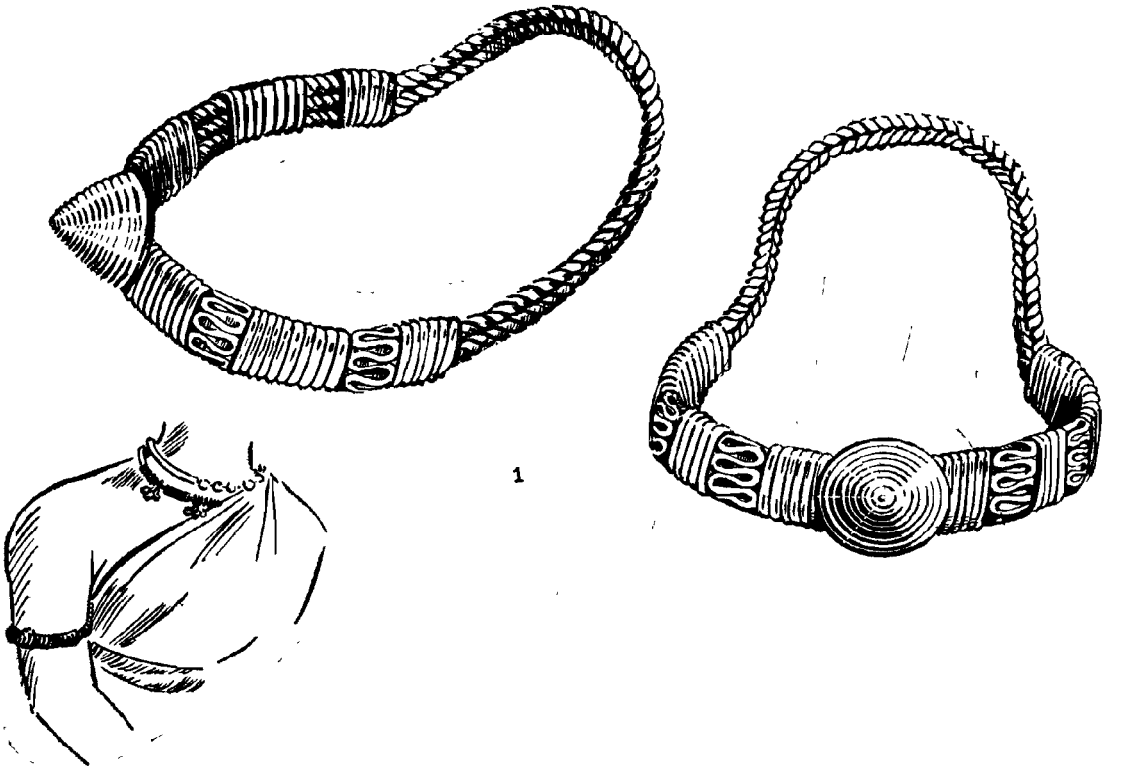
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1. Angatha ..
2. Tongale ..

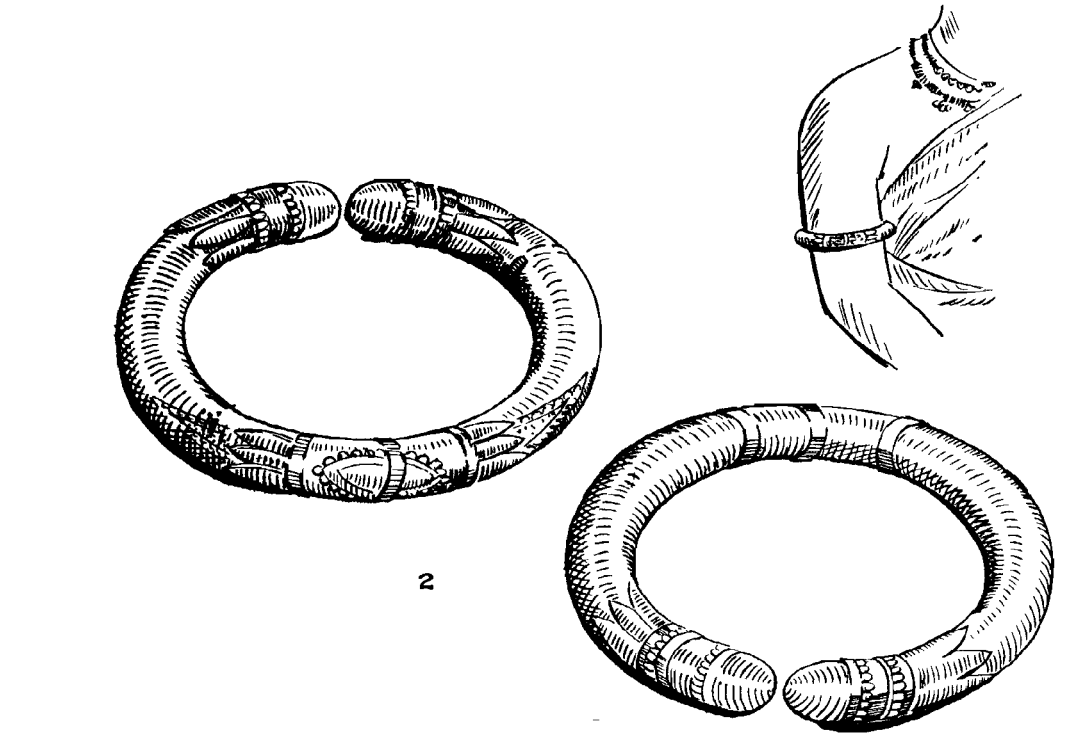
} Varli (Thana)



some tribal ornaments



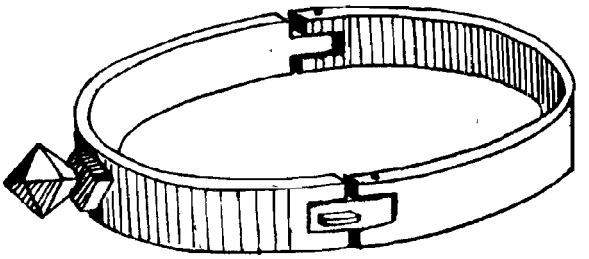
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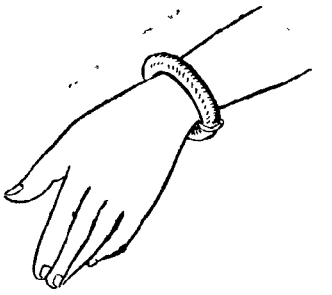
2

1. Waki—Korku .. } Amravati
2. Tadiya—Korku .. }

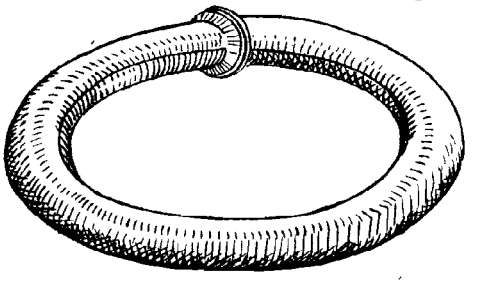
some tribal ornaments

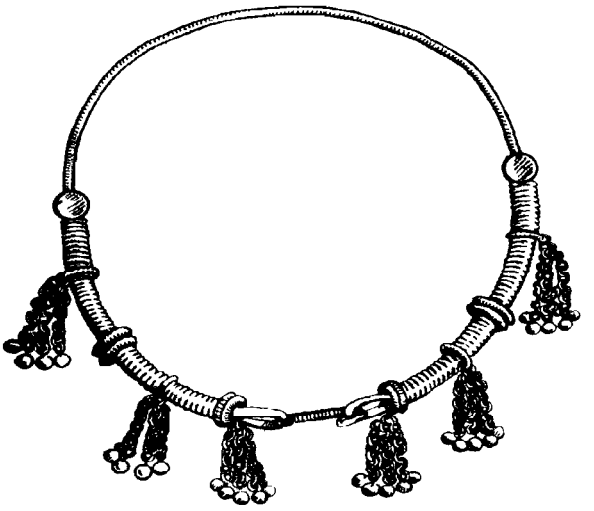


Yere (Bhil)

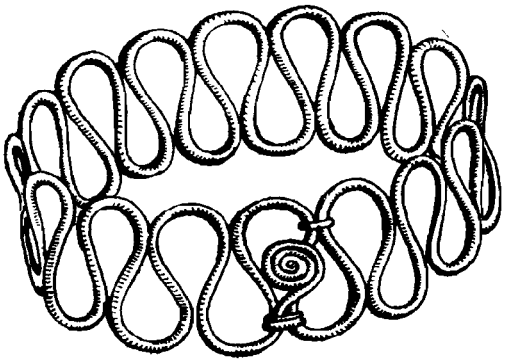


1





Ghungurwali Saree (Pawara Bhil)

