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MADHYA PRADESH

PART VI

VILLAGE SURVEY MONOGRAPHS

No. 8

RICHHARI

TAHSIL & DISTRICT DATIA

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Madhya Pradesh

1966

1961 CENSUS PUBLICATIONS, MADHYA PRADESH

(All the Census Publications of this State will bear Volume No. VIII)

PART I (in Sub-Parts)	General Report including Subsidiary Tables.
PART II-A	General Population Tables.
PART II-B (in Sub-Parts)	Economic Tables.
PART II-C (in Sub-Parts)	Cultural and Migration Tables.
PART III	Household Economic Tables.
PART-IV (in Sub-Parts)	Housing and Establishments Tables (including Subsidiary Tables) and Report.
PART V (in Sub-Parts)	Special Tables for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
PART VI	Village Survey Monographs. (A separate Sub-Part for each Village surveyed).
PART VII	Survey of Handicrafts of the State. (A separate Sub-Part for each handicraft surveyed).
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FOREWORD

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

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

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

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

(a) At least eight villages were to be so selected that each of them would contain one dominant community with one predominating occupation, e. g. fishermen, forest workers, jhum cultivators, potters, weavers, salt-makers, quarry workers etc. A village should have a minimum population of 400, the optimum being between 500 and 700.

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

(c) The third group of villages should each be of fair size, of an old and settled character and contain variegated occupations and be, if possible, multi-ethnic in composition. By fair size was meant a population of 500-700 persons or more. The village should mainly depend on agriculture and be sufficiently away from the major sources of

modern communication such as the district administrative headquarters and business centres. It should be roughly a day's journey from the above places. The villages were to be selected with an eye to variation in terms of size, proximity to city and other means of modern communication, nearness to hills, jungles and major rivers. Thus there was to be a regional distribution throughout the State of this category of villages. If, however, a particular district contained significant ecological variations within its area, more than one village in the district might be selected to study the special adjustments to them.

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

It might be of interest to recount briefly the stages by which the Survey enlarged its scope. At the first Census Conference in September 1959 the Survey set itself the task of what might be called a record in *situ* of material traits, like settlement patterns of the village; house types; diet; dress. ornaments and footwear; furniture and storing vessels; common means of transport of goods and passengers; domestication of animals and birds; markets attended; worship of deities, festivals and fairs. There were to be recordings, of course, of cultural and social traits and occupational mobility. This was followed up in March 1960 by two specimen schedules, one for each household, the other for the village as a whole, which, apart from spelling out the mode of inquiry suggested in the September 1959 conference, introduced groups of questions aimed at sensing changes in attitude and behaviour in such fields as marriage, inheritance, moveable and immoveable property, industry, indebtedness, education, community life and collective activity, social disabilities forums of appeal over disputes, village leadership, and organisation of cultural life. It was now plainly the intention to provide adequate statistical support to empirical 'feel' to approach qualitative change through statistical quantities. It had been difficult to give thought to the importance of 'just enough statistics to give empirical underpinning to conclusion', at a time when my colleagues were straining themselves to the utmost for the success of the main Census operations, but once the census count itself was left behind in March, 1961, a series of three regional seminars in Trivandrum (May 1961), Darjeeling and Srinagar (June 1961) restored their attention to this field and the importance of tracing social change through a number of well-devised statistical tables was once again recognised. This itself presupposed a fresh survey of villages already done; but it was worth the trouble in view of the possibilities that a close analysis of statistics offered, and also because the 'consanguinity' schedule remained to be canvassed. By November 1961, however, more was expected of these surveys than ever before. There was dissatisfaction on the one hand with too many general statements and a growing desire on the other to draw conclusions from statistics, to regard social and economic data as interrelated processes, and finally to examine the social and economic processes set in motion through land reforms and other laws, legislative and administrative measures, technological and cultural change. Finally, a study camp was organised in the last week of December 1961 when the whole field was carefully gone through over again and a programme worked out closely knitting the various aims of the Survey together. The Social Studies Section of the Census Commission rendered assistance to State Superintendents by way of scrutiny and technical comment on the frame of Survey and presentation of results.

This gradual unfolding of the aims of the Survey prevented my colleagues from adopting as many villages as they had originally intended to. But I believe that what may have been lost in quantity has been more than made up for in quality. This is, perhaps, for the first time that such a Survey has been conducted in any country, and that purely as a labour of love. It has succeeded in attaining what it set out to achieve: to construct a map of village India's social structure. One hopes that the volumes of this Survey will help to retain for the Indian Census its title to 'the most fruitful single source of information about the country'. Apart from other features, it will perhaps be conceded that the Survey has set up a new Census standard in pictorial and graphic documentation. The schedules finally adopted for this monograph have been printed in Appendices I and II to the Monograph on Village Bendri (Vol. VIII Pt. VI, No. 2).

Asok Mitra
Registrar General, India.

New Delhi,
July 30, 1964.

VILLAGE SURVEYS IN MADHYA PRADESH

Fortynine villages were initially selected in Madhya Pradesh for these surveys on the basis of four main considerations. First the caste indicated for a particular district should be dominant in the villages. The principal caste/s of the district was/were determined on the basis of the 1931 Census returns as Castewise or tribewise figures were not available in full for later Censuses. The second, which was also sociological, was that the village should be, as far as possible, at a certain specified distance from the nearest urban area. It was felt that a study of villages at different distances from urban centres would help us understand the strength of the forces of urbanisation. The 43 districts of the State were arranged in the order of Census location code numbers and a set of three distances (15, 25 & 35 miles) was repeated, only one figure appearing against each village. It was likely that this procedure would impart a somewhat random character to the sample in respect of urbanisation. Next came two administrative consideration: first, the village was to have a population within the range 250-400 yielding thereby some 50-80 households. It would have been impossible to cover a larger number of households in the desirable degree of detail. Second, the village should not have been already surveyed by a different agency. Though normally it was to be one village per district an extra village was selected in districts with a population of more than a million each so that the total number rose to 49 instead of being 43.

2. While it was not expected that it would be possible to stick to the exact distance (from the nearest urban centre) given for each village, it proved difficult to ensure that a village of the given population size also contained a large proportion of the members of a particular caste or tribe. This to some extent has distorted the pattern of purposes that governed the selection. It was also difficult to re-do the selection because it was not certain that a second attempt would succeed. In the last thirty years, the composition of the population seems to have changed quite a lot in some areas. And, we had no figures whatever to go on with so far as the 1960-61 distribution of the population among castes/tribes in villages was concerned. In any case, the main purpose of these surveys was to obtain a detailed picture of present day rural life and the statewise scatter of localities required for the purpose was ensured by making the district the primary group of the villages selected, 9 had each a dominant (scheduled) caste; 16 had each a dominant (scheduled) tribe; and the remaining were multi-caste and/or multi-tribal villages.

3. It was soon discovered that it would be impossible to make a reasonably good job of the survey in respect of all the 49 villages. We started with a very simple questionnaire which was expanded in due course to some 70 or 80 pages. An attempt was made to make them factual but whether the investigator's or somebody else's view of the hierarchical level of a particular caste (or tribe) is objective enough to be considered substantially valid fact is a difficult question to settle but inquiries of this kind were included. This basic survey was left to an official selected by the district authorities; in quite a few villages the results were not unsatisfactory. But the official of the Census Organisation who had to write the report found it necessary to go to the village once or twice again not only to go through most of the schedules right on the spot but also to

collect some more information on particular aspects and prepare the pictorial part of the survey (photographs and drawings). It was at this stage generally that I came into the picture. I have also myself seen a few of the villages. My scrutiny of the first draft resulted in a number of suggestions which were incorporated, the draft finalised and sent upto the Registrar General. The trouble with a survey of this kind is that there can be no end to it even though it is microcosmic in character. We tried our best to modify the report again in the light of the criticism made by the Registrar General. What happened as a result of the approach was that the number of villages we could deal with was determined by the number of officials we had in the Census Organisation who could write at least presentable first drafts. The initial ambitious design was therefore abandoned and the hope at present (December 1965) is that we should be able to produce in Madhya Pradesh some 11 reports, though spade work in respect of another 10 has been completed. The only apology I can offer for publishing them is that very hard work has gone into them even though a strictly sociological approach might have yielded different results. In every survey, an attempt has made to delineate the 'personality' of the village even if in the process the mere recording of information on various generally important aspects may also have suffered. It is like striking out the heading, 'relationship', in a census enumeration schedule and entering 'squint-eyed' in that space. It seems to me that the Census Organisation should continue in coming Censuses to supplement their macrocosmic operations with studies of this kind-which together will probably give a better picture of the varied life of our people than mere statistical reports. For the results to be more satisfying than they have been in this Census, it will be necessary to make a careful study of the present schedules and draw up a new one.

4. I have to acknowledge the debt of deep gratitude that we in State Census Organisations owe to the Registrar General, India, Shri Asok Mitra, who initiated and directed these studies. In the State, the main burden of dealing with matters relating to these surveys fell on Shri K.C. Dubey, Deputy Superintendent of Census Operations and Shri N. B. Basu, Chief Investigator (now District Organiser, Durg, in the Department of Tribal Welfare) to both of whom I am extremely grateful. Dr. B. K. Roy Burman, who helped us with advice and criticism, deserves our particular thanks.

5. Richhari, a Bundehkhand village, is the subject of the report presented in this volume. It is a purely agricultural village and, on the economic side, has little progress to show over the last decade-though, as a result of high agricultural prices, some prosperity has been "thrust" on it. There is no evidence of any improved methods of cultivation and even irrigation is something which the villagers do not seem to be keen about. One would have thought that, in this hardly changing economic context, nothing much could have happened on the social side as well; this, however, is not so. Obviously influenced by the events in the Gwalior area with which Datia district (in which Richhari is situated and which, like Gwalior, was also a former princely State), is contiguous, the Chamars have broken through their traditional barriers. Surprisingly enough, there have been no major clashes heralding this significant revolution. This is not to say that caste has entirely disappeared. The Ahirs, who are the dominant caste of the village, and other "higher" castes still cling to traditional notions of superiority. For the complete eradication of the effect of these memories of the past on the present social situation, more rapid economic change would be necessary as a catalytic agent. It is unfortunate that the community development organisation which has been for some years the main agency of rural development — has not had any impact worth the name on this village. The village, as a social and economic problem, is typical of Indian conditions, though it is doubtful whether the villagers themselves are aware of their being a problem. It is not as if, in response to real need, the village is incapable of organising itself. This area has

been infested by dacoits for centuries and the villagers have organised themselves for defence against these depredations. But the stimulus of such organisational effort has so far been external. It is to be hoped that increasing knowledge of the possibilities of economic development will create internal stimuli strong enough to create a collective urge towards, and collective action for, progress.

I am sure this competent rural survey will reveal to all concerned the true state of rural affairs in our country.

G. JAGATHPATHI,
Joint Secretary,
Ministry of Home Affairs,
Government of India
(Formerly) Superintendent of Census Operations, M.P.

New Delhi
21-1-1966.

PREFACE

The monograph attempts at presenting a study of a multi-caste village situated on the urban fringe of Datia city. The communications for the village are excellent, it being almost on the road and a couple of miles away from railhead, presents a valuable material for assessing the influence of urbanisation in the district. Yet more than this is perhaps the pattern of social, economic and cultural changes that are noticeable in post-independence era, for it is here that the impact of social legislation and constitutional safeguards is keenly felt. The changes brought about emphasise the hitherto latent, but otherwise deep set desire for social equality, leading to economic betterment, something which had been denied by the barriers of caste hierarchy.

The rural study seeks to bring out social and economic conditions. It was taken up after the household schedules had been filled up by the Block agency in July 1961. After scrutiny, the field work commenced from November 1961 to January 1962 by Shri S. K. Varma a Compiler Checker of Gwalior Tabulation Office. I visited the village from January to June 1962 at various intervals staying for a few days. Since the study is based on observations of a comparatively brief investigations such shortcomings as are corrected by intensive and thorough study would perhaps show up. An attempt, however, has been made at studying the main economic trends and many other by-paths of economic activities which weave the some-what complex pattern of livelihood of our villages.

In the village Ahirs are the dominant caste but it is the Chamars who have shown some progress, both economically and socially. The age-old pattern of being born in a caste which determined the occupation appears to be changing. Smarting from social injustice and economic suppression, catching up with progressive legislation and keeping in step with the march of times, the Chamars appear to have come out fairly creditably. They have overthrown their centuries old and some-what obnoxious profession, taken to agriculture and have generally improved their economic lot. Although prejudices die hard and a casual sneer or frown may still be seen on the face of 'Other Castes', at the mention of the word 'Chamar', but the rot against pride in one caste and prejudice against others seems to have set in. The trend is noticeable in villages, the last bastion of caste hierarchy, which seems to reflect the new tempo proclaiming that the 'Old Order' is changing, albeit slowly.

A lucky coincidence went a long way in making friends with the villagers, who earlier appeared shy during investigations. The villagers complained about lack of fire-arms in the village and this made them utterly helpless against the dacoits. I sympathised with their needs, and agreed with their demand for arms. Then within a month of this sympathy six of them were granted arms licenses. This proved a very lucky break and I never forgot it nor did I try to dispel the erroneous belief, that I might have helped them to obtain these. They became friendly though remaining extremely reticent about women and did not permit interrogation or photographs. The Lady Health Visitor was then called in for help. Short of this they were kind, friendly, helpful and hospitable. Despite inconvenience and discomfiture which our visits caused to they were times when one felt that opened out their hearts. We are extremely grateful to them and yet these words fail to convey our deep sense of gratitude.

The fear of dacoits appears very real. The villagers have lived constantly in a state of fear and more lately in a state of preparedness, which is very bright feature in the somewhat murky background; for it exudes, self-confidence coupled with a spirit of adventure. Perhaps this spirit results from their love for wrestling, love for outdoor exercises, for few villages can boast of having so many men versed in the technique of wrestling and some really good fighters.

I am thankful to Shri S. K. Varma, who conducted the field work and took some photographs (the others being taken by me). The sketches have been drawn by Sarvashri I. N. Saxena, S. K. Saxena and B. L. Parganiha. The household schedules (which have been annexed in our report for Monograph No. 2, village Bendri, district Raipur) were filled up by Shri K. S. Kushwah, Social Educational Organiser of Datia Block. The maps and sketches have been prepared by Sarvashri V. Mohan and B. L. Parganiha, Investigators in our office. To all of them and Shri M. L. Sharma, Statistical Assistant, and Shri H. C. Jain Research Assistant who read the proofs and laid out the report for press, my grateful thanks. The cover design based on the idol of Sun at the Sun Temple of Unao, has been drawn by Shri B. L. Parganiha. The work would not have been completed without the kind help and willing co-operation of Sarvashri B. M. Date, and A. V. Kaveeshwar, Collector, and Additional District Magistrate respectively. My thanks are also due to the Block Development Officer, Datia for the help rendered. To claim this report as mine, would be rather unfair. The unfailing help, guidance, comments and valuable suggestions, that I received from Shri G. Jagathpathi, Superintendent of Census Operations, Madhya Pradesh, can hardly be adequately described. The meticulous care with which he went through the report almost re-writing it, despite his pre-occupation was most encouraging and inspiring. I am extremely grateful to him for his painstaking labour. To Dr. B. K. Roy Burman, I am specially beholden for his advice and comments in light of which I have tried to revise and re-write the Report. And finally to Shri Asok Mitra, the fountain head of all our inspiration, the beacon of light which guided our endeavours, I am deeply indebted. Lastly, while generally attempting to refrain from expressing opinions, if any have been expressed, then the responsibility is mine, in personal capacity.

Bhopal,

March 25, 1963.

Kant Swarup Bhatnagar.

"THE PROPER STUDY OF MANKIND IS MAN"

—Alexander Pope
'Essay On Man' II.

To,

The People of Richhari

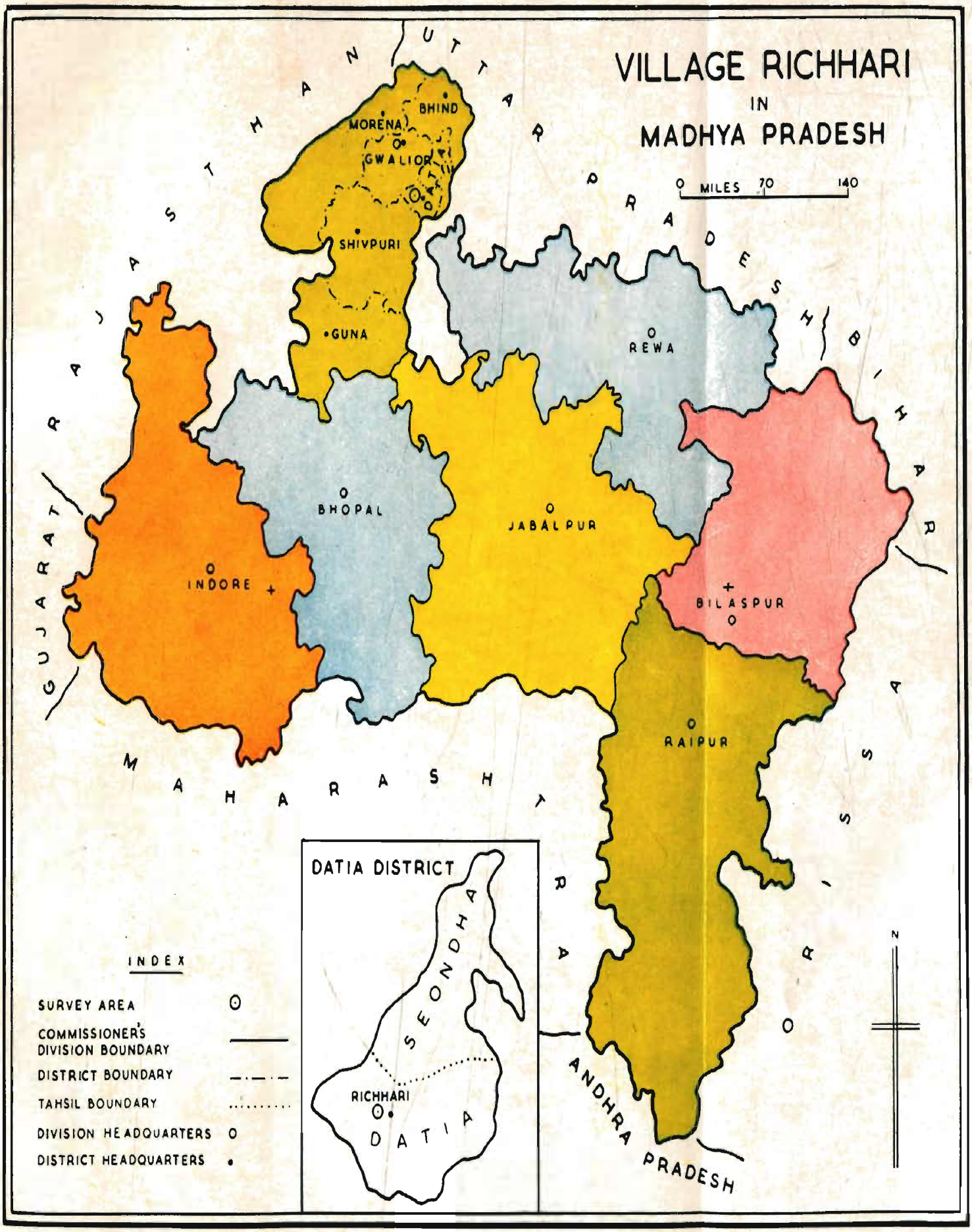
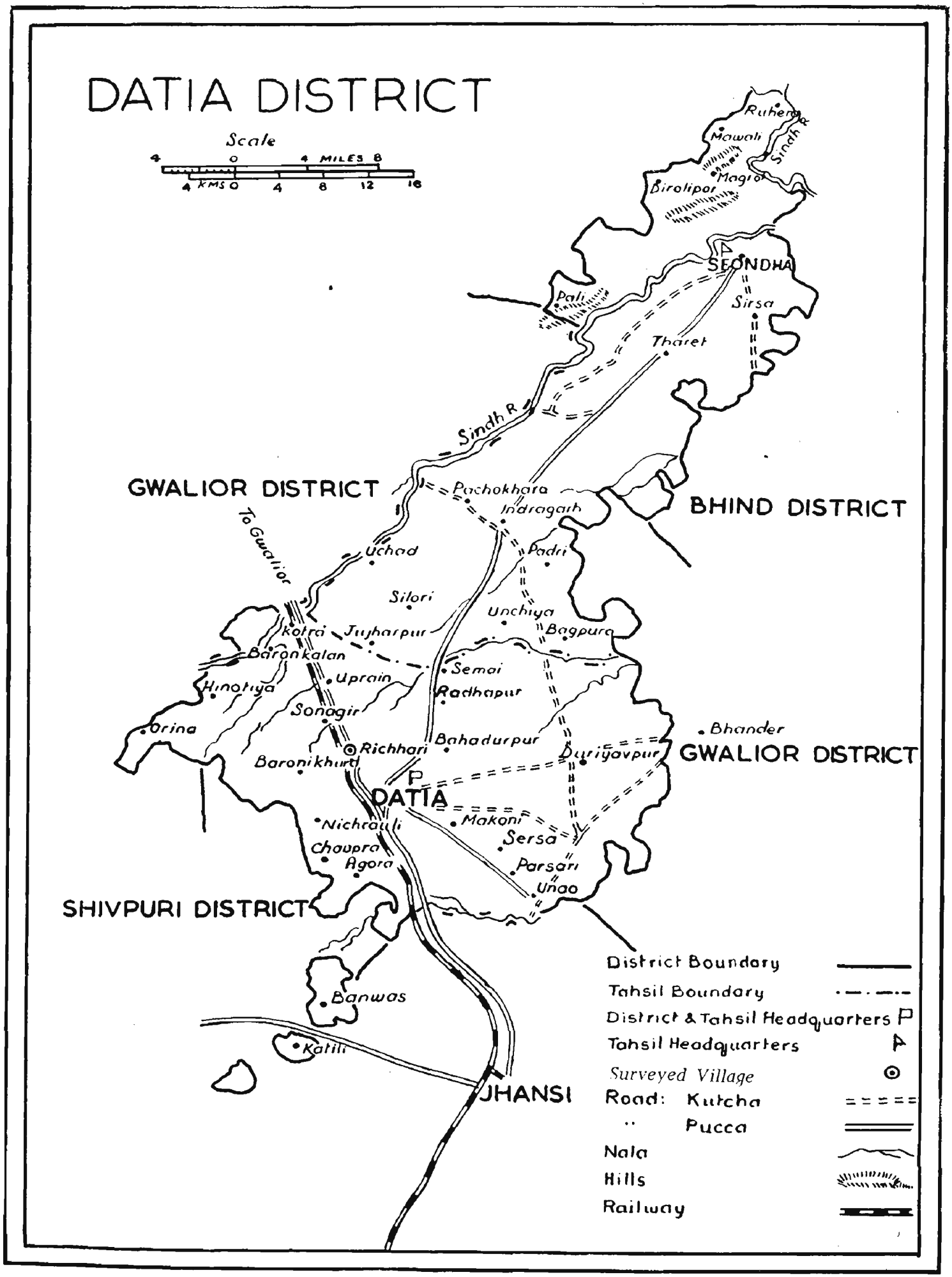
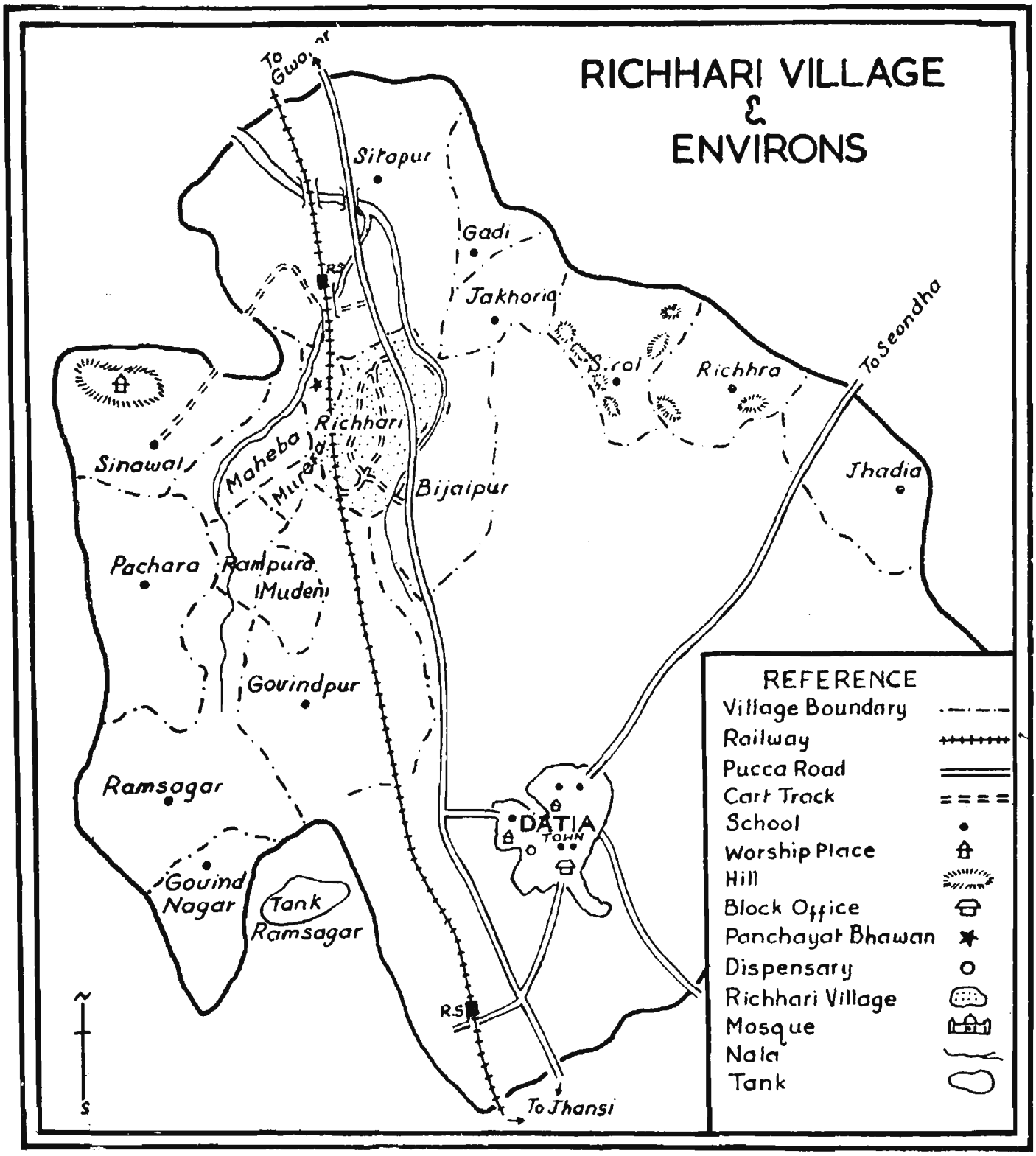

VILLAGE RICHHARI
IN
MADHYA PRADESH
0 MILES 70 140
UTTAR PRADESH
RAJASTHAN
GUJARAT
MAHARASHTRA
ANDHRA PRADESH
ORISSA
BIHAR
BHIND
MORENA
GWALIOR
SHIVPURI
GUNA
REWA
BHOPAL
JABALPUR
INDORE
BILASPUR
RAIPUR
DATIA DISTRICT
SEONDHA
RICHHARI
DATIA
INDEX
SURVEY AREA
COMMISSIONER'S DIVISION BOUNDARY
DISTRICT BOUNDARY
TAHSIL BOUNDARY
DIVISION HEADQUARTERS
DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS
N

PLATE II



Map of Datia District

PLATE III



Richhari Village and Environs (Notional Map)

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Richhari is a multi-caste village — five miles to the north of Datia town, the tahsil and district head-quarters. It lies sandwiched between the Jhansi-Gwalior road and the Jhansi-Delhi main line on the Central Railway. It is situated near the milestone towards Gwalior (44 miles), and lies two furlongs west from the road. The rail track passes one furlong further west from the village and the nearest railway station is a passenger-stop, Sonagir. Sonagir is famous for its Jain temples and every year in the month of *Chaitra* (March-April) a big mela is held. On the map the situation corresponds to 25° 42' North Latitude and 78° 29' East Longitude (not shown in the Survey of India map). From the main road it is approachable by a bullock cart tract. From the railway station Sonagir , a footpath leads into the village, the distance being two miles, one may also come by road from Sonagir after covering a distance of five miles — three miles being the approach to Jhansi-Gwalior road and the remainder on the Gwalior -Jhansi road.

History

Datia was one of the three treaty States of Bundelkhand Agency in Central India in the British days. The ruler enjoyed a personal salute of 15 (fifteen) guns. It was founded by Maharaja Bhagwan Rao, the sixth son of the famous Bir Singh Deo of Orchha in 1626. Originally, Bir Singh belonged to the family of the Suryavanshi chiefs; Pancham Singh Gaharwar of Kashi who performed severe penance before Goddess Devi at Bindbasni (Mirzapur) and pleased her. She granted Pancham Singh a boon who thereafter was called "Bundela". In 1256 A. D. he established his capital at Orchha (Tikamgarh District).

It is said that Bhagwan Rao was with Emperor Shahjehan when his father divided the territories among his other five brothers, on return he asked his father for his share. Bhagwan Rao was given Datia and Badoni *Jagir* as his share. He was also given the palace at Datia. His territory had, however, been enlarged by the grants received from the Moghuls for distinguished services. He served the Emperor Shahjehan faithfully who rewarded him by giving him pargana Bhander (now in Gwalior District) and also decorated him with a title. Thereafter he started expanding his territories and captured Daboh (in Bhind district), Khagsir and Samthar — later on Daboh and Bhander was taken by Peshwa "temporarily" but never returned. Since then Datia continued, through different vicissitude, to remain a princely State.

Richhari village, so the legend has it, was founded in the reign of Indrajit Singh (1736-62) round about 1760 A. D. It so happened that Maharaja Indrajit Singh went to Bhander in a stately procession. A *daftari* (Peon) named Ramju who carried silver ink-pots and golden pens was left behind. He was captured by dacoits. He cleverly hid the ink stand and pens in a nearby bush and refused to disclose the whereabouts to the dacoits who stripped and beat him mercilessly. When the dacoits could get nothing out of him they left him. He reached Bhander carrying the precious cargo but still without clothes. The Maharaja on hearing his tale of suffering and stubbornness granted *zemindari* lands which are now comprised in village Richhari.

So Ramju with his three brothers came and founded the village. He was an Ahir and even upto this day Ahirs form a majority in the village. The non-Ahirs concede that it was the Ahirs who founded the village. This history gives the approximate duration of the settlement at about 200 years. The present day Ahirs, it is claimed, came from Ramju's family although no direct lineage is established.

Climate

The climatic conditions are clearly marked. The monsoons from the Arabian Sea reach this place by the first week of the July which is comparatively a rainier month. Most of the rainfall is received by about September. October is a period of bright sun and stray showers. It is humid during the rains and one perspires

*In the British regime, Bundelkhand was a Political Agency with its headquarters at Nowgong. The Maharaja of Datia in 1804 came to an agreement with the British. Their agreement was ratified in 1818 by a formal treaty at Kalinjar. Apart from Datia, Orchha, now in Tikamgarh district and Samthar were the other two States who had signed separate treaties with the British during nineteenth century.

profusely. The average rainfall is 38". Sixty five inches was the maximum recorded in 1917-18 and 12" minimum in 1905-06. With the advent of November the season begins to cool down and it is pleasant. By December the winter sets in and becomes unpleasantly cold. The minimum temperature goes down upto 40° F. This year (1961-62) it went down to 38° F. By February the weather begins to warm up but it is only in April that heat commences. From 15 April to the end of June the summer is severe, the maximum temperature going upto 116° F in the shade.

Flora

The following trees are easily met with:—

Neem (Melia indica), babul (Acacia arabica), chhokar (Butea frondosa), beri (Zizyphus jujuba), peepal (Ficus religiosa), seesum (Dalbergia sissu) and *imli (Tamarindus indica)*. It is rather strange that one does not come across big trees in the village. The village is comparatily exposed from above in view of this scarcity of trees.

Fauna

Jackals, foxes, rabbits abound in the area. Near the village lies some hilly area. From here sometime wild boars are known to visit the fields. The common birds are peacocks, partridge, sand-groves, sparrows the common eagle and crow. No damage to life or property has been reported in last few years from animals. Snakes are comparatively rare but there are plenty of black scorpions who live beneath the big boulders on the hill, under which the village is situated.

General Situation of the Village

The village is sprawled along the base of a hillock which is stony and full of boulders. It is not visible from the road because of the hill. From the window of the moving train silhoutted against the sky-line it presents a pleasant view. It is spread out over 490.82 acres. From atop the hill one can look at the village laid out in neat blocks and rows of houses, with roof covered with local tiles. The red flag of the temple rises above the housetops and the fields are well spread out for a long distance. Amidst the green fields, a train racing towards Gwalior or Jhansi is an arresting, if incongruous, spectacle — especially on a cool clear day when the dark or buff engine smoke weaves fine patterns against brillantly blue skies.

The Administrative Link

The Tahsil, District and National Extension Service Block headquarters are located at Datia 5 miles south of the village by the main road but otherwise three miles by *katcha* route. The police station is at Chhoti Baroni 4 miles to the south-east. The *Gram Panchayat* is situated at Murera about one mile away to the west. For the Judiciary Datia is the headquarters of a First Class Magistrate who is also a II Civil Judge in the Sessions District of Gwalior.

The Village

The village has not had the advantage of being covered by the N. E. S. Block although Datia Block functioned from 2-10-53. This was so because at the time of formation of the Block no regard was paid to contiguity or Revenue Inspector's Circles boundaries. It has received attention of the block authorities only after formation of a second block in the district on 2-10-60. The village patwari does not stay here but lives in Datia.