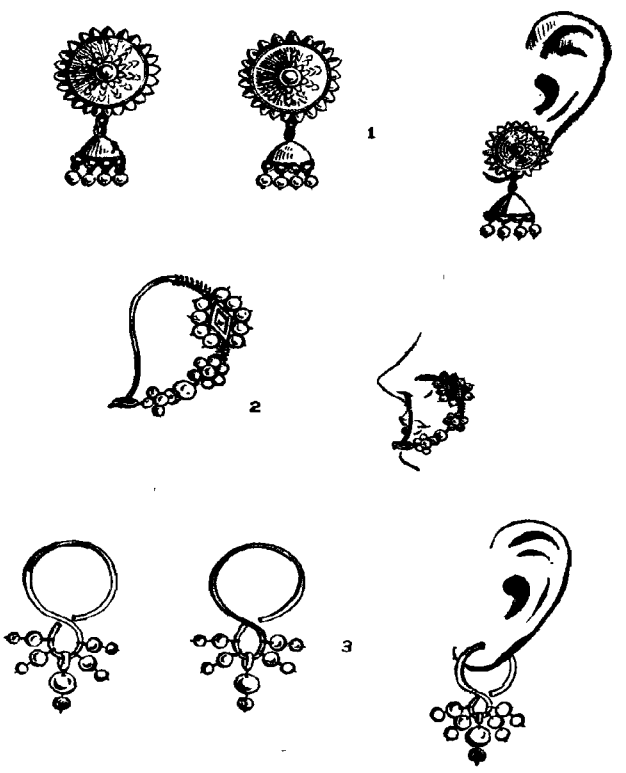


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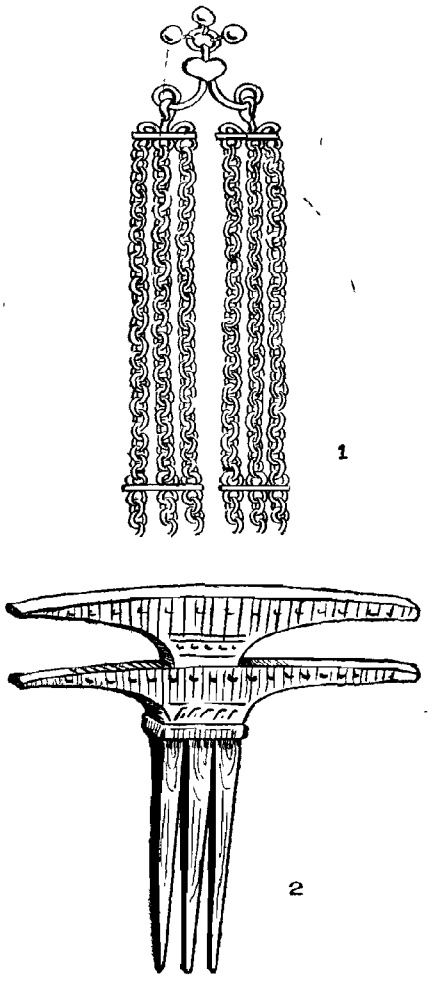


1. Goth (Varli)
2. Waki (Pawara Bhil)

some tribal ornaments



1. Kudya .. } Varli
2. Nath .. }
3. Tarki .. }



1. Kardoda (Varli) 2. Fani (Madia Gond)

BIRHUL OR BIRHOR

The Birhur or Birhor is a small scheduled tribe with its main concentration in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. According to Mujumdar (1950, p. 24) their main habitat is the hills and jungles that fringe the Chhota Nagpur plateau on the east and north-east. Russell and Hira Lal say the name Birhor means a forest-dweller (p. 352). Col. Dalton considered the Birhors to be a branch of the Kharia tribe. Mujumdar thinks they belong to the same racial stock as the Hos and the Mundas (1961, p. 149.).

In Maharashtra the Birhuls or Birhors are notified as a scheduled tribe only in Melghat tehsil of Amravati district; Gadhchiroli and Sironcha tehsils of Chandrapur district and Yeotmal, Wani and Kelapur tehsils of Yeotmal district. In the 1961 census, the tribe returned a negligible population of 15 males and seven females all from the rural area of Kelapur (Yeotmal). These appear to be immigrants to Maharashtra as 13 out of 16 whose census slips are available were born outside the State. A study of four households shows that three of them have three members each and one has six members. According to Mujumdar most of the exogamous clans into which the tribe is divided are named after plants and animals.

The Birhors in Maharashtra mostly speak Hindi as 18 persons out of 22 returned Hindi as their mother-tongue in the 1961 census. The other four returned Lamani as their mother-tongue and Marathi as a subsidiary language. All the 22 individuals are illiterate. Though their traditional occupation as reported by Risley, is snaring monkeys and hares and collecting jungle products (Russell and Hira Lal, 352), in Maharashtra all the 12 workers – 9 males and 3 females—are reported to be agricultural labourers. All the 22 Birhors are Hindus.

BARDA

The Bardas have a total population of 1,207 persons. During the 1961 census, they were found only in three States—918 in Maharashtra, 268 in Mysore and 21 in Gujarat.

Enthoven speaks of them as a sub-division of Bhils. He mentions three classes of Bhils—the plains Bhils, hill and forest tribes and mixed tribes—and assigns to the second group the Barda, Dhanka, Gavit and Mavchi (59, 156). A study of census slips of 200 persons belonging to the community in Maharashtra shows that 82 of them have 'Bhil' as their surnames. Most of the Bhils from Kolda village in Nawapur tehsil (Dhulia) regard the Bardas as one of their sections like the Gavit, Mavchi, Padvi, Vasava, Vasave and Dhanka. They however regard the Bardas as the lowest in social scale.

In Maharashtra, the Bardas are notified as a scheduled tribe only in the 13 districts of Bombay and Poona divisions. In 1961, they returned a total population of 918 persons—473 males and 445 females—from these 13 districts. The three contiguous districts of Dhulia with 429, Jalgaon with 275 and Nasik with 142 account for 90 per cent. The Barda are essentially a rural community as only 21 out of 918 of them were found in urban areas. Census slips show that 86 persons were born outside Maharashtra, 53 in Madhya Pradesh and 33 in Gujarat.

The majority of the Bardas have Marathi as their mother-tongue. The next important language spoken is Pavari. Out of 12 mother-tongues returned by Bardas, Marathi accounts for 549 speakers, Pavari for 230 speakers and Bhili for 84 speakers. Barda is reported to be spoken by only 14 persons. Except Varli which has 12 speakers, each of the remaining eight languages returned by them as mother-tongues has less than ten speakers. Knowledge of Gujarati is reported by 72 persons. Only a few are reported to know Hindi, Marathi and Telegu as subsidiary languages.

Most of the Bardas do not send their boys and girls to schools. The literacy percentage among them is only 3·15. Of the 918 Bardas, 889 were returned as illiterates during the 1961 census. Of the literates only nine had passed the primary or junior basic standard of education. Among the three females returned as literates, none had reached even the primary stage of education.

The Bardas depend on agriculture. Out of 459 persons—263 males and 196 females—returned as workers in 1961, 96 males and 42 females (30·0) were cultivators and 113 males and 131 females (53·0) were working as agricultural labourers. A study of 21 Barda households from Dhulia reveals that only two of them own or hold land. The remaining 19 households do not possess any land.

During the 1961 census, two males and 20 females of the tribe were returned as married out of 218 males and 192 females in the age-group 0—14; they had 15 widowed males, 38 widowed females and four divorced females.

All the 918 persons of the tribe returned Hinduism as their religion in 1961.

BAVACHA OR BAMCHA

The Bavacha or Bamcha are a minor scheduled tribe with Gujarat as their chief habitat from where they returned a population of 2,455 during the 1961 census. They returned a small population of 94 from Maharashtra and a negligible population of 21 from Mysore. They claim to have been vanias originally and they were, it is alleged, degraded to their present status on account of their eating the white flowers of the shiri or varshadodi, a kind of vegetable. They have neither endogamous or exogamous divisions (Enthoven, 65).

In Maharashtra the Bavachas or Bamchas are notified in 13 districts of western Maharashtra, including Greater Bombay. During the 1961 census they returned a population of only 94 persons—38 males and 56 females—from only five districts—Greater Bombay, Thana, Nasik, Poona and Sholapur. Only ten persons were returned from the urban areas of Greater Bombay and Thana and the rest were from rural areas.

Though Bavacha and Bamcha are notified as synonyms, it is not certain whether it is actually so. While Bavacha is reported to be a tribe of grass-cutters, grooms, masons and labourers (Enthoven, 65), Bamcha is said to be a division of Vaghri and live as hunters and fowlers (Census of India, 1931, Bombay presidency, p. 521).

Mohite, Chavan and Jadhav are some of the surnames found recorded by the Bavachas during the 1961 census whereas Gaikwad and Jadhav are reported to be the common surnames among the Bamchas.

In Maharashtra, 81 out of 94 Bavachas or Bamchas have returned Marathi as their mother-tongue. Of the remaining, eight have returned Hindi as their mother-tongue while Kannada and Telugu account for two and three persons, respectively. One male and one female whose mother-tongue is Marathi also know English as a subsidiary language. Twenty persons were reported to be literate. Of these, two males and three females were literate without any educational standard and 15 had passed the primary or junior basic standard of education. In the 1961 census, 22 males and 17 females were reported to be workers, of whom 16 males and 17 females were cultivators and six males were engaged in household industry.

Marriages among the Bavachas are generally prohibited within seven degrees of relationship. Marriage with father's sister's, mother's sister's or mother's brother's daughter is not allowed. Boys and girls generally get married between the ages of seven and fifteen. A bride price of Rs. 22 has to be paid to the girl's father and the marriage is conducted by the caste headman (Kotwal). Marriages generally take place on Sundays. Widow re-marriage is permitted and the widow's intending husband has to pay Rs. 12 to her father. Divorce is allowed with the consent of the caste panch if the husband and wife cannot live in harmony. In such cases, the wife's intending second husband has to pay Rs. 22 to her parents. The dead are generally buried with head to the south and the castemen are feasted on the third day after death. They observe all the Hindu festivals. On Dasara they offer a goat to the goddess and distribute its meat among all castemen. At the outbreak of an epidemic the goddess Kakabalia is worshipped. As they have no priests the Kotwal conducts their ceremonies (Enthoven, 65, 66).

In the 1961 census, all the 94 persons reported Hinduism as their religion.

The Dhanwars mainly belong to the wild hilly country of the former Bilaspur zamindari estates adjoining Chhota Nagpur. Russell and Hira Lal say they are also called Dhanuhar. The name means a bowman and it is reported that the bulk of the tribe have until recently been hunting with bows and arrows. Jeorakhanlal mentions that 'Dhanuhar' is a corrupt form of 'Dhanusdhar', meaning a holder of a bow. Russell and Hira Lal say the Dhanwars or Dhanuhars are probably an offshoot of either the Gond or the Kawar tribes or a mixture of both. Their own legend of their origin is nearly the same as that of the Gonds, while the bulk of their sept or family names are identical with those of the Kawars. They say their ancestors were two babies whom a tigress unearthed from the ground when scratching a hole in her den and brought up with her own young. They were named Naga Lodha and Nagi Lodhi. Growing up, they lived for some time as brother and sister and subsequently got married as they were asked to do so by the deity. Their twelfth son named Karankot, who was born with a bow and arrows in his hand, is the ancestral hero of the tribe (Russell and Hira Lal, pp. 488-9).

In Maharashtra the Dhanwars are notified as a scheduled tribe only in a few tehsils of Nagpur division—Melghat (Amravati); Gadhchiroli and Sironcha (Chanda) and Kelapur, Wani and Yeotmal (Yeotmal). In the 1961 census, only 40 persons—26 males and 14 females—were returned as Dhanwars, all of whom were enumerated in the rural areas of Yeotmal and Kelapur tehsils of Yeotmal district. They were not returned from any of the present districts of the Nagpur division in the 1911 and 1921 censuses. A population of 5,199 was however recorded in the 1931 census in Buldhana district where they are not notified as a scheduled tribe under the President's order, 1956.

The Dhanwars are divided into a number of totemistic, exogamous septs named after plants or animals. The names of septs are generally Chhattisgarhi words, though a few are Gondi. One or two septs have split into a number of others; the Sonwani sept has been divided into the Son-sonwani, Rakat-sonwani, Hardi-sonwani, Kari-sonwani and others. Marriage within the sept is prohibited (Russell and Hiralal, pp. 490–1). The same authors add (p. 488) that the Dhanwars have no language of their own and speak a corrupt form of Chhattisgarhi Hindi; but all the 40 persons enumerated in Maharashtra in 1961 returned Marathi as their mother-tongue. Of these, eleven males also knew Hindi. Out of the 40, only three were literate with one having attained primary or junior basic level. Russell and Hira Lal state (p. 501) that though the tribe considers hunting its proper occupation, many of them work as cultivators and labourers. They also make bamboo mats and large baskets for storing grain; but they will not make small bamboo baskets or fans because this is an occupation of the Turis on whom the Dhanwars look down upon. In Maharashtra, of the 19 persons—16 males and 3 females—returned as workers in the 1961 census, one male worked as a cultivator and three males as agricultural labourers; eleven males and three females were found working as shepherds and one male was engaged in other services. All the 40 Dhanwars returned Hinduism as their religion.

BHUNJIA

The Bhunjia are notified as a scheduled tribe in Orissa and parts of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. In Maharashtra, they are notified in Melghat (Amravati), Gadhchiroli and Sironcha (Chanda) and Kelapur, Wani and Yeotmal (Yeotmal). In the 1961 census, only six persons—five males and one female—of the tribe were returned. Two males and one female were returned from the urban area of Chikhaldara and the other three males were enumerated in village Semadoha of Melghat (Amravati). The latter three belong to one family—a father and two sons. The head of the household had immigrated from Betul (Madhya Pradesh), the main habitat of the tribe.

In the 1931 census, the population of Bhunjias was 187: Nagpur—136, Wardha—25, Yeotmal—16, Chanda—3, Akola—3, Buldhana—3 and Amravati—1. The decline in population in 1961 may be attributed to the fact that this tribe is now notified in only six tehsils and its population, if any, in other parts of Nagpur division was not separately enumerated.

All the six Bhunjias returned Hindi as their mother-tongue. One male reported knowledge of Korku and two males returned Marathi as their subsidiary language. Four males were literate and had passed the primary or junior basic standard of education while one male and one female were illiterate. Of the six persons, five males were workers and one female was a non-worker. She was unmarried and dependent on her parents. Among the five workers one each was engaged in cultivation, household industry and manufacturing and the remaining two in construction work. All the six Bhunjias returned themselves as Hindus during the 1961 census.

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ORAON

The Oraons who are a Central India tribe are concentrated in Bihar, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa wherein they returned in large numbers during the 1961 census. In Maharashtra, they are notified as "Oraon, including Dhanka and Dhangad" in six tehsils of Nagpur division — Melghat (Amravati); Gadhchiroli and Sironcha (Chanda) and Kelapur, Wani and Yeotmal (Yeotmal district). In the 1961 census, only one Oraon was returned from village Adkoli of Wani tehsil (Yeotmal).

BHATTRA

The Bhattra tribe has its main habitat in the former Bastar State and southern portions of Raipur district. 'Bhattra' is said to mean a servant; it is reported that the tribe is mostly employed as village watchmen and household and domestic servants (Russell and Hira Lal, 1916, v. II, 271). It has its main concentration in Madhya Pradesh from where it returned in large numbers during the 1961 census. In Maharashtra, it is notified as a scheduled tribe in only six tehsils of Nagpur division — Melghat (Amravati), Gadhchiroli and Sironcha (Chanda) and Kelapur, Wani and Yeotmal (Yeotmal). In the 1961 census, only three persons belonging to one family were returned from village Jhadgaon in Kelapur (Yeotmal). All the three persons returned Marathi as their mother-tongue and were illiterates. The head of the family is a herdsman and his wife and daughter work as agricultural labourers. All are Hindus.

BHAINA

The tribe Bhaina is reported of mixed descent derived principally from the Baigas and Kawars, having probably served as a refuge to persons expelled from these and other tribes and the lower castes for irregular sexual relations. The name Bhaina is stated to have originated with the Baiga tribe (Russel and Hira Lal, 1916 v. II, p. 225). In Maharashtra, the tribe is notified in six tehsils of Nagpur division — Melghat (Amravati), Gadhchiroli and Sironcha (Chanda) and Kelapur, Wani and Yeotmal (Yeotmal). In the 1961 census, only 12 Bhainas were returned, all from urban areas of Yeotmal district. The only other State from which the tribe is returned in the 1961 census is Madhya Pradesh (19,941) which is the habitat of the tribe. In Maharashtra, all speak Marathi and nine of the 12 persons are literates. Of these two males and four females have reached the primary stage of education and the two males are matriculates. Of the 12 Bhainas, only one male is reported to be working in household industry; the rest — six males and five females — are non-workers. All the Bhainas are Hindus.

KOYA

The Koyas are an important tribe in Andhra Pradesh where they returned a population of 220,146 in the 1961 census. In Maharashtra, they form a minor tribe with a population of only 33 persons— 14 males and 19 females. The Koya, including 'Bhine Koya' and 'Rajkoya', is notified as a scheduled tribe in the districts of Aurangabad, Parbhani, Bhir, Nanded, Osmanabad and Rajura. It is also notified as a sub-tribe of the Gond tribe in six tehsils of Nagpur division — Melghat (Amravati), Gadhchiroli and Sironcha (Chanda) and Kelapur, Wani and Yeotmal (Yeotmal). In the 1961 census, they were returned from only three districts — Parbhani (2), Osmanbad (5) and Rajura (26) (Rajura is notified as a separate district in the President's order, but is now administered as a tehsil of Chanda district).