The total area of the village is 490.82 acres — which includes the entire lands in its jurisdiction. There are 71 households. The caste-wise break-up of total population is:

S. No.	Caste	No. of Households	Population		
			Persons	Males	Females
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Ahirs	42	261	145	116
2	Gadariya	12	52	30	22
3	Chamar	11	53	29	24
4	Kachhi	2	16	8	8
5	Brahmin	2	12	7	5
6	Bhat	1	4	2	2
7	Nai	1	5	4	1
	TOTAL	71	403	225	178

The Residential Pattern

The pivot of the residential pattern is the caste. The Brahmin family once lived on the top of the hill which is comparatively isolated. The dacoits raided the house in early summer of 1961 and thereafter he abandoned the house to come down towards denser habitation. (The abandoned house is shown in the photograph plate XXXIV).

The Ahirs have their houses clustered together towards the northern fringe of the village. The Gadariyas also live together in the middle portion and Chamar's households are located towards the southern part. Apart from these none of the other communities seemed to be very gregarious *inter-se*. They are usually inter-

spersed and have taken up their residence wherever space was available. The total habitation area is approximately 3 acres. The plan of residential pattern gives the details. (Please see plates IV and V).

The Houses

The houses are built of mud, stones or local bricks of varying sizes, biggest being 9" x 6" x 3" or proportionately smaller ones. These sizes are not standardised. The stones and bricks are held together with wet mud. The clay is made by getting loose earth obtained from the nearby hill. The content of this clay is mud, with gravel and small pebbles. In colour it becomes yellowish brown. Water is added till the consistency of a thick paste is reached. Nothing is added to it. The wall is then raised with bricks or stones using this clay to cement the construction. The clay holds the stones or bricks better than any other material or mixture. After the desired height is attained and construction completed the plastering is done with the same clay to which cowdung, husks of wheat has been added. This prevents cracks from showing up. (Please see plates VI and VII. For roofing, all houses have tiles made locally by themselves at a nearby place in the village. After the wall has been constructed, wooden beams are placed across the room and the tiles carefully placed on the top.

There is one house of burnt brick walls. Stone is generally very popular being easily available from nearby hills. Bricks come next in popularity. Cement is not usually used because it is not easily available. There is a great demand for G. I. sheets but they too appear in short supply. For construction of a house local artisans, professing no technical skill, but sound ordinary "construction sense", are employed.

Temples and Schools

There are two temples and one primary school for boys in the village. The bigger temple is in the Ahir sector and is dedicated to Lord Krishna. It is owned by the community at large and was constructed about 25 years ago by voluntary subscription. A Brahmin *pujari* has been engaged to offer prayers and he looks after the temple. No lands have been given to the temple. The *pujari* is paid one seer of grain, wheat or *juar* per plough at every harvest i. e. he gets a seer of the grain from the summer and winter crops. This is his regular income. Apart from this, on occasions like births or weddings, offerings are made by the parties concerned at the time of celebration of festivals, whatever offering thus made, goes to the *pujari*. Idols of Lord Krishna and his consort Radha are placed on a small pedestal.

The second temple is dedicated to *Jagadamba* and is situated in the fields about a furlong to the north-west of the village. No regular prayers are offered here. *Jagadamba* is worshipped as *"Durga* or *Devi"* hence a fair is held towards the Ram Navmi.

The Kachhis while worshipping the Gods described earlier have their own titular deity known as *Ganga Baba*. They have created a small memorial to him. (Please see photograph plate VII) It is known as *Madiya* or a small memorial. Among the Kachhis only the Kachhawahas worship the deity. The Kachhis have little knowledge about his past but claim that *Ganga Deo Baba* himself was leper, and by some miracle came to acquire a cure for leprosy. Thus persons suffering from leprosy worship him in the hope of a cure. They also attribute to him supernatural powers whereby he keeps them (Kachhis) safe. The Kachhis who are essentially the gardner class offer coconuts at the *madiya*. When vegetables like chillies, brinjals are attacked by pests, *Ganga Baba* in invoked as a *devta* by the Kachhis. (The invocation of a *Devta* has been described in Chapter IV)

The *madiya* is situated about half a mile to north of the village near a bullock-cart track, but is covered with wild growth. In construction it is a platform 3' x 2' on which a cupola like structure has been added. The place is not well looked after and remains in utter neglect.

Apart from these two temples and a *madiya*, situated in the village, the Sun temple at Unao is very famous in this area and on Sundays piligrims throng to it. (Please also see Appendix). The entire village is known to go to it.

Water Supply

There are three drinking water wells which supply the needs of the village. In addition to this there is one more well in the village, but the water being brackish it is not used for drinking. One more well is being dug privately. Of these three wells two are towards the north-west, one is located near the *Jagadamba* temple and the other, another 200 yards east of it. The Ahirs living in the northern sector of the village make use of these wells. Towards the south of the village there is another well in the Chamar locality and those living near this sector use the well. There are no restrictions on the use of these wells. The Chamars, however, by convention fill up the water last. Usually the women

go to the well for filling water and they collect there community-wise. The water table is between 25′ and 30′. For the cattle, drinking water is available in a nearby tank a mile away towards south-east of the village. Lately on the bank of the tank a Government Mechanised Farm has been set up. The border wiring of the Farm is in dis-repair and so the village cattle often stray into the Farm where the authorities impound the cattle and the villagers have to pay some fines. This had caused some hardship to them who feel that if the fencing is in good shape, this could be avoided.

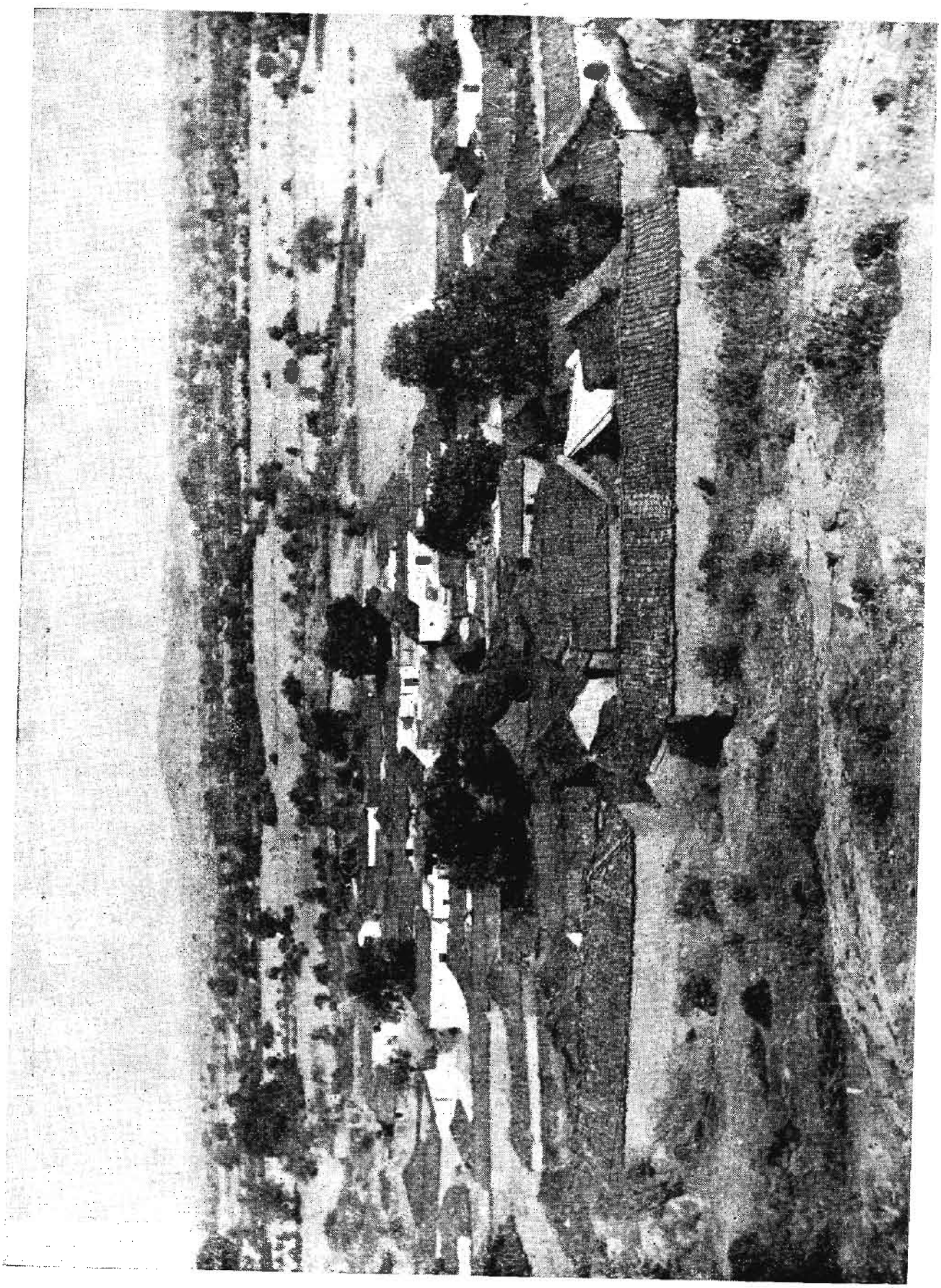
Village — Its composition and History of Settlement

The Ahirs were the 'Pilgrim Fathers'. Their coming over to the village has been discussed earlier. One Brahmin household from Datia followed the Ahirs. The Brahmins are wanted by any new settlers because one must have a priest to assist in the ritual prescribed by religion. After the Brahmins came one of the descendants of a Brahmin family who married a low caste woman and became a Bhat; thus Bhat, it is said, in the caste of a Brahmin male contacting a hypogamous marriage.

Chamars came from Chulota a village in old Datia State. They had no land in that village and the cobbler's profession did not give them much earnings there, so they came here. At first they plied their traditional craft. Later lands were made available to them by the Ahirs and so their settlement became permanent. At first only two families came, later the number multiplied from these families. There is only one new family which established itself in the last 30 years and is not related to the earlier two families. The caste as a whole has now taken to cultivation. Tanning and flaying has been given up, about 10 years ago. It is said that after abolition of untouchability the Chamars of the region, called a caste Panchayat. The Chamars had been looked down upon because their profession was considered obnoxious. Hence some of the Chamar elders from all nearby villages got together and decided to hold a Panchayat, to get away from this social stigma. In the Panchayat it was decided that they would no longer carry on with this profession. The decision was more or less unanimous. It was strictly enforced under the threat of expulsion from the caste. The Chamars thus broke away from their traditional occupation and switched over to cultivation or agriculture labour or to skilled and unskilled labour.

The Gadariya is a shephered caste who came from Datia. The Gadariya used to look after the cattle of different villages. Near about Richhari there was jungle and the cattle were taken out to these spots. Gradually these persons settled in the village, acquired lands and have now become permanent members of the settlement. They have not completely taken to agriculture as even today, as many as half of their families are still grazing cattle.

PLATE IV



A Panoramic view of Richhari

PLATE V

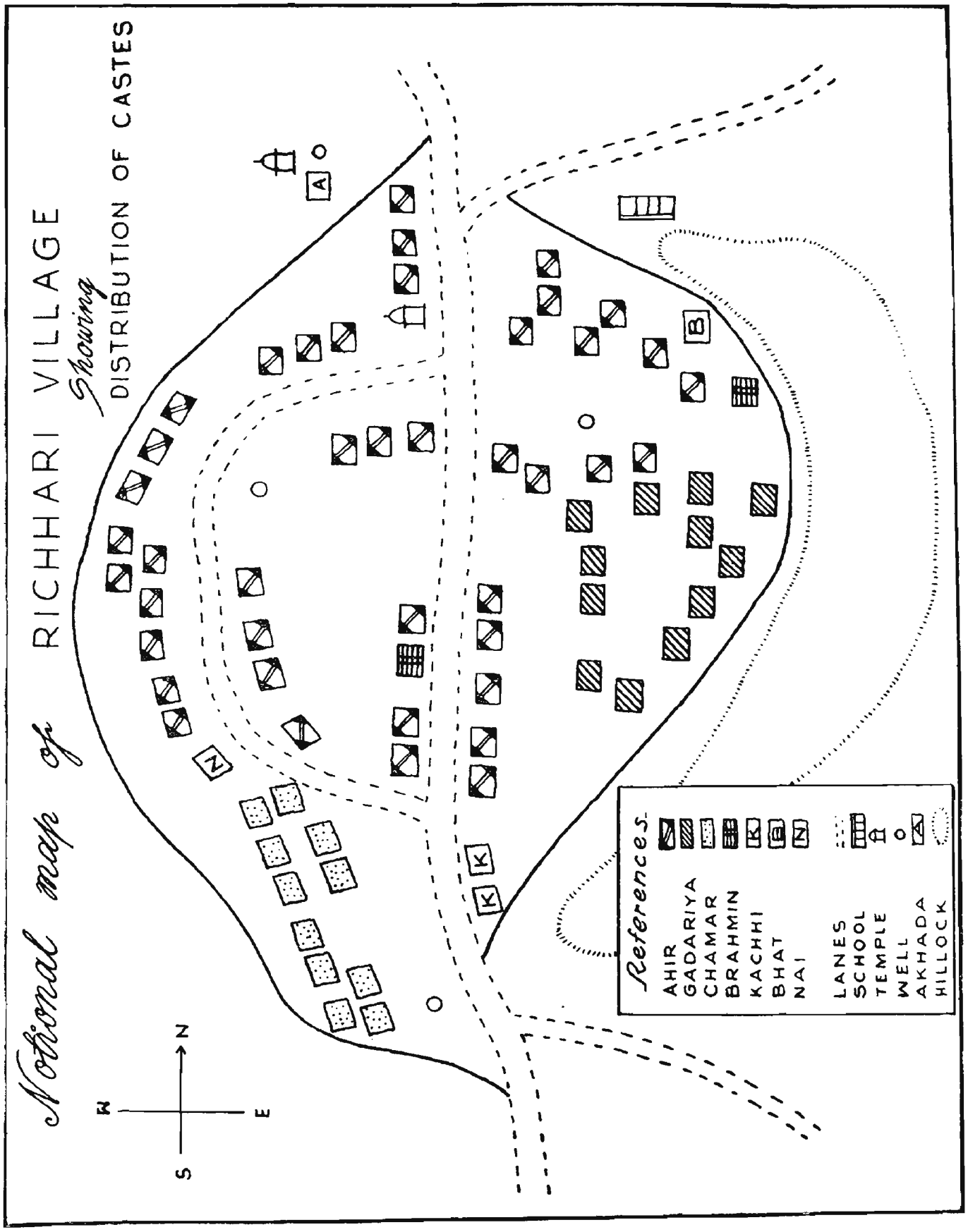
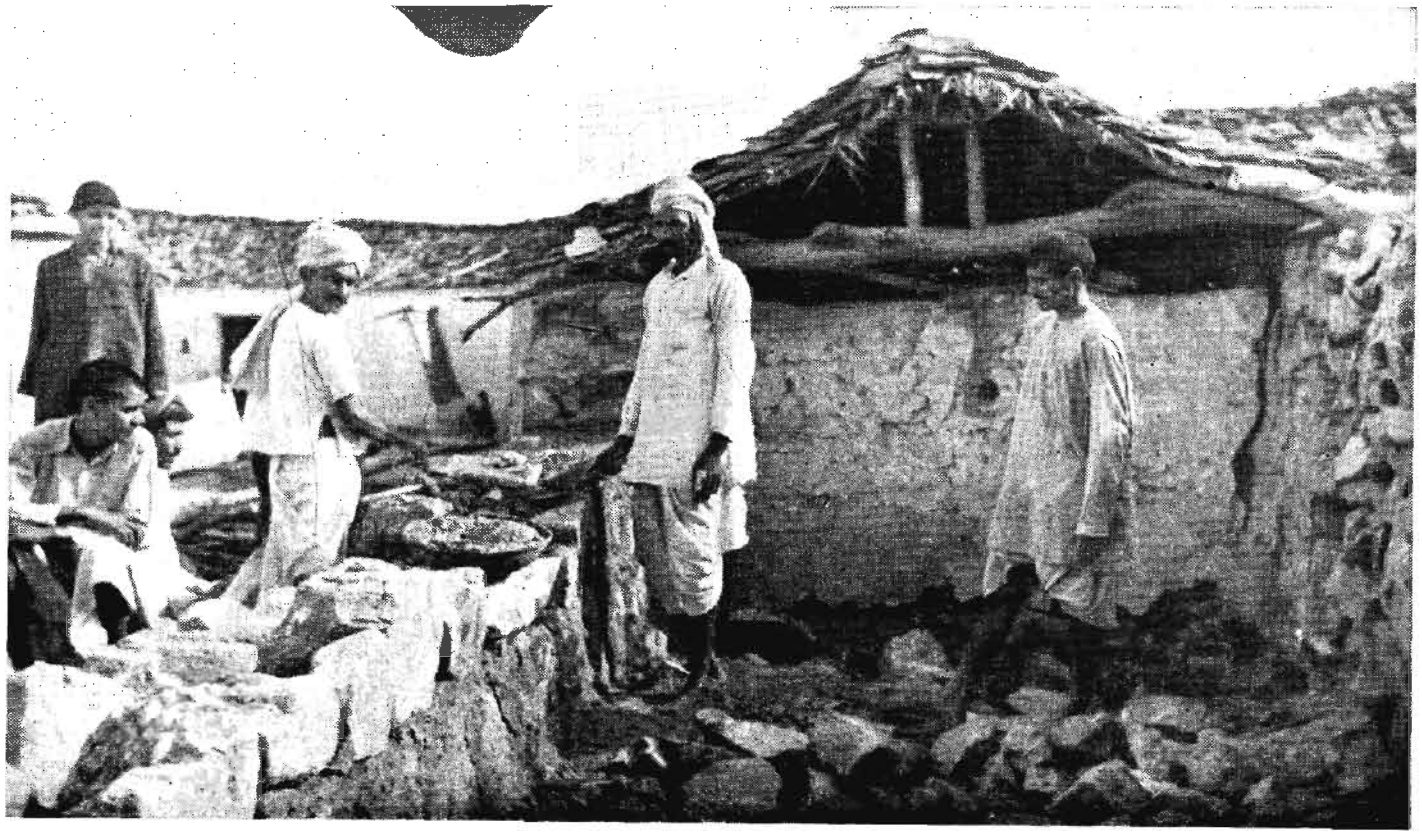
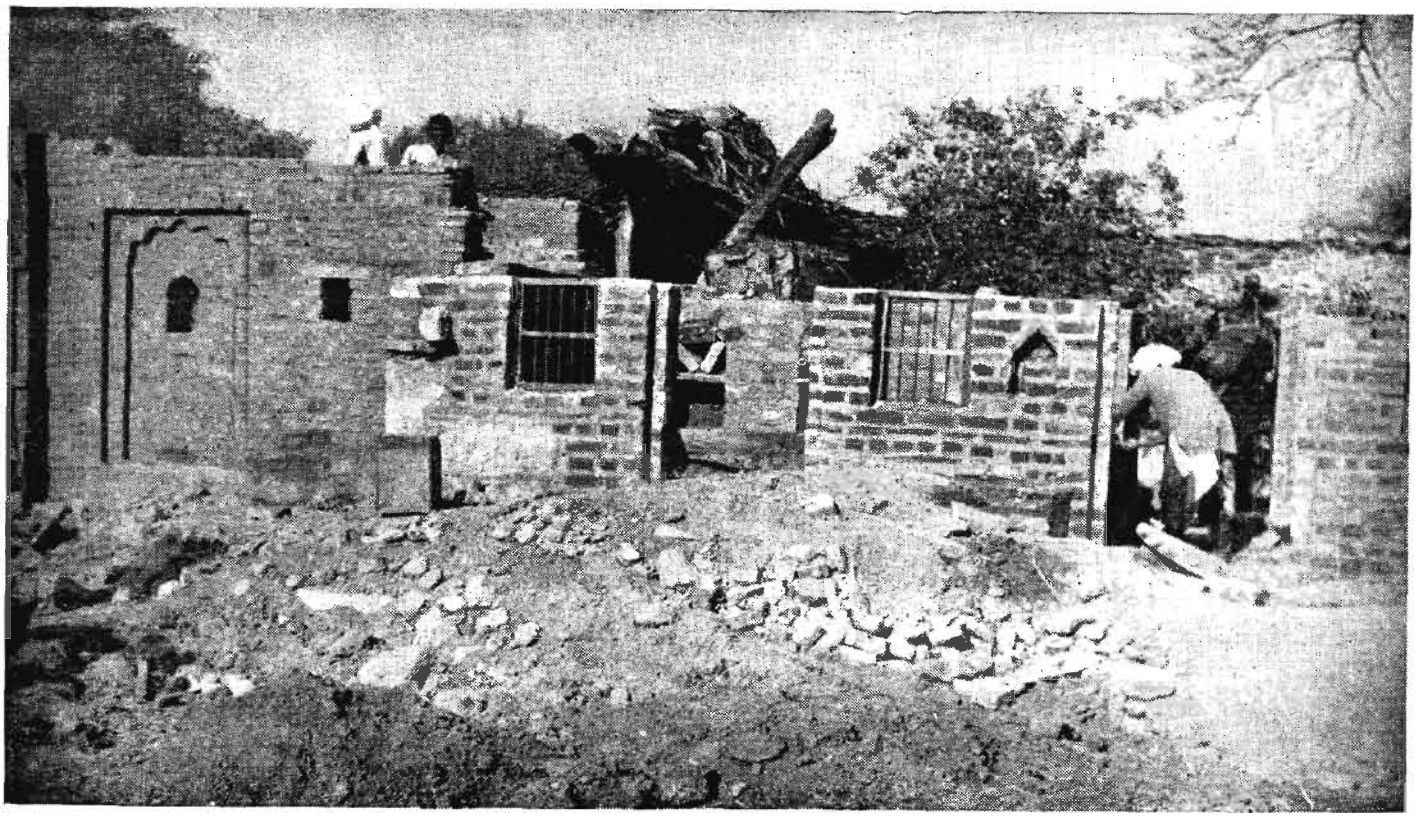

National map of RICHHARI VILLAGE
Showing
DISTRIBUTION OF CASTES
References
AHIR
GADARIYA
CHAMAR
BRAHMIN
KACHHI
BHAT
NAI
LANES
SCHOOL
TEMPLE
WELL
AKHADA
HILLOCK
N
S
E
W

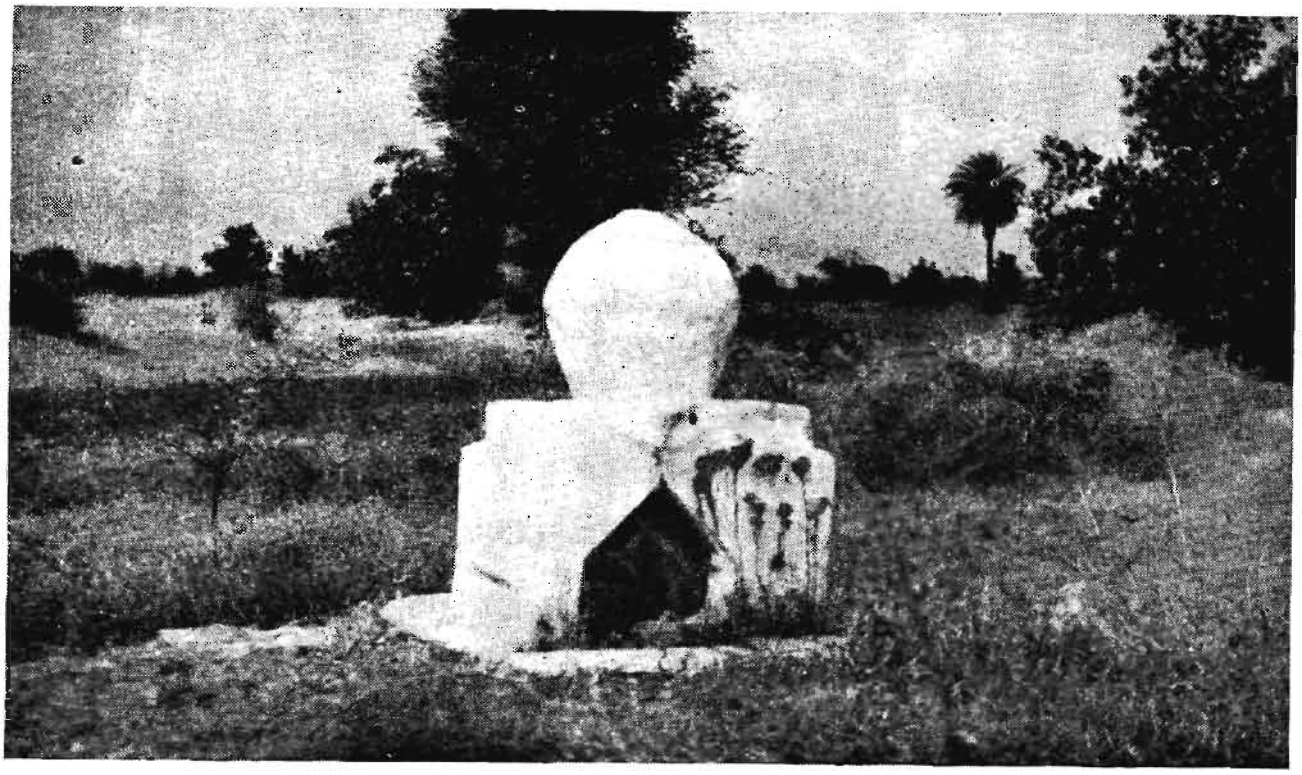
PLATE VI





Construction of a new house

PLATE VII

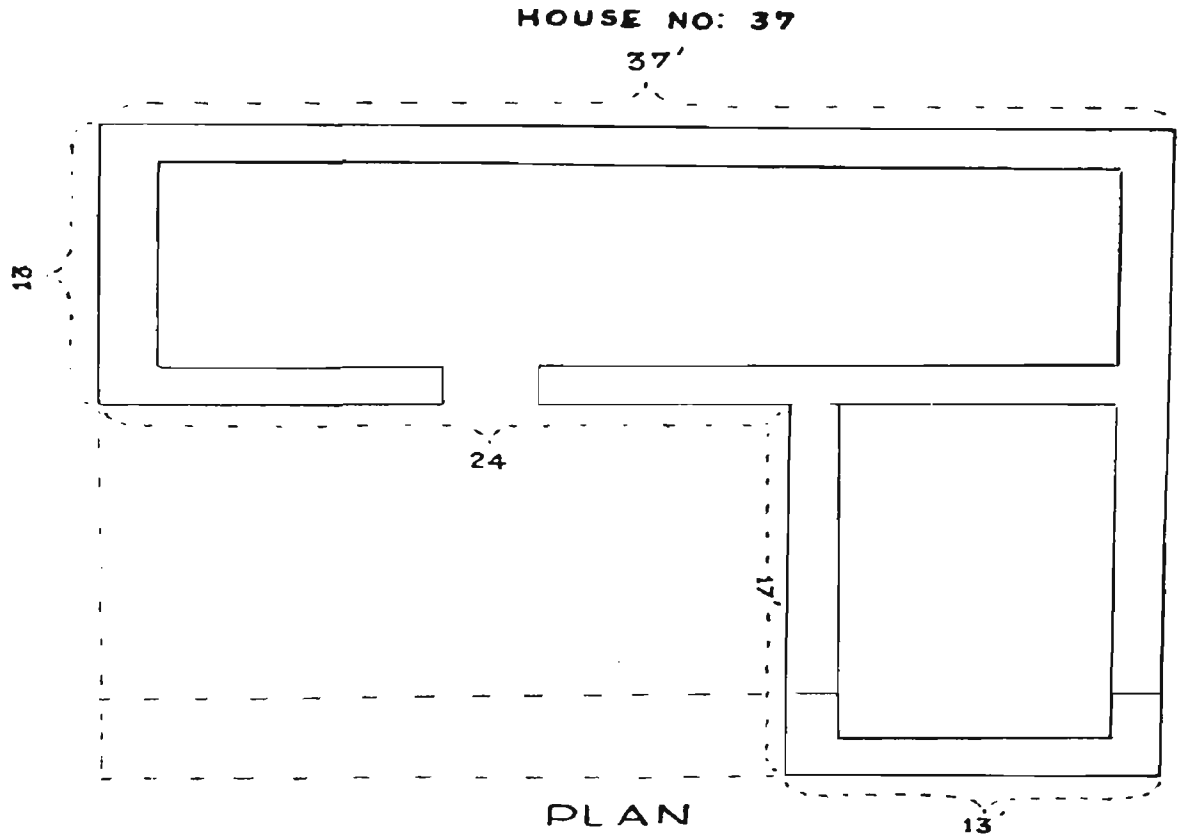


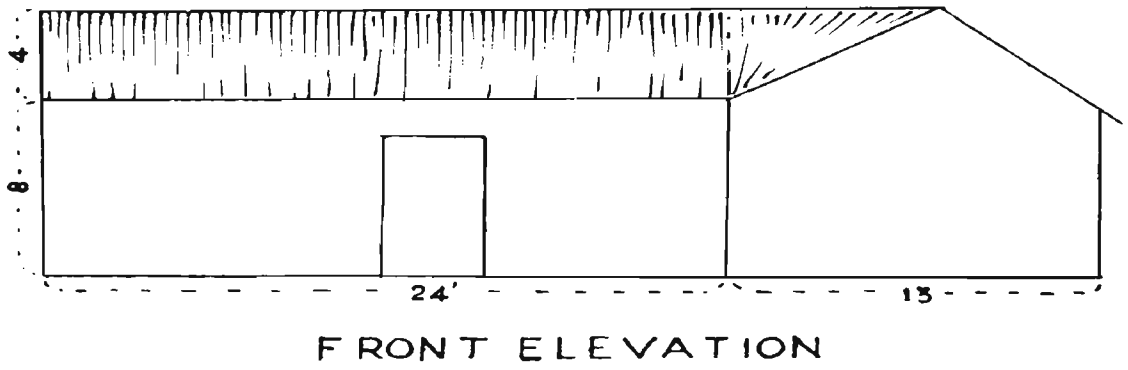
Madia of Ganga Baba

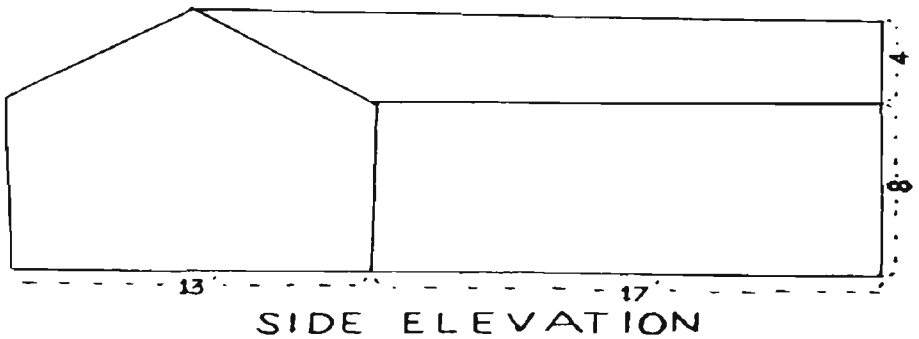


A House of a Well-to-do Ahir

PLATE VIII



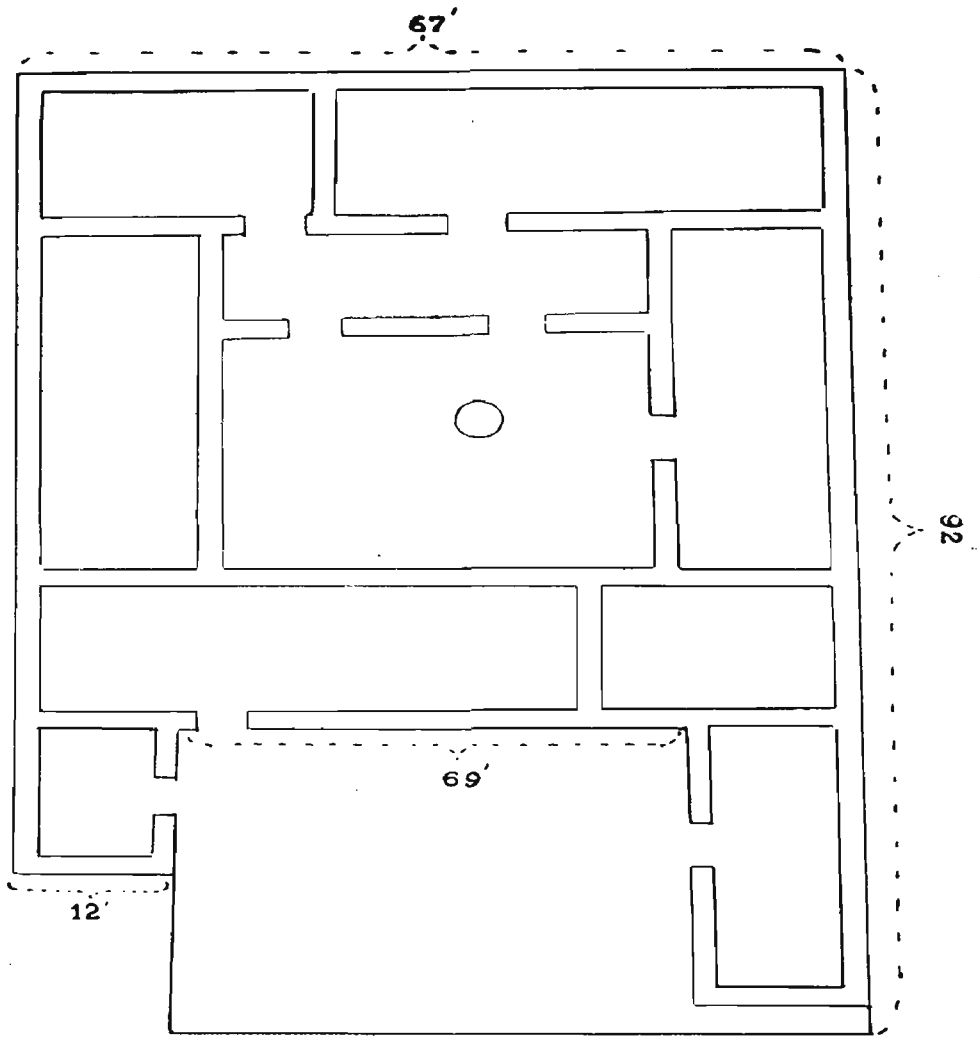




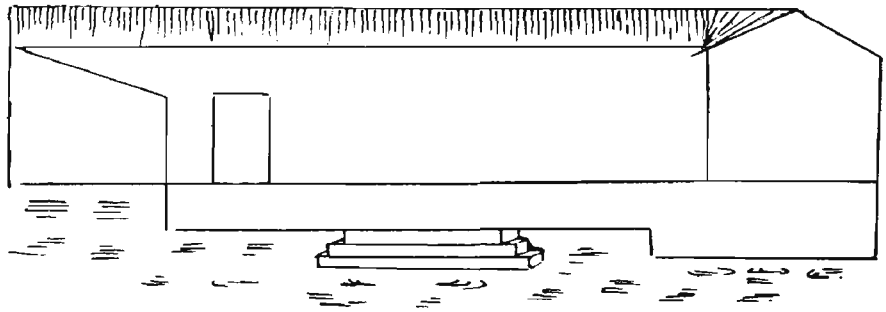
Sketch-House of a poor cultivator

PLATE IX

HOUSE NO: 70



PLAN

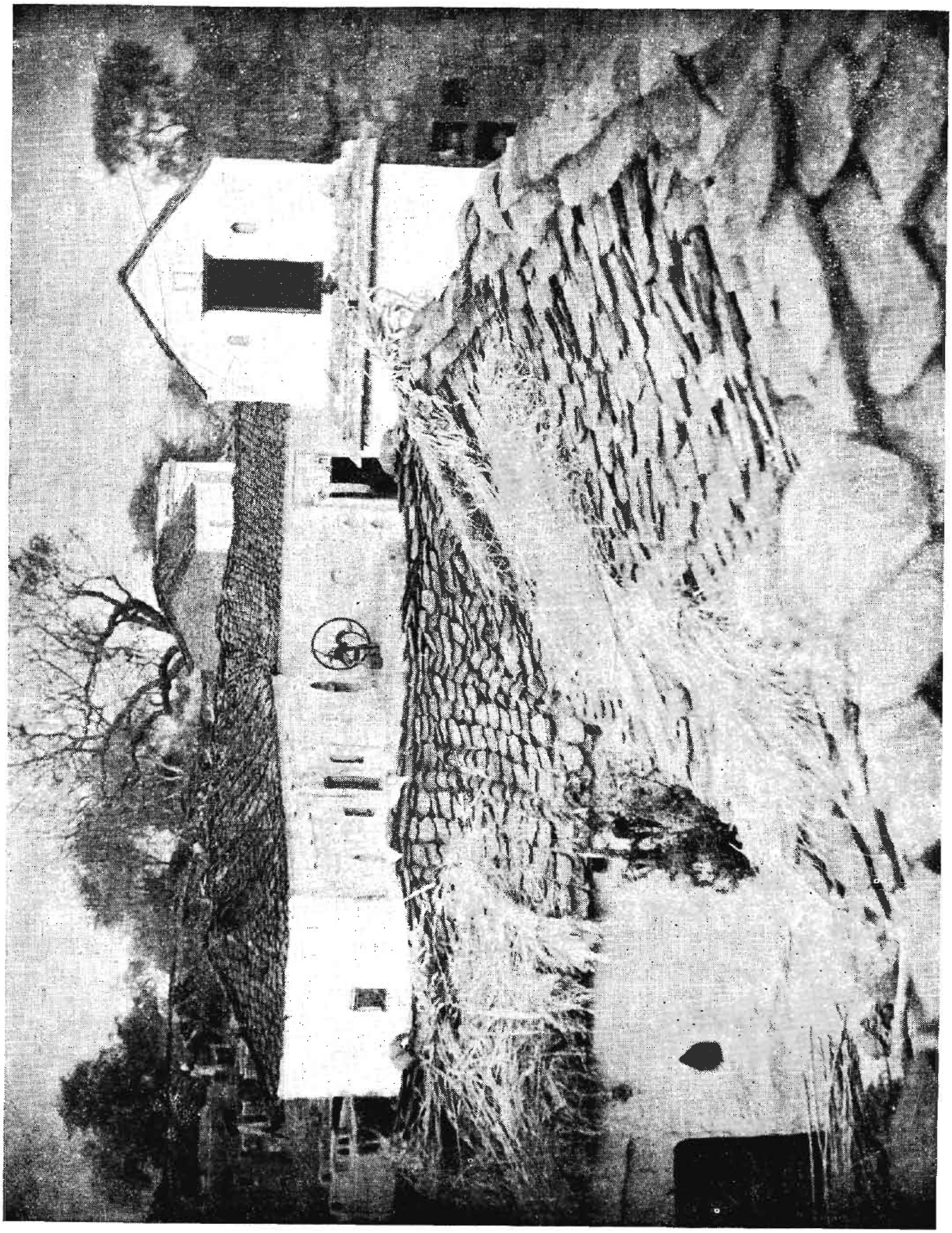


FRONT ELEVATION



Sketch-House of an average well-to-do cultivator

PLATE X



Roofs of locally made tiles

CHAPTER II

Caste Composition

Ethnically the village is basically like those found in north and in the northern parts of Central India. The various castes composing the village are as follows:

The Brahmins

They stand at the apex of the society. In the village the Brahmins belong to the Sanadya group claiming descent from Rishi Sanad Kumar. Smoking is permitted but eating meat is tabooed. They claim to have come to the village from Badoni *Jagir*, about 4 miles away. Locally they are known as 'Rajouria' Brahmins. Probably 'Rajouria' is derived from the word *Raj* meaning rule or administration. The Brahmins claim that the village was comprised in their proprietory rights before given over to others. They never stayed in the village but lived in Badoni. 'Rajouria' according to them still signifies their old status.

The Bhats

"A caste in upper India or hereditary bards, genealogists and heralds, probably of mixed Brahmin and Rajput extraction, but claiming Brahmin descent".[1] There is one Bhat family in the village. The present Bhat's father was a Brahmin who married a Charan woman of Bhat clan. Regarding Bhat, in practically the same strain, Russell and Hiralal[2] wrote, "Some (Bhats) no doubt are derived from the Brahmin caste as stated by Mr. Nesfield". "They are an offshoot from those secularised Brahmins who frequented the courts of Princes and camps of warriors, recited their praises in public and kept records of their genealogies. Such, without much variations, is the function of the Bhat at the present days". Times have changed and although some Bhats still follow the traditional occupation described above but in the present case this is not so. The point to be emphasised is that the Bhat is still of Brahmanic descent. The Bhat has had its counterpart in the West. The lays of Greece and Rome were also sung by the bards.

Charans are also known as Bhats except that they claim descent from the Rajputs. "Malcolm states that according to the fable of their origin, Mahadeo first created Bhats to attend his lion and bull, but these could not prevent the former from killing the latter, which was a source of infinite vexation and trouble as it compelled Mahadeo to create new ones. He, therefore, formed the CHARANS equally devout with the Bhats but of bolder spirits and gave him in charge, these favourite animals. From that time no bull was ever destroyed by the lion".[3]

Thus a Brahmin bringing a Charan woman gave rise to Bhat in the village who now subsists almost entirely on agriculture. He belongs to a lower social level, a brahmin would not partake 'katcha' food prepared by him. There are a few other Bhat families in nearby villages. They are known as Bhats and accept the Bhat of the village as one of them.

The Ahirs

They are a caste primarily of graziers, cowherds and also of cultivators widely distributed in Northern and Central India. Near Jhansi a piece of country was called Ahir-war. The word Ahir appears to have been derived from the 'Abhira' an immigrant tribe which imigrated into India from Central Asia. In the village they form a very powerful group of cultivators, having been its founders. They call themselves 'YADAVS' and belong to the Yaduvanshi sect, which claims descent from Yadav — from the family of Balaram — Lord Krishna's brother. They total 42 families, — the highest for any caste in the village. Their totem is a snake cobra, from which they call themselves *Nagelas*. The legend narrated is:—

There was a woman whose first child was a daughter, when she was about four years of age, a snake — cobra was born to her mother. The mother regarded the snake as her son and while it was lying in her bed, she had to go out on some errand. She told the daughter to look after the 'baby'. In the meanwhile milk had been placed on the fire for boiling. The snake got up, slithered by, went to the boiling milk pot and fell in it, dying instantaneously. The mother on return saw the whole tragedy.

1. Hutton, J. H. — Caste in India, 1951 p. 276.
2. Russell, R. V. and Hiralal — The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India, 1916, Vol. II, p. 251.
3. Quoted by Russell and Hiralal.

The *Nagelas* have come from this lineage. They worship the snake and would never kill it. On *Nag Panchmi* day which is dedicated to snakes, milk is never boiled in their households and on each 'Navmi', 9th day (both in the bright and dark phases), milk would not be boiled or churned. Should this be violated, then they believe that the milk in the cattle would dry up.

The Gadariyas

This is the occupational shepherd class of Northern India derived from Gadar (Hindi) *ganahara* or *kandhar* in Sanskrit meaning a sheep. Their traditional occupation was sheep or cattle grazing. Once, they were producing woollen blankets. Half of them have now taken to agriculture. Some of the inhabitants of the village say that they have come over from Turkestan.

The Kachhis

Kachhis are essentially a vegetable cultivating caste. The word is derived from *Kachhar* meaning alluvial soil near a river. They show great preference for growing vegetables. They claim their descent from *Kachhwaha* Rajputs which is rather doubtful according to some writers. The Kachhis of the village claim to have descended from Kush, the twin son of Rama and have been blessed by Mahadeo, who tested them for their intelligence. The blessing goes:

"Na kachhia marega: na kothia bharegi"
Literally, No Kachhi die nor house full
"Na basa parega: na bhooka uthega"
Literally, No stale food thrown nor hungry get up.

Which means, "A Kachhi will not die (of hunger) nor will his house be ever full. Nor will stale food be eaten: nor will he rise hungry."

It was intended to be a tribute to Kachhi's intelligence. Another interesting version regarding descent was given. An unmarried Brahmin girl became pregnant and was delivered of a male child. To save herself from the infamy, she placed the child in a wooden box and put it in the river. The box floated and was picked up by a sage who happened to be bathing. The sage reared the child and when it grew up he was given some land near the river on which he grew vegetables, fruits and other produce. The descendants of this man continued the profession and began to be known as 'Kachhias.' The local Kachhis call themselves *Sakoriyas*, their, other three sects being *Khodoriya, Khariya, Pahariya*. The Kachhis in the village are primarily agriculturists.

The Chamars

The Chamars are the skinners, tanners and workers in leather generally found in Northern and Central India. They are found in all districts of north and north-western Madhya Pradesh.

Origin

Their name is derived from the word *Charm-kara* which in Sanskrit means 'a worker in leather'. Traditionally Chamar is an off-spring of a *Chandala* woman from a fisherman father.

There are various other accounts of the origin of Chamars. The *Karavara* of Manu "who cuts leather" is descended from a Nishada father and Vaideha mother. The Nishada is again said to be the child of Brahmin and Sudra woman, and Vaideha of Vaishya father and Brahmin mother. The origin thus represents a good deal of intermixture of various castes. It was perhaps this feature which impressed Sherring who thought that Chamars were of no mean lineage. He wrote, "If the workers in leather of the present day are lineal descendants of the workers in leather in Manu's time, the Chamars may fairly consider themselves as of no mean degree and may hold up their heads boldly in the presence of higher castes".[4] High bred appearance of some of the Chamars tempted Sherring to remark this and he is not alone here, for superior physical types of Chamars have been noted in several localities. Thus in the Kanara district of Bombay, the Chamar women are said to be famed for their beauty of face and figure for there it is stated that 'Padminis' or perfect type of women, middle sized with fine features, black lustrous hair and eyes, full breasts and slim waists, are all *Chamarins*.[5] Sir Denzil Ibbeston writes, "their (Chamars) women are celebrated for beauty and loss of caste is often attributed to, too great a partiality for a *Chamarin*."[6]

The Chamars in this part, however, do not qualify for this description. In appearance they are mostly dark skinned, vary from short to medium in stature and are generally coarse featured. There is no refinement attributed earlier. This would tally more with Sir Herbert Risley's description — "the average Chamar is hardly distinguishable in point of feature, stature or

4. Sherring, M. A. — Hindu Tribes and Castes 1881.
5. Bombay Gazetteer, Vol. XV, Kanara, p. 355; quoted by Russell and Hiralal in the Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India, Vol. II, p. 404.
6. Punjab Census Report, 1881, p. 320.

complexion from the members of those non-Aryan races from whose ranks we should *prima facie* expect the professions of leather dressers to be recruited."[7] This description of the Chamars appears more correct. Similarly Nesfield believed that the Chamars sprang from several different tribes like the Dom, Kanjar, Habira, Chirs etc., the last remains of which are still outside the pale of Hindu society. "Originally he seems to have been an impressed labourer (*begar*) who was made to hold the plough for his master and receive in return space to build his mud hut near the village, a fixed allowance of grain for every working day, the free use of wood and grass on the village lands, and the skins and hides of the animals that died. This is very much the status of the Chamar at the present day. He is still the field slave, the grass cutter and the carrion eater of the Indian village".[8]

The Nai

This is the barber caste found all over Northern India. There is one family in the village. He is a sort of a liaison man and is often described as *bichauniya* or a middleman. He undertakes to settle marriages, acting as a messenger for various odd jobs and also follows his traditional occupation of shaving and hair cutting. He is paid in kind and cash (discussed later in the Chapter).

House Types

The village lies at the foot of a small hillock which adjoins the Gwalior-Jhansi National Highway at mile 4 from Datia. It is all a stony and rocky area. Huge stones cover up the hill and the trees are very few. Towards its western slope lies the village.

One prominent village path about 8′ to 10′ divides the village fairly clearly. This north-south path divides it into East/West sectors. The eastern part uses the sloping hill as its residential site. The Gadariyas have the most compact block along with the Chamars who are not to be out done in that respect. The Ahirs are spread over the village but the continuty of their houses enables them to form a fairly well defined cluster. As for the rest, it is obvious that they settled wherever they could. Apart from the north-south path, the village has another path which branches off from the main one and rejoins it. It goes around the Ahir households and returns to the main path forming a rough triangle.

No sanitary arrangements have been made but owing to its being situated near the edge of the hill the water drains off easily and even in the worst of rains the village remains fairly neat and tidy. The villagers generally keep the space around their houses neat. Though small children (upto 4-5 years of age) may defecate, but the excreta is thrown away. The houses are not clean from inside as household effects are not arranged and remain lying helter-skelter. Although the three paths described above define the habitation fairly clearly, yet there does not appear any planned layout. There is no occasion for any site selection because there is hardly any choice, for building sites are very few. People prefer to be as near their caste cluster as possible. The houses already constructed do not indicate any preference for any particular direction, nor do villagers have any.

The pattern of houses is practically uniform. The main door opens into a covered room which is of a fairly big size and is used mainly by men for sitting. Following this room is *chouk* (open space) on the sides of which are the living rooms for the family. Some space is also made available for cattle. As an embellishment to this type of house near the outer door two small *chabutaras* (platforms) are also made. The usual size of the rooms is 20′ x 8′ and the other which are towards the side are about 12′ x 9′ or 15′ x 9′. The total living space which is available caste-wise is:

TABLE A—I

S.No.	Caste	Total space including the *chouk*	Open space
1	Ahir	600 to 700 sq. ft.	240 sq. ft.
2	Gadariya	625 sq. ft.	200 sq. ft.
3	Chamar	625 sq. ft.	225 sq. ft.

Living space is thus generally limited to about 400 to 450 sq. feet. In some houses in the winter and rains cattle also are tethered within this living space. Normally 80 to 150 sq. ft. of it is made available for it. Thus actual-living space comes down to 300 to 350 sq. feet after deducting an average space of 100 sq. ft. for the cattle.

Generally speaking the Ahirs have more commodious houses than other castes. Thus they are able to observe some privacy. The elderly males sleep outside the house either in verandah or in the backyard where cattle is tethered. When corps ripen they sleep in the

7. Risley, H. H. — Tribes and castes of Bengal, 1891.
8. From Nesfield: quoted by W. Crooke and referred to by H. H. Risley in Census of India, 1901, Vol. I, Ethnographic Appendices, 1903.

fields. The married members sleep in the main room. The Chamars houses have very little scope for privacy because there is very little living space. As far as the other castes concerned their privacy varies between these two ranges.

From inside the houses are not painted, excepting about 3/4 houses belonging to the more well-to-do-sections of the Ahir community. These families smear the walls with white chalk solution giving it a dull white appearance. As for the rest they are only coated with a cowdung plaster which serves as a paint as well. The roofs as a rule are of locally made tiles. The tiles are made in the village by the villagers themselves. There are no potters who make these tiles, the needy villagers do it themselves.

The houses are not very neat. The floor is usually *katcha* but often smeared with cowdung to which water has been added but in many cases kept tidy. Since the entire village goes towards the fields for easing themselves, no latrines have been constructed. No urinals exist. The cover of the walls round about or open fields are made use of for urinating. The children however do so near about the houses. The use of antiseptics or phenyle products is unknown. Bathing is mostly done at the well. The women folk after the morning breakfast or preparing the meals, pick up the pitchers and go to the well. Usually it is the "women's hour". Here they fill the water, bathe, wash the clothes, gossip for a while, collect their assortment of articles, cover their faces and commence their homeward journeys with filled pitchers and washed *dhoties* hanging from shoulders. All this, may take anything between one to two hours. Often this occasion fulfils their need for a club. Talk is free, criticism of others generous, and rumours grow with appropriate embellishments. One can get a fair cross-section of the women's opinion here. Men by convention do not go there and outsiders dare not. Yet human nature being what it is, it is not uncommon for intruders to pry into the proceedings from a vantage point and feast their eyes on Eve's charms: but woe to him! Should he be discovered. (Please see plates VIII, IX and X for houses).

Dresses

The normal dress of a man is *dhoti* secured by a knot a little below the navel and allowed to go upto the ankles. The *dhoti* is 5 yards long, of mill made coarse to medium cotton cloth, costing about Rs. 4 to 6 and upto Rs. 10 for superior cloth. Sometimes the villagers spilit up 5 yards *dhoti* into two parts calling it a *pancha* and wear it by tying a knot near the navel and taking the two sides of the cloth hemming it at the back. It covers upto the knees only and is a useful dress for working.

The school going children, however, wear shirts and payjamas. Mill made cloth is used. The upper garment for men is a *kurta* costing about Rs. 5/- made of cotton fibre. Cloth is purchased and stitched in Datia. Ready made shirts are also becoming popular. The average life of these clothes is about 6/8 months. The poor people do not put on a *kurta* but use a *bandi* or a jacket from the shoulders to the waist made of thicker cotton material costing about Rs. 3/-. In the winter months the clothing is the same except that a blanket or shawl is used for covering the body. One noticeable feature in the village was that the younger and middle aged persons in Ahir community were wearing an underwear a red *langot* a sort of an athletic supporter. This is probably due to the fact that they delight in wrestling bouts for which a red *langot* is the proper apparel. Their preference for red is due to its resistance to dirt and red is also the colour for the monkey God, *Hanuman* who is revered for such pursuits. Besides this, Ahir, Brahmin and all elderly members of various communities put on a head wear, which is 8 yard turban of cotton cloth wound carefully across the forehead and back of the neck. A head wear is a must, before going out. When going out apart from these clothes a piece of thin cloth usually red with squares $4\frac{1}{2}'$ by $1\frac{1}{2}'$ is slung across the shoulders. This is an all purpose towel which can be used in many ways from wiping the forehead to bathing or collecting or buying articles and keeping them in it.

The dress for festive occasions is not much different excepting that new clothes are worn occasionally by all. Even as it is, the old clothes described above, are worn on a festival day, after they have been carefully washed and cleaned before being put on.

The male children use shirts and banyans as upper garments. In some well-to-do houses an occasional bush-shirt may also be seen. Children usually have two or three dresses for themselves. *Dhoti* once purchased is used until it becomes unserviceable. The market at Datia supplies all the clothing requirements.

The Dresses of Women

The dresses of women still go by the caste to which they belong. The Brahmin women put on 5 to 6 yards mill made cotton printed *sarees* with a petti-

coat underneath, the cloth ranging between coarse and fine. The women in Ahir, Gadariya and Chamar communities put on a *lehnga* or *ghagra* with a *choli* and a loose flowing garment called *loongda* which is tied over the *ghagra* in front and taken over the breasts via hips. covering them. A little cloth is also left over for the covering the head and face. The *loongda* is a cotton cloth usually of a dark colour, maroon, green, yellow being the favourite ones. It costs about Rs. 5 to 7. A *lehnga* is a loose skirt narrow at the top and has a bigger circumference at the bottom. It is tied at the navel by means of a strong string called *nara* and is of a thick cotton cloth gaudy colours being preferred *viz.*, deep red, blue and green as no underwear is used. It consumes about 12 to 15 yards of cloth and costs about Rs. 15 to 20. It lasts for a little over a year. Usually women have at least two *lehngas* at a time.

The *saree* is a loose flowing garment usually worn over a petticoat. A petticoat is a loose skirt of about 2 to 2½ yards of coarse cloth which should be opaque preferably matching with *saree* colour. It is tied near the navel by a string over which *saree* is worn. The *saree* covers the entire body passing round the waist, across the brests over the shoulders. The *saree* costs about Rs. 8 to 12 and lasts for 6 to 9 months. The brests are usually covered by *dhoti* or a blouse under which no brassiere or its local substitute is worn. In this manner the breasts are not supported and they tend to sag early. The Chamars and some Ahirs seem to have overcome this handicap. Their women-folk put on over the breasts an *angiya* which is a thin piece of cloth, tailored in the brassiere style, it holds the breasts upwards and is tied towards the back by means of string. The entire back, including the shoulders remain bare; in the front often the cleavage between breasts is exposed and the entire region between the breasts and navel remains uncovered. It is an ancient mode of dress but appears more modern than the upper piece of some of the Bikini swim suits. This is only worn with *lenhga* and is covered with the *loongda*. For sheer exhibitionism this is one of the finest mode of wearing apparel. It usually costs less than a rupee and is available in ready to-wear form. In the villages it is never worn without *loongda*. Yet it helps to bring out the best in a well proportioned woman.

For festivals the clothing is not different from the one described above except that on these occasions newer or atleast cleaner dresses are worn. On *Gauri Puja* day locally known as *Ghangaur* the women put on their best dresses. Silken fabrics, decorated with golden border called *gota* are used but the pattern of the clothes worn remains the same. The silk used is the imitation one, and of a cheaper variety.

The female children put on *kachha* or underwear shorts till about the age of 7 or 8. The upper garment used is a loose shirt without a collar. When the girls begin to grow up, they put on women's clothing described above. There is no ceremony to mark the change over from children's clothings to women's. Children of both sexes upto the age of 3/4 years wear only a loose shirt from collar to the knees and remain without clothes in the lower regions.

The Foot Wear

The men wear shoes locally made having a high-heel with a complete cover over the instep. They cost about Rs. 8 to 10/- and usually last a year. The women are now taking to the use of chappals, the cheap rubber types costing about Rs. 2 to 3/-. The shoes are made in Datia city by Chamars.

The Ornaments

(Please see plates XI, XII, XIII and XIV).

The ornaments of Ear, Nose and Neck.

Ear

Tops and ear-rings are usually worn. Tops are made of silver and cost approximately Rs. 5 or so. The designs are simple. Ear-rings made of gold are worn, they weigh upto a tola and cost between Rs. 20 to 150. Silver ear-rings are also worn. Depending upon the financial condition, tops and ear-rings are worn by all castes. Golden ear-rings are not worn now, because of fear of dacoits, since gold ornaments proclaim economic status which in dacoit infested region, may invite trouble. Brahmins and Ahirs once wore them.

Nose

Long usually of gold is worn in the left nostril. It usually costs about Rs. 5 to 15. It is worn in all castes. Ahirs and Brahmins use gold but other lower castes have been known to use silver ones. The left nostril is pierced any time after the girl reaches the age of 4/5 years and the *long* is put into it. This would be worn throughout the life — even during widowhood.

Nath

Nath is usually made of gold and is worn before performing some ceremonies *viz.*, *Shravani*, *Ganghour*

or during marriage ceremonies. This ornament is worn only by married women. Widows are not supposed to wear any ornaments. The cost depends upon the quantity and quality of gold that is used. Its weight varies from 1/8 tola to one tola (cost varying from Rs. 50 to 150) if of gold. Besides the main *nath* i. e. ring of gold it also carries a chain and is studded with shining stone usually jades. It is worn by all communities. Chamar women use the cheaper type of gold.

Neck

Tabeez

This is usually worn inside a small copper case hung around the neck by means of a black silken thread. Usually it contains a magic spell promising success in a venture or at least avoiding any mischance or ill luck. Frequently women of all castes resort to wear this to beget children, preferably sons. Sometimes a *tabeez* is also tied around the arms.

Locket

A locket is worn around the neck with thin golden chain. A small heart shaped piece is fastened on to the chain. It costs about Rs. 10 to 50, depending upon the gold content. Except for Chamar and Kachhis, women of other castes wear it.

Khangwari

Khangwari is a solid silver ornament worn around the neck with the front coming over the collar bone. It is a fairly heavy ornament weighing almost 1/4 a seer or 20 tolas and is secured by means of thick ribbon piece at the back. It costs about Rs. 40/50. All castes use it. It is almost a must in a women's collection of ornaments.

The Hair Clips

The hair clips are both a decoration and a means to keep the hair in their proper places. They are made of silver and are not very common, only Brahmin women use it.

Ornaments of Hands, Legs and Waist

Mostly silver ornaments are used for arms. They are *Bara, Chura, Churi,.*

Bara

This is worn a little over the elbow. It is put on via hands forearms, pushed above the elbows and finally tightened up and is worn on both the hands. The total weight is approximately 20 tolas costing Rs. 50 or 60. All castes wear it.

Chura

The *Chura* is a solid thick silver bangle weighing about 5 tolas each, costing about Rs. 30. Unmarried girls are also allowed to wear these ornaments.

Churi

It is more refined and a better finished form of *chura* made from both gold and silver. There are many designs and the ornament is lighter than the *chura.* It could weigh upto 2 tolas costing about Rs. 5 to 10 for silver. Use of gold is rare. Glass bangles are also becoming common. They are procured from Datia city market. All castes wear *churies.*

Rings

Rings are usually worn in the second finger of the left hand by men and women. Women also wear them on other fingers. They are made of gold or silver, the former being prefered. The rings worn by the women are usually lighter but have better craftsmanship. Those worn by men have a stone studded in it. The cost of a ring depends both in the quantity of gold or stone used and its craftsmanship. Among the males only the Brahmins and Ahirs used golden or silver ring. Among the females silver is used by almost all castes.

Ornaments of Waist and below

Kardhoni

Over the waist *Kardhoni* is worn. It is a decorative belt worn over the waist over a *saree* or *lehnga.* When worn it hardly gives an impression of being very pleasing but one may take some comfort from the fact that it is very heavy and hence has plenty of silver content (being 40 tolas). It costs as much as Rs. 100/-. or more. It hangs loosely tilted on one side and except that it proclaims economic status but has little aesthetic appeal.

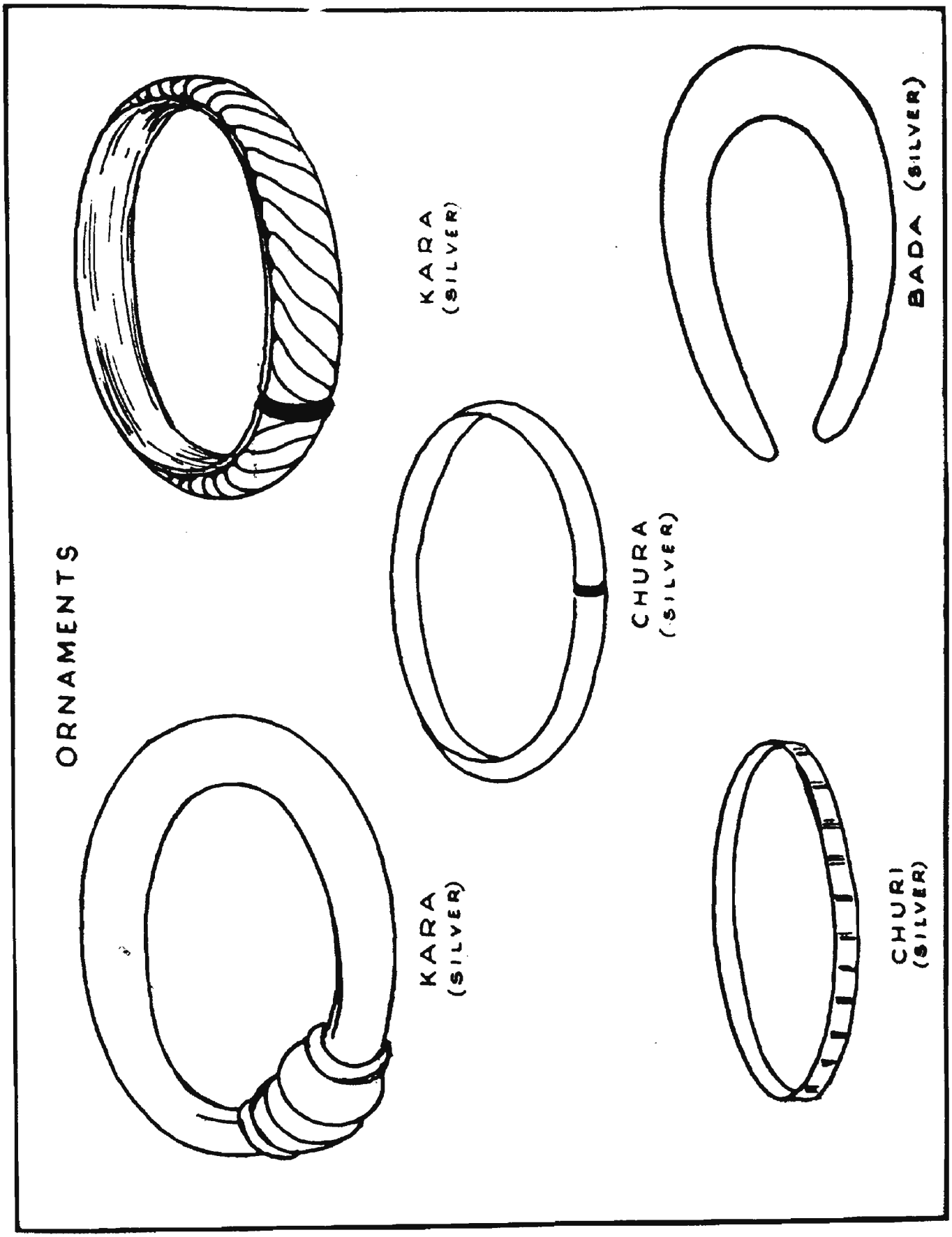
Kada

Kada is a bangle like ornament worn over the *ankle.* It has different varieties — two are shown in the sketch. It weighs comparatively less because they are hollow from within. They weigh upto 10 tolas and cost Rs. 25 to 30. All castes wear it.