The Koyas are primarily a Telugu-speaking tribe. All males and 17 of the 19 females reported Telugu as their mother-tongue and only two females returned their mother-tongue as Marathi. Only two persons (both males) are reported to be literates. Out of 33 Koyas, 11 males and 8 females are returned as workers and 3 males and 11 females as non-workers. Of the 19 workers, 3 males and 5 females are cultivators, one is an agricultural labourer, one works in mining, two are engaged in household industry, one is reported to be in construction and six in other services. All the 33 Koyas are Hindus.

The Chodharas are primarily a community of Gujarat where they returned 6,107 during the 1961 census. Maharashtra with 157 and Mysore with 3 are the only other States from which they were returned in 1961. According to their own account, were once carriers in the Rajput kingdoms of north Gujarat from where they fled south at the time of the Muslim invasion. According to the 1911 census they claim to be partly of Rajput descent but there is little evidence in their customs and organisation of any Rajput ancestry. The tradition of their former connection with northern Gujarat is not improbable. The tribe is said to have nine endogamous divisions—Bharutia, Chantala, Chokapur, Takaria, Valvai, Santala, Mota, Nana and Boda. Of these the Chokapur is supposed to be the highest in social status. They are also known as Pavagadia which shows their former connection with the famous Pavagad hill in Panch Mahals. It is stated that members of all divisions eat at the hands of Pavagadias but the latter are not in the habit of eating with the other divisions (1911 Census). The Valvi, one of the endogamous divisions of the tribe, is mentioned as a sub-division of Dhanka and Gamit in the President's order, 1960. Similarly Mota and Nana, two other endogamous divisions of the tribe, are mentioned as sub-divisions of Naikda against the names Mota Nayaka and Nana Nayaka in the same order. These three endogamous divisions may show some affinity of the tribe with Dhankas, Gamits and Naikdas. In the 1961 census, 38 out of 157 persons of the tribe returned Bhili as their mother-tongue which may also suggest affinity of the Chodhara tribe with the Bhils.

In Maharashtra, the Chodharas are notified as a scheduled tribe in the 13 districts of western Maharashtra including Greater Bombay. In the 1961 census, they returned a small population of 157 persons—92 males and 65 females—from only five districts—Greater Bombay 6, Nasik 5, Dhulia 64, Jalgaon 1 and Sholapur 81. Of these 157 persons, only seven were reported to be from urban areas. A study of the 1961 slips of 126 persons shows that ten out of them were born in Gujarat, 15 in Mysore State and six in Madhya Pradesh. Naik, Choudhari, Paoghadi, Chavan and Choware are some of the surnames recorded by the Chodharas in Maharashtra.

In the 1961 census, they returned six mother-tongues, out of which Marwari is spoken by 80. Bhili which is spoken by 38 persons ranks second. The speakers of other languages number as follows—Gujarati 28, Chodhari 8, Ahirani 2, and Marathi 1. Only eight Chodharas out of 157 claim Chodhari as a mother-tongue. They reported knowledge of four subsidiary languages, viz., Marathi 18, Kannada 15, Hindi 3 and Sindhi 1. Out of the 157 Chodharas returned, 20 males and 3 females are literates, among whom only one male is a matriculate and ten males have passed the primary or junior basic standard of education.

The census of 1911 reported agriculture as the traditional occupation of the tribe. In 1961, 62 males and 33 females out of 157 were returned as workers, among whom 18 males and 12 females were engaged in cultivation and 30 males and 20 females were returned as agricultural labourers. Thus 84·2 per cent workers were engaged in agriculture. A study of eight households from Dhulia and Nasik districts shows that one household had 5 to 7·4 acres of land, two households had 25 to 29·9 acres of land and five households had no land of their own for cultivation. Of the remaining workers five males were in forestry, one male was working as a tailor, one female was enaged in manufacturing, one male was in trade and commerce, four persons were engaged in transport (railway) and three were in other services. Out of the 30 male and 32 female non-workers, three males and one female were school going children, one male was seeking employment for the first time and 26 males and 31 females were dependents.

According to the 1911 census, the Chodharas do not permit marriages within six or seven degrees of relationship. Generally marriages do not take place between members when any former relationship can be traced between them. Marriage is generally adult and is conducted by the bridegroom's sister who should be a suvasini. In her absence, it is conducted by one of the bridegroom's paternal female cousins. The Khandalia form of marriage is also in vogue. In such a form of marriage, the bridegroom serves his would be father-in-law for a certain period and after that he is married with the girl at her father's expense. A widow is allowed to marry a younger brother of her deceased husband if she desires so. Dead persons are either burnt or buried.

The chief objects of their worship are reported to be Suraj (sun), Dharati-Mata (earth), Kakabalio (small-pox goddess), Bhavani and Palio, Simario and Naderio (boundary gods) (1911 census, p. 251). In 1961 all the Chodharas returned Hinduism at their religion.

BINJHWAR

The Binjhwars are said to be a comparatively advanced section of the Baigas who have become a distinct caste. They are said to be the land-holding section of the Baigas like the Raj Gonds among the Gonds and Bhila among Bhils. The name is reported to have been derived from the Vindhya hills and it is said the tribe still worships the goddess Vindhyavasini as its tutelary deity. According to the tribe, their original ancestors were Barahbhai Betkar or the twelve brother archers, the sons of Vindhyavasini (Russell and Hiralal, pp. 239-330).

In Maharashtra the Binjhwars are one of the minor scheduled tribes and are notified in six tehsils of Nagpur division—Melghat (Amravati), Gadhchiroli and Sironcha (Chanda) and Kelapur, Wani and Yeotmal (Yeotmal). In the 1961 census, the tribe returned a negligible population of 24 persons, comprising eight males and 16 females, amongst whom four males and three females were returned from the urban areas of Melghat, seven females from the rural areas of Kelapur and four males and six females from the rural areas of Gadhchiroli. In previous censuses, they returned in large numbers in seven out of the present eight districts of the Nagpur division although their number declined to some extent in successive censuses. The 1911, 1921 and 1931 censuses recorded their population as 6,158, 4,590 and 4,368, respectively, The marked decline in 1961 may be attributed to the fact that their 1961 census population is restricted to only six specified tehsils wherein they are notified as a scheduled tribe.

Russell and Hira Lal mention four sub-divisions of the tribe—(1) Binjhwars proper, (2) Sonjharas, (3) Birjhias and (4) Binjhias. The Sonjharas are those who took to washing for gold in the sands of the Mahanadi and the Birjhias are those who practised bewar or shifting cultivation in the forests. The Binjhia is said to be simply a diminutive form of Binjhwar.

During the 1961 census, 22 Binjhwars returned Marathi and the remaining two persons returned Gondi as their mother-tongues. The latter have also reported knowledge of Marathi in addition. Of the 24, two males and 12 females were reported to be workers, among whom eleven females were agricultural labourers, one male and one female were engaged in trade and one male in 'other services'.

Marriage is usually adult and girls are sometimes allowed to choose their own husbands. Bride price is common and the marriage is performed at the bridegroom's house. Polygyny is permitted. Divorce is not very common though it is recognised. The dead are mostly buried and on the third day some rice is placed on the grave and a lamp is lit. Bura-deo, the chief god of Gonds, is respected. On Dasara, they worship their daggers, spears and arrows and on every third year carry their tutelary goddess, Vindhyavasini, from village to village in a procession. They have gurus or spiritual preceptors. When a boy or girl grows up, the guru whispers the kan-mantra and receives a cloth and coconut in addition to some cash payment. He visits his disciples every year at the time of harvest and receives some grains from them as present (Russell and Hira Lal, pp. 332-334).

In the 1961 census, all the 24 Binjhwars returned Hinduism as their religion.

POMLA

The Pomlas, according to Thurston, are a small section of the Korvas. Pamula means a snake and as they follow the calling of snake-charmers, the name Pomla got associated with them (459). Enthoven feels they are a primitive tribe and their tongue, which resembles Telugu, would show that they originally belonged to southern India. In Maharashtra, the Pomlas form a minor tribe of 263 persons—143 males and 120 females. In Gujarat, there were 319 Pomlas in the 1961 census. In Maharashtra, the Pomlas are notified as a scheduled tribe in 13 districts of Bombay and Poona divisions. They are returned from only three districts—Sholapur 241 (91·6), Greater Bombay 21 and Dhulia 1. Except 21 persons who were returned from the urban areas of Greater Bombay, all the rest were found residing in rural areas. The 1961 census slips of 129 persons from North Sholapur tehsil of Sholapur district shows that 37 persons were born in the neighbouring State of Mysore.

A study of 28 Pomla households from Sholapur reveals that 14 of them consist of husband and wife with un-married children; in two households married sons are living with their parents; other relative are found living in nine households. Nineteen of them have 1 to 5 members, six have from 6 to 8 members and three households have more than eight members. The average number of persons per household is five and the maximum size of a household is found to

be eleven. Laman, Chavan, Pawar, Rathod and Gaikwad are some of the surnames found recorded by the Pomlas in 1961. The first three appear to be more common.

In 1961, the Pomlas returned as many as eight mother-tongues. Banjari is spoken by 126 persons, Pomla is returned as a mother-tongue by 41 persons and Lamani by 31 persons. The other mother-tongues returned are Gujarati 26, Marwari 24, Telugu 10, Kannada 3 and Marathi 2. Subsidiary languages spoken are Marathi 83, Kannada 67 and Hindi 3. The literacy rate is 12·55 per cent. For males it is 20·28 per cent and for females 3·33 per cent. Of the literates, ten males had attained the primary or junior basic standard and one male was a matriculate. As against 72 males and 61 females in the age-group 0-14, only 29 males and 5 females were reported to be full-time students.

According to Enthoven (235) the Pomlas were formerly tumblers, but now make their living by weaving baskets. From the 1961 census returns, it appears that the Pomlas have now given up their traditional occupation of tumblers, basket makers and snake charmers and engage themselves mostly in agriculture. Of the 118 persons—74 males and 44 females—returned as workers during the 1961 census, 17 males and 8 females were cultivators and 31 males and 35 females were agricultural labourers. Of the rest, ten males and one female were engaged in mining and rearing of livestock, ten in manufacturing, one in trade, two in transport and three in 'other services'. A study of some census slips from Sholapur shows that out of the eleven persons working in mining and rearing of livestock, eight were shepherds and all the ten persons engaged in manufacturing other than household industry were working as labourers in a spinning mill at Sholapur. The only one person engaged in trade was a grocer and one out of the three persons engaged in other services was a labourer.

In the marriageable age-group 15-44, there were only two widowers and three widows. All the 263 Pomlas reported Hinduism as their religion in 1961.

NAGESIA NAGASIA

Nagesias or Nagasias are found principally in Madhya Pradesh where they numbered 46,850 persons in the 1961 census. Russell and Hira Lal say that the Nagasias often style themselves Kisan, a term which is also applied to the Oraons. According to the Nagasias, they are the true Kisans whereas the Oraons, are only so by occupation i.e., cultivation. The Oraons, however, call the Nagasias Kisada. According to legend, a child was once left in the forest of Setambu and a cobra was found spreading its hood over the child. Some Mundas who were passing by foresaw a royal future for the child so they took him home and made him their king, calling him Nagasia; from him the tribe is said to be descended. The story appears to indicate that the Nagasias are an offshoot of the Mundas; this belief is strengthened by the fact that Nagasia is often used as an alternative name for the Mundas by their Hindu neighbours. The term Nagasia is supposed to mean the original settlers (basia) of Nag, i.e. Chhota Nagpur (Russell and Hira Lal, pp. 257-258).

In Maharashtra, Nagesias or Nagasias are notified as a scheduled tribe in six tehsils of Nagpur division—Melghat (Amravati), Gadhchiroli and Sironcha (Chanda) and Kelapur, Wani and Yeotmal (Yeotmal). In the 1961 census the tribe returned a population of 28 persons—15 males and 13 females—from only one village in Gadhchiroli. In the 1921 census, they numbered 17 persons in the present districts of Nagpur division. Of them 13 were returned from Wardha and four from Nagpur. In 1931, there were 13 of them in Bhandara district only.

According to Russell and Hira Lal, the tribe has three sub-divisions—Telha, Dhuria and Senduria—and these are based on the mark applied on the forehead of the bride at the time of marriage. On this occasion the Telhas mark the forehead of the bride with tel (oil); the Dhurias mark the bride's forehead with dust taken from the sole of the bride-groom's foot; the Sendurias like most Hindu castes, use sindur for this purpose. The Telhas and Dhurias marry with each other, but not with the Sendurias who consider themselves superior to the other two.

All the 28 Nagasias returned Telugu as their mother-tongue; 19 of them knew Marathi as subsidiary language. All were found to be illiterate. According to Dalton (127), Kisans or Nagesias are cultivators who cultivate the skirts of the forests. They chiefly worship the tiger (Ban raja) whom they do not kill. They adore their ancestors and a spirit called Shikaria devata, the latter by offering goats and also the sun. All the 28 individuals enumerated in Chanda in the 1961 census reported themselves as vagrants and none of them has even reported as being in search of employment. All Nagesias profess Hinduism as their religion.

KOL

The Kol tribe is concentrated in Madhya Pradesh and Orissa where it returned 386,009 and 46,397 persons, respectively in the 1961 census. They are said to be closely allied to if not identical with the Mundas. The word Munda is the common term employed by the Kols for the headman of a village and has come into general use as a title. The word 'Kol' is said to be derived from the Santali word 'Har' which stands for a man. The Munda tribes use the word 'har' in many forms such as har, hara, ho and koro to denote themselves (Risley, pp. 501-502).

In Maharashtra the Kols, who form a very small tribe, are notified only in Melghat (Amravati), Gadhchiroli and Sironcha (Chanda) and Kelapur, Wani and Yeotmal (Yeotmal). In the 1961 census they returned a population of only 53 persons—26 males and 27 females—and that too, only from Wani. Of them, 51 were found living in village Wanjri and the other two in village Adkoli and Kosara. In the 1911, 1921 and 1931 censuses, the Kols numbered 1,981, 1,315, and 5,041 respectively in the areas from the present districts of Maharashtra. The decline of the population in 1961 may be attributed to the fact that this tribe is notified as a scheduled tribe only in the few tahsils mentioned above. In the previous census years, the tribe appeared in large numbers especially in Nagpur, Bhandara and Buldhana districts where the Kol are not notified now as a scheduled tribe and thus were not enumerated during the 1961 census.

Excepting one, all the 52 Kols returned Hindi as their mother-tongue. The remaining one returned Telugu as his mother-tongue and Marathi as a subsidiary language. Out of 53 persons, only 8 males and 1 female were reported to be literates and only one had attained the primary or junior basic level. Of the 53 persons 14 males and 16 females were returned as workers. Of them, except one male who was in construction, all others were engaged in mining, quarrying and lime making. All the Kols in Maharashtra returned Hinduism as their religion.

KHAIRWAR

The Khairwars are a minor scheduled tribe in Maharashtra where their 1961 population is only 275—137 males and 138 females. Their higher concentration is in Bihar—109,357 and Madhya Pradesh—44,251. They are also returned from Orissa—717 and West Bengal—1,142.

Russell and Hira Lal describe them as a primative tribe of the Chhota Nagpur plateau and Bihar. They are also known as Kharwar, Khaira and Khairwa. Khairwar or Khairwara is mentioned as a sub-tribe of Gond in the President's order, 1960. Crooke derives the name Khairwar either from the khair tree or from a place called Khairagarh. The probable derivation seems to be from the khair or catechu tree which suggests the occupation of the tribe as makers of catechu (Russell and Hira Lal, pp. 427-430).

Col. Dalton considers the Khairwars to be closely connected with the Cheros. Elsewhere, he connects the Santals with the Khairwars. Sir H. Risley says that according to their own tradition in Chhota Nagpur, the Khairwars declare their original seat to be the fort of Rohtas, the abode of Rohitaswa, son of Harischandra, of the family of the sun. The Khairwar or Khairwars of the Khaimur hills, who are identified by Col. Dalton and in the 1901 census with the Khairwars of Chhota Nagpur are said to have been named after the khair tree and it is reported that they are generally recognised as being Gonds who have taken to the business of boiling catechu. Crook describes them in Mirazpur as a compound of various jungle tribes who have taken to this special occupation. He identifies them with the Kathkaris of Bombay, whose name means makers of kath or prepared catechu (Russell and Hira Lal, pp. 427-430).

In Maharashtra, the Khairwars are declared as a scheduled tribe in parts of the Vidarbha region—in Melghat tehsil (Amravati), Gadhchiroli and Sironcha tehsils (Chanda) and Kelapur, Wani and Yeotmal tehsils (Yeotmal). During the 1961 census, all the 275 Khairwars were however returned only from nine villages of Gadhchiroli (Chanda). Of them, 23 were born in Orissa. The rest recorded their birth-places in Maharashtra.

The Khairwars have a number of exogamous groups named after plants and animals such as the mouse, tortoise, parrot, pig, monkey, banyan tree and date palm. Members of these septs worship their totem animal or tree and when they find the body of a dead animal they throw away an earthen cooking-pot to purify themselves. Some of them are reported to have a vague idea that they have descended from their totem object (Russell and Hira Lal, p. 432). A few surnames recorded during the 1961 census are Zangad, Sandokar, Chudari, Singale, Deshmukh, Chunarkar, Raout, Wadhankar, Paik and Mhashakhetri. Of these, Zangad, Sandokar, Chudari and Paik appear to be more common.