Painjana

Painjana is an important ornament. Aesthetically

PLATE XI

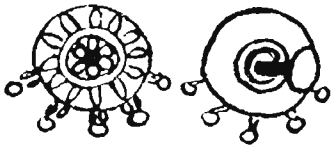


Small Ornaments

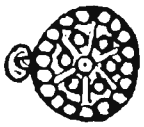
PLATE XII



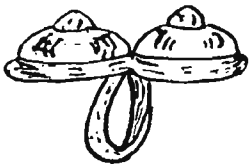
TABIJ (GOLD)



BICHHIYA (SILVER)



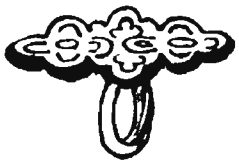
LONG (GOLD)



BICHHIYA (SILVER)



TABIJ (GOLD)



RING (GOLD)



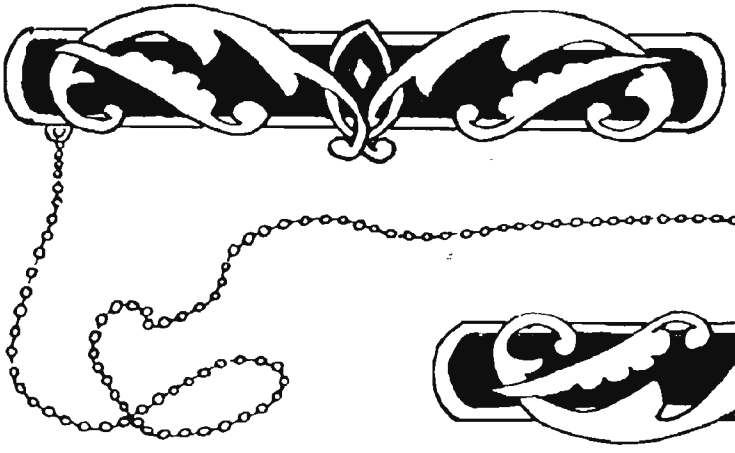
LONG (GOLD)



BALI (GOLD)



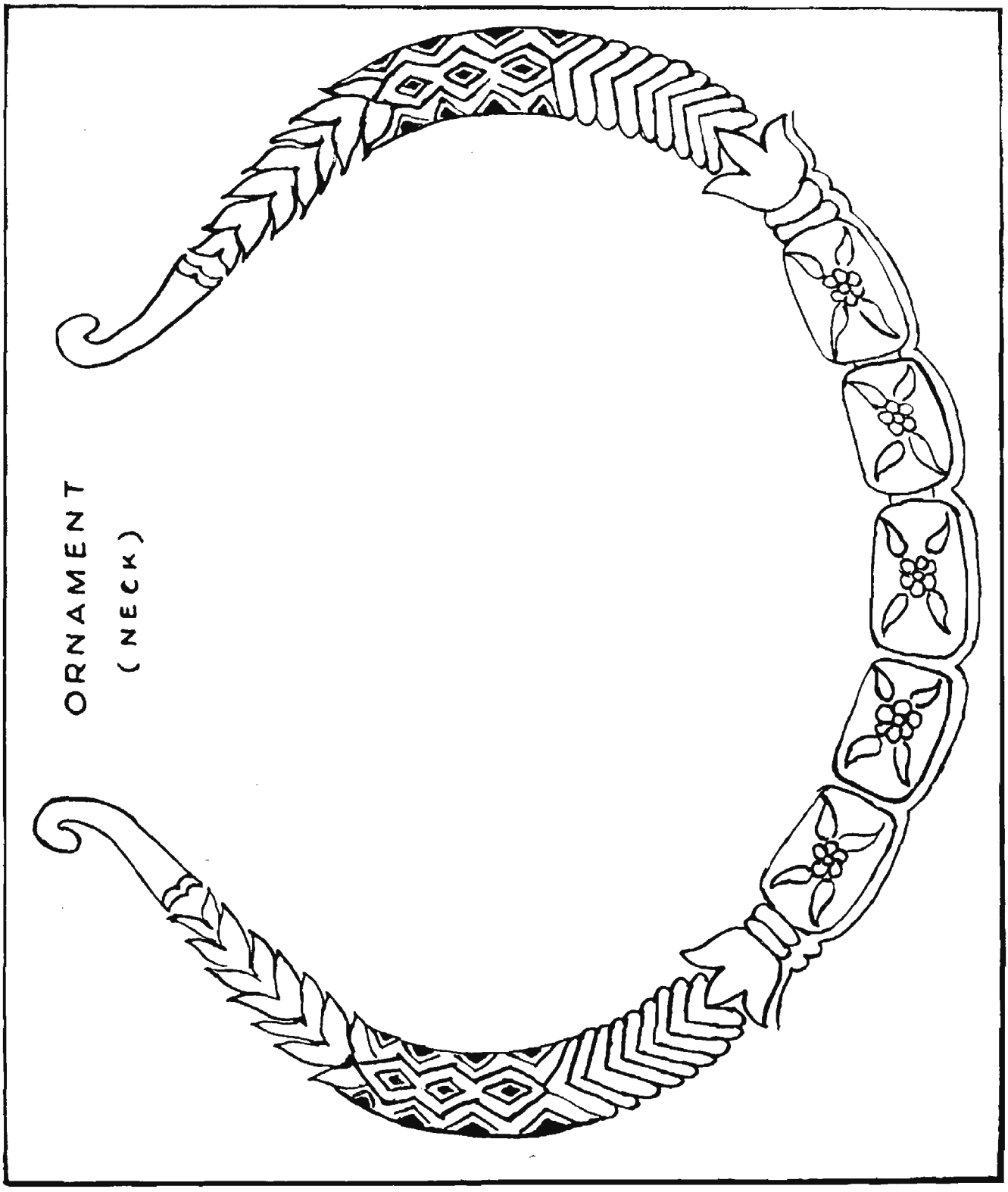
LONG (GOLD)



CLIP (SILVER)

Other Ornaments

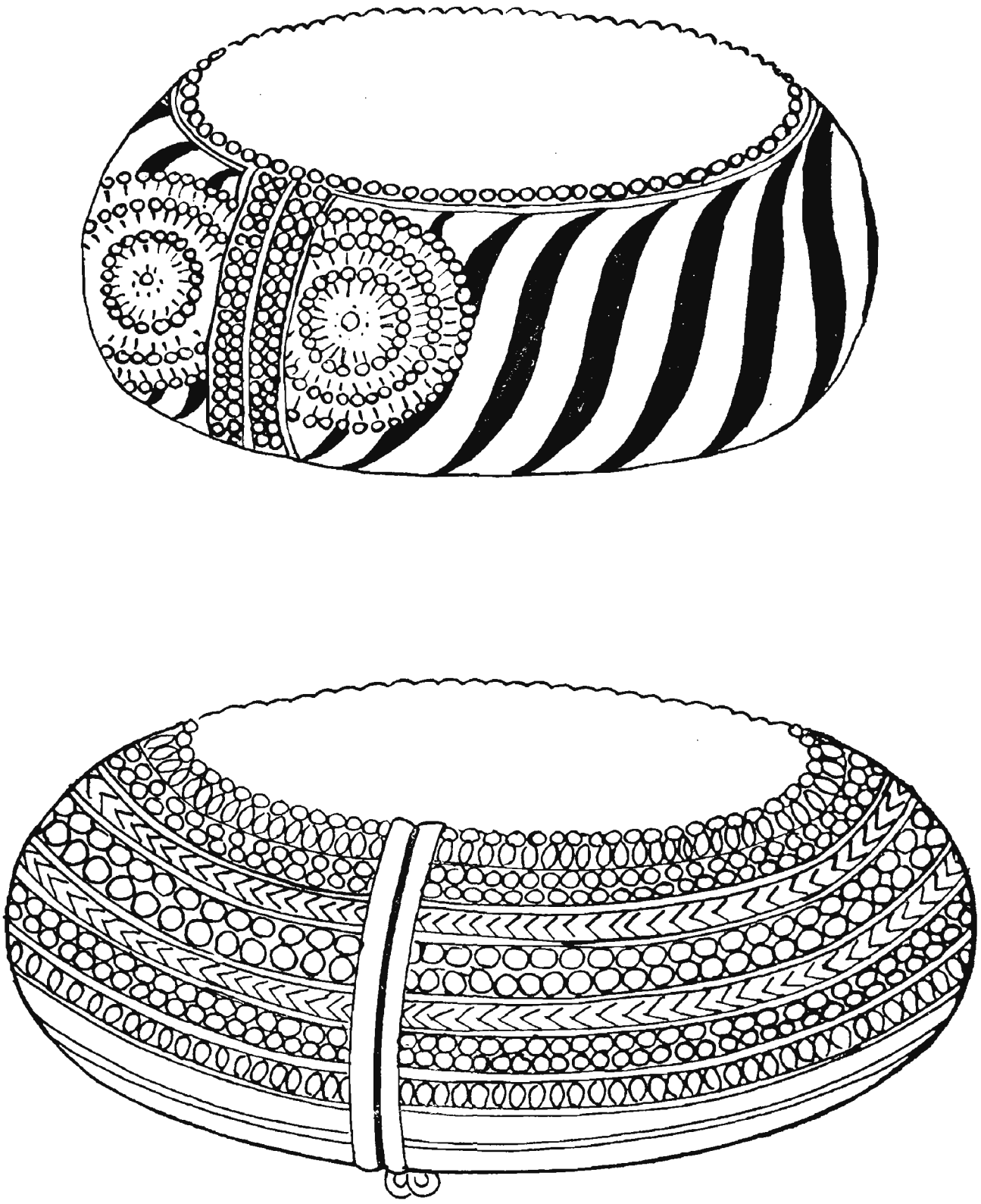
PLATE XIII



Khangwari

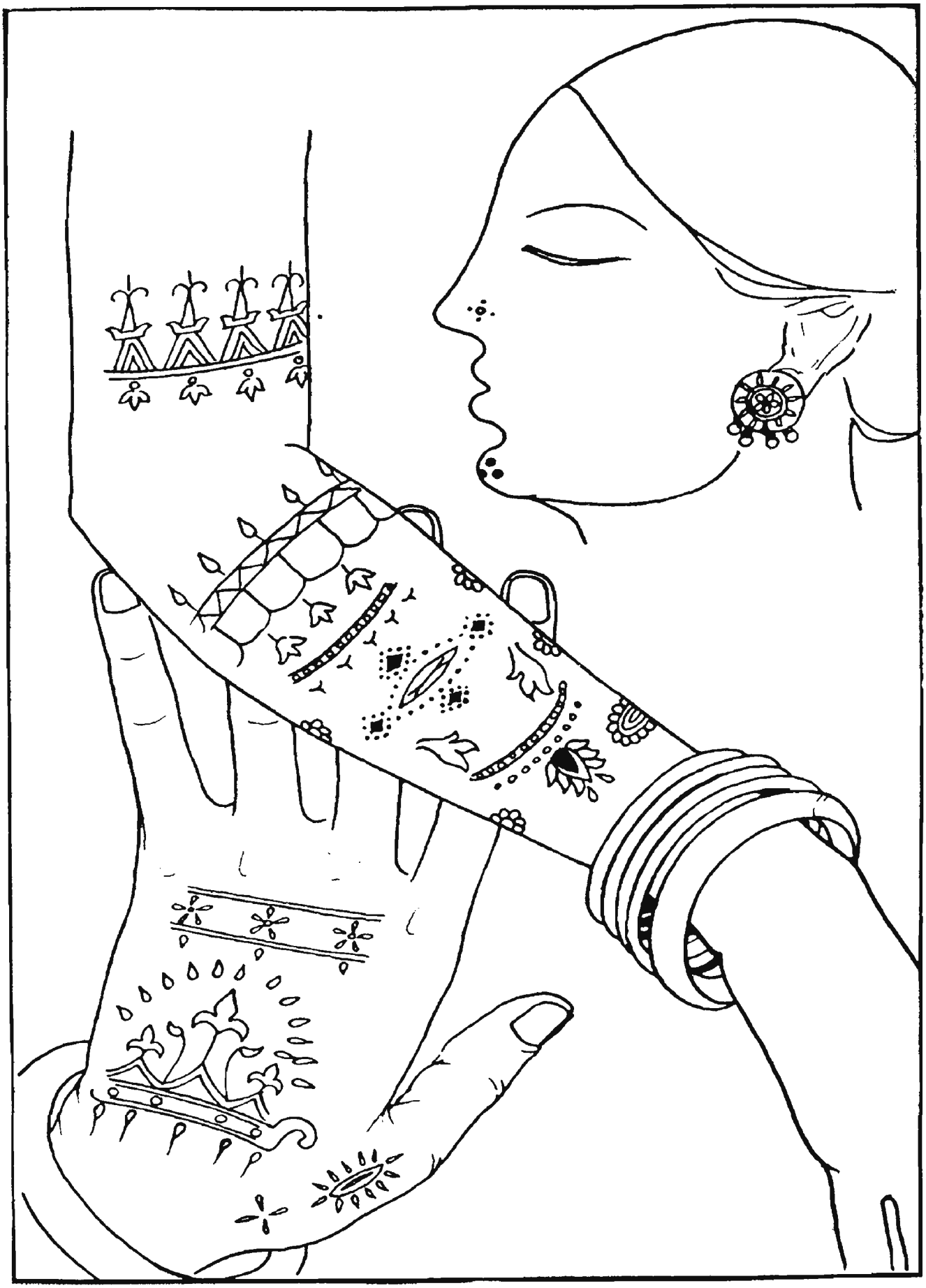
PLATE XIV

ORNAMENTS



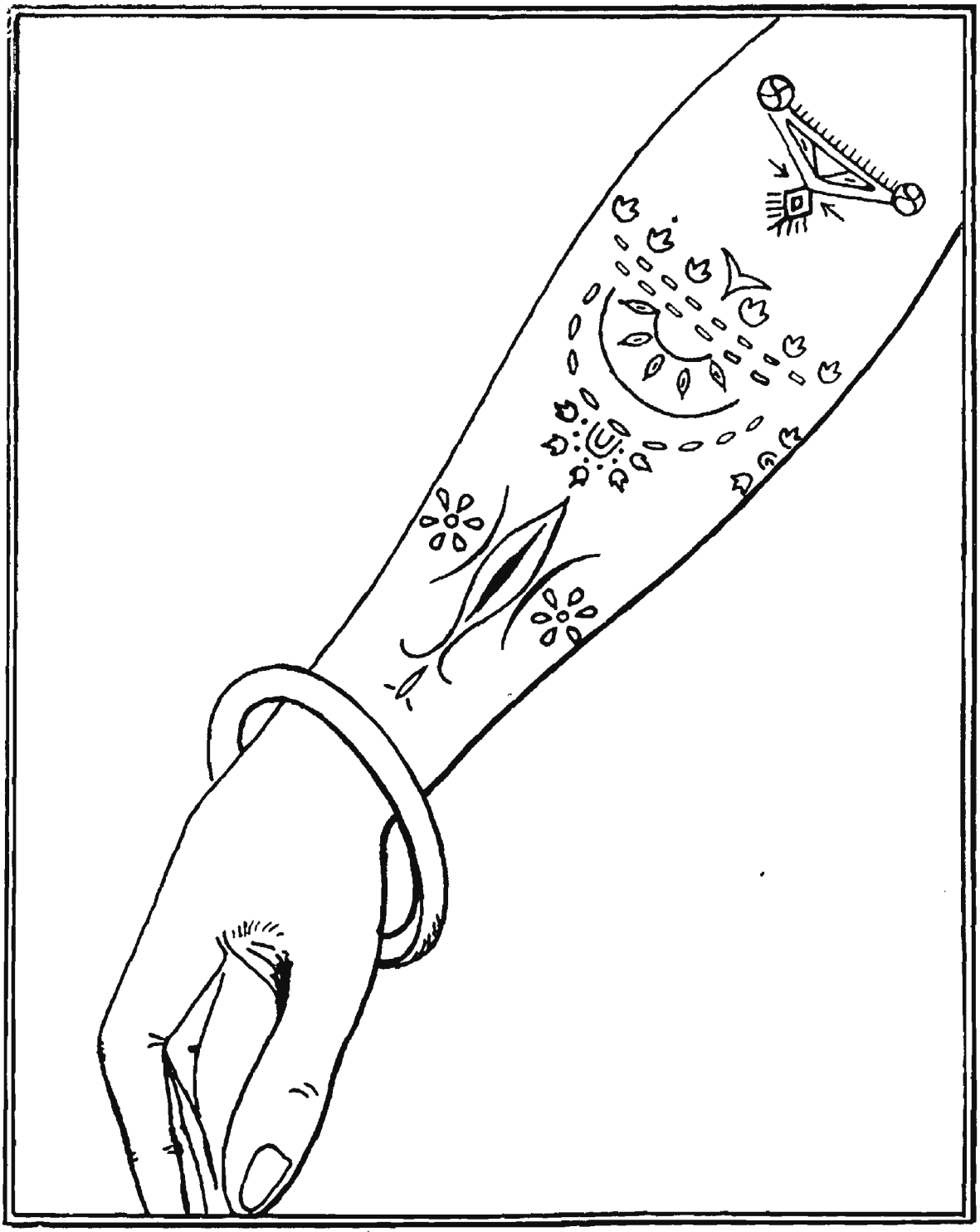
Painjana (Silver)

PLATE XV



Some tattooing designs

PLATE XVI



More tattooing designs

it is a fine piece of workmanship. It is worn above the ankles and is fairly heavy, each weighing upto 15 to 25 tolas of silver. Owing a fine *painjana* is like owning a thorough — bred horse. Riches and tastes are determined by the quality of *painjana* worn by a woman. The more she possess the more envious others become. It makes walking rather uncomfortable, because the lady has to walk carefully by placing her feet fairly apart, lest she may hit one *painjana* against the other. Although they became practised at walking after wearing these, yet their gait suffers. A pair of *painjanas* could be as heavy as a seer or a little less than a kilogram. They are a speciality in Bundelkhand region and cost as much as Rs. 100 to 150. All castes are fond of it.

Lachhae

These are silver ringlets worn by girls at the ankles mostly before their marriage and when they cannot put on a *painjana* they continue to wear these even after marriage. As many as 8 to 10 per ankle is worn. They weigh a tola each.

Bichhuva

Bichhuva is the traditional sign for a married women. She wears the *bichhuva* in both her feet, the first, second and third fingers being the favourite ones. As would follow the widows and unmarried ones are prohibited from wearing them. All castes wear it and regard it as a votive sign of married status. Only when the husband dies are these removed along with other ornaments.

Regarding Ornaments Generally

Till about 15 years ago the Chamars did not use any ornaments. There were two reasons for it (1) it was due to extreme poverty and (2) the fear that upper castes would not approve of such a thing loomed large before them. Things are different today. Depending upon their financial resources they make use of the ornaments. When the Chamars took to using ornaments, the upper castes in the village did not relish the idea. They jeered and mocked at the Chamars; scolded and abused them frequently causing minor pin pricks. It was a resentment, which they felt; resentment at the attempt by the Chamars to equate themselves with the superior castes. There were, however, no serious incidents or diastrous consequences. but a mental reservation, an under current of contempt was almost unmistakable. The Chamars did not take the criticism seriously. They went ahead using the ornaments; the only limitation being, their resources. Gold is not be worn below the waist this is observed by all castes.

Only in the Ahir and Brahmin households the women have gold and silver ornaments. Silver is often mixed with their alloys. The Chamar and Gadariya women wear ornaments at the time of marriage or religious ceremonies. A cheap substitute for gold known as "Amritsar gold" is gainning a lot of propularity. The ornaments made from it, shine brightly, initially at least and appear quite attractive.

Other Decorations over the Body

Tattooing is a very common mode of decoration of the human body. All females in the village get tattooed. The tattooing takes place in the village itself where the tattooers come. They visit the village periodically from Datia and Dongarpur, a nearby village. The tattooers are said to be some Muslim women from Dongarpur, four miles away. They are paid Rs. 1.25 and corn or grain worth another Rs. 1.25. The payment always depends upon the amount of tattooing. In case there is no cash in the house, the payment could also be made by giving more grains. worth that amount.

Only decorative importance is attached to it. It is usually carried out before the marriage and after the age of 8/10 by which time the girl would be able to bear the pain. It is done on the hands over the whole of the arms and legs upto the knees and in some cases between breasts. The themes are mostly decorative pieces as the sketches depict. In one case a devotional theme was also tattooed. Apart from the decorative importance an old woman gave the following justification for tattooing. Said she;

"When I die, I leave all my silver and gold decorations here; this is the only thing I can carry along with me and I need some ornaments, some decorative things to take. Are they not good to carry with me?"

(Please see plates XV and XVI) This may not rationally be convincing but emotionally very satisfying.

Another favourite subject for tattooing is known as *Sita Rasoi* or cooking by Sita. It shows a small cottage (of the type of the P. S. P. Election symbol) with a flag, this signifies the kitchen of Sita, wife of Ramchandrajee. Perhaps it emphasise the essential duty of a house wife or exhibits a latent desire to have a

house. No detailed explanation seemed to be forthcoming.

Household Goods

Furniture

There is no furniture in the accepted sense of the word. Only one Ahir family owns one chair and a bench used for sitting purposes. Mostly they sit on the floor on which a *duree* or *jajam* has been spread. When guests from other places come to the village, locally made cots are used for sitting and a *duree* is spread over it to avoid the rough surface.

Cots and Bed-steads

The cots are made locally from cheap wood available from the nearby forest. It is then strung with rope made out of thick grass-*kans*. The cots are usually of small size 60" to 66" x 30". All families possess cots: for they sleep on them. Apart from these cots iron bed-steads with springs are being used by eight Ahir families. They purchased them at an auction for Rs. 16 each. Better quality wooden bed-steads are also to be met with. One Chamar, a Brahmin and eleven Ahirs are using these. They are of 6' x 3' size and thick *neewar* is being used in them.

Beddings

Beddings usually comprise of (1) *Duree*, (2) mattrees, (3) *Kenthri*.

(1) *Duree*:— is purchased from market at Datia. It costs about Rs. 3 to 5 and is made of cotton.

(2) The mattress:— is made of cotton cloth stuffed with cotton weighing about 2 to 2½ seers. This also is made at Datia. The eight Ahir families owning spring cots and those having wooden bed-steads use it. Others do not possess these mattresses. Some families use mattresses only when guests arrive.

(3) *Kenthri*:—has two fold task to perform. Some use in the form of a mattress and others as a quilt. A *kenthri* is made by sewing all unserviceable cloth available from clothings. *Dhoti, saree, lehngas* and all wearing apparrel when no longer useful is utilised for making a *kenthri*. Usually with *saree* or *dhoti* as a base all cloth is sewed on and it assumes a thickness or 2". The *kenthri* used for covering is comparatively of a better quality. Care is taken that only fairly good quality of discarded clooth is utilised. The thickness of this is a little more being approximately three inches.

The above *kenthri* is used in all houses irrespective of their economic status. Besides this the *kenthri*, quilt and blankets are also used. Their use is limited to the Ahir and Brahmin families. Three Chamar families also have been known to use it. Quilts are purchased from Datia in ready made form for Rs. 8/- to Rs. 10/-. Blankets are used by Gadariyas. The Gadariyas used to make blankets once but they now sell the wool to contractor. The blankets are locally made and are of the coarse variety costing about Rs. 8/- to Rs. 10/-. In the Ahir and Brahmin household the blankets of a slightly better quality are met with. They cost Rs. 15/- to Rs. 20/-.

A used quilt is also put to some other use. When the quilt has lasted its time, the cotton and wool in it are taken out and given to the weaver who weaves there, form a two yard piece of heavy long cloth locally called *doria* and *khor*. This is used for covering their body while moving outdoors or covering themselves at night. The local name for such cloth is *khor*. The use of bed-sheets is confined only to some Ahir and Brahmin families. No pillows are used. For children usuall *kenthri* of half size is used.

Cooking Utensils

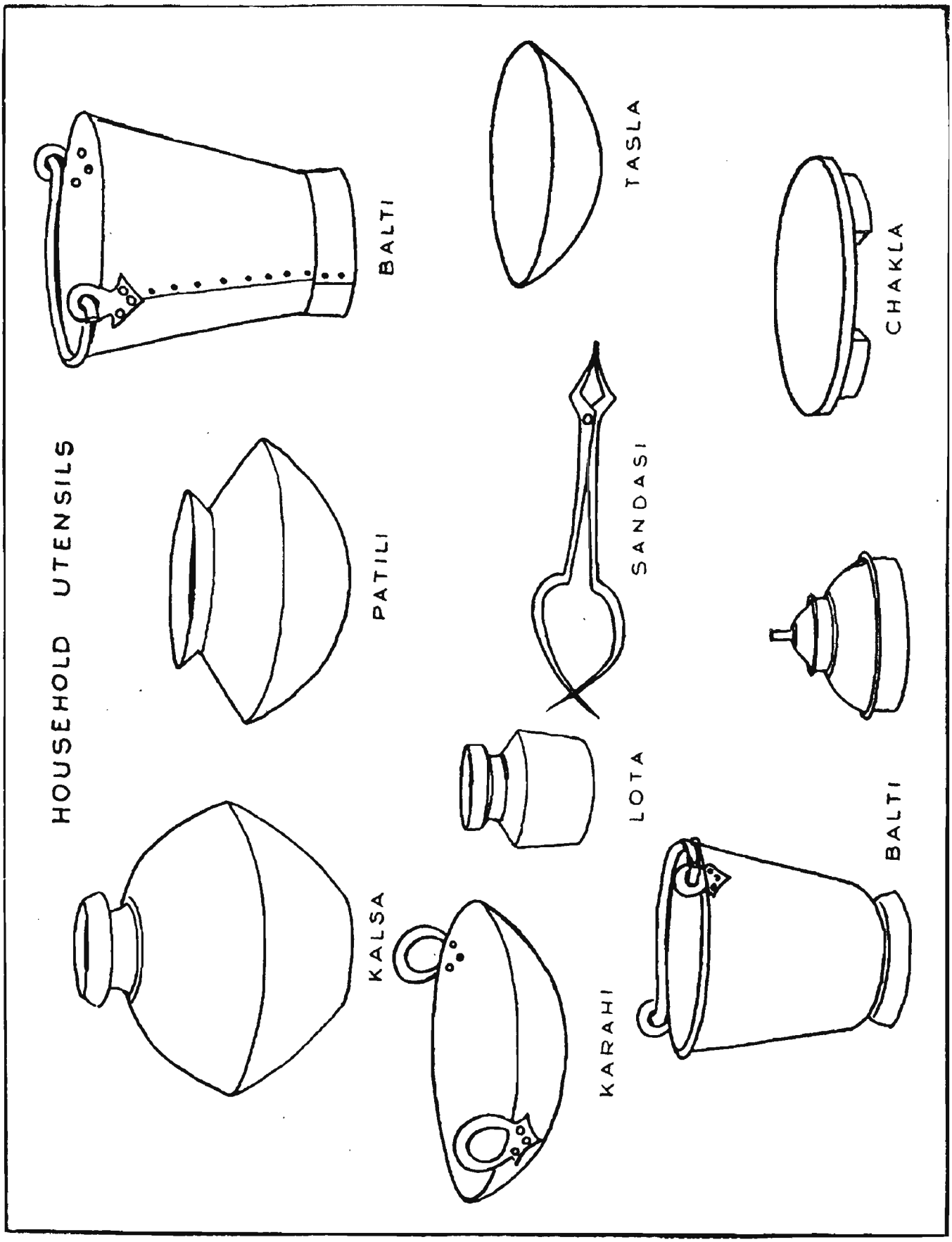
Utensils made of the following metals are generally used: (1) Brass, (2) Copper, (3) Aluminium. Some utensils made from iron are also in use e. g., *tawa, kadhai*, but by and large, iron is avoided for it is not considered proper to eat out of iron vessels. No wooden utensils are used. Earthen pots are used for storing water and milk.

The Chamars, economically most backward, use the following utensils:

(1) *Thali* or big plate of brass alloy.
(2) *Katori*, or a small cup.
(3) *Bhagoni* (pot) of aluminium or brass.
(4) *Kadchhi* or big spoon.
(5) *Kadai*, (iron) or cauldron.
(6) *Tawa* (iron) or flat plate.
(7) *Sandasi* (iron) or pincers.
(8) *Kalsa* (brass) or metal pitcher.
(9) Bucket (iron).
(10) a tumbler (brass).
(11) *Lota* (brass).

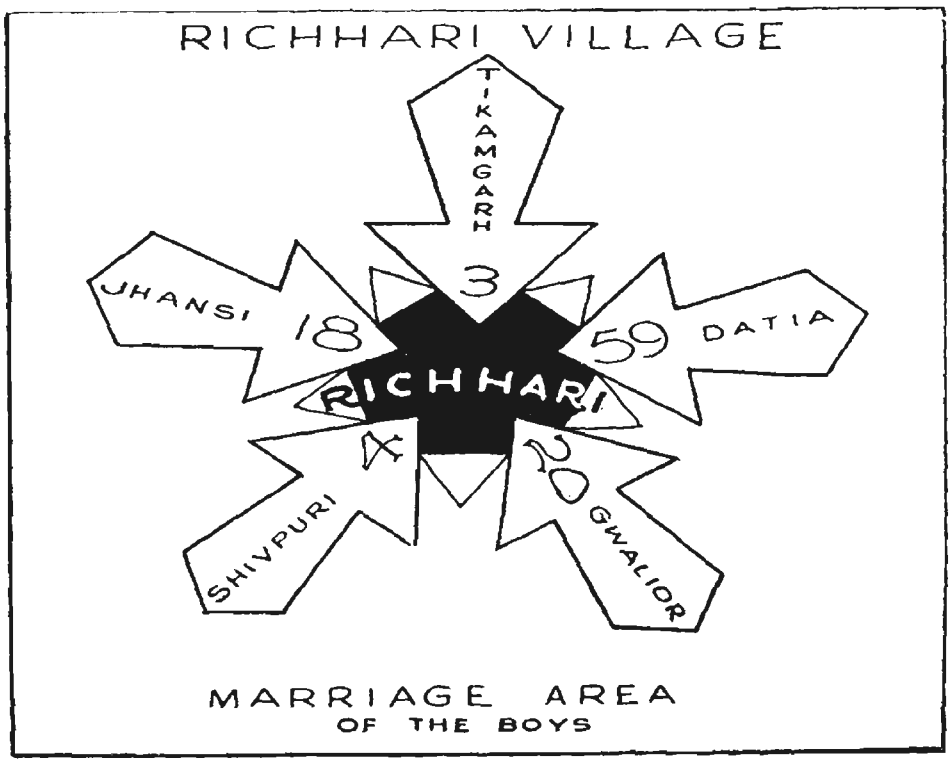
The above is a list of utensils usually found even in the poorest households. Generally there would be only one of each type. In the more well to do ones the number and quality of these improve; for example, in the Ahir households, buckets made of brass are to be seen. Utensils made of alminium are the cheapest and hence

PLATE XVII

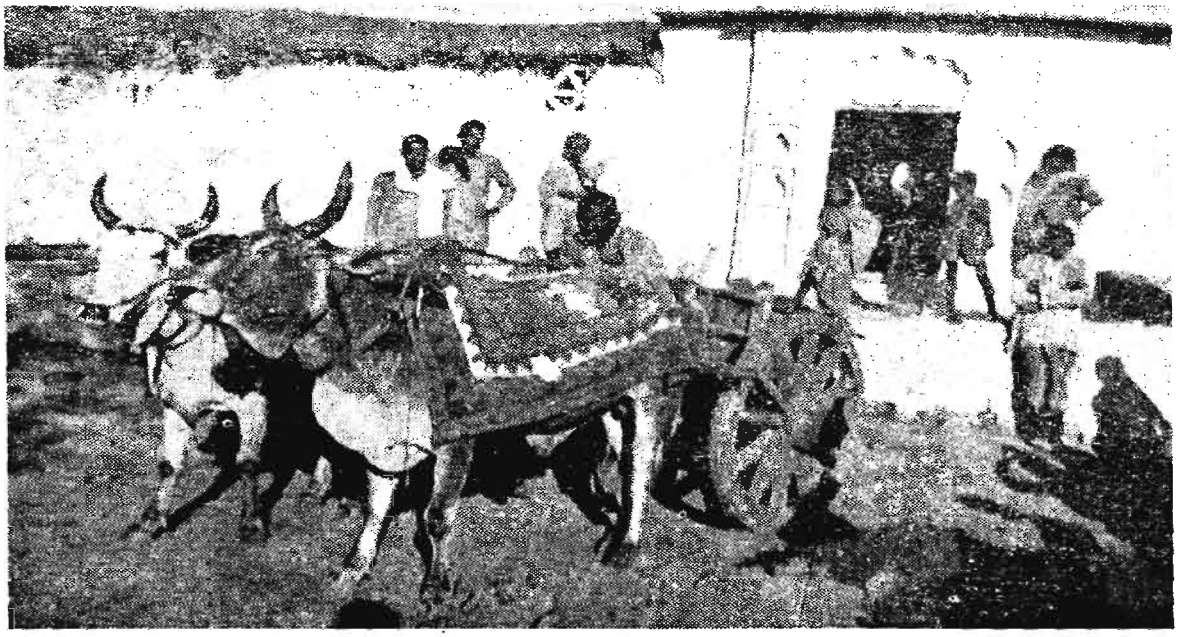


Utensils

PLATE XVIII



Marriage chart showing the district from where the brides came



A decorated bullock cart

in more well-to-do households they are not to be found. A copper or brass vessel when purchased is often displayed, critically assessed and then the purchaser is looked upon as being a person of some means (Please see plate XVII).

Earthen pots are not used for eating but only for storing water, milk, curd and pickles etc. The pots used are purchased from Datia and Sitapur which are about 4 and 3 miles respectively. The following pots are in use:—

(1) *Matka* or pitcher,
(2) *Kulhad* or a small tumbler of earth,
(3) *Mathaniya* in which curd is stirred for obtaining *ghee*.

Guns

The village had three muzzle loading guns but during the course of survey, licences to nine more persons have been granted. Two Ahirs and one Kachhi possessed weapons. The new licensees are mostly Ahirs. The Brahmin although, visited by dacoits once had not yet applied for a gun licence. The guns are all used for protection. These new licensees will go a long way in meeting their demand for weapons, after the last dacoity.

All these guns are purchased from Datia. The guns are all muzzle loaders.

Goods for Transport

The push bicycle is the fastest and most popular means of transport. There are twenty-two cycles. Ahirs 14, Gadariyas 2, Chamars 3, Brahmins 1 and Kachhi 2, are the cycle owners. The most popular make being, Hind and Eastern Star. Besides cycles for moving out in bigger numbers bullock carts are the chief means for transport. On festive occasions the carts are fairly well decorated. (Please see Plate XVIII). There are 61 bullock carts in the village . The same carts are used for carrying passengers and goods when they take load to Sonagir about five miles away. They charge about Rs. 5 to 8 per trip. Passengers are charged about Rs. 0.20 to 0.25 P. per head on the same route. A cart load of wheat weighs about 12 to 15 maunds and transporting it to Datia costs about Rs. 4 to 5/-. If the cart is required for some work for the whole day then the charges would be about Rs. 10/-. For other long journeys trains from Sonagir or Datia or buses from Datia are boarded. Some times buses are boarded near the village, provided the driver stops. Private transport operators oblige them but the State Roadways do not. Lastly trucks are stopped and boarded. The last is illegal but fairly popular because it is cheaper and also gives the truck driver some money.

Miscellaneous

For illuminating purposes chimneys purchased from Datia for 30 P. to 50 P. are generally used by the poorest of all. Kerosene oil, also purchased from Datia is used as fuel. The better households use Hurricane lanterns. The Ahirs have 40 such lanterns. The whole village has 65 of them. It is rather strange that not one family has more than one lantern. For the temple a petromax and a lantern have been provided. Besides the above, four Ahirs, two Chamars and one Brahmin possess electric flash lights.

Steel boxes are used for keeping clothes; *tipara* or baskets made from *kans* and *khajoor* is used for storing women's apparel. This is fairly well made and appears a tidy looking box. Usually this *tipara* is not carried from place to place. Every family has a looking glass, a cheap type of small size mirror costing about 25 to 50 P. For sitting purposes in the house a *pidi* or a flat stool is used. This is an inexpensive wooden construction. For storing corn a *kothi* or an earthen receptacle is used. It can contain as much as 12 maunds of grain. It is usually made of earth to which cowdung has been added. Baskets made of *kans* are also used for storing miscellaneous goods. Almost all houses have a few of them. They are purchased from Datia. A small grinding machine operated manually is found with every family. It is mostly used for grinding wheat and pulses.

Musical instruments *Nagara, Dholak, Jhoonka, Damru, Chimta* (Please see plate XXVII) are owned jointly by the village. All families of the village contributed to purchase them.

Food and Drink Habits

For food habits the grouping of castes would be on basis of what foods are not eaten. It is in this that a general agreement appears possible. So we have the Nais and Ahirs in one group, Brahmins, Bhats in the other, Kachhi and Gadariyas in the next and the Chamars remain by themselves.

Brahmins and Bhats

In the non-working season they take three meals a day. The day starts with a glass of milk and *roti* (unleavened cake of wheat) at about seven o'clock in

the morning. In the noon at about 1200 — 1300 hours *roti* with *daal* (a pulse) or a vegetable usually potatoes, brinjals, or onions, (only one item will be prepared either a vegetable or a *daal*) is taken. In the evening the food taken for lunch is repeated with a slight variation. In the working season a little food is consumed at about 1600 or 1700 hours while still in fields. Usually it is the lunch which has been saved over for the occasion.