Most of the Khairwars in Maharashtra speak Marathi as their mother-tongue. In 1961, they returned Marathi and Katagi as their mother-tongues. Of these, Marathi is spoken by 260 persons and Katagi by 15. Besides, two persons of the tribe know Hindi and one person knows English as subsidiary languages. In education, they appear to be more advanced than the neighbouring scheduled tribes of the region. The general percentage of literacy among them is 16·73 (30·66 for males and 2·90 for females) as against 7·88 (14·81 for males and 1·00 for females) for the scheduled tribe population in Gadhchiroli tehsil. Out of 46 persons—42 males and 4 females—returned as literate during the 1961 census, eight males had reached the primary or junior basic stage of education. One male was a matriculate and 33 males and 4 females were reported to be literate without any educational level.

In Maharashtra, most of the Khairwars are either cultivators or agricultural labourers. Out of the 178 returned as workers during the 1961 census, 157—81 males and 76 females—were found working in the agriculture sector. Of these 124—65 males and 59 females—were cultivators and 33—16 males and 17 females—were agricultural labourers. Of the remaining 21 workers, three were engaged in cattle grazing, one was looking after a shop opened by a co-operative society and 17 were working as labourers in other services. A study of 64 households from Gadhchiroli showed that 51 owned or held land from government for cultivation and 13 had no land for cultivation. Among the land-holders seven households had one to 4·9 acres of land, eleven households owned or held land from 10 to 14·9 acres and 21 households held land ranging between 15 and 49·9 acres. The average size of ownership holding was found to be 15 acres. The minimum size of land possessed by them was one acre while the maximum was 49·9 acres.

Khairwar boys and girls are mostly married after they attain the age of 14. In 1961, one male and three females of the tribe were reported to be married from among the 47 males and 55 females in the age-group 0-14. According to Russell and Hira Lal in the case of an adult marriage a girl is not married without her consent. A bride price has to be paid to the girl's father and in the case of an unmarried girl married to a widower, the amount is doubled. The marriage is performed according to Hindu custom. An auspicious day is fixed by a brahman priest (Russell and Hira Lal, 432). During the 1961 census, four males of the tribe were returned as widowers, 18 females as widows and three males and three females as divorced. As a rule their dead are buried though a few well-to-do practise cremation. The body is carried seven times round the grave and is buried with its feet pointing to the north. Mourning is observed for ten days and they abstain from animal food and liquor during that period (Russell and Hira Lal, p. 433).

While Col. Dalton states that the Khairwars do not offer prayers to any Hindu god, but when in great trouble they appeal to the sun (Russell and Hira Lal, p. 434). During the 1961 census, all the 275 Kairwars in Maharashtra reported Hinduism as their religion.

PATELIA

The Patelias are a Gujarati-speaking community in Maharashtra with a population of 180 persons—94 males and 86 females. The name Patelia according to Venkatachar, is derived from "bitle" (polluted) owing to their being treated as outcastes. In Dohad district of Gujarat, one of the clans driven by hunger is said to have killed and eaten a roz (Nilgai). On account of this act of sacrilege, they were looked down upon as impure (bitle), becoming ultimately known as Patlias. Venkatachar says they have an admixture of Rajput blood and were originally a section of the Paramara clan which dwelt at Abu. Enthoven says Patlia is a synonym for Talabda who are a sub-division of Bhavsars, Vaghris and Kolis (221 and 361). Nath regards them as descendants of those Rajputs who were driven to the Vindhyas by the armies of Alaudin Khilji in 1303 A.D. Many of these exiled Rajputs then came in contact with the handsome Bhil women of the Vindhyas and thus came to be known as "Vatlia" or impure. In course of time, the descendants of these Rajputs assumed an independent status of an endogamous tribe. The name "Vatlia" seems to have been later on transformed to Patlia (63).

In the 1961 census, Patelias were returned in this State only from five districts—Dhulia 69, Thana 44 Greater Bombay 43, Kolaba 18 and Poona 6 out of the 13 districts of Bombay and Poona divisions where they are declared as a scheduled tribe. Of these, 94 were from urban areas and 86 from rural areas. A majority of these persons are born in the State and those from outside are from Gujarat.

Venkatachar says they form a single endogamous group or tribe with a number of exogamous septs.

Nearly 12 sept names are said to have Rajput appellations with local affixes such as Pipria Parmar, Tandia Parmar and so on, the affixes denoting the village from which they hail (59). Some surnames found recorded by them in Maharashtra during the 1961 census are Patel, Dhodi, Kodi, Bhil and Patil. Dhodi and Bhil also occur in the area as the names of two separate independent tribes.

More than three-fourths of the Patelias—137 found in Maharashtra speak Gujarati as their mother-tongue. Bhili was returned by 25 (which further suggests their affinity with Bhils), Marathi by 17 and Ahirani by one. Besides, 24 Patelias speak Marathi, five Hindi, four Gujarati and two English as their subsidiary languages. The literacy among them is 19·44 per cent as compared to the general literacy of 21·46 per cent in rural areas of Maharashtra. For males, it is as high as 34 per cent; for females it is 3·5 per cent. Of the 35 persons—32 males and 3 females—returned as literates in 1961, 14 males and 2 females had reached the primary or junior basic standard of education and one male was a matriculate.

In Maharashtra the majority of the Patelias earn their livelihood by following different non-agricultural pursuits. Out of 78 persons—59 males and 19 females—returned as workers in the 1961 census, only eleven—five males and six females—worked as cultivators and two males and eight females returned as agricultural labourers. Thus about 27 per cent of workers are engaged in the agricultural sector. Of the remaining 52 males and five females in economic activities outside the agricultural sector, 31 males and 4 females were in manufacturing, one in plantation and seven as labourers on road construction work. Of the remaining workers, one each was engaged in household industry and trade, seven in transport, storage and communications and five in other services.

Adult marriages seem to be more common among the Patelias. A few cases of early marriages are also found, especially in the case of females. In the 1961 census, two females of the tribe were reported as married out of 31 males and 48 females in the age group 0-14. All the 180 per sons of the tribe returned Hinduism as their religion.

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A NOTE ON THE BHAGAT

The bhagat is a medicine-man and spiritual guide of the tribe. Members of the tribe have implicit faith in his knowledge and medicine and authority in spiritual matters. The office is not hereditary. Any adult member of the tribe can officiate as a bhagat after getting trained under a senior bhagat. The training starts in the month of Shravan and lasts for four to six months. The apprentice has to observe certain restrictions on food and personal behaviour as advised by the senior bhagat. The killing of a serpent, shaving the head and the face, sexual contact with a woman and eating fish and meat are prohibited during the period of training.

Whenever members of the tribe fall ill, they turn to a bhagat first rather than going for ayurvedic or allopathic treatment. A bhagat has his own ways of diagnosis and treatment. He examines the patient and tries to know the history of his illness. If he feels that it is due to some natural cause, he gives the patient some medicine which he himself prepares from the roots and leaves of certain trees. If he thinks the illness is the result of the wrath or displeasure of some god, he advises the patient to sacrifice a hen or a goat to that god. In case the illness is believed to be an evil act of a witch, he chants some formula to ward off or minimise the trouble. Sometimes he ties a magical thread or tayit (talisman) round the wrist or the neck of the patient. If the patient does not get any relief through these measures, the bhagat advises him to go and consult any doctor available in the neighbourhood.

SOME IMPORTANT FESTIVALS AND RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

The following list is of the more important festivals and religious practices commonly observed by a number of tribes in Maharashtra. Their dates are given according to the local calendar. A list of the twelve months according to that calendar is given with the corresponding months of the Gregorian calendar.

Chaitra pratipada (Gudi padva)	Chaitra sud 1
Sri Rama navami	Chaitra sud 9
Hanuman Jayanti	Chaitra sud 15
Akshaya tritiya	Vaisakha sud 3
Vata Savitri	Jaistha sud 15
Ashadi ekadasi (sayani)	Ashada sud 11
Naga panchami	Sravana sud 5
Narali poornima	Sravana sud 15
Janmashtami (Gokul ashtami or Sri Krishna jayanti).	Sravana vad 8
Pola (Vrishabha utsava)	Sravana vad 30
Ganesh chaturthi	Bhadrapad sud
Sarvapitri amavasya	Bhadrapad vad
Dasara (Vijaya dashmi)	Asvina sud 10
Kojagiri poornima	Asvina sud 15
Divali	Asvina vad 14
Bali pratipada	Kartika sud 1
Bhaubij	Kartika sud 2
Kartik ekadasi (prabhodini)	Kartika sud 11
Makar sankranti	The day the sun enters the Makara (Capricornus) rasi. It is usually on 14th January and occasionally on 13th January. It is the day the sun begins his northward journey from the tropic of capricorn.
Maha sivratri	Magha vad 14
Holi	Falguna sud 15

Detailed accounts of how these festivals and rites are observed are given in "Fairs and festivals in Maharashtra," v. X Pt. VII-B. Maharashtra census report, 1969—

A comparative calendar

(1) Chaitra	March-April
(2) Vaisakha	April-May
(3) Jyaistha	May-June
(4) Ashada	June-July
(5) Sravana	July-August
(6) Bhadrapad	August-September
(7) Asvina	September-October
(8) Kartika	October-November
(9) Margashirsha	November-December
(10) Paush	December-January
(11) Magha	January-February
(12) Falgun	February-March

The months in Maharashtra are lunar. They start on the day after the new moon, the full moon falls in their middle and they end on the day of the new moon. The bright forthnight is called suddha (sud) and the dark fortnight is called vadya (vad).

Adhe ... Ridgepole of a house.

Adholi ... A measure.

Aher ... A gift or present made on ceremonial occasions.

Ain ... *Terminalia tomentosa.* A deciduous tree. Its bark is used as tanning material. Its leaves are eaten by cattle and its gum is used as incense.

Akshata ... Full grains of rice smeared with haldi or kumkum. They are thrown by elders on the heads of younger people as a token of benediction.

Ali, alvat ... A farm implement for levelling the ploughed field.

Anguti ... A metal ring worn on the finger.

Antarpat ... *See* Jamnik below.

Apta ... *Bauhinia racemosa.* A deciduous tree. Its leaves are exchanged among relatives and friends on Vijaya Dasami by way of greetings.

Arati ... A lamp or lamps on a plate which is waved before the gods at puja or before individuals on auspicious occasions.

Avala, avla ... *Emblica officinalis gaertn,* a middle-sized tree. It is worshipped as part of a vrata. Its fruit, rich in vitamin C, is used in pickles. It is also dried and eaten like supari.

Avni ... Transplanting of seedlings.

Badawani ... *See* Sakharpuda.

Bahanye ... *See* bashing.

Bahuta ... A hollow armlet.

Bajri ... *Pennisetum spicetum Roem and Schult.* Bulrush millet. A kharif crop grown on light soil. It ranks next to jowar as a food crop in the Deccan. Bhakri is made from its flour.

Bajuband ... A hollow ornament worn on the arm.

Bali ... An ornament worn on the upper lobes of the ear by men.

Bangadya ... Bangles.

Bandi ... An open jacket without sleeves worn by men.

Barava ... Obsequies done on the twelfth day after death.

Bashing ... A marriage coronet with tassels tied to the foreheads of the bridal couple.

Basi ... Rice cooked and kept soaked in cold water overnight.

Basta, baste ... Purchase of bashings and clothes for the bridal couple. It is done jointly by members of both the parties.

Bel ... A tree. *Aegle marmelos.* Its tridal leaf is used in the worship of Lord Siva.

Benani ... Weeding of cultivated land.

Besan ... A paste made of pulse flour, usually chana. It is seasoned and taken as a sauce along with bhakri.

Betel ... *See* pan.

Bhagar ... A thin gruel.

Bhakar, bhakri. Pancakes made usually of jowar flour.

Bhang ... Hemp leaf.

Bhutalin ... A woman supposed to have the power of a witch.

Bidi ... Tobacco rolled in tendu or some other leaf for smoking.

Bol, bolghada ... Asking for a girl's hand in marriage.

Chaddi ... Trunks worn by boys and girls.

Chambhar ... A caste of cobblers.

Chandan ... Sandal trees. *Santalum album.* Its powder is made into a paste and forms an important article in puja.

Chappals ... Leather sandals.

Chatti ... A ceremony performed on the sixth day after a child's birth.

Chaali ... *Vingna catjang walp.* Its green pods are used as a vegetable, raw or cooked.

Chillim ... A clay pipe for smoking tobacco.

Choli ... Woman's bodice usually of a vivid colour.

Chula ... An oven usually of clay.

Chura ... A solid round bracelet worn by men.

Dai ... A midwife.

Darbha, kusa ... A tall grass. *Desmostachfya bipinnata stap.* Tradition requires that it should normally be pulled out of ground on Pitar amavasya day. It is used in many religious rites.

Dasakriya .. Obsequies done on the tenth day after death.

Datal ... A farm implement to break clods of earth on the field.

Datwan ... A green babul or neem twig used to brush teeth with.

Dava ... Divorce.

Dej ... Bride price to be paid by the boy or his parents to the girl's parents or guardian.

Devara ... A wooden box or basket for keeping the images of household gods.

Devghar ... Puja room in a house.

Dhavaleri ... A mid-wife.

Dhobi ... A caste of washermen.

Dhol ... A big drum played at dances.

Dholi ... A caste priest.

Dholi ... *See* kanga.

Dhotar, dhoti .. A piece of cloth, usually white, worn by men round the waist and reaching down to the ankles.

Divas ... The day on which obsequies are performed.

Dukhavata ... Ceremony which marks the end of mourning.

Durva ... A prostrate grass. *Cynodon dactylon.* It is used to worship Lord Ganpati.

Eranda ... Castor oil plant. *Ricinecs Communis linn.* Its stalks are used in obsequies by some tribes.

Fadki .. A piece of coloured cloth with dots on it worn across the shoulders by women.

Fal ... Occasion when gifts are offered to the bride and the bridegroom by their kinsmen and well-wishers.

Fara ... A measure.

Farqat ... Divorce.

Feravi ... Toe-ring worn by women.

Feta ... Men's head-wear of cloth.

Fui .. Father's sister.

Ful ... An ear ornament.

Fuli . A nose stud worn by women.

Gadi ... A labourer.

Ganarin ... A midwife.

Ganja ... Hemp flower.

Gathali ... A necklace.

Gathi ... A necklace.

Gaokanun .. A sum of money given to residents of a village on occasions like marriage to be spent on tea and drinks.

Ghada ... A small pot for carrying water.

Ghagar ... A pot for carrying water.

Ghagra ... A girl's petticoat.

Ghane ... Ceremonial pounding of paddy as part of marriage ritual.

Ghangal ... A flat and round vessel. It is used to store water for bathing.

Ghar-javai ... A boy who has agreed to stay with his parents-in-law after marriage. According to custom, he need not have to pay dej.

Ghongadi ... A rough woollen blanket.

Goth ... Bracelet.

Gotra, got ... An exogamous group of persons believed to have descended from a common ancestor inside an endogamous caste or tribe.

Guava, peru ... A fruit tree. *Pridium guayava linn.*

Gulal ... Red powder thrown on each other on Holi.

Halad, haldi .. *Curcuma longa.* A stemless herb with thick tubers. The powder from its dried tubers is called halad or haldi. It is used on all auspicious occasions either as a tuber or in the form of powder or paste.

Halad lavane .. The ceremonial application of haldi to the bride and the bridegroom

Homa ... Sacrificial fire in which offerings are made.

Harali ... *See* durva.

Huvaki .. A Bhil midwife

Imli ... *Tamarindus indica.*

Jambul ... A tree, *Eugenia jambolana, Syzygiumcumini.* Shri Krishna is associated with the tree and its fruit. It is worshipped as a rite and its leaves are used on many auspicious occasions and religious ceremonies.

Jaminik, Jamnuk. A curtain of cloth held between the bride and the bridegroom during the earlier part of the marriage ceremony, usually by their uncles.

Janosa ... A place arranged for the temporary stay of the bridegroom's party at the bride's village during marriage.

Jate ... A wooden or stone hand-mill. *a quern.*

Jawal ... First ceremonial shaving of the head of a child.

Jowar ... Great millet. *Andropogon sorghum brot.* An annual crop extensively grown in Maharashtra for grain and fodder. Its flour is made into bhakar or bhakri and forms the staple food of many people.

Kada ... A hollow, round bracelet worn by women.

Kamble, kambli. *See* Ghongadi.

Kamij ... A shirt.

Kanga, kanagi. A cylindrical container made of bamboo plaits to store grain.

Kankan ... *See* bangadi.

Kapani ... Cutting of standing crops when they are ripe.

Khale, khali ... Threshing floor.

Kara ... A metal pot containing water with a sprig of mango leaves and a coconut on its mouth. It is held by the sister of the bride or bridegroom during marriage. Hence she is called Karoli.

Karavanda ... A fruit of *carissa carandas.*

Karbhari ... A village or tribal headman.

Karboda, kargita. A thick waist-band worn by men.

Karvi ... A reed which is commonly used as building material for walls and roofs.

Kathya, Kothya. A village servant.

Katyar ... A dagger. The bridegroom carries it in his hand during the marriage procession.

Khair, catechu. *Acacia sundra.* Its twigs are used as tooth brushes. Its extract is used in the manufacture of katha.

Khandakari ... A person carrying the funeral bier to the cremation or burial ground.