The Brahmins eat mostly wheat and *juar*, gram is used for preparing *besan* or gram flour. Rice is rarely eaten, reserved for better occasions i. e. festivals or cooking *khir*. The cooking mediums are *ghee* and sweet oil i. e. *til* oil, hydrogenated oil has not made its appearance. Meat, eggs, fishes are strictly tabooed and not eaten. Liquor is prohibited. If one eats meat, he would be treated as an out-caste. No case of eating meat has been reported.

The culinary art is almost in its primitive stages. Cooking is of a very simple nature. For pulses water is boiled and pulse put in it adding turmeric, chillies and salt. It may be fried later on. *Chappaties* are cooked by kneading the flour and baking it in small cakes over slow fire. For festivals *poories, khir*, vegetables are prepared. *Poories* are fried in *ghee*. *Khir* is prepared by adding rice, sugar or jaggery to boiled milk. Pickles, *chutneys* and *pappad* are often used in these households.

Ahirs and Nais

They eat three times a day in non-working season and four times during the working one. The breakfast in the morning consists of *juar roti*, salt and molasses, the lunch is of *roti* and pulse which is known as *maheri*. The evening meal also consists like lunch of bread and pulses. During the working season they have another meal at about 1600 — 1700 hours in the fields. The Ahirs and Nais are non-vegetarians although they do not eat much of meat because it is not easily available. Their festival food is again *poories, khir* and *halwa*. The Ahirs and Nais eat a preparation called *maheri*. This is prepared in the following way. Flour of wheat or *juar* is taken in a thicker form, put in the boiling water, salt is added. It forms a sort of gruel to be eaten with *roties*. It is prepared in quick time. Other castes also make it. Originally *maheri* was made from butter-milk or *mahi* but now a days water is also used. Liquor is not consumed. Beef, peacock meat is tabooed but pork is agreeable

Kachhis and Gadariyas

Their timing of meals are the same as those of Ahirs and Brahmins. They are non-vegetarians but because meat is not easily available they eat mostly vegetarian foods. The details of their food habits tally in almost all details with those of Ahirs. Liquor is consumed by a few although majority of them abstain from it. Liquor is procured from Datia. They do not distil it privately.

The Chamars

The food habits of Chamars are similar to those of Ahirs and Kachhis. They are non-vegetarian but do not eat carrion flesh. They are fond of liquor and procure it from Datia. They are not known to distil liquor in their houses. Tea is their favourite beverage. They drink it almost daily. In other castes, tea may be drunk, but never regularly. *Til* oil is their cooking medium. For a festive occasion they would buy vegetable oil from the town and use it for frying. No *ghee* is used. Use of milk is comparatively little. Vegetables as a rule are not used but when marketing at Datia they often buy a few potatoes. Apart from potatoes, onions and garlic no other vegetable is used in the household.

The Chamars mostly eat *juar* and sometimes wheat. This year owing to a bad *juar* harvest they are obliged to eat more of wheat. Among pulses they use *arhar, moong, masoor*. For the guests the following meal is generally approved of: (1) *Kadhi* made from gram flour and curd; (2) Rice, (3) *Papad* and pickle followed by *chappaties*. It may be followed by a sweet rice pudding prepared as follows. In boiling milk or water to which jaggery has been added, rice is put in and allowed to boil, till it becomes ready for eating. This menu is now used by all castes of the village in entertaining their guests.

Liquor is available at the authorised excise contractor who sells country liquor under following lables

Rasi	Pint Bottle	Rs. 3.30
Dubara	Pint Bottle	Rs. 4.54

The following table gives a statement of expenditure incurred per caste over their food requirements. The Chamars spend 88% of their income over food. From the table it appears that among the poorer classes the expenditure on food is greater than in the more well-to-do ones. The Nai, however, forms an exception to the above observation. This is because he is often eating at the expenses of the others in view of the social service he is called upon to render.

TABLE A—2
Showing expenditure on food

S. No.	Name of Caste	Number of families	Total income p. m.	Expenses on food	Percentage of food in comparison to income
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Ahir	42	3454/-	2548/-	73.76
2	Gadaria	12	644/-	459/-	71.27
3	Chamar	11	539/-	479/-	88.86
4	Kachhi	2	137/-	119/-	86.86
5	Brahmin	2	183/-	154/-	84.15
6	Bhat	1	43/-	37/-	86.04
7	Nai	1	60/-	41/-	68.33
	TOTAL	71	5060/-	3837/-	75.83

Practices and beliefs connected with Births, Marriages and Deaths

The birth of a child is an important event in all castes every where. Before we start with birth rituals and their significance, it is as well that we trace the progress of these ceremonies from a little earlier than birth. Thus it would be in the fitness of things to describe these functions and ceremonies at the time when pregnancy is ascertained.

Pregnancy

While pregnancy results from biological factors, the birth of a child is in God's hands. This summarises the villager's attitude towards birth. They are aware of the phenomenon resulting pregnancy but that is their *ultima thule* on this subject.

It is the senior lady, usually the mother-in-law of the lady, who discovers for the first time that there is a pregnancy in the house. She has no set formula to discover it, it is only by observation that she begins to suspect and later on she asks some of her daughter-in-law's friend to ascertain if her suspicions are well founded. These friends bursting with curiousity lose no time in trying to find it out. The mother-in-law also observes that *bahu* (daughter-in-law) is getting more irritable, developing a paler complexion and is beginning to grow interested in eating mud or lime. She i. e., the mother-in-law is not in a position to observe the cessation of menstrual discharge because except among Brahmins, women in their periods are not regarded as unclean. She is allowed to perform her normal task, filling water and may even cook. Thus this method of discovering pregnancy is lost to other castes excepting the Brahmins. The other castes maintain that they cannot afford to regard their women unclean during their menstrual period because the whole work which she performs has got to be done, and there is no substitute so the poor woman despite her difficult period has to carry on with the domestic chores or with the work in the field. Thus necessity disregards convention.

The pregnant woman knows about it after about six weeks of her last menstrual flow. She does not keep a datewise account of her periods but is able to make out by dates, *tithis* of the Hindi calendar. Thereafter, when she begins to vomit or feel nausea she realises that she is pregrant. Sometimes the husbands may come to know about it, but she remains very reticent and would not herself give out the secret. Some times her friends in the village learn about it from her or infer from her general appearance.

Once it is known that she is with child, special care is taken. She is given fresh and wholesome food and no strenous work is given to her. Where there is no lady other than the pregnant one, the work is carried on by her for sometime and later the husband or the neighbour's wife is requested to help her. Great regard is paid to the fact of her being pregnant: all work or task assigned to her should be of such nature as would not injure her. Towards the later part of pregnancy, however, no work is entrusted to her and she is allowed to rest. To ensure a safe and painless delivery the woman keeps a lamp at the Jagdamba temple. This is also done to beget a son. A *katha* is held towards the later stage of pregnancy and this is followed by the delivery. In cases where the delivery is delayed beyond the completion of the 9th month, the village *dai* is consulted. She usually advises performance of a *katha* or prayer to *Kans Deo*. *Kans Deo* is a village deity having his *chabutara* about 2 furlongs east of the village. The person concerned may also promise a feast or agree to distributing alms in his name. It is said that this method helps in cases of over-due deliveries, for "more things are brought by prayers, than dreams this world of".

Delivery

The woman must deliver at her husband's house. Only when there is some difficulty, she is taken to Datia hospital. An untrained midwife, *dai* delivers the baby and the *dai* is usually from Nai or Barahain caste. The Barahain is from Basor caste and is called from Datia or Sitapur (Basor is a scheduled caste in the dist-

rict). She performs the task with bare clean hands. No antiseptics are used.

A separate room carefully cut off from the other rooms is selected. When the woman has delivered the child, the *dai* cuts the umblical cord by means of a piece of string. Placenta and umblical cords are disposed off in the following two days. Either the whole thing may be buried under the cot on which the person concerned was born or buried under at the spot the rubbish of the house is usually deposited taking care that no dog or cat may get at it. The *dai* used to get ten *takhas*, a *takha* was the old half anna coin in vogue in the British days: or 5 annas along with 5 seers of grain when a boy was born and cash payment only in case of a girl. These were the traditional fees which used to be paid to her. Today she is given Rs. 1.25 or 2.50 for girls and boys respectively. In case cash is not readily forthcoming then grains, usually wheat or *juar* worth Rs. 1.25 or 2.50 are given. The system of payment by grains is steadily coming to a close. Apart from these, presents could be given.

Rejoicings at Birth

The birth is followed by rejoicings which are great in the case of the first male child. The rejoicings begin by firing a few gun shots in case of a son, where parents are rich. This is done usually by the father's younger brother. The *Nain* goes around giving the news and invites the women for singing in the evening. *Batashas* (a light and spongy cake of sugar) are distributed to all who call in the evenings. The proceedings begin by mass singing to the accompaniment of *dholak* and *manjeeras*. A *seedha* placed on a *thal* comprising of wheat flour, rice, *gur*, turmeric and one anna is sent to the house of the village Brahmin, who begins his enquiries regarding the time of the birth of the child. From here the *pandit* begins his calculations to see whether the child is born under auspicious circumstances or if the stars are not favourable or if he was under *mool nakshatra*, i. e., (under the influence of adverse planets) he suggests ways and means to propitiate the Gods. The day of birth then draws to a close with these happenings. If it is not possible to call the *pandit* that very day then he may be called the next day.

The mother of the child is now regarded as unclean and no new clothes are given to her. Her room is carefully kept closed. She is given *Cherua ka Pani* an energy giving decoction of dry fruits, *laddus* made from gum and no other food is given. This is fairly heavy to digest, but given for the next ten days. The first ceremony to remedy her pollution is *chhathi* on sixth day.

Chhathi

On *chhathi*, or the sixth day, the mother and child are given a bath. A new set of clothes is given to them. The room is cleaned up. Members of the community and village are invited and they are given roasted wheat (the local name is *Kaunhi*) to which some gram has been added. This much of the work is usually carried out by Brahmin.

Dashtone

The mother now comes out of her room. She is clean. On this day (i. e., tenth) a grand feast is given only for the first birth irrespective of the fact whether a boy or girl was born. The *pandit* is invited to preside over the proceedings, among Brahmins, Ahirs and Bhats. He suggests the name for the child. The mother puts on good clothes and ornaments and she is made to come out through a decorated arch. The father's sister tries to prevent her from crossing the arch. Having gifted presents or cash, the mother of the child passes through the arch.

The *pandit* then recites the *shlokas* and a fire (*hawan*) is lit. This is the purificating fire and the *pandit* is given Re. 1/- for this labour.

A few days after the *dashtone*, and no time limit is prescribed, the mother of the child along with other women goes, singing to the village well. Here the new mother cleans up a *lota* and draws some water for her prayer. She prays at the well. This signifies that she is now fit to resume her old time duty of filling water and resuming normal work. This is known as *Ghat Pooja*. She is required to go to the source from which water is drawn, i. e., well, tank or river etc.

Hitherto we had been dealing with birth which take place when the stars are considered favourable. It often happens that some time planets are not so favourably disposed. Births occuring under the adverse planets are usually said to be under '*Mool Nakshatra*' and in these cases it becomes necessary to perfrom certain rituals to ward off the effect of these.

Two rituals are performed to ward off the evil effects of *mool*. They are known as *tula* and *bachhiya*. Literally the words mean weighing for *tulas*, calf for *bachhiya*. The ceremony takes place of 21st or 27th

day as may be advised by the *pandit*. Upto this time the father of the child is not supposed to wear any shoes or get himself shaved or have his hair cut or combed or see the baby. The mother is not expected to go out even her *ghat poojan* ceremony described earlier will be held up.

On the 21st or 27th day as the case may be the house is completely cleaned. A *Joshi* or *Bhandari* is invited in the morning to ward off the evil effects. He takes grains and pulses viz., rice, gram, *arhar*, *moong*, and prepares 9 small mounds of it. They are arranged in three places of 3 small mounds each. Green grass and water is called for. The nine mounds are for nine planets who have to be propitiated. The mother along with the child sits near these and the child is weighed against the grains and pulses. He may not be weighed strictly according to the scales but the ceremony described above is gone through. This is known as *tula*. Whatever grain is used in weighing is given over to the *Joshi*. Besides this he also gets clothes usually worn ones. He then asks for oil and is given some approximately 4 to 6 ozs of sweet oil. He is also paid in cash, this payment depends upon the status of the person concerned. Usually for boys, the rate of payment is higher going upto as high as Rs. 5/- otherwise it is Rs. 4/-.

So far the father of the child had not appeared on the scene. Now he washes, shaves himself and gets dressed. All these proceedings take up practically the whole of the morning. In the meanwhile a festive meal is being prepared in the house. During the afternoon the second part of the ceremony is gone through. At about 2 or 3 P. M. the *pandit* is called in and the *bachhiya pooja* takes place. For the first time both the parents participate in the ceremony. They sit side by side; their clothes are tied together by means of a loose sheet usually worn by the mother. This is known as *gath joda* from Hindi word *Gath vana* meaning to cause to be joined or united together i. e. the "pair sitting secured by a knot". The child has not yet been brought out. He is not supposed to be in this function.

Nine mounds of grain and pulses as described before are placed in front of the couple. A purificatory fire is lit up and the *pandit* performs the *pooja* by reciting *shlokas*. A calf is then brought, usually the family owns one or is obliged to buy it. The tail of the calf is washed by *pandit* with water to which rice and *turmeric* have been added. The couple catches the tail of the calf and sprinkle the water, apply a *teeka* and feed her with the food cooked for the evening's feast. The calf is then presented to the *mandir* (temple). The *pandit* is given Rs. 1.25 in cash and also gets the grain and pulses along with the *lota* used for *pooja*. All castes observe this ceremony. Ahirs are known to spend as much as Rs. 100 to 125 and Chamars about Rs. 15 to 20 over it.

Thereafter the community feasts and the evil effects are supposed to have been warded off. After the birth of the child presents are received from the mother's parents. This is known as *pachh*, which means a fortnight, being derived from *paksha*. In practice these gifts can be received upto a month's time. The gifts usually consists of (1) clothing; (2) ornaments; (3) grain. Clothing is sent for the mother and the child (2) ornaments of gold are sent for mother and child. This depends upon the status of the party. In some cases no ornaments are sent. (3) Rice, pulses, wheat, gram which has been broken up and is called *daal* is sent. The total weight of all these is between 1½ to 2 manuds. No grain less than 5 seers in weight is sent. These gifts are usually sent with a barber or nai, who may be accompanied by smaller boys of the household of the village. The Nai returns after a couple of days stay there. Besides these, toys are also sent. A cradle (*palna*) is almost invariably sent as one of the main gifts. The above ceremonies are gone through in the manner described, by the Brahmins, Ahirs, Bhats and Kachhis. The item of expenditure differs due to economic conditions. The Nai performs these but does not invite any person of other community. Chamars and Gadariyas call a Basoran or barber referred earlier for delivery. As for the other ceremonies their performance is directly related to their means.

Barrenness

If after five or six years of married life no children are born to a woman, she is regarded as barren. No searching enquiry into the possible causes of barrenness is ever made. They regard fertility or barrenness, a matter of divine dispensation. To cure barrenness no doctors are consulted, neither are the husbands subjected to a medical check up. The woman is asked to perform *pooja*. She may be taken to an important temple e. g. Balaji's Temple at Unao. The *devta* may be invoked and the question put to him. Often the *devta* replies that feast to the community may be offered or the woman may be taken to a temple (invoking of a *devta* has been dealt with under Religious Beliefs and Faiths).

There have been some cases where children were born after 6/8 years of marriage, and after having taken the woman to a temple. This has considerably strengthened their faith in the working of the magical charms. The invocation of a *devta* has a unique place in the beliefs and customs of the village.

Marriages

The villagers regard that it is enjoined on them to marry and get their children married when the time for it is ripe. Marriage thus becomes a sacred duty. They have always thought that marriages are made in heaven and the bonds holding the two together, after marriages are absolute. This may then be taken to be their mental attitute towards marriage.

Age

The marriageable age varies from community to community. In the Ahirs and Brahmins the marriages are mostly after puberty. In Chamars and Kachhis pre-puberty marriages are quite common. The Nai, Bhat, Gadariya follow the brahmanical patterns. Therefore, we find that the ages of boys in Ahir, Brahmin, Bhat, Gadariya and Nai castes at the time of marriage are between 17 to 19 whereas in the case of girls it is 13 to 16. The villagers desire that the difference of ages between a bride and groom should be about 3 years at least, the groom being the senior partner. In no case should the bride be older than the groom. Among the Kachhis and Chamars child marriages still continue. We saw a Kachhi marriage in which the boy was hardly 12 years old and his bride only 8/9 years. A marriage was performed in *Jyaistha* — June '62 in the Ahir community. The bridegroom was 18/20 years old and the bride about 16 years of age. (No photographs of the bride were permitted). It is rather interesting to note that the bridegrooms (there were two marriages in the same house, for two brothers married the two sisters) absented themselves from the ceremonies. They took time off from the ceremonies to see a movie at Datia, and only escaped physical punishment because a bridegroom is regarded as "King" for three days, at the time of his marriage and should not be maltreated.

The brides in the village have come from nearby villages and quite a few of them have come from Tikamgarh 75, Sheopuri 80, Jhansi 18 and Gwalior 46 miles away. Historical affinities link Datia to Tikamgarh and contiguity to other districts. In the marriage referred to above the brides-migrated to Shivpuri district.

General Restrictions

The villagers generally are monogamous although all castes permit polygamy but at present there are no persons having more than one wife.

No marriage can take place between persons of same *gotra* or lineage. The following gotras are avoided.

(1) *Gotra* of father.
(2) *Gotra* of mother.
(3) *Gotra* of father's sister.
(4) *Gotra* of father's mother.

In Richhari all castes would avoid the above relationship. Preferential matching does not exist.

Brahmins

Brahmins are very orthodox in their outlook on marriage. A widow re-marriage is not permitted. Junior levirate is not permissible: a man may not marry two sisters though he may marry his deceased wife's sister. A younger sister should not be married before the elder. A widow usually stays at her husband's place, either with her children, or her husband's brother or other male relatives. She is not supposed to enter into intimate relationships. If it happens then the couple is excommunicated. A woman would also be expelled if after widowhood she lives with a man of some other caste. Among the Brahmins *fait accompli* recognition of living together does not exist. In cases where a Brahmin widow goes to live with some other person, her children are taken care of by the deceased husband's family. All ornaments and precious clothing is also taken away from her. There is however no such case in the village.

Ahirs

Among the Ahirs widow re-marriage and divorce is permitted. Divorce is allowed at the instance of either the husband or wife. There is no marriage ceremony and the woman is allowed to go to her new husband, who has to pay compensation to the father-in-law or other male relatives. This is known as *jhagda* or dispute money. The Ahirs prefer to draw up the proceedings in writing. A *pandit* or other literate person has to reduce it to writing. The children by deceased husband remain in the custody of husband's family except when they are too young to stay back, she is allowed to take the child with her. When the child grows up, the deceased husband's relations arrange

to take him back. A widow is free to marry her deceased husband's younger brother, but may not marry elder one. The Gadariyas also follow the above system, except that they would prefer that the widow may marry the deceased's husband's younger brother and thus remain in the family, adultery leads to quarrels and often fighting among themselves. A caste Panchayat is also held and for adultery the man concerned is fined, warned and has to stand a feast to the caste. In one case a married woman was carrying a liaison with another person of their community. This led to a fight and quarrel. The Panchayat tried to pacify the parties and apparently seemed to succeed. A few days later, however, the woman escaped and went over to her lover; who had migrated to a nearby town. She still continues to stay with the lover. An Ahir or Gadariya may marry his wife's younger sister but not the elder one. The above also holds good for Kachhi, Bhat and Nai.

Chamars

Widows remarry, they may take any person for their husband except their own relatives and husband's elder brother and ascendent relations. Where a woman carried on intimacy with another man she is generally married to him,if both be unmarried or married. Usually the caste Panchayat decides it and the quantum of dispute money payable by the paramour is settled. Nothing is reduced into writing. Where a widow has lands and property and none to look after them she may take a man to live with and look after her. Chamars generally prefer to marry girls between 8-13 years and boys from 10-16 years. In case a girl becomes pregnant and if the person responsible, could be otherwise married to her then she would be married otherwise marriage cannot take place. She may then be married to some one in the community who may be much senior in age or otherwise finds hard to be married or may even be a widower. A pre-marriage pregnancy is a stigma. The child however would assume the name of the husband. In case it becomes difficult to find a husband then the girl is sent away to some relation, away from the sorroundings of the village, there efforts to marry her off will be made.

All marriages are carefully negotiated in advance. Negotiations are carried on through mutual friends or relations. They give information to the father of the party and then usually the girls' father takes the lead, shows some interest in seeing that matter is soon finalised. With Ahir the position is some what different because there is only one village in the tahsil with families in which alliances are possible. They accordingly have to get their brides from far off places, hence the boy's father evinces more keenness for negotiations so that he may be able to get a bride from the nearby village.

When the father of a girl knows about a prospective party he begins to gather information about the groom, the groom's father, their standing in the village, their economic status and their general reputation is carefully assessed. He is never particular to see the boy. Usually he asks some of his relations to have a look at him (the boy) and then leaves his judgment to their appraisal. He may use an agency of friends or relations to satisfy himself about the suitablity of the bridegroom. Having done so he would send an appropriate message to the groom's father. If on a similar scrutiny the groom's father is agreeable, then he (bride's father) sends a coconut, *teeka* (vermillion) along with Rs. 1.25 in cash. Usually a male member of the girl's household accompanied by a barber takes it. No stipulation regarding dowry is made. At the bridegroom's place the *teeka* is applied on the forehead of the boy and some money given to him. The money given depends upon the economic status of the parties and varies from Rs. 11 to 101.

God Bharna

Among the Ahir, Gadariya, Nai, Chamar and Kachhi the bridegroom's party performs a ceremony known as *God-Bharna* literally, 'filling the lap'. This ceremony is not a must and many families dispense with it. The male members of the boy's household go to the girl's place. The number of persons going in the party depends upon the number invited by the girl's father. The bridegroom's party take their presents-mostly clothing and give it to the prospective bride. Presents are also given to the bride's mother. This is followed by a feast for the party and at the time of departure they are given a present of Re 1/- in cash for each member and the prospective (bridegroom) gets more depending on status. (The Chamars do not invite any relations for the ceremony but the Ahirs do.) We have now reached the stage when marriage has been settled for the ceremony of *God-Bharna* finally sets the seal on all negotiations. The village *pandit* then fixes a date looking into his papers. The bride's party fixes upon the date of marriage and the other side okays it. Now the *peeli cheethi* meaning the 'yellow letter' or *lagoon* is sent to the boy's home. It contains a letter, sprinkled with turmeric water to become yellow or *pila* with Rs. 10/- or more. The yellow colour is an

auspicious one. With this the preparations go ahead. The main preparation consists of gathering the grain, pulses and other commodities and keeping them ready. Usually the ladies of the house do it. Clothing, fireworks, band etc. is procured from Datia. A *palki* or crude palanquin is procured on hire and also a sweetmeat maker.

On the boy's side, three days before starting of the *barat* or marriage party ceremonies begin. The first ceremony is *Rattjagga* or keeping awake at night. The hands and feet of the boy are coloured red by *mehndi* (henna) thereafter he is not supposed to move out hence perhaps the Hindi expression

'Mehndi Lagi He,
Bahir Nahi Javega'.

(Because he has applied *mehndi*, he would not go out).

This is followed by women's singing and dancing in the night, hence the term *Rattjagga*. Early in the morning small *poories* are made, they are called *bana*. This is the second day and women of the village are invited and these *poories* are given to them. In the evening the boy is annointed with oil. The aunts i. e., wives of father's younger or elder brother's and his elder or younger brother's wife apply oil to the accompaniment of singing. The name of husband of the woman who applies oil is put into the song and the women sing e. g.:

"TEL CHADAYO SHANTI NE JINKE
MADANLAL HAI SAVALIYA"

which means Shanti has applied oil and her dear husband is Madanlal. This is followed by singing in a chorous. The boy is then lifted and carried by the women near the village dumping ground called *ghoora*. Here he is held aloft and the oil container is buried in the heap and the boy is carried back, not being allowed to touch the ground. As stated earlier, the umblical cord is often buried near this dumping spot, so at this stage too the spot is worshipped.

The third day is *mandap* day and preparations begin on the night of the second. On the *mandap* day men are invited for a feast. The women of the house would make the boy seated under a small canopy, with log of wood underneath. Here the women apply a turmeric paste called *upton* and a head wear from *khajoor* leaves is tied. The *pooja* is over after this. Similarly at the girl's place all these ceremonies in these forms are gone through. In the evening the men have their feast. No such feast is held at the girl's place.

The Barat

The marriage party now sets out from the boy's place; but before this is done another ceremony has to be gone through by the boy. He is taken in a *palki* around the village and goes to the *Devi's* place where he prays. He should now not return home without bringing his bride so he stays at a friend's or relative's place or even at *Devi's* temple, in fact anywhere other than at his own place.

The marriage party then moves out. If it has to go by bus or train then only 60/70 members go in it. If it is for a nearby village then as many as 125-150 will go. For nearby villages they prefer to go in bullock carts but for distance beyond 20 miles buses are used. In the marriage referred to earlier the *barat* came by bus from Shivpuri which by regular route is 80 miles *via*. Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh, but through a fair weather jungle route is only 50. This route is through Madhya Pradesh State, so no inter-state permits are required. The bus, a 44 seater carried 70 members and charged Rs. 150/- for the outward journey.

Where the party is in affluent circumstances the boy's people bring their own band and *palki*. The Nai with the party is then sent to the village with news of its arrival. The band begins to play. Now as soon as the news reaches the villages, the bride's people excepting her father go out to receive the marriage party and bring them to their place of stay which is called *janwasa*. The bridegroom is received with gifts presented from the girl's side, usually Rs. 10 or even a guinea is presented. The marriage party stays in some open place near a temple or a *dharmshala* if there is any. Arrangements for their food and stay are made at the expense of the bride's father. (Please see plate XIX).

Marriage Dresses

Bridegroom

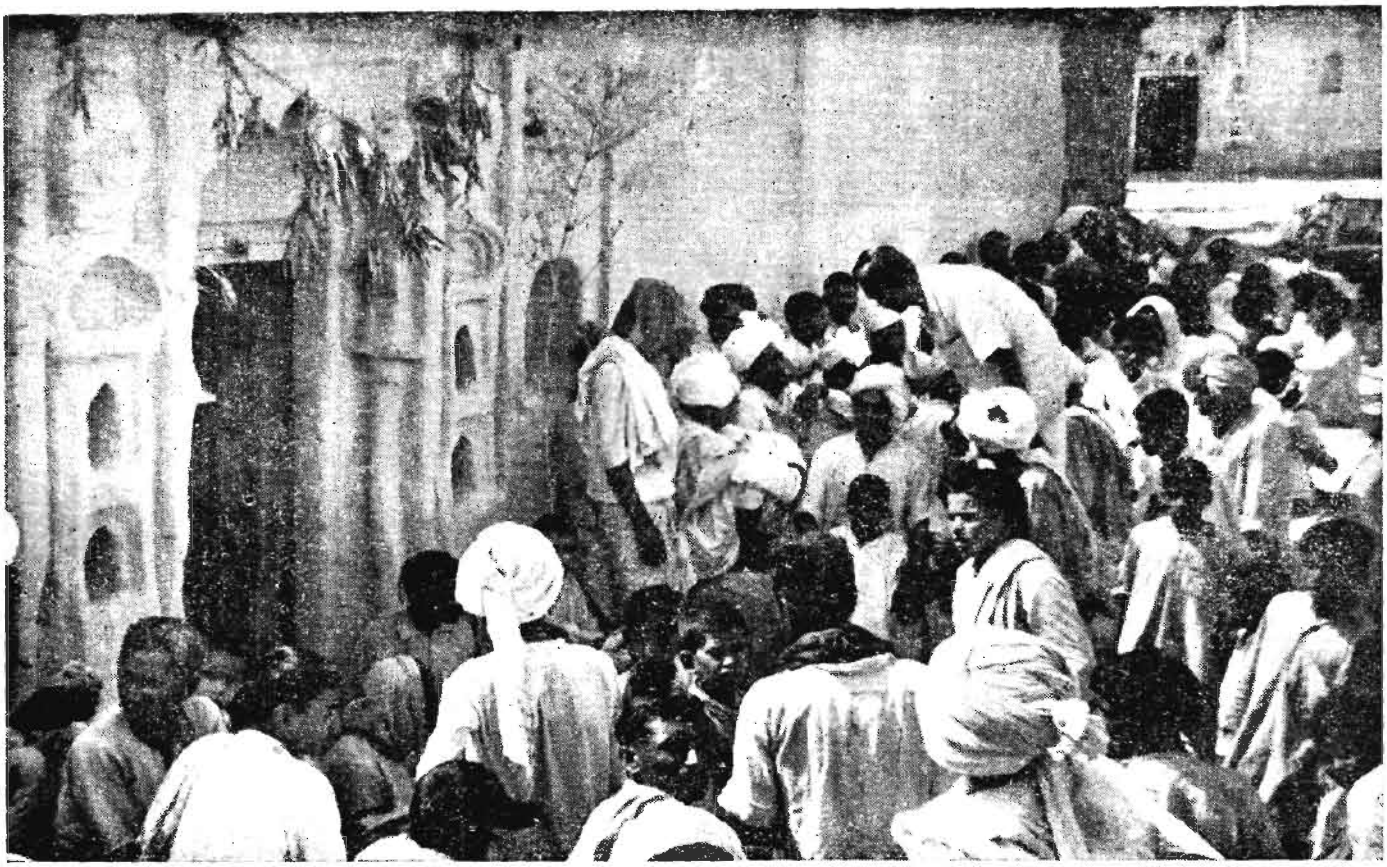
In the olden days a yellow loose flowing *kurta* touching the ankles was worn as a upper garment on which *haldi* markings were made. From the waist he wore a tight fitting cotton *payjama* white or coloured. He also wore *pugri* and a sword dangled from his side. The eyes are darkened with a sooty preparation called *kajal*. The shoes are the local type sometimes with gold brocades.

Today among the Brahmin and well-to-do Ahirs the groom may put on an ill-fitted western style suit without a tie. Besides the above wear, he also puts on a palm leaves crown over his head. The minimum cost of

PLATE XIX



The Barat



Reception of the marriage party

PLATE XX



The Madha

clothing is Rs. 25/-. Financial resources call the tune in matters of dresses for the groom.

The Bride

The bride puts on a silken yellow or red skirt called *ghagra* worn from the waist to the ankle. It requires about 12 yards of cloth and is finely pleated with golden brocade. The upper part is covered with a blouse. It covers up the stomach completely and does not show the shoulders. No brassiere or *choli* is worn beneath. Over the *ghagra* a small *loogda* is tucked in the front which winds around the hip back and covers the breasts leaving a little cloth to be worn covering the head. The bride covers her face with a veil which is known as *ghoongat* on top of this a pink silken cloth is tied across her hips and covers the head completely. This accounts for a second veil over the face.

Among the Brahmins these days the wedding dress consists of *saree*, petticoat and blouse of silk or superior georgette etc. The cost of the clothing is Rs. 100 or above. Besides these the bride is generally covered up with ornaments.

Marriage Ceremony

Usually the marriage party reaches by the noon on the day of the ceremonies. From the bride's side the Nai brings the invitation to the party. The *barat* then moves out after attiring itself properly for the occasion. The groom now goes for *teeka*. On arrival at the bride's place he is given presents of utensils (bigger ones), ornaments (like ring, buttons etc.) and cash. The amount of cash may be upto Rs. 200/- or even more. No dowry is stipulated. The boy's father-in-law puts on a *teeka* on the forehead. The boy touches with sword the frame of the decorated doorway. This probably signifies victory of the bridegroom, a relic of the days of marriage by conquest. The bride in the meanwhile throws turmeric mixed with curd at the boy's face. The groom should try and avoid being hit, whereas the girl will try her best to score a hit. In case the bride succeeds in hitting then it is considered that she would be able to dominate her husband. The ceremony of *teeka* ends here and this is followed by a feast for the marriage party.

The main ceremony of the marriage i. e., *bhanwar* (circumambulation of sacred fire) now draws near. The bridegroom comes along with other male members of the party to the *mandap*. Here the bride is called from inside and now with *pandits* of both sides *bhanwar* ceremony is gone through. The father-in-law and mother-in-law of the groom also come out and sit with the bride in between. This particular part of ceremony is now known as *kanya dan* i. e., gifting the daughter, or giving the bride away. The *pandit* recites the *shlokas* and the holy fire is lit up. It is at this time that the bridegroom promises to keep his wife happy by caring for her. The bride on the other hand promises obedience. After this the bride and groom sit near each other in *gath-joda* style. The bride's dress is draped in a loose *chaddar* and also over the groom's clothes another loose pink coloured cloth is hung around. At this stage the two loose garments are united by means of a knot. This is known as *gath-joda*. The tying of knot symbolises the link up of bride and bridegroom. Often, mothers-in-law at this juncture exclaim, 'O *Pandit*, tie such a knot as may never become loose', and exchange curd rice and grass contained in leaves. The couple then goes around the fire seven times. The parents at the time of encircling the fire absent themselves. It is not regarded as very auspicious for them to remain present. The marriage is now solemnised.

The relatives of the bride now come and offer her presents, smear her with turmeric and bow to the couple. This is known as *pav pakhariya* i. e., washing the feet. The money received at this time is distributed to the Nai, Brahmin and other menial staff.

Next day, the breakfast is sent to the *barat*. At the *janwasa* both sides assemble and the occasion becomes a social meeting. Dancing girls if taken with the party entertain all those present. The system of taking dancing or *nautch* girls is prevalent among the richer types only. These girls are brought from Datia, Jhansi or Gwalior. It is a status-symbol, *haisiyat* is judged by the amount of money one can spend on such occasions.

This entertainment goes on till about the dinner time when the marriage party is called away for dinner at *bride's* place. The bridegroom usually does not eat unless he is won over by some present. This, thus becomes another occasion for some presents for the bridegroom and gives the women of the bride's family a chance to poke fun at the groom, teasing him, at times, out of his wits.