Khatiya ... A wooden or bamboo cot.

Kheer ... Rice cooked in water, sugar and milk.

Khichadi ... Rice and pulse cooked together. It is considered nourishing and given to convalescents.

Koyata ... A thick sickle-like instrument used for breaking coconuts, cutting branches, etc.

Kolpe ... A farm implement for cutting grass.

Kopri ... An open jacket with half sleeves.

Kudagi ... An ear ornament.

Kudal ... A farm implement for digging.

Kumbhar .... A caste of potters.

Kumkum ... Vermillion. The yellow powder of dry halad is soaked in an alkaline solution. It then turns red and is dried. The kumkum mark on the forehead of women is considered most auspicious. Kumkum figures in all pujas, religious and auspicious occasions.

Kumkum lavane. Betrothal. Applying kumkum (vermillion) to the girl's forehead is the highlight of the ceremony.

Kul ... A clan or a sept all of whose members are believed to have descended from a common ancestor. Marriage between two members of the same kul is not permitted.

Kulith, kulthi. Horse gram. *Dolichos biflourus Roxb.* A kharif crop. The pulse is eaten in soups and porridge. The green crop is used as cattle feed.

Kunabi ... A caste of cultivators.

Kurhad ... An iron axe.

Langoti ... A narrow piece of loin cloth worn by men.

Lota ... A metal utensil used for drinking water.

Lugade, lugadi. Woman's sari, usually nine yards long.

Machli ... A toe ring.

Madha ... A corpse. It is also used for funeral bier carrying the corpse.

Mahua ... A flowering tree. *Bassia latifolia,* wild, or *Bassia longifolia,* cultivated. Liquor is extracted from its flowers. The flowers are also consumed as an article of diet.

Mali ... A caste of domestic and market gardeners.

Mandav ... The marriage pandal or booth. Its erection at the house of the bride and the bridegroom is a ritual. Those who put it up are entertained to dinner (Hirva mandav jevan).

Mangalashtaka. Auspicious verses, usually eight, recited at the time of marriage.

Mangalsutra ... A necklace of black beads first worn at marriage and which married women wear all the time as long as their husbands are living.

Mantra ... A scriptural passage recited as a formula.

Medinga ... *A caste or tribal priest.*

Mithali ... A necklace.

Mothi pen ... A form of marriage. Also called varhadaki.

Motur ... Widow re-marriage.

Mugadya ... An ornament worn by women on the upper lobes of the ears.

Musal ... A wooden pestle to pound grain in a mortar.

Nachni, nagli ... Ragi. *Eleusine coracana Gaertn* Cultivated for grain and fodder.

Nagarni, Naugur A wooden plough.

Nagarni ... Ploughing of land with a nagar.

Nagli ... *See* nachni.

Naivedya ... Offering to a deity.

Nal ... Umbilical cord of a new-born child. It is ritually cut and buried. The pit where it is buried along with the placenta is worshipped for some days.

Nath ... A nose ring worn by women.

Navas ... A propitiatory vow taken before a deity.

Nhavi ... A caste of barbers.

Nyahari, nyari. Breakfast.

Odhani ... A piece of cloth with which women cover their heads.

Oti bharane ... Placing coconut, haldi, flowers, cloth or money in the lap of a married girl as an auspicious act.

Pachvi, pachora, panchavi. A ceremony performed on the fifth day after a child's birth.

Pada ... A hamlet of a village.

Pagote ... A long piece of cloth worn as head-wear by men.

Pahar ... A farm implement for digging.

Paikada ... Hollow, round anklets.

Paili ... A measure unit for grain. Sixteen pailis make one maund.

Palas ... *Butea monoosperma.* Its trifoliate leaves are used in many religious ceremonies either as platters or as cups. Its twigs are offered in homa.

Pan ... The leaf of piper betal which is chewed with arecanut and lime; sometimes also with tobacco. It also plays a part in rituals when it is offered to some one else as a mark of respect.

Panch, panchayat. The tribal council, usually of five which hears and settles disputes.

Panjan ... A toe ring.

Papadya ... Thin, crisp pancakes made of flour.

Parat ... A flat plate.

Parkar ... A long skirt worn by girls.

Pat ... Widow re-marriage.

Pat ... A wooden plank used to sit or stand on.

Patalya ... Flat, solid bracelets worn by women.

Paydhuni ... Ceremonial washing of the feet of honoured guests when they arrive at a house.

Peepal ... *Ficus religiosa.*

Pej ... A gruel made of rice, wheat, jowar or some other cereal.

Perni ... Sowing of land.

Pindadan ... Oblation of cooked food to the departed.

Polke ... A blouse.

Post ... A gift given by householders to revellers who go from house to house duruing festivals like Holi.

Punjaro .. A tribal priest.

Putali ... A necklace.

Rab ... Burning of leaves, grass and twigs on land during summer as a preliminary to ploughing.

Ranjan ... A big earthen pot for storing water.

Ritkarin ... A woman playing a vital role in marriages of the Nayaka tribe.

Rui ... A targe shrub. *Calotropis gigontea.* Its leaves and flowers are used in puja On occasions, a man gets ceremoniously married to a rui tree before he marries some one else like a widow.

Rumal .. A long piece of cloth worn on the shoulders.

Sag, sagvan ... A large tree. *Tectona grandis.* Used largely in house building.

Saja ... A tree. *Terminalia tomentosa.*

Sakhali ... A necklace.

Sakharpuda ... Betrothal, Sugar (sakhar) or gur is one of the items that figure on the occasion.

Saravanya .. A participant in Bhil death rites.

Saree ... A necklace.

Sari ... A long piece of cloth worn by woman round the waist, one end of which is carried over the shoulder to cover the upper part as well.

Sati ... A goddess worshipped on the sixth day after delivery by a woman.

Shahanai ... A wind instrument played on auspicious occasions.

Shami ... A thorny tree. *Prosopis spicigera.* It is worshipped on Dasara or Vijaya dashami.

Shela .. A long piece of cloth worn round the waist or over the shoulders by men. To give a shela is to honour a man.

Shendi ... Hair worn long from the crown of the head by men. A pigtail.

Shira ... A sweet dish made of wheat granular flour.

Sindur ... Red lead.

Sonar ... A caste of goldsmiths.

Soop ... A winnowing fan usually made of bamboo chips.

Sraddha ... Death anniversary when rites are performed.

Sudaka ... A sari.

Suin ... A midwife.

Supari ... Areca catechu. Its smooth nut figures in many rituals and auspicious occasions. It is given along with the betel—'Pansupari'—as a mark of respect and courtesy. Broken into pieces, it is chewed along with betel and lime

Sutak ... A period of ceremonial impurity observed by a family following the death one of its members.

Sutar ... A caste of carpenters.

Suvasini ... A Hindu married woman whose husband is living. She alone can participate in a number of auspicious acts and duties.

Tagai ... Cash loan given by government to agriculturists towards cultivation and land improvement expenses.

Tambya ... A small metal pot.

Tava ... An iron plate for baking pancakes.

Teli ... A caste of oilseed crushers and oil merchants.

Thali ... A metal plate used to eat from.

Tikas ... A farmer implement to break clods of earth.

Til ... *Sesamum orientale.*

Topi ... A cap.

Toran ... A bunting usually made of green mango leaves.

Tulsi ... Basil plant. *Ocimum Sanctum.* Its leaves are used in the worship of Lord Vishnu. It is grown in a particular spot, Tulsi vrindavan, in almost every house. The plant itself is worshipped daily.

Tur ... A pulse. *Cajanus cajan milsp.* Pigeon pea. A kharif crop. The ripe pulse is split (dal) and eaten boiled or mixed with vegetables.

Ukhal ... A mortar.

Umbar ... *Ficus recemosa.* Branches of this tree are used as props for marriage pandals.

Umbarya, umbari, umbarani. The man and the woman who bring the umbar pole for erecting the marriage mandav.

Urid ... A pulse. *Phaseolus radiatus.*

Val ... A rabi pulse. *Dolichos lablab linn.* The pulse is eaten whole or split and cooked as dal. Its leaves and stalks are used as fodder.

Vajratik ... A necklace.

Varhadaki ... A form of marriage. Also called Mothipen.

Vat, vad ... A large tree sending down acrial roots. *Ficus Bengalensis.* Its leaves are used as platters and its twigs in homa. It is worshipped by women on Jyestha sud 15.

Vela ... An ornament worn at the elbows by women.

Vila ... An iron sickle used by cultivators for weeding and cutting grass.

Waki ... An ornament worn on the arms.

Yela ... An ornament worn on the arms.

Zadap ... An ear-ring.

Zaga ... A girl's frock.

Zendu ... A plant with yellow flowers. *Tagetus erecta.* The flowers are used in worship on Dasara.

Zodani ... Threshing of grain.

Zoli ... A cloth cradle for infants.

Zure ... A necklace

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