The clothes meant to be worn by the bride are sent away to the bride's place by the marriage party for being worn by her. The bride now wears these clothes at the bidding of her in-laws. This signifies the change in her status. She has passed into her husband's family by now. The bridegroom is sent

to the bride's house for now the *palka-poojan* ceremony takes place. The bride and the bride-groom sit on a cot and rice is thrown over them. As time for *bela dena* draws near some gifts are given to the groom and fathers-in-law exchange some small gifts. After this the bride is sent away amidst wailing female relatives. The bride now sits in the *palki* and the party returns home. The groom walks along unless there are two *palkies* in which case he would be given one. The departure of the *barat* thus takes place along with the bride.

The happenings at the bridegroom's place during the time when the marriage party is away are also of some interest. Only the women are left behind. They arrange a mock marriage among themselves and keep up the festive atmosphere by singing and dancing.

The marriage party returns. Both the bride and the groom are received by the relations. This is known as *agvani* (reception): some sweet is put in their mouths. They are taken in the house now. In the evening the bride feeds the bridegroom by giving him rice and milk. Also the bridegroom has to feed his wife. Both will spend the night away from each other. The next day a few ceremonies for creating a cordial get-together atmosphere are gone through.

Kangana

Kangana is a coloured thread tied across the wrist Also tied with it are areca nuts, pice, secured by seven small knots. A game in opening the *kangana* is played. It consists in untying knots in the *kangana* worn on the wrist. He who opens all the knots wins and would perhaps dominate. In yet another game a fish made out of flour is rotated by hand by the bride; the groom with a small stick tries to score a hit. The whole proceeding is watched with great interest. It is taken to be a battle of wits and all praise is showered on the victor. All women congregate for the occasion.

Gauna

Gauna is another important ceremony connected with marriage. *Gauna* connotes the readiness for consummation of a marriage. As long as a *gauna* does not take place sleeping together is not permitted except in the Brahmins, even though the parties may be in a fit stage to consummate the marriage. The bride during this period sleeps near her mother-in-law. After about a week's stay the bride returns to her father's place. Usually in this interlude she hardly speaks to her husband for the houses are small and talking in the day is not possible while at night it becomes out of question.

Gauna takes place in 1, 3, 5, 7th year of marriage and epitomises the commencement of married life. The boy's parents broach the subject, fix the date and inform the bride's party. The bride's father informs him as to how many members he may bring with him for *gauna*. This usually depends upon the financial condition of the girl's father. When the groom's party reaches the place a *teeka* is applied on groom's forehead. The party is treated to good food during its stay for 2/3 days. They then leave with the bride and a present of Re. 1/- per head. Returning home no ceremonies are held. At this time the father of the bride gives all the presents that he can to his daughter. Rice *laddu*, grains and jaggery along with cereals are given. The total weight being about 2 maunds. Gifts of household articles are generally preferred.

Back at home the couple is allowed a room exclusively. A small boundary in flour is drawn at the site where their bed-stead is placed and only one bed usually big size is spread out for them. In the evening it is now bride's turn to ask for present from the husband. Seven purses containing dry fruits are often given to the bride. Some cash may also be given. In Brahmins a ring or an ornament is presented. Purses are not much in vogue. Where dry fruits have been presented both the parties eat them. This done, the couple retires.

Dowry

Usually dowry is not stipulated before hand in the village but a general expectancy always exists. It is taken for granted that the bride's father would be giving appropriate gifts to his daughter. The word *haisiyat* or status conveys a correct meaning of their expectancy. Where the dowry received falls short of expectations, there is keen disappointment. No cases of any retaliatory action against the bride for having brought little dowry were noticed. The bride however is often taunted and jeered by the mother-in-law for such things and her life may be made miserable.

In the village no caste has been known to have stipulated the payment of dowry, at the time of finalising marriage. The Brahmins however admit that among them dowry system prevails, but in the village they have not yet demanded it. The expectancy referred above take the form of payment in cash or kind to compensate the expenditure incurred by the bridegroom's father for bringing the *barat* and its accompaniments. Sometimes the bride's father gives a gift of an amount say Rs. 500 or 1,000 to cover up the ex-

penses of the other party. The Brahmin said that he would not expect any dowry because his boys were neither qualified nor in government service. In his view the above categories have a greater dowry value.

Bride Price

In the village bride price is not paid. Acceptance of bride price is regarded with shame and if paid, it is done with utmost secrecy. There has been no case in the village where bride price was paid. The villagers however admit that it is paid in circumstances where a boy is unable to get a bride in the usual way. It may happen that owing to his being over-age, or his suffering from some disability like some disease, or physical disability, he fails to get married. The parents of the boy may contact girl's parents who in such cases are poor and needy or whose daughter may herself be suffering from similar disability, or the guardians of an orphan girl and by paying some money, marry the boy. Even in such cases rules of prohibited relationship are observed and no inter-caste marriage are known to have taken place. Since payments are made surreptiously the truth about the deal is rarely known.

Ceremonies of Death

A man or woman must never die on cot so first before death they are taken down from the cot and placed on the earth. The villagers say that a man came from the mother earth and must return to it. Leaving him midway on a cot would not be proper. The villagers believe that after death it is possible for them to be reborn. The law of *karma* has a stranglehold on them. They feel that if in this life they become responsible for misdeeds, then in the next birth they may be relegated to a form lower than the human one, e. g. beasts or reptiles.

When a man or woman dies his/her body is washed either by the male or female relations. When a very old man or woman dies, his age entitles him to a better funeral. A *viman* or square bier is prepared for him. He after being washed and bathed is handsomely attired and is made to sit upright in it. The bier is carried on the shoulders by the relatives and villagers and the body consigned to fire. In the case of other deaths a ladder is procurred and grass is spread over it and the man or woman is laid supine on it. The relations cover up the body by a white or red sheet and take it to burning *ghat*. White is generally used for males and red for females, married, un-married or widowed. At the burning *ghat* a pyre is prepared and body is placed in it. The eldest son lights up the pyre. After some time the person who lighted the pyre takes out a burning stick and touches the forehead of the deceased. This is known as *kapal kriya* meaning the forehead ceremony. After the body is burnt out the relations bathe at the *ghat* or nearby well and return to their houses. The chief mourner usually the son or other heir, chews the leaves of the *neem* and gargles it out. He then appeals to other members of the congregation who go with him, to regard him as their ward. The villagers assure him of their help and support.

On the third day after the cremation the relations go to the burnt heap to collect the remaining bones. This is known as *phool chunana* (collecting the flowers i. e. the remains). On return the barber is called for shaving off the moustaches and hair of the head. Shaving of hair is done only when the person dead is father or an elder brother. The bones and ashes thus collected are sent away through some relations to Allahabad or Soro in district Bulandsahar (U. P.) on the banks of Ganges. These are scattered in the river. The poorest would scatter them in the Pahuj river nearby.

The preparations are now taken in hand for celebrating the thirteenth day after death. The ceremony is known as *tervi*. Thirteen Brahmins are called and food on thirteen leaf plates is arranged. On yet another leaf plate food is also arranged in memory of the departed soul. The food of the fourteenth plate is given to the cow or otherwise distributed. All the villagers and members of the family assemble for the feast. The chief mourner is presented with a turban, when the male head of the family has died. Usually heavy expenditure has to be incurred over these ceremonies. The above ceremonies covered adult natural deaths. The period of thirteen days mourning is observed for elder relations *viz.* father, father's brothers, married elder brothers, but for younger case, male relations and female relations eleven days mourning is observed. In the case of deaths of unmarried persons no feast is given.

Where children die before the age of 8 years they are buried in jungle towards the western side of the village. Persons dying from suicide or from accidents are cremated. Deaths from snake bites also are cremated.

The Changing Scene

The most important change that has come about

is that the customs are no longer rigidly followed. In olden days it would have been unthinkable for a bridegroom to run away to see the movies. The old customs are now easily broken. Even in delivering a child the help of trained *dais* is taken. Cases are also sent to the hospital. Change has also come about in the mode of wearing clothes among the more well-to-do types who prefer to wear trousers. The modern village bridegroom wears coat and trousers, hates to put on ornaments and prefers to travel in a Mercedes bus (the sneezing type — in the village terminology from its peculiar noise of the braking system). Even in eating the change of style has become noticeable. More sweets in vegetable oil than *ghee* are prepared due to economic causes. In the olden days cows, buffaloes and bulls were gifted but today the groom asks for cycle, radio and such other useful gifts. Expenditure on marriage has gone up. Loudspeakers to play gramaphone records or band to proclaim the marriage, is now a necessity. Very high prices are paid to get them from bigger villages or towns. The villager would also try to procure a tourer type of car for the bridegroom's procession and he does not mind spending money over it, this however is limited to two families in village. A few years ago the standing of a party was determined by the number of prostitutes it brought. These were the singing and dancing types; along with the other types. Today, at least in this village no singing girls are brought although the practice has not completely been given up: yet it has lost some of its pre-eminence.

The expenditure in marriages raises two issues (1) have the earnings increased considerably? (2) are the villagers increasing their indebtedness owing to extravagance? It is true that in the past few years the prices of grains have remained steady on the higher side. This has brought some prosperity to the villagers. Coupled with this, there has been a steady rise in prices, or decrease in the purchasing power of the rupee. In comparision to this rise, however, the wants of the villager have remained more or less constant, with some very slight fluctuations. Much of foodstuff consumed is produced by him. Thus the high prices of food-stuffs do not entail much expenditure. This leaves him with greater profits than ever before. To this extent his financial condition has certainly improved.

Villagers in general have been spending lavishly on marriages, and deaths. These causes account for much of their indebtedness. More recently in idea of 'Status' has found its way to them. Many of them today are keenly aware of their economic status, besides this there is a constant urge for bettering their economic status. This awareness manifests itself specially on such occasions when money has to be spent. This led them to incur debts at the same time it has to be remembered that their capacity to repay the loans has also increased. The two factors appear to balance each other and the final outcome is that, whereas his income may not have increased his expenditure has gone up.

CHAPTER III

THE VILLAGE ECONOMY

(1) Economic Resources

The main economic resources of the village are:

(1) Land: the agricultural lands;
(2) The cattle;
(3) Forest produce obtainable from the adjoining woods.

As a result of these available economic resources, a few houshold industries cattle and dairy farming exist but agriculture remains the main occupation in the village. The livelihood pattern of the village is as follows:

TABLE B—1

LIVELIHOOD PATTERN

Persons	*Males*	*Females*	*In cultivation*		*In animal husbandary, forestry, shikar, quarrying, gathering forest produce*		*In Household industry*		*In agricultural labour*		*In other services*		*Total workers*	
			M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
403	225	178	99	60	11	6	10	1	3	2	3	2	126	71

M = Males F = Females

The percentage of workers to non-workers is fairly high in the village as compared to other villages in the neighbouring districts of Gwalior, Morena, Shivpuri and Bhind. This has been dealt with in somewhat great detail under livelihood pattern.

Land

The total area of the village as given in village papers stand at 490 acres. The break-up of this is as follows:

TABLE B—2

SHOWING BREAK-UP OF VILLAGE LAND

Area under cultivation	375.56	acres
Cultivable land	44.26	acres
Muafi land	1.76	acres
Charnoi or grazing land *abadi* or habitation including land under roads	71.30	acres
Total	492.88	acres

The ownership of the land mostly vests with the cultivators. The following break-up gives castwise, the total lands held.

TABLE B—3

SHOWING VILLAGE LANDS HELD CASTEWISE

S. No.	*Caste*	*No. of family*	*Land held in acres*	*Average per family*
1	Ahir	42	320.18	7.62
2	Gadariya	12	3.42	.28
3	Chamar	11	10.58	.86
4	Brahmin	2	31.90	16.00
5	Kachhi	2	3.36	1.68
6	Nai	1	...	...
7	Bhat	1	6.12	6.12
	TOTAL	71	375.56	5.29

It would be noticed that the Ahirs are the biggest landholders and Gadariyas the poorest. All lands lying in the village are held by the villagers resident here. There is no case of cultivators residing in other villages and coming to Richhari to cultivate the land. Under the present law the cultivators hold the land on ownership basis possessing the right to inherit, transfer it within the frame-work of rules. Continuty of interest is thus guaranteed. Apart from 375 acres of land referred to earlier the villagers hold more lands in another village Ghutari which happens to be depopulated. It is depopulated since long: no records about its becoming depopulated are available. Thus the total land held by persons of various communities is 534.24 acres giving them an average of 7.52 per family. The caste-wise details are as follows:

TABLE B—4

SHOWING TOTAL LANDS HELD BY CULTIVATORS OF RICHHARI VILLAGE

S. No.	Caste	No. of house-holds	Total land in acres	Held in Bhoomi-Swami rights	On Batai	Average per family
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Ahir	42	393.04	344.44	48.60	9.35
2	Gadariya	12	32.00	16.00	16.00	2.64
3	Chamar	11	55.20	26.40	28.80	5.00
4	Brahmin	2	28.80	28.80	—	14.40
5	Kachhi	2	13.00	13.00	—	6.50
6	Bhat	1	6.00	6.00	—	6.00
7	Nai	1	6.20	6.20	—	6.20
	TOTAL	71	534.24	440.84	93.40	7.52

Out of this total of 534.24 acres 440.84 acres are held in *Bhoomiswami** rights and as many as 93.40 acres on *batai* or 'sub tenancy' by which crop is shared usually on 50:50 basis. *Batai* is not recognised in law but was a fairly wide spread practice of the past. A cultivator unable to till his lands gives it to another on *batai* usually for a year.

The agreement, though void *ab initio* is generally reduced into writing. This is done because generally cultivators are ignorant and secondly it creates some moral pressure over the person who takes over the land. The owner gives the land, provides half the quantity of seeds and pays half the total land revenue. Then as far as he is concerned the whole responsibility shifts to the person who actually cultivates. Firstly, the one who takes land would have to provide the other half of items stated above. He has to provide all labour, bullocks and get other implements to till and sow the land.

So he labours, tills, sows and when it is time for reaping the harvest, it must be shared with the owner. The shares are again, half for each. Even the bye-products like husks and other seeds etc. are divided equally among themselves.

Under the Madhya Pradesh Land Revenue Code 1959 now in force such a lease is contrary to law and generally it is permitted only in some exceptional cases *viz.*, where party is a minor or a widow or is imprisoned or with the Defence Forces etc. In most of these cases lands held under this *batai* system (literal meaning apportioning or dividing among themselves) would be illegal. Yet it goes on and because the parties do not object; the patwari allows it surreptitiously. The Chamars have 28.60 acres under them in this manner. Giving land on *batai* has been a very old practice and despite progressive legislation it continues chiefly because it gives the owner a chance for not working and a non-owner an opportunity to make a living without owning land. There are however no persons from other villages who hold lands in this village.

The total land revenue collected from the village is Rs. 957.11 paise spread over in two equal instalments. This is collected in January and May each year corresponding to the kharif and rabi crops. No difficulty in collecting these has been experienced.

Live Stock

The table below gives the total number of cattle heads in the village.

* *BHOOMISWAMI* tenancy rights as laid down in Madhya Pradesh Land Revenue Code 1959, Sec. 158 confers the right to transfer and inherit lands, limit in certain cases, allow him to make improvement in the land and provide that only land in excess of 10 acres (unirrigated) 5 (irrigated) could be attached in a Court proceedings.

TABLE B—5

STATEMENT SHOWING CATTLE OWNED BY VARIOUS CASTES.

	Caste	Cow		Bulls		Bullocks			He Buffaloes			She Buffaloes		Goats	Sheep	Total
		Milch	Dry	Breeding	stray	Ploughing	Cart	stray	Ploughing	Cart	stray	Milch	Dry			
1	Ahir	31	105	11	6	70	16	15	—	4	2	32	48	2	—	342
2	Gadariya	3	8	2	—	10	—	7	—	—	—	—	1	285	112	428
3	Chamar	1	7	1	—	20	—	5	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	36
4	Brahmin	—	10	1	—	4	—	—	—	—	—	1	2	—	—	18
5	Kachhi	2	4	4	—	4	—	—	—	—	—	2	4	—	—	20
6	Bhat	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	3
7	Nai	—	2	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	7
	TOTAL	37	138	19	7	109	16	27	—	4	2	36	59	288	112	854

(A) Economic cattle :— 822
(B) Un-economic cattle :— 32

The Ahirs have the greatest number of cattle heads with Gadariyas coming next. The Gadariya's animal wealth is mostly in the number of goats and sheep owned by them; they do not own any bigger cattle. The ownership of cattle has lead to a supplementary occupation. The Ahirs who have plenty of agricultural land are content to sell milk to vendors who come from Datia and even from Jhansi which is about 21 miles away. They sell the milk at Rs. 0.50 per seer, but this milk according to their own confession is not the best type. The 'best type' which contains no water sells at about 0.62 P. per seer. The Gadariyas also sell the milk on the above condition. The Brahmins, Kachhi and other remaining castes of the village do not sell milk. The milk vendors come to the houses and arrange to collect the milk themselves. The villagers thus avoid the botheration of going to the town to find out a market for their products. The Ahirs do not sell any other milk products except of course milk. Payment is made on monthly basis. Contractors do not advance any money.

For a Gadariya the cattle is the main source of economic activity. They buy cattle and sell it. They collect the wool from the sheep and also sell it. The wool is cut by means of shears which the Gadariyas possess and it is done thrice a year. The sheep is washed, tied and laid on the ground before shearing. The wool is sold to the dealers at Datia for cash. The details of the economic are discussed later under the head 'Animal Husbandry'. Once, they were known to weave the wool into finished products. They have given up weaving because it did not bring any returns. Six families among Ahirs depend almost entirely on these cattle for their livelihood. These have been enumerated under the household industry in the 1961 Census. The Ahirs do not rear cattle with a view to selling it, although out of economic necessity they may be obliged to do so.

The other communities who do not depend upon cattle for a subsidiary occupation consume the milk products. Among the Chamars the production is so low, that even for consumption at home very little is available.

The Table B-5 also gives the number of economic and uneconomic cattle. The uneconomic cattle constitute a low percentage. The fodder for the cattle is procured from the nearby jungle and is available in plenty. The jungle referred to is neither a reserved forest nor a protected one, hence there is no restriction for grazing cattle. In the village itself lie about 50 acres of grass land in which cattle is grazed.

The Gadariyas graze their cattle flocks in the above places, supplement the grazing by plucking *peepal* (*Ficus religiosa*), *babul* (*Acacia arabica*) leaves in dry summer months. Their herd also eats up the stubs in the fields after the crops have been cut. The cultivator reaps the benefit of their droppings. No agreement on this is entered into. These Gadariyas, it may be added, are not the wandering type who move from village to village to graze their flocks. The jungle from where grass is available is about four miles to the east and the villagers go to it in their carts. Usually it costs them Rs. 8 or so to obtain a cart of grass. This is inclusive of the wages of a labourer. It has been observed that they prefer to use *bhoosa* or wheat husk rather than get grass for feeding the cattle. Excepting for Ahirs who feed the milk cattle with oilseeds, the rest only allow them to pasture on waste land or eat *bhoosa*.

Forest

There is little forest near about. It consists of scrub jungle; *khair* (*Acacia catechu*) and other poor quality timber is found. The villagers obtain head loads of fuel from the jungle situated about 3/4 miles in the south-east. The usual practice is that the women go to the jungle and pick the dried wood lying about or they even cut it up taking with them a head load of about 40 Kg. or so. This is sold in the market for about Rs. 0.80 P. to 1.20 P. and brings an estimated income of Rs. 15 to 20 a month. This is done mostly by the Chamar women and one or two Gadariya families. It has been a very popular method of getting some part time work because it does not take the whole day. A couple of hours in the morning or before evening suffices and this supplementary income is extremely handy. Apart from the wood procured from the forest the Nai makes small leaf vessel and plates known as *daunas* and *pattals*.

These trees are known as *chhoula* (*Butea frondosa*) and give a very charming pink flower during the spring days. Beyond this the forest is not exploited for any other purposes. The flowers locally known as *tesu* sparkle very brightly, specially after some spring showers and are prized for *Holi* festival, on which day they are boiled in water to give out good colour.

The Primary Census Abstract shows 3 males, 2 females under 'other services'. Two persons are working in the Datia Sugar Mills and one is a barber who serves the village. They have been returned under other services.

Economic Life

Agriculture has been the main stay of the village economy. Therefore the system of land tenure and reforms connected with it will be important. The village today has the ryotwari system, in which a cultivator holds the land directly from the Government and pays the assessed land revenue to its nominee the patel or the village headman for being credited into the treasury. This system has not been built up in a day. Progress to ryotwari pattern of land tenure involves an arduous journey through the feudalistic pattern and the village has had its share of it.

The first ever settlement in Datia was carried out in *Samvat* 1922 or 1866 A. D., by Major Thomson. In 1913 H. Bomford I.C.S. of the Uttar Pradesh cadre undertook a detailed survey and settlement. Thereafter only revisions have taken place but no settlement was ever recorded. The State then had *jagirdari*, *zamindari* and *thekadari* system whereas *jagirdars* and *zamindars* followed the conventional patterns the *thekadari* or monopolistic was different. The villages were auctioned and the highest bidder was given the *theka* or the right to collect the land revenue.

Land Tenure System

The settlement of 1916 ushered in the ryotwari system in the State. Prior to this it was *thekadari* monopolistic system. The village was auctioned and the highest bidder was given the right to collect the rents. There was some opposition at the time of introducing it but it came mostly from the *baniyas*, who use to buy the rights to collect land revenue. The progressive move met with some opposition and so Bomford in his report wrote:

"The plain facts are that every village was given out on *theka* annually though in a few cases the *theka* was given for term of years. The *theka* was put up to auction: the reserve price was the amount of previous years *jama* plus the evaluation of any *nautor** and minus any new *muafi*† grants that might have been made. A deduction of 3½% on account of village expenses was made and as a general rule, the hereditary *lambardars* were allowed to take the village at the resultant figure. But there was nothing to prevent an outsider making an offer of higher figure".

The *thekedars* thus formed an intermediary, they used to recover the amount in a callous manner and the burden of their harshness was felt by the tenantry. It was in *Samwat* 1870 or 1914 A. D. that the *thekedari* system was abolished.

Today their conditions of land tenure are governed by Madhya Pradesh Land Revenue Code 1959. The agency of collection is the village headman who along with the patwari in practice is responsible for recovering and depositing the amount of land revenue and cesses at the tahsil. The patel gets the following commission for recovery:—

6% for the 1st Rs. 1500.
4% for the next Rs. 1500.
3% for the next Rs. 1500.
2% for the next Rs. 1500.
1% for the rest.

The present pattern of land tenure seems to satisfy the people, at least there is fixity of rent and security of tenure.

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* 'Nautor' means lands newly brought under cultivation : derived from Hindi word 'Nautor'.

† 'Muafi' : meaning land exempted from paying land revenues usually in return for services of personal nature.

Soil

The village contains lands of the following description; *kabar, padua* and *rakad*. The first has been divided into two categories. The assessment is as follows:

(1)	*Kabar I*	Rs. 3/6/- to 3/14/-	per acre
	Kabar II	Rs. 2/10 to 2/14	"
(2)	*Padua I*	Rs. 2/10	"
	Padua II	Rs. 2/6 to 3/10	"
	Padua III	Rs. 1/-	"
(3)	*Rakad I*	Rs. 1/4	"
	Rakad II	Rs. -/12/-	"

The quality of land generally not being of the highest order the land revenue assessed is comparatively low. In 1961-62 for 375.26 acres under cultivation the land revenue assessed was Rs. 957.11 P. only which works out to a little over Rs. 2.54 per acre. In the past few years no improvements have been made in the land.

There has been no growth of industries in the village. Even the district place does not show any industrialisation. In fact the only industry worth the name is situated across the river Sindh at Dabra a tahsil town in Gwalior district. It is about 13 miles away from Richhari. Two persons have sought employment there as unskilled workers. In Dabra there is a sugar mill which employs over a thousand persons in the season.

For small business, people visit the town Datia, about 5 miles away. In the Malaria Eradication Scheme about six persons from the village work for three to four months. Nearness to the town is also responsible for a comparatively negligible immigration.

Although the village merely by its situation has excellent communications being about two miles away from Sonagir and is only 2/3 furlong away from main road, yet because it practically produces nothing except agricultural products, even these factors have not helped its growth. There is littld scope for improvement in communications. The existing ones are sufficient.

Intercensal Growth

The population of Richhari since 1951 shows the following changes.

	Persons	*Males*	*Females*
1951	295	153	142
1961	403	225	178
1951-1961	108	72	36

The decade shows an increase of 36.60% and whereas the growth among the males has been 48% over the 1951 population, the female growth is almost half of it.

The sex-ratio of the village is 791.1 females per thousand males. This is a low figure, the district itself returning 898 females per thousand males. Generally all the districts in this region have an excess of males over the females. The figures for other districts: Morena (839), Bhind (849), Shivpuri (888), Gwalior (859) and Guna (899) repeat the same story. The corresponding figures for Indore, Bhopal and Raipur divisions are 935, 919 and 1,013 respectively. The shortage of females has been very noticeable in these parts of the State.

The villagers themselves are unable to account for the sexual imbalance. In the last decennial the births exhibit the following pattern.

Age-group	*Persons*	*Males*	*Females*
0-4	68	38	30
5-9	71	43	28
0-9	139	81	58

The rate of growth has been uniform but both the age groups exhibit an excess of male births. The tendency of increase in the males persists, perhaps it strengthens the belief that in an endogamous society males are likely to exceed the females.

The Livelihood Pattern

The statement below gives a comparative idea of the changes in the agricultural pattern of the village.

TABLE B—6

M=Male F=Female	1951 M	1951 F	1961 M	1961 F
1	2	3	4	5
Agriculture	130	113	99	60
Agricultural labour	18	23	3	2
Animal husbandry	—	—	11	6
Household Industry	—	—	10	1
Other services	5	6	3	2

Whereas the 1951 figures show a greater number as engaged in agriculture, the figure includes all dependents on agriculture as workers. In 1961 there are 126 total male workers i. e. over 30% of the population are male workers and out of these 99 are agriculturists or 78% are cultivators. There are 76 female workers out of which 60 are agriculturists or 84% are of the cultivating class.

Whereas in 1951, 18 males and 23 females were returned as agricultural labourers, the 1961 figure shows only 3 males and 2 females in the category. This is partly due to the fact that some of these families have been given lands by the Government and yet in another case purchase of land has caused the change. In 1951 again 5 males and 6 females were returned in 'Other Services' but the present figures are 5 persons—3 males and 2 females. No valid reason seems to have come out during the investigations. It may, however, be that the persons were then holding some job of a casual nature. Then household industry was not a separate category, hence there were no returns for this category.

The total number of workers and non-workers is as follows. Figures for adjoining districts are given below for rural areas.

TABLE B—7

M = Males
F = Females

Place	*Total for thousand*			
	Workers		*Non-workers.*	
	M	F	M	F
Richhari	560	399	440	601
Datia	611	405	389	595
Shivpuri	621	445	379	555
Bhind	591	139	409	861
Gwalior	588	284	412	716
Gwalior Division	607	298	393	702
Madhya Pradesh	616	486	384	514

Thus less persons work in Richhari as compared to the neighbouring districts and the State. One of the reasons for this may be found in the male population between age-group 0-9 which is 81 males accounting for a little less than 1/3 of the total male population. These in most cases have been returned as non-workers. More male births during the last decennial have perhaps upset the averages in the village.

The Changes

Richhari has not changed much since 1951, at least in its occupational or livelihood pattern. There has been some change in introducing household industries, but these are mostly insignificant for they consist only of making *daunas* and *pattals* from leaves, and some manufacture of *ghee* or milk products. These are not on any big scale. Thus the old pattern seems to persist.

Primary and Subsidiary Occupations

The following chart gives some details regarding the primary and secondary occupations:

TABLE B—8

SHOWING PRIMARY AND SUBSIDIARY OCCUPATION

Name of Caste	*No. of House-holds*	*Primary Occupation*	*Subsidiary Occupation*
1	2	3	4
Ahir	42	Cultivation (42)	Animal Husbandry Other services (42)
Gadariya	12	Cultivation (6) Animal Husbandary (6)	Animal Husbandry (6)
Chamar	11	Cultivation (11)	Labourers and Selling Timber (Women)
Brahmin	2	Cultivation (2)	
Kachhi	2	Cultivation (2)	
Bhat	1	Cultivation (1)	
Nai	1	Cultivation (1)	Hair Cutting and *Pattal* making

It will be observed that the Ahirs traditionally animal husbandsman, have now taken to agriculture, since the last two generations. Some still sell milk. The Gadariyas, traditionally herdsman, still continue in their old occupation although half of their number has switched on to agriculture. Some Gadariyas were already in possession of land. They have also been able to obtain some land on *batai*. *Batai*, however, is an uncertain factor. Chamars have broken away from their traditional trade of flaying, skinning and tanning preferring agriculture and mason work. The word *chamarpana* which signified their trade has always been associated with contempt. Other caste looked down upon it.

Thus it becomes obvious that agriculture being a more economic occupation villagers have taken to it; a contempt for the previous hierarchy of professional casteism makes them throw overboard, centuries of, if not honoured, but well tolerated and accepted pattern of being born into a profession. Today, irrespective of birth, the vocation could be willed. Atleast this gives the freedom to revolt against a tradition.

Agriculture

Agriculture has been for ages and continues to be the main occupation; out of the total workers in the village 81% are cultivators.

The following is the 10 year crop statement of the village.

TABLE B—9

CROP STATEMENT, VILLAGE RICHHARI, TAHSIL — DISTRICT DATIA

S.No.	Agricultural year	Area under cultivation	Actually cultivated	Description of Crops						Irrigated Area	Total Kharif	Total Rabi	No. of cattle used in Agriculture	Land Revenue	Recoveries
				Area under cultivation excluding double cropped	Double cropped	Jowar	Bajra	Wheat	Gram						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1.	2007 (1950-51)	490.82	350.80	259.74	—	33.34	1.30	100.38	97.52	10.00	45.78	213.96	50	940.61	925.42
2.	2008 (1951-52)	,,	350.80	293.70	—	67.60	0.90	117.52	71.70	10.00	86.12	207.58	50	940.61	928.25
3.	2009 (1952-53)	,,	370.50	275.34	—	59.22	0.74	92.06	107.68	1.76	69.88	205.46	50	954.33	931.62
4.	2010 (1953-54)	,,	370.20	268.62	—	26.90	0.52	68.60	150.00	8.60	34.44	234.18	60	954.33	931.62
5.	2011 (1954-55)	,,	375.26	314.00	—	146.74	3.16	41.66	45.48	17.68	205.26	108.74	60	957.11	950.56
6.	2012 (1955-56)	,,	375.26	316.22	—	32.66	—	120.50	120.08	5.00	66.94	250.28	80	957.11	936.06
7.	2013 (1956-57)	,,	375.26	218.00	—	35.50	—	125.50	74.50	4.50	70.50	210.50	80	957.11	950.52
8.	2014 (1957-58)	,,	375.26	229.30	—	50.50	—	35.40	30.60	5.00	70.80	158.50	80	957.11	955.00
9.	2015 (1958-59)	,,	375.26	232.32	—	56.76	—	38.06	40.72	9.58	72.90	159.42	108	957.11	950.50
10.	2016 (1959-60)	,,	375.26	314.44	—	33.96	—	158.00	90.96	1.68	38.66	275.78	100	957.11	957.16
11.	2017 (1960-61)	,,	375.26	286.38	—	102.67	—	169.26	8.52	—	107.50	178.88	100	957.11	953.22

(Figures were made available by the Patwari of the village).

It will be seen that the main crops grown are wheat and gram. Statement given above indicates that except in the Vikram *Samvat* 2011 corresponding to 1954-55 when more kharif crops were sown the average under rabi crops have always been greater. The column "Irrigated area" only connotes the area for which land revenue is paid for at rates applicable for irrigated area. It does not represent the actual irrigated area.

The Agricultural Cycle

The agricultural season actually commences from *Akshay Tritiya* in the second fortnight of *Vaishakh* on the 18th day, in April-May. The proceedings commence with a nominal start on the auspicious day. On this day the bullocks are well decorated and worshipped. They are yoked to a plough, taken to the field and a token ploughing is done. This is only for the sake of utilising the auspicious occasion for a formal start. They also leave in the field a handful of seeds to mark the occasion.

The villagers then return to their homes where the bullocks are well fed and festive food has been arranged. The day marks the commencement of agricultural operations. They now manure the fields, using mostly the compost manure and *bukhur* it with the wooden *bukhur*. By doing so all the stubs and undesirable growth is removed and the fields are levelled. This process also helps to prepare fields for the winter crops for which the fields are allowed to lie fallow during the rains after they have been *bukhured*. (Please see plate XXI).

After the *bukhuring* is over the arrival of monsoons is eagerly awaited. The rains come by early July.

When the ground has been fairly soaked and the soil sufficiently wet, it is time for the sowing operations to commence. During these months June-July, kharif crops *viz., juar, arhar, moong, ambadi, urad* are sown. For sowing a good day is usually selected. The good days are Manday and Friday and bad ones are Tuesday and Saturday. Before sowing some food preparation saved up from the *Akshaya Tritiya* day is taken to the fields and *gur* or jaggery is given to the bullocks.

The seeds of the crops are then sown by the broadcast method. Usually mixed sowing is resorted to. *Arhar* and *juar* are sown together. After broadcast of these seeds if there is no rain or the soil is not very wet then *bukhuring* is done. This circulates the seeds and puts them under the soil for a proper germination. In case the soil is wet then ploughing has to be done to achieve a similar effect.

The seeds germinate after about 4/5 days and by a fortnight are about 6" to 8" high, then the plough is run through the nearby channel area. This has a double effect, it removes the weeds and gives sufficient soil to the crop to grow up. This is known as *kurab*. This opportunity is also used for preparing the fields for the winter by ploughing them. Then after a month or so a second *kurab* becomes necessary. By this time the month of September begins to draw near.

The *juar* crop now begins to get its "ears" or cobs. In the meanwhile preparation for fields for rabi crops goes on. By the month of October the *juar* crop has become ready and with the late October sun it begins to ripen. October also signals the festivity season. *Dushera* and *Diwali* closely follow each other and usually by the end of October or early November it becomes time to sow the wheat and gram crops. Wheat is sown before the land dries up completely. If there are rains in October-November the sowing will be delayed. When the soil still retains some moisture and there is no possibility of heavy rains, wheat is sown. Wheat is sown by means of a plough only one row is sown at a time. This usually occupies the cultivator upto November end by which time *juar* has become ripe. This is also the time for him to collect grass and fodder and he does it from the adjoining villages or forest. This is done by about the middle of December and the harvesting of *juar* crop begins and is locally known as *katai*.

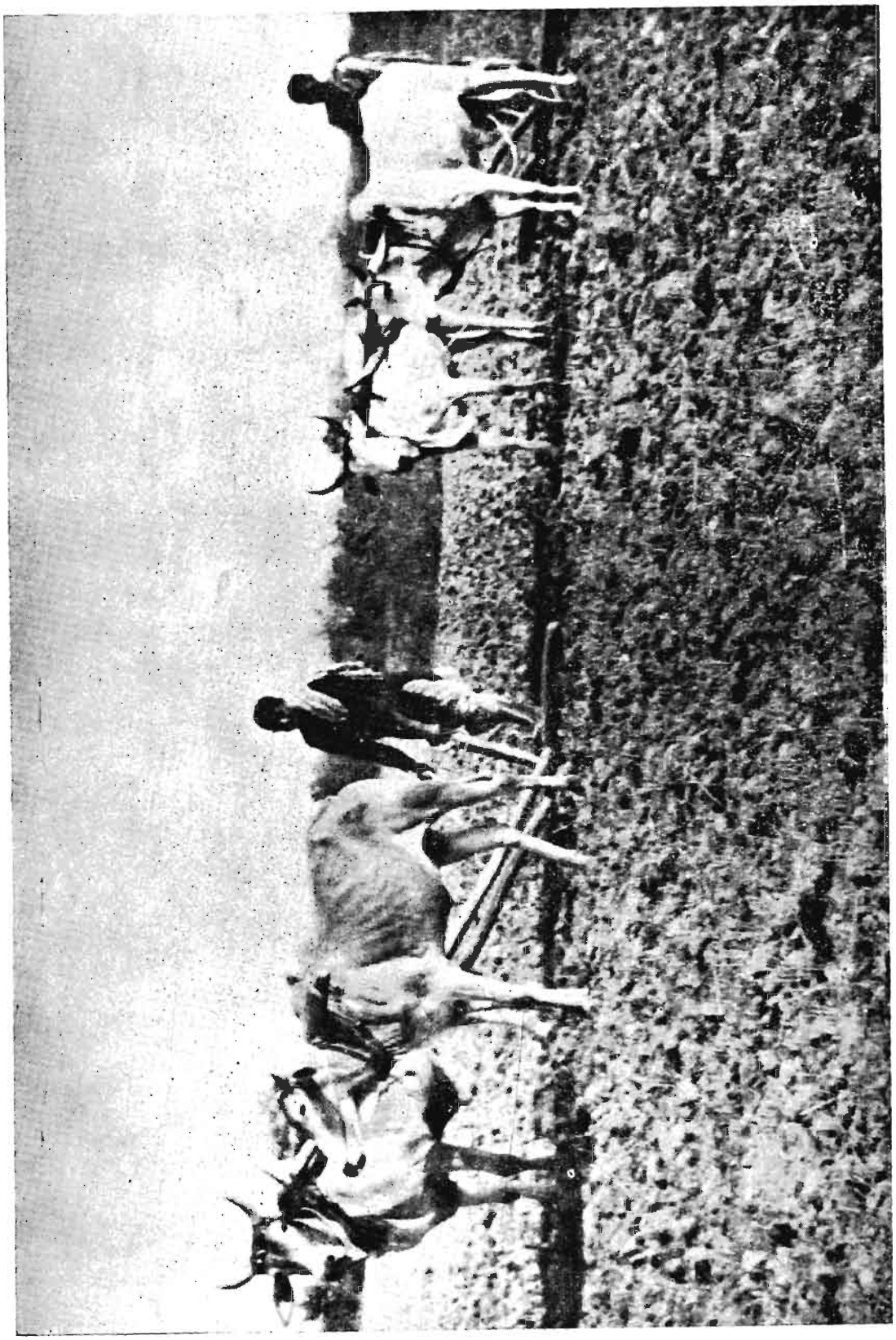
When the *juar* crop is ready cutting commences. A sickle is used and the whole plant leaving about 8" to 10" in the ground is cut away. The stalk is removed and stocked in the open near the field. This area is cleared up earlier and is known as *khaliyan*. Usually the members of the family cut the corn but in some cases it may be necessary to engage labourers. Labourers are engaged from Datia and at the end of the day's work they are paid the corn contents of three *poolas* or small bundles in which the corn is usually gathered. The total produce they take home is about 2½ to 3 seers of corn. They appear fairly happy, irrespective of the prices that may prevail in the market. In the *khaliyan* the corn is stocked. It is then spread over clean bit of ground and trampled upon by the bullocks. This results in the corn being sifted from its husk. This done, the remaining impurities are removed by winnowing with a *soopa* or wonnowing basket. The impurities fly away with the wind and the corn falls below. The corn is now ready for being marketed. After keeping enough for home consumption the rest is marketed in Datia. This process has taken the cultivator well into the month of January.

In the meanwhile wheat has been growing steadily and would be ready in a month's time. From the middle of the month of March or earlier harvesting of wheat begins. Usually labourers have to be engaged for this. Labourers are hired from Datia and at the end of the day's work get two stacks of the reaped wheat. This contains about 3 seers of wheat. Those who tie up the wheat stack in bundles receive three stacks containing 4½ seers. In addition to this all the *bhoosa* is theirs. *Bhoosa* is wheat husk and is coveted because of its commercial value as animal fodder. This mode of payment works out to cover a rupee per day plus the sale price of *bhoosa*. The wheat so gathered is taken to the *khaliyan* and later the processes as for *juar* are gone through till wheat is fairly ready for the market. This takes the cultivator upto April-May completing the agricultural cycle.

Seeds

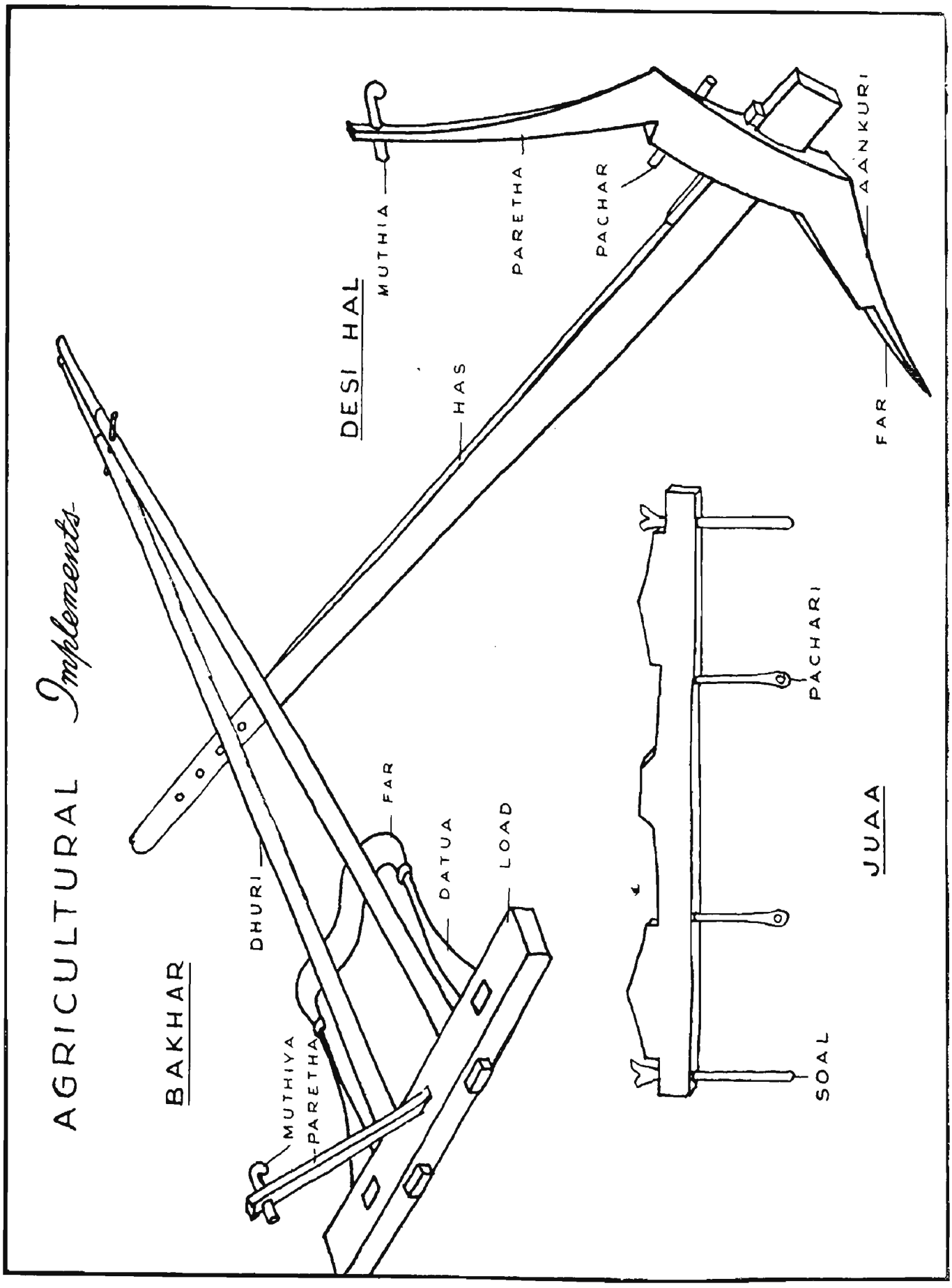
Most of the cultivators preserve the seed for the next crop. Where this is not possible seed is procured against cash payment from Datia. There is no improved variety of seed in the village. They have not obtained it from the Block either. This though appearing strange happens to be true. In some cases they naturally help each other in supplying the seed requirements. The chart below gives the seed required for sowing.

PLATE XXI



Preparing the fields — *bukhuring*

PLATE XXII



Local plough — Desi Hal, Bukhur and Juaa

PLATE XXIII

Smaller Agricultural Implements

TABLE B—10

REQUIREMENT OF SEEDS

S. No	Name of crop	Quantity of seed required per bigha
1	2	3
1	Juar	2 seers with Arhar
2	Wheat	24 seers
3	Gram	12 seers
4	Castor	8 to 10 seers

One Bigha equals '40 acres
40 Bighas equals 16 acres.

There has never been any scarcity regarding seeds. It never happened that some area was left unsown because of the scarcity of seeds.

The average produce in the village is as follows:—

TABLE B—11

SHOWING YIELD OF CROPS

S. No.	Crop	Yield in maunds per acre
1	2	3
1	Juar	8
2	Wheat	8 to 10
3	Gram	6 to 8

There are no cash crops. The statement below gives the total production: one third of the crops are retained for personal use.

TABLE B—12

SHOWING INCOME AND CONSUMPTION OF PRODUCE

Name of Caste	Area (Acres)	Income from sale of corps Rs.	Amount of produce (all crops) retained for consumption.	
			Mds.	Rs.
1	2	3	4	5
Ahir	393.04	4,145	1320	16,191
Gadaria	32.00	550	111	1,418
Chamar	55.20	345	170	2,234
Brahmin	28.80	856	92	928
Kachhi	13.00	300	74	851
Bhat	6.00	—	28	320
Nai	6.20	150	30	450
TOTAL	534.24	6,346	1825	22,392

Irrigation is by means of wells. In the past few years the figures have been declining. For irrigating the area of the village a canal from Ramsagar tank about 4 miles away shown on the location Plate III (map) has been constructed but there is some snag in releasing the water, because of an alternate scheme for supplying drinking water from Ramsagar, to Datia city. This would leave little water for irrigation. The village wells only need minor repairs and could irrigate some area. The villagers did not seem anxious to avail of the water to be supplied by the canal and have not cared to irrigate the land this year. The tools used are mostly olden ones *viz.*, the plough, *bukhur*, *patella*, the bullock cart, chaff cutter, *kulhadi*, *phavda*, sickle and *khurpee* and bullocks. Most of these implements are old ones. (Please see plates XXII, XXIII)

Plough

A plough is the chief agricultural implement, the one used by the villagers, is a wooden one and ploughs only 4″ to 6″ deep.

Bukhur

The *bukhur* is next in importance to plough, it is used for eradicating roots and levelling the land. It also turns the soil thereby facilitating its exposure to sun.

Patella

The *patella* is used for levelling the ground after *bukhuring* or ploughing.

The Bullock Cart

The bullock cart is the main means of transport both of men and material.

The Chaff Cutter

This is a modern implement — the only modern one in a gallery of older ones used for cutting fodder. there are two chaff cutters in the village.

Kulhadi
Phavda
Khurpee
Sickle

These are the conventional tools for carrying out various agricultural operations. These are required in various operations connected with cleaning, cutting and levelling the land for crops.

Technique

In the past ten years or so there have been no marked improvement in the technique of agricultural production. The village has only recently been included in a Development Block and as such has not received much attention from the Development authorities. There is a dim awarness of the usefulness of fertilisers but no fertilisers have been made use of in the past two or three years. Manuring is therefore only from the compost pits and they are 52 in number for the whole village. Even iron ploughs have not been introduced. The villagers have professed ignorance about the usefulness or otherwise of these methods. Obviously it is plain that much needs to be done in this direction.

Man Power

The man power for agricultural operations usually comes from the families who own and till the lands. There are only one Brahmin and five Ahir families who, besides utilising the labour of the members of their own household, employ labourers. The village has 3 males and two females agricultural labourers. Besides these some Chamar families who own insuffient land also take up jobs as casual labourers during the sowing season, when the seasonal demand goes up. Labourers who work on a permanent basis are usually paid Rs. 25 a month without food. A contract is entered into for about 6/8 months and labourer is engaged accordingly. In some cases the stipulated amount is Rs. 20/- with a meal to be served in the field during the operational period. The contract money is subject to adjustments on either side. For example a pair of shoes or a set of clothes may be given by the employer against a small deduction in his pay. Where such benefits are also allowed, the payment in cash is about Rs. 15/20 per month. The labourer freely draws advances against income not yet earned but likely to be earned. These mutual adjustments and welfare facilities are a very essential part of the employer-employee relationship; it ensures personal loyalty and goes a long way in getting the work done.

The agricultural labourer classes are heavily steeped in debt and are nearly always living against future advances. The labourer starts by borrowing, say Rs. 100/- for his immediate expenses for there is food to be bought, clothes to be mended, the house to be repaired and all before the rains. Having received an advance, which is his 5 month's salary, he runs short of it after about 2/3 months. Again he obtains a small advance and thus follows a series of advances on which he continues to subsist. At the end of the season he is still in debt to the tune of say Rs. 100/- or less. Naturally now since there is no other way of paying it back he enters into a less advantageous contract for the next season; or if he broken off with his present employer, then he finds employment elsewhere; borrows an advance from new employer to pay off the previous one borrowing from Peter to pay Paul. Thus the vicious cycle having once commenced goes on and does not end. In very rare cases an agricultural labourer may even run away. If he goes far away he may be safe but if discovered, the former employer will have him beaten up. Since the labourers are essentially shy, non-adventurous, they suffer patiently rather than escape or run away.

For most of the season many agricultural labourers are not required by the cultivators. It is only at the time of reaping and sowing that some casual labourers are required. In some cases, thanks to good mutual co-operation, the cultivators help each other in reaping the crops. This is usually on a reciprocal basis and no wages of any type are charged. The casual labourers are paid at the rate of two *poolas* (approximately 3 seers) of wheat or *juar* for a day's labour. The day's programme is a heavy one. The reaping starts at 0700 hours and goes upto 1200 — restarting at 1330 to end at about 1800, by which time it becomes dark. The permanent labourers are not paid any grain. The wives of these persons may work for wages in kind and get paid for it, like others. The harvesting time in a village is an important period from the economic activity point of view. All such persons who do not own lands join in this and earn a few day's or months' valuable food. An individual is able to earn as much as two to three maunds of grain during the season. If the price of the wheat is higher, as it usually is, then some families would interchange their wheat earnings for a greater quality of *juar*. After all the basic necessity appears to be that of having food for as many days as possible. The question of taste hardly matters. Harvesting season is thus an opportunity for men and women to work and collect some useful money. an opportunity often well made use of.

The casual labourers for harvesting come mostly from Datia. They do not have to be called for, but each year they know the probable timings and appear at the right time. The earnings during harvesting time have a peculiar significance; casual labourers throng to the fields: none who can work need be afraid of hunger. It is literally a case of earning one's food. Wheat in the market costs more, here it is made easily and cheaply available. Twenty days earnings would

bring 60 to 80 seers of wheat and *bhoosa* worth approximately Rs. 3/-. Sixty seers of wheat is worth about Rs. 22/24 depending upon the prices. Thus food worth Rs. 25 or 27 is earned during the period. This is about the minimum that is earned and by clever thieving more, is easily carried home. There have been instances where people have left their normal occupations for a while to do harvesting. Pilfering and cheating is quite common, and thus harvesting time has its own attraction.

Expenditure

Apart from the labour that a cultivator may have to expend in looking after his crops and performing other agricultural operations like fertilisers, providing for seeds, bullocks etc., the expenditure over cultivation works out as below in Table B-13 (showing expenditure on cultivation).

The likely sale price would be as follows in case of the produce of one acre.

	Produce	*Selling price per maund*
Wheat	10 maunds	Rs. 13 : Rs. 130
Juar	8 maunds	Rs. 9 : Rs. 72

Wheat is usually a more profitable crop to sow and reap: often the price of wheat is high and so this brings in more income. Generally sowing of wheat is preferred, although economic considerations are not the only ones, the climate and soil being the more important ones. *Juar* will also bring in a little more money than Rs. 72 for *arhar* pulse is sown with it and the same is retained for home consumption.

Finances

For finances the villagers have to depend upon indigenous bankers, there being no other organised agency affording credit facilities. There is one Brahmin moneylender who lends money at the annual interest of 24% The rate of interest is almost exhorbitant. He is not a licence holder but manages to recover by persuasion. He has not indulged in any act of violence for recovering his loan. There are some cases where his loan has not been re-paid. He advances loans by writing down the deal on a plain paper and obtains signature of the parties. Besides him there is another moneylender from Datia who advances loans on 24% interest. He too is not a registered money-lender. He is dealer in grains and the villagers go to him to sell their produce. He thus loans the amount against the expected sale of grains to him. The cultivators feel morally bound to sell their produce to him and so he thrives. The cultivators generally prefer to go to him because he alone proves useful when their need arises. The cultivators obtain cash from him and return it in kind. He pays them for the sale of grain at prevalent market rates. His creditors do not seem to complain about him. It is only under rare circumstances that they obtain grain advance from him, for which he charges 25% interest per year.

Produce and its Disposal

After retaining some produce varying from one fourth to one third for the home consumption and seeds, the rest is sold off in Datia market. Table B-12 gives the details of the produce withheld for domestic consumption and that which is sold.

Datia is the nearest market centre for the village and so they take their produce there to dispose it of. There is a well constructed *mandi** under the Agriculture Department. All carts reaching the place report there. In the *mandi*, the traders congregate and an *arhatiya*† or an agent acting as a middleman arranges to dispose of the produce. He is paid commissions at varying rates upto .03 P. per rupee. The following service charges have to be borne by cultivator (1) for weighing at the rate of .06 P. per manud and for (2) *arhatiya* Rs. .03 P. per rupees of the value of the sale. Thus if the cultivator struck a bargain at the rate of Rs. 15 per maund then 0.45 P. go to the *arhatiya* and 0.6 per maund to the weighmen. The cultivator thus gets only Rs. 14.49. The payment in the *mandi* is fairly prompt. There were some whispers about the weighing not being very satisfactory.

The *arhatiya* is of Jain caste and a regular commission agent. The villagers have mostly friendly relations with him and *arhatiya* would also advance loans to the cultivator in the hope of securing goodwill and business later on. He charges 24% interest. Sometimes *arhatiya* would help them in obtaining goods on credit by standing as a surety for a villager. This is specially so when purchases for marriage have to be made. The cultivator may spend the night at *arhatiya's* shop if the deal is not completed or when it becomes too late to return to the village. *Arhatiya* thus becomes a cultivator's trade-agent-cum-financier-cum-surety-cum-host in a word—friend. He has no influences with official or at least he is not used in that capacity.

* '*Mandi*' from Hindi word meaning a big market.

† '*Arhatiya*' from Hindi word "Arhat" meaning an agent.

TABLE B—13

SHOWING EXPENDITURE ON CULTIVATION

Grain	*Cost of ploughing*	*Cost of seeds*	*Harvesting expenses*	*Total cost*	*REMARKS*
J O W A R	Rs. 3.25 'B' A	Rs. 1.50 'C'	Rs. 7.20 'D'	Rs. 11.95 or Rs. 12.00 + 3 'G' Total Rs. 15.00	A : Calculations made for one acre; they do not include cultivator's own labour. B : Two acres of land are ploughed by one pair of bullocks and man in one day. Cost Rs. 5/- (bullocks) 1.50 (labour) = Rs. 6.50 reduced by half for an acre. C : 5 seers per acre cost — Rs. 1.50 @ Rs. 12/- per maund. D : 8 persons cut the crops of one acre in one day. Paid at 3 seers per person or 24 seers per day or Rs. 7.20 per day.
W H E A T	Rs. 3.25 'B' A	Rs. 20.00 'E'	Rs. 12.00 'F'	Rs. 35.25 + 6 'G' Total Rs. 41.25	E : 60 seers or 1½ maund as seeds are required—cost Rs. 20/-. F : 10/12 persons cut one acre in a day and are paid 3 seers per head or 30 to 36 seers per day or Rs. 10 to 12 per day. G : Cost of fertilizers used each year.

Animal Husbandry

Only two castes — Ahirs and Gadariyas earn part of their livelihood by animal husbandry. Beyond selling milk Ahirs do not undertake any other economic activity. Milk is kept by them in their houses and collected by milk dealers from Datia and Jhansi. Payments are made monthly and no advance is given.

The milch cattle, cows and buffaloes are mostly of the local breed. They are fed on grass, *bhoosa* or wheat husk. oil-cake and other enriching foods are not given. The condition of the cattle is not particularly good. Their daily yield for cow, is about one and half seer of milk and for buffalo 3 to 4 seers on an average. The highest yield is 5 seers for a buffalo. The milking is done twice a day. They have no means of preserving milk for any length of time.

The Gadariyas rely more on sheep and goats. They sell the goat milk and the goats for slaughter. Sheep are also sold for slaughter and their wool is removed. There was a time when these Gadariyas use to weave blankets but now they are only content to sell them off and obtain ready money. The wool is sold off to a Muslim contractor at Datia. The selling rate of wool is Rs. 5/- per seer for white wool and Rs. 3/- for black. Soft wool cut from lambs fetches Rs. 8 to 10 per seer. Each year a sheep is sheared thrice for wool usually in March, July and November or the following months.

The following procedure is adopted by them the sheep is bathed in water and rubbed with soap, if available. After removing the dirt it is allowed to dry and then two or three persons lay it on the ground. With the help of big shears the hair are cut. They believe that after a sheep has been washed the hair should be cut. The opportunity should not be wasted otherwise some mischief may occur. The Gadariyas have owned these sheep for a long time. They have not made any fresh purchases. but breed them. They do not borrow funds to enhance their tradings. There is no organisation for trade They mostly work on their own, each works for himself. No facilities have been afforded to them. They are shy and so far no efforts by any official agency has been made to help them, (Please see plate XXIV).

Fishing

None in the village does any fishing.

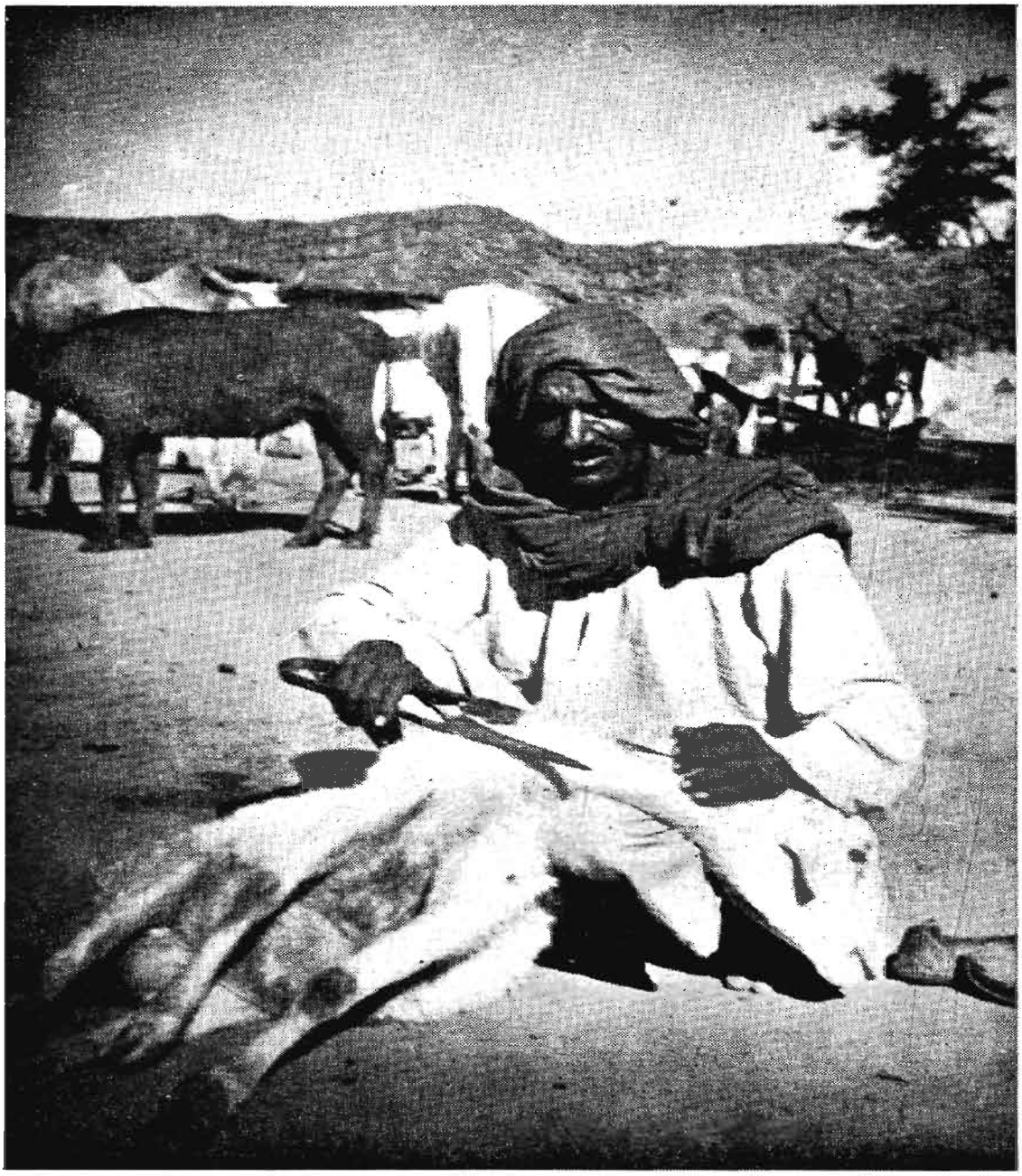
Village Industries

The Primary Census Abstract figures under the household industry read as follows:—

Persons	*Male*	*Female*
11	10	1

This, however, on a spot enquiry, is not borne out. In the village our enquiry revealed that there are only two persons engaged in the household industry. They

PLATE XXIV



Shearing of lambs for wool

are mostly making *daunas* (leaf cups) and *pattals* (leaf plates). One man has been doing this job for supplying these articles to the villagers only. These are supplied mostly at the time of a *katha*, wedding or other feast and for other jobs coupled with supplying these he gets a lump sum amount upto Rs. 5 or 10 in a case of marriages.

There are none other engaged in household industries. A scrutiny of the individual slips showed that 9 more males have been returned as engaged in household industries. They have been shown as a "Engaged in Animal Husbandry, Dairy Farming, Production of *ghee*". In the village, however, these persons are not engaged in production of *ghee* or milk products, hence they cannot be deemed to be engaged in household industry in the commonly accepted sense. Apart from these there is no other industry. The Nai who makes these *pattals* and *daunas* has many other tasks to do. So, this is by no means his sole occupation. He obtains his raw material from the jungle nearby and the *chhaula* (*Butea frondosa*) leaves are available in plenty.

Commerce

Grain, milk, wool, sheep and goats are sold from the village. Apart from this there is no other trade. Grain is sold in the *mandi* at Datia, milk is collected from the respective houses. For slaughter, sheep and goats are sold to the butchers in Datia, wool is sold away to a contractor also in Datia. Excepting in the case of grains where marketing facilities are more organised at *mandi* the other commodities are all sold purely by individual enterprise.

From the past the general change noticed is that for all commodities there is almost a ready market. Prices are being paid more promptly. Exploitation by middlemen has been somewhat reduced. The village from one point of view is rather unfortunately placed. To the north its contacts are limited by physical features; *viz.*, the river Sindh which is not bridged. The river is about 12 miles to the north and cuts Datia off completely from Dabra or Gwalior. A fair weather pontoon bridge is erected some time in December each year and is dismantled by 15 June. Hence there are no economic contacts with Gwalior mainly because of the river and also there is no past link with Gwalior both being in different political units. Later on Datia went over to Vindhya Pradesh and Gwalior came into the State of Madhya Bharat. Thus contact with Gwalior never grew.

In the South lies the city of Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh. Here too contact was not possible because of restrictions during the State times and later on the two places being in different States could not come near each other, despite their geographical proximity Thus Richhari remained politically in backward area, whose only approach on this side of horizon was confined to Datia. In the light of these facts, it is easier to follow why it did not grow in small trade — for only more lately milk has been sent to Jhansi.

Storage of Grains

Grain is collected on the fields in the *khaliyans* and transported to the houses in bullock carts. At home they are kept in big earthen *kothis*, made by the women of the households. The women make these *kothis* in summer months which is a period of comparative leisure. There are square shaped containers usually 27″x 27″ and rise upto a height of 4 to 6 feet. This can stock about 10-12 maunds of wheat. It is made of yellowish mud to which cowdung and wheat husk has been added, this prevents moisture from destroying the wheat. The grain is put inside these and *neem* leaves (*Melia indica*) are added to prevent the grain from rotting inside thus the whole thing is sealed by means of an earthen lid. The storing method is purely regional. Milk is stored in earthen pots. The vendor comes and collects it in his barrel shaped drums. No preservatives are added. The milk that is kept is in its natural form.

The other product which needs to be stored before sale is wool. Wool is kept in an empty container or is just wrapped in a piece of cloth and tied up, usually the quantity of wool is so little that storage is never a problem. It is rarely kept stored for any length of time.

Other Occupations

There are five persons, three males and two females engaged in other services. The details regarding the males have already been given earlier. The women are general labourers who find various jobs according to the seasonal demand. The labourer even now continues to be paid in kind. He gets 5 seers of grain each year from each households his regular payment. On festive occasions he gets what may be termed as honoraria or some more money depending on the nature of the work.

Two other workers who go to the Dabra Sugar Mills are not trained technical hands. They are only labourers. The work in Sugar Mills is purely seasonal lasting from November to April each year. Lately one

person has succeeded in getting the job of ward boy in the Datia Hospital. These labourers in Dabra get as much as Rs. 60 each.

Indebtedness

Out of 71 families in the village 53 are in debt. The following table B-14 gives the caste-wise details of the indebtedness.

TABLE B—14

SHOWING INDEBTEDNESS

S. No	Caste	Total No. of families	No. of indebted families	Amount in Rupees
1	2	3	4	5
1	Ahir	42	27	21,609
2	Gadariya	12	10	3,500
3	Chamar	11	11	3,958
4	Brahmin	2	1	2,000
5	Kachhi	2	2	1,800
6	Bhat	1	1	700
7	Nai	1	1	400
	TOTAL	71	53	33,967

The average debt for an Ahir family comes to Rs. 800.30. This is due to meeting social obligations. The whole amount excepting Rs. 1,515, borrowed from Block, has been obtained from the money-lender. The amount borrowed from Block was for bullocks; although bullocks have been purchased, yet a substantial portion of the amount has been diverted to other uses. Loans borrowed for social obligations cover expenditures on marriages including *gauna* and feasts for dead relatives.

The debt average in a Gadariya family is Rs. 350. The whole amount has been obtained from money-lenders and was necessary for social obligations.

The entire Chamar community is in debt. They average Rs. 359 per family. The amount was borrowed from money-lender for social obligations. The amount goes back to 2/3 years ago. The Brahmin with a debt of Rs. 2000 stands at the peak. He obtained the loan to perform the marriage of his daughter about 2/3 years ago. The loan grows in size. The Nais, Bhats and Kachhies average Rs. 400, 700, 900 respectively. All the borrowing was effected from the money lenders for social obligations. Their average indebtedness is Rs. 641/- as against Rs. 478 for the entire village.

Where money is borrowed from the money-lender the repayment of debt becomes extremely difficult if not exactly impossible. The money-lenders are unscruplous and take the fullest possible advantage of the ignorance and dire need of the villagers. Mostly the loans obtained are unproductive e. g., loans taken for social obligations and marriages. The money-lender on top of it charges 24% interest and this augments indebtedness rapidly. If a loan of Rs. 100 is not paid for three years the interest alone comes to Rs. 72. By falsifying accounts the money-lenders take full advantage of the ignorance of the people and are very ruthless. Thus the maxim "once in debt, always in debt" holds good literally.

In the past few months one change, a hopeful indication observed was that one cultivator borrowed Rs. 500 from the Block to purchase bullocks. He has purchased a pair of bullocks using the full amount. This happened after the schedules had been filled in but during the period of investigation. The hopeful feature is that the aversion for borrowing from Government is gradually dying out. The villagers feel that loans from Government involve hardship in making applications and obtaining the same, for more often than not, the loan is never made available when required. In the case of the money-lender these are all obviated. The return of the amount to the Government is a matter of great trouble to them. The *sahukar* is lenient although he sucks them dry. Between these obvious and wearisome delays and the 'sugar-coat-tongued' but otherwise sour tactics of the money-lender, the rural indebtedness continues to be a disturbing feature.

Income and Expenditure

The village could be divided into the following income groups.

TABLE B—15

SHOWING CASTEWISE INCOME OF THE VILLAGE

(Monthly Average)

Name of Caste	No. of Household	Income	Remarks Average
Ahir	42	3,454/-	82.24
Gadariya	12	644/-	53.66
Chamar	11	539/-	49.00
Brahmin	2	183/-	91.50
Kachhi	2	137/-	68.50
Bhat	1	43/-	43.00
Nai	1	60/-	60.00
TOTAL	71	5,060/-	71.20

No family has an income of Rs. 200 or above. The Ahirs are the most well-to-do ones with about 12 families coming within the income range of Rs. 100 to 199. In the village they are the richest. It is rather significant that no family in any other community has an income between Rs. 101 to 199. The next category is of the poorer type and even here Ahirs have 22 families, the Gadariyas who are numerically the second biggest community come next in this group. The fact that 7 Chamars have qualified to be in this group indicates the progress made by them in the recent years. Ten years ago they would not have found a place in such a category. Two Brahmin and one Kachhi and Nai also come in this category. Nai who is a servant of the community earns a better livelihood than some of the cultivator or agricultural labourer class. Among the poorest we have eight Ahirs, four Gadariyas, four Chamars and one each among Kachhi and Bhat. For the Bhat, it is a fall from Brahmins category both socially and now financially. The average income for the village is Rs. 71.26 for each family. Poverty is thus very secular — no respector of any community.

The following chart below gives the monthly income per family from various of occupations.

TABLE B—16

SHOWING CASTEWISE TOTAL INCOME OF THE VILLAGE

(MONTHLY AVERAGE)

Name of Caste	*No. of Household*	*Income (Monthly Average)*	*Source of Income*							*Average income per family*	*Remarks*
			Agriculture	*Animal husbandary*	*Crafts*	*Other services*	*Forest products*	*Labour*	*Other sources*		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7					
Ahir	42	3,454/-	2,089/-	553/-	—	395/-	54/-	172/-	191/-	82.24	
Gadariya	12	644/-	145/-	266/-	—	70/-	8/-	155/-	—	54.00	
Chamar	11	539/-	286/-	2/-	—	50/-	65/-	126/-	10/-	49.00	
Brahmin	2	183/-	156/-	—	—	—	4/-	—	23/-	91.50	
Kachhi	2	137/-	87/-	10/-	—	—	—	30/-	10/-	68.50	
Bhat	1	43/-	15/-	—	—	15/-	—	5/-	8/-	43.00	
Nai	1	60/-	—	—	25/-	35/-	—	—	—	60.00	
TOTAL	71	5,060/-	2,778/-	831/-	25/-	565/-	131/-	488/-	242/-	71.26	

It will be observed that agriculture is the main occupation followed by animal husbandry, other services, agricultural labour, others and forest produce in that order. The chart also indicates the occupations pursued by the community. Barring the Bhat and the Nai, agriculture remains the best source of income to all the communities.

Expenditure

The following chart gives the current expenditure over food, clothing, and other necessaries.

TABLE B—17

SHOWING CASTEWISE EXPENDITURE OF THE VILLAGE

(Monthly Average)

Caste	*No of household*	*Food*	*Clothing*	*Religion and social obligations*	*House constructions and repairing*	*Luxuries and intoxicants*	*Recreation & others*	*Total*
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Ahir	42	2,548	324	85	64	110	308	3439
Gadariya	12	459	82	34	12	25	61	673
Chamar	11	479	54	10	8	21	20	592
Brahmin	2	154	18	4	3	4	1	184
Kachhi	2	119	13	—	2	4	14	152
Bhat	1	37	5	—	—	2	2	46
Nai	1	41	4	—	1	2	1	49
TOTAL	71	3,837	500	133	90	168	407	5,135

It will be observed that almost 75% expenditure is incurred over food. Clothing comes next. Among the Ahirs Rs. 305 per month are spent in education and recreations. This gives them the highest incidence per family and this bears out the general rule, the more well-to-do is a group the greater is the amount spent over recreational and other facilities. The expenditure table gives the average of Rs. 72.28 per family for the whole village. This is only 1.06 rupee over the income. The natural corrolary is that income and expenditure are well balanced: this however is not the case. Although given normal months this may be so but very little is left behind for conducting a major ceremony like marriage or other ceremonies, i. e., death. One such occurrence completely throws over board all their economy and except falling back into the hands of the money-lender, there appears no alternative. The economy thus is very precarious and leaves no room for any adjustment. Existence is therefore beggarly, and the village lives from hand to mouth. The only luxury is smoking *biri*, chewing of tobacco with *pan* and occasional visit to the movies at Datia. Such persons are very few and it is only in the younger generation that a tendency for going to cinemas is noticeable.

All the communities spend about 75% to 80% of their income on food and clothing. For luxuries there is very little left. The expenditure statement suggests that in a rural economy, almost three fourth's of the income is spent over food.

CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE

Statistics relating to Age : Sex Distributions

The total population of Richhari is 403 persons. The figures for 1951—1961 are given below:

TABLE C—I

Year	*Persons*	*Males*	*Females*
1	2	3	4
1951	295	153	142
1961	403	225	178

The period between 1951 and 1961 shows an increase of 108 persons or 10.8 persons annually. The percentage increase in the decade for the village is 36.60 and 26 and 24.17 for the district and State respectively. Whereas the number of males born is in excess of the female children, there is no satisfactory reason to account for it.

The region has returned an excess of males over females. The figures for district Datia are 898 females for every 1000 males and for its surrounding districts Gwalior, Shivpuri, Bhind, Morena are 859, 888, 849, 839 respectively. The whole region comprising of Morena, Bhind, Gwalior, Datia and Shivpuri exhibits an excess of males over females. To trace the reasons for this imbalance we may examine the historical background.

In places where there was incessant warfare among petty chieftains, the fear of women falling into the enemy's hand steadily caused a decline in the numbers of the females. Among other things defeat brought dishonour for women and in the Rajputs particularly mass suicide by women at the impending defeat in a battle was a common practice, known as *jauhar* the ladies of the nobility burnt themselves.

This region in sixteenth and seventeenth century was in a disturbed state and wars and rebellions were very common. It is likely that this cause contributed its share in reducing the female population. The birth of a male child is generally preferred to that of a female one. There is no record of infanticide practised against the female children, but the practice of neglect of female children is fairly widespread. In due course of time this continued neglect reflects itself in the decline of female population.

The growth of males in the last 10 years however remains hard to account for. The following chart gives the details of males and females according to their respective ages.

TABLE C—2

TABLE SHOWING AGE-WISE BREAK-UP

Age	*Male*	*Female*	*Age*	*Male*	*Female*	*Age*	*Male*	*Female*	*Age*	*Male*	*Female*	*Age*	*Male*	*Female*
0	15	19												
1	1	—	22	3	1	43	—	—	64	—	—	85	—	—
2	6	3	23	1	—	44	—	—	65	4	3	86	—	—
3	11	6	24	3	—	45	6	4	66	—	—	87	—	—
4	5	2	25	9	—	46	—	—	67	—	—	88	—	—
5	13	8	26	3	2	47	—	1	68	—	—	89	—	—
6	13	4	27	—	1	48	1	—	69	—	—	90	—	—
7	4	5	28	5	6	49	—	—	70	—	3	91	—	—
8	7	3	29	1	3	50	7	6	71	—	—	92	—	—
9	6	8	30	8	5	51	—	1	72	—	—	93	—	—
10	6	1	31	—	—	52	—	1	73	—	—	94	—	—
11	3	4	32	2	2	53	—	—	74	—	—	95	—	—
12	6	3	33	5	—	54	—	—	75	3	—	96	—	—
13	6	2	34	1	—	55	3	3	76	—	—	97	—	—
14	3	3	35	12	8	56	—	—	77	—	—	98	—	—
15	6	3	36	—	—	57	—	—	78	—	—	99	—	—
16	3	2	37	—	—	58	1	3	79	—	—	100	—	—
17	2	1	38	1	2	59	—	—	80	1	—			
18	4	4	39	2	—	60	5	7	81	—	—			
19	5	3	40	9	5	61	—	—	82	—	—			
20	3	11	41	—	—	62	1	—	83	—	—			
21	—	3	42	—	2	63	—	—	84	—	—			
TOTAL	128	88	—	65	58	—	24	26	—	8	6	—	225	178

The imbalance is glaring in age groups 0-4, 5-9, 10-14 and 15-19. Excepting for the age-group 25-29 which shows an excess of females, practically, at all ages men have outnumbered women. The villagers themselves are unable to account for it although they clearly welcome the addition of male children.

There are 176 persons between the ages ranging from 0-14. This completely covers the generation born after 1951 Census, besides also covering births upto 1947. In this it would be noted that there are 105 males and only 71 females which gives females even lower figures per thousand, well below the average for the district. It is rather difficult to account for it because there does not appear any plausible explanation. The population among the other age-groups is more or less balanced. There being 120 males for 107 females. This is in accordance with the district figures, given earlier. Perhaps during a certain period there are more male births than females and later on these are made up by the reversal of the process. In the age-group 20-29 women outnumber men by 28 to 38. In the other age-group the position is more or less even. The district however shows the characteristic features of the region

MARITAL STATUS

Males

No person between the age of 0-9 was married. Generally the marriages are not performed before the boy attains the age of 15/16. Three persons however were married before crossing the age of 14. Between the ages of 30 to 70 and above, 8 persons are unmarried. The majority community i. e. Ahirs do not have many families in Datia with whom marriages may be arranged. This being so, they are obliged to get brides from outside. At present there are 27 females who have come to the village from the neighbouring districts of Gwalior (20), Shivpuri (4), Tikamgarh (3), in Madhya Pradesh. Besides this as many as 18 brides came from Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh. Thus out of 113 women who have been ever married, 45 came from neighbouring districts. A "marriage chart" showing how these brides came is at plate XXI.

Females

None is married before the age of 9-10 years. Marriage among females commences at about 11/12 years. Thus between the age-group 10 to 14 we have six unmarried and six married girls. By about 15-16 almost all girls of marriageable age are married. The village has returned no spinsters. Every woman above the age of 20 had been married.

TABLE C—3

MARITAL STATUS OF THE VILLAGE

Age Group	*Unmarried*		*Married*		*Widowed*		*Divorced*		*Total*		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	P	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
0 — 9	81	58	—	—	—	—	—	—	139	81	58
10 — 14	21	6	3	7	—	—	—	—	37	24	13
15 — 19	11	1	9	12	—	—	—	—	33	20	13
20 — 29	4	—	24	37	—	1	—	—	66	28	38
30 — 39	4	—	27	17	—	—	—	—	48	31	17
40 — 49	2	—	13	8	1	4	—	—	28	16	12
50 — 59	1	—	9	9	1	5	—	—	25	11	14
60 — 69	1	—	8	2	1	8	—	—	20	10	10
70 & above	—	—	2	—	2	3	—	—	7	4	3
TOTAL	125	65	95	92	5	21	—	—	403	225	178

Educational Statistics

The comparative returns for literates in the village are as follows:

TABLE C—4

S. No.	Year	Literates P	Literates M	Literates F	Total P	Total M	Total F	Percentage
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	1951	28	28	—	295	153	142	9.50%
2	1961	29	28	1	403	225	178	7.19%

It is obvious that literacy in the last ten years has not progressed much. The district figures for literacy are 14.88% which includes the urban population as well. As compared to this the village has returned 7.19% as literates. This is very low. The percentage of literates in Datia 14.88 compares fairly well with other districts in the division leaving Gwalior, which has a big urban population. The figures for literacy in other neighbouring districts are:

Shivpuri	11.56%
Guna	13.80%
Morena	14.89%
Bhind	17.41%
Gwalior	27.87%

During the investigation it was found that there are 46 literates in all, including 5 girls and other children going to the school. The primary school was established only about two years ago and now has an attendance of 48 students including 5 girls. Seven boys go to Datia for schooling. They are reading in the Higher Secondary School and go on bicycles. It appears that at the time of emuneration many of these boys who, are otherwise literate were not entered as such, 46 literates out of 403 approximates more closely to the district average of literates. Investigation has revealed that there are seven males who have read beyond the primary stages. As for the rest they are merely literates. There are 31 children who are of the school going age but are not attending schools. The villagers complain that sending children of the 6 to 11 age-group deprives them of valuable man power at home and they cannot afford to do so. They are not very happy at being compelled to send the children to schools. The figures given at the beginning of the para are from the Primary Census Abstract.

Immigration and Emmigration

There are 3 males who came here to settle down. They came from other villages in the district. Initially they came for staying with their relatives and later acquired some land. They have now settled in the village. The trio is made up of one Ahir, one Gadariya and one Nai or barber. The villagers do not remember if any males from the village have gone away and settled elsewhere. Thus we may assume that villagers from Richhari have not gone away from the village.

Out of 178 females in the village 45 have come from nearby districts, Jhansi 18, Gwalior 20, Shivpuri 4, Tikamgarh 3, and 68 have come from other parts of the district. The 65 females in age-groups 0-9 (58), 10-14 (6), 16-19 (1) who are unmarried are born in the village. Thus out of 178 females of all ages, 103, married or widowed are from other villages or towns, 65 unmarried ones are born in Richhari itself leaving another ten females who have been born, married or widowed in the village itself. Therefore out of 113 married or widowed women as many as 103 came from outside. This is a very high figure and essentially emphasises the shortage of females and the dependance of village on other parts for getting girls for marriage.

There are no exact figures for the females who went out of the village. Enquiries from the families reveal that this number would be around 20/25 girls, during the last 8/10 years.

The Impact of Social Legislation

The one enactment to have a far reaching effect in the past few years is the one relating to the removal of untouchability. It has changed the economic and social pattern of communal life. The village has returned 58 persons — 31 males 27 females, in the scheduled castes. These are the members of the eleven Chamar households. One noticeable feature is that the male: female sex-ratio is fairly well balanced.

About 10-12 years ago (for the Chamars do not remember accurately) they held a big caste-panchayat which was attended by *panchas* of nearby villages too. The social inequities were discussed and the panchayat decided to stop carrying on the profession of tanning and flaying of hides. The reasons for coming to such a decision were that the trade gave them no social standing: it was generally looked down upon. The caste as a corporate body unanimously decided not to ply this trade any further. The persons affected took to agriculture, worked on agricultural lands as unauthorised sub-tenants paying from the produce and some of them worked as masons elsewhere.* As

* For details please see Appendix A. Village Survey Monograph, Dikhatpura — Morena, M. P.

time passed some of them acquired the rights of *pacca* tenant. Some others are now fighting a legal battle in the Board of Revenue. The facts given by the Chamars, appear to be as follows. Some land was lying fallow near the village and the Chamars began cultivating it on some assurance from the person in whose name lands were entered in papers. The villagers allege they paid land revenue to the former proprietor who even issued receipts. Then later the proprietor initiated proceedings against them for unlawful occupation. This was done after about 2/3 years of occupation by the Chamars, the case is now before the Board of Revenue. The Chamars claim to be in possession of lands. Apart from this disputed land the Chamars also own some land which was allotted to them by the Government or purchased by them directly from other cultivators. Today they occupy 76 acres of total lands and out of this 10.58 acres is owned by them. Regarding the rest litigation referred to above is pending for disposal.

Thus Chamars have become agriculturists and their mode of life has changed radically. The Chamars have crossed another big hurdle in the social set up. Formerly the Chamars were outcaste in the literal sense of the word. Today they are an integral part of society. No stigma attaches to them. Previously they were not permitted to draw water from the common well. In the village they are now living in their own cluster which is towards the south side. They had a well in their cluster and drew water almost exclusively from it. Now, however, other castes are also drawing water from this well. Even Brahmins were doing so. The only reservation observed today is that the utensils must not touch those of the Chamars, hence if a Chamar is drawing water, the Brahmin would only do so after it has been done. But this should not suggest that all prejudices have been removed and that the Chamars stand on the same footing with other castes.

The villagers are even now prejudiced against the Chamars. They are not allowed to enter the village temple. The villagers say that the Chamars do not want to enter the temple themselves, but this is not very accurate. The consensus of opinion does not favour an entry into the temple by the Chamars: to give the whole thing a very graceful appearance the Chamars voluntarily do not enter the temple precincts. Both parties appear happy at this arrangement and the Chamars are content to have a *darshan* from outside. They do not even sit on cots, along with the other caste Hindus. They prefer to remain seated on the floor. The Chamars do not press the issue and so this "Voluntary" arrangement appears to work satisfactorily.

The Family Pattern

The family pattern while exhibiting the traditional joint family system is slowly disintegrating into the individual units. Out of the 71 families in the village 23 are joint, 20 intermediate and 28 are single family units.

The Joint Family

The joint family pattern consists of the parents and sons living with their spouses or other brothers of the parents living together in one house and eating from the same kitchen. Out of the 23 joint families 16 are among Ahirs, four from Chamars, one among Kachhis and one each in Gadariyas and Brahmins. Thus of all castes only the Ahirs seem to prefer the joint mode of family living. Among the other communities the single unit family seems to find more favour.

The joint family is administered by the head of the family who usually is the eldest male member. The father or eldest brother or in few cases an uncle is the head of the family. He runs the family and keeps all accounts. It is his duty to feed and clothe everybody. Usually he does not discriminate between the members, for this alone ensures homogenity in the family. The custom demands that all earnings be made over to the head but in practice this is usually not followed. Where the earnings of the family are from a common source like agriculture, the head receives all the earnings, keeps accounts and is responsible for the upkeep. In such cases members do not get a chance to apportion their earnings to their own use. Where, however, a member can hoodwink the head, he usually does so and loses no opportunity, e. g., where a member earned some wages by working for a little while on a farm or by some casual labour, then he would quickly pocket the earnings and apportion it to his own use.

Most of the villagers regard a joint family as the best form of family life. Lately owing to petty squabbles and a growth of individualistic tendencies the joint families are cracking up. The commonest causes are quarrels amongst the members; mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law or differences among the brothers. In one case two brothers both with their wives, one with three children and the other without any were living together. The wife of the childless brother be-

gan to complain that they (the childless couple) were obliged to surrender a greater share of their earnings to feed the family of the other brother. The two ladies began quarrelling with each other until finally they separated. The childless woman's argument was that for equal labour her husband was being taxed more than her brother-in-law; they were therefore paying for the upkeep of the children of the other brother; this reduced their share of earnings. It is observed that the joint families generally disintegrate after marriage of the sons, because of the inability of the wives to adjust themselves to changed circumstances. Gradually an awakening seems to have come over the villagers that the break-up of a joint family is more or less inevitable and their is no harm even in it.

TABLE C—5
SHOWING FAMILY PATTERN

S.No.	Caste	Total Families	Joint Families	Intermediate Families	Single Families	Percentages of columns 4, 5 & 6		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
1.	Ahirs	42	16	14	12	38	33	29
2.	Gadariyas	12	1	3	8	8	25	67
3.	Chamars	11	4	2	5	36	18	46
4.	Brahmins	2	1	—	1	50	—	50
5.	Kachhis	2	1	—	1	50	—	50
6.	Bhats	1	—	1	—	—	100	—
7.	Nais	1	—	—	1	—	—	100
	TOTAL	71	23	20	28	32	23	40

Some villagers were of the view that today, tempermental mal-adjustments disintegrate a joint family. In the olden days these were smothered out and at the surface, every thing appeared properly patched up. The villagers contend that the olden approach of greater toleration and sympathy was preferable to the present day volatile tempers. In the past the respect for authority of the elders was far greater than it is today.

The Intermediate Families

The intermediate families (20) mostly consists of (14) Ahirs, (3) Gadariyas, (2) Chamars and (1) Bhat. They usually comprise of parents with one married son or daughter. They have not shown any signs of distintegration.

The Single Families

The single families (28) are comprised of

Ahirs	12
Gadariyas	8
Chamars	5
Brahmins	1
Nai	1
Kachhi	1
	28

This consists of husband, wife and their children. It would be observed that the Ahirs have more joint families and Chamars and Gadariyas more single families. The main reason is that Ahirs own lands and cultivate the same together. The holdings being of a fair size, permit the family to live together. In the case of Chamars and Gadariyas they are mostly individual workers and hardly earn enough to keep the family together. Thus they spilit up more easily.

INTRA FAMILY RELATIONS

The Husband and Wife Relationship

The traditional Indian view in which the husband dominates the home prevails. He is regarded as the senior partner. He is the head of the family and has to provide food and clothing to the members. The wife regards him as her lord and master. Excepting for one Ahir family in which the woman proved to be the master of the house, the other households have followed the orthodox pattern. In this household, the woman who dominated the scene finally ran away with a paramour. The wife's duty is to run the house and bring up the children. The wife is thus utterly dependent upon the husband. In some Chamar and Gadariya families the woman are allowed to work and earn some money. They therefore feel more independent and not utterly at the husband's mercy. This however has not made them belligerent and they live quitely with their husband.

Parents and Children

This relationship is very tender in the childhood. The parents are full of affection and indulgence for the children. They often spare the rod to spoil the child. They do not check the children when they use filthy language or smoke *bidies*. They have no set ideas for bringing up children. The children just grow. Their complaints against the children start when they get older and are married. An old father complained that almost within 60 days of the marriage the son under the influence of his wife started behav-

ing funnily and this reminds one of an old widow who said — "It took me 20 years to make a man out of my son and it has taken less than twenty minutes for this woman (his wife) to make a fool of him".

Mother and Son

The male child is fed at the breasts upto the age of two or three years and generally remains in mother's custody upto the age of 6 to 8 years. Thereafter he assists the father who takes more interest in the outdoor activities of the boy. He moves around with boys of his age and begins by looking after the animals tethering or unfastening them or helping the father in other miscellaneous tasks.

Mother and Daughter

The girl nearly always remains under the tutelage of the mother. Upto the age of 5 or 6 years she may play with the boys but thereafter she would remain with the mother, who would teach her the various household chores.

Grand Parents and Children

The grand parents are very affectionate and usually pamper the children. The children stay with their grand parents for the greater portion of the day. In the village the grand parents when disabled by age from working act as ideal 'baby sitters'.

Mother-in-Law and Daughter-in-Law

The future of a joint family depends on this relationship. The mother-in-law usually feels her importance and exercises her authority in no uncertain manner. To some, daughter-in-laws are merely maid servants meant for slaving for the family needs. They had received similar treatment before and so they perpetrate it upon others now. The mother-in-law gets all respects in the beginning and if she treats her daughter-in-law with consideration and sympathy, the reverence increases and there is harmony, failing this bitterness and rancour grow.

Father-in-Law and Daughter-in-Law

The daughter-in-law observes *purdah* and would never appear before her father-in-law without a veil being drawn over her face. She is not supposed to talk to him either and avoids him. The father-in-law is usually very considerate to her and often gives her presents. There was one case of incestuous relationship with the father-in-law among Ahirs. In this case the woman was senior in age and appeared physically more strongly built than her husband, such relaship is however rare.

Inheritance

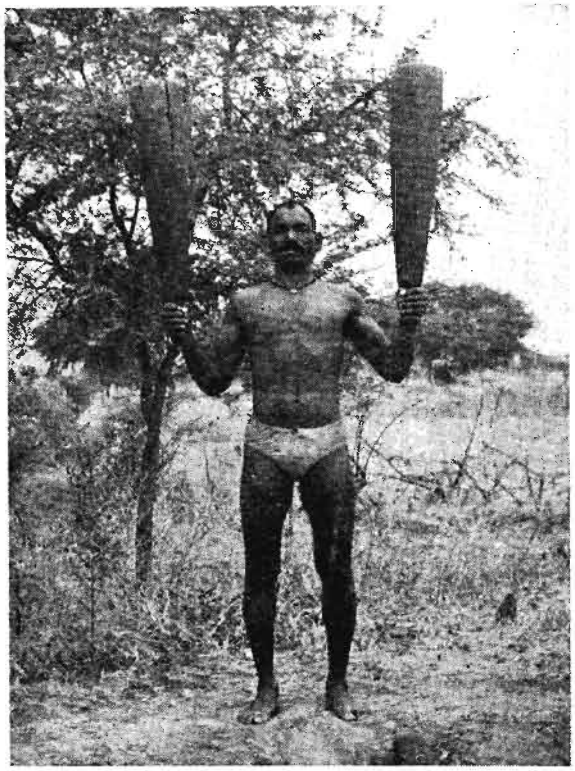
The property is shared equally between all the living sons to the complete exclusion of the daughters. In the case of a pre-deceased son, if he is survived by a male child, then the appropriate share would be given to him. In case there is a female child or no child then the widow would only get maintenance and in case the widow goes away into another family she would be deprived of that too and even her ornaments would be snatched away.

Where a partition of the property takes place during the father's life time, then all the shares of the sons are made out and the father takes one share equally with his sons for himself. The father then may live with one of the sons and his share gets merged with that son's when the father dies. If all the brothers bear the funeral expenses then his share is partitioned equally among the brothers but if only the brother with whom the father was living, has to bear the expenditure, then that son succeeds to the exclusion of others.

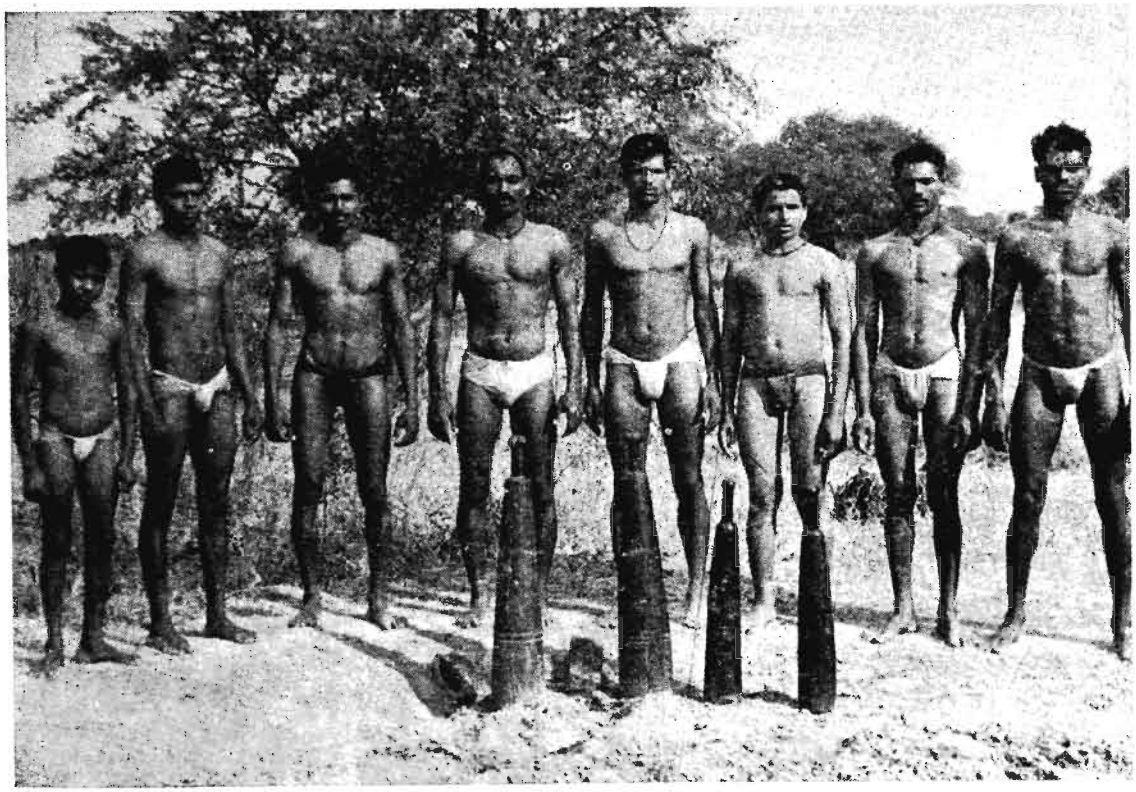
Where there are no sons and only daughters the property passes on to the nearest male surviving heirs like brother or uncle. Thus the property does not go to the daughter. Only in cases where there are no males then the daughters inherit equally. There is no *ghar-jamai* or a son-in-law staying at wife's place in the village.

The villagers feel that whatever had to be given to the daughters, was given away at the time of their weddings or by way of subsequent gifts. They do not favour daughters sharing the property with the sons. One of the elderly types remarked that he would not like to see the face of a daughter who has to be given a share along with her brothers. It appears that this is the initial reaction to a reform. The villagers do not want their lands to pass away into other families, although the daughters-in-law will bring their share too, under the same law. This they feel complicates the issue, citing an example one villager said, "My son has 10 acres of land here. Supposing his wife brings him 2 acres in Jhansi district and my daughter takes away 2 acres to Shivpuri, where her husband resides, how would you arrange for the cultivation?" There is some sense in what he said. Such cases would not be conducive to better agriculture, at least.

PLATE XXV



The strong man of the village; also a keen wrestler



A group of wrestling enthusiasts

Wrestling

It appears that wrestling has been a favourite past time in Datia in the past few years. Datia also claims to be the birth place of the world famous wrestler Gama. There has been same controversy about the claim but Datia's claim does not appear to be without any foundation either. This would hardly be a proper place to go into the details of this. but the fact remains that wrestling is quite popular round about Datia. Even today some persons still vividly recollect Gama wrestling and going through his exercise in Datia. Jagdish Singh (30), Ahir, is the present *ustad* or the *guru* or main coach and the wrestler of the village. He is married and has two children. He married at 16 but *gauna* took place at age of 17 and he has wrestled all along since the age of 15/16. His father introduced regular wrestling in the village about 50 years ago. The father had seen and watched Gama. He himself has not seen Gama. Jagdish Singh was initiated into wrestling by his father whom he accompanied on morning walks and exercises. He began the exercises along with the father. They consisted mostly of *dand*—arms bend and *baithak* an exercise to strengthen legs and stamina. Even today he does his exercises by performing 500 *dands* or arms bend and 1000 *baithaks*. Apart from this he also fights with the youngsters and coaches them. This tires him out and he then calls it a day. There are about 35 men and boys of age-group 15-35 who are attending his exercise sessions daily. Jagdish Singh remembers that his father used to give him ½ seer of fresh unboiled cow's milk in the morning and 3 seers of it in the evening.

Diet

Jagdish Singh holds very definite views about the diet required for wrestling. According to him a wrestler in prime of health and fighting fit ought to have:—

(i) 250 grams of pure *ghee* per day with his meals

(ii) One and half Kg. (1½ Kg.) of wheat flour grinded by hand, per day.

(iii) Three seers of buffalo milk per day to which almonds have been added after grinding.

(iv) 250 grams of sugar to be mixed with milk.

(v) Twice a week, 500 grams of meat (mutton or pork) to be be eaten at one time.

(vi) *Daal* and vegetables as required in proportion to above.

(vii) Rice should not be taken, except once in a blue moon, because it slows down reflexes.

(viii) Abstention from liquor is advised.

Due to economic reasons Jagdish Singh is unable to eat as above. The above diet would cost Rs. 6/- to Rs. 8/- per day. As against this Jagdish Singh's present diet consists of:—

(1) 1½ Kg. wheat flour.

(2) Two seers of milk.

(3) 100 grams of *ghee*.

(4) Almonds are being used though on a much smaller scale and not regularly.

(5) Twice a week meat is taken.

(6) *Daal* and vegetable.

Early in the morning after his exercises, at about 7 A. M. a seer of milk is taken along with almonds, if there are any. This is followed by a lunch at 1100 hours. It consists of the above items which in quantity are halved. His is probably the only household among the Ahirs which does not sell the milk or its products but consumes them. During the cultivation season when he is working in the fields another meal consisting of the mornings left-over lunch is consumed. In the evening, usually the other boys and persons interested in wrestling join and it becomes a regular exercise session. This done, dinner is taken at about 7/7.30 P. M.

Views on Marriage

Marriage is no impediment for wrestling. Most of the persons wrestling are married. Jagdish Singh is of the opinion that for a wrestler wishing to keep himself in good shape it is not desirable to sleep with his wife more than twice a month. He holds that 2 to 3 children are all that one should have. He has two, although he has been married for the last 12/13 years. Family planning is not practised.

Their favourite deity is the monkey God Hanuman. Before the start of a wrestling bout they would make their obeisance to him: by bowing head and folding the hands for a *namaskar*. At home a picture of Hanuman is usually hung. Apart from Hanuman, Jagdamba in the form of *devi*, Durga or Sakti is worshipped. This however is an individual approach but for wrestling Hanuman is the deity.

In the morning when they reach the *akhara* the place of wrestling bout, exercises commence. When the exercises are over the boys massage each other

with mustard oil. In about a month's time nearly ½ to 3/4 seers of it is used for massaging. The members of *akhara* help to maintain the same and put in a good amount of labour every now and then over it. After the massage practice fights begin. Although everybody does not attend regularly but each day there are at least 8 to 10 members. Jagdish Singh seldom misses. The oldest member of this club is about 35 years, which age is considered as being a good one to retire. Although the habit is not given up, but no longer one remains so enthusiastic or regular about the fighting, (Please see plate XXV).

Strategy or Tactics or daav pechs

A bout is deemed to have been won, when the opponent is felled or laid supine on the ground. The wrestling is not the "All In" type of wrestling but a regular bout in accordance with the rules prevalent all over the country. The usual attacking stratagems employed are known as:

Ek Langa	:	The opponent is held under the arm
Or	:	and leg is placed infront of him.
By one Leg	:	Then he is pushed over, the leg acting as an obstacle, accelerates fall.
Kamar Tega	:	The opponent is held by one hand
Or	:	over his head and then lifted on the
Back lift	:	back and shoulder to be thrown down.
Bahe	:	By pulling the opponent with the
Or	:	arms he is brought down.
Arm	:	
Dhobi Pat	:	The aim is to lift the opponent bodi-
Or	:	ly and throw him down like a
Dhobi's	:	Dhobi washing the cloth.
beating of	:	
Clothes	:	
Pet ki Ukhad	:	The opponent is held back to back
Or	:	his stomach is in line with the back
Stomach grip	:	of the fighter. The opponent is held firmly by the neck and then brought down by turning him around.

As against these the defensive stratagems are:

Kenchi	:	The opponent although on the
Or	:	ground tries to grab at the neck of
Scissors	:	the adversary trying to bring him down or relax his grip.
Savari	:	When the opponent has been thrown
Or	:	on the ground, he may try to catch
Ride	:	one hand or leg of his adversary and then throw him down.
Charkha	:	In this the opponent is lifted from
Or	:	the back, either by catching his back
Cart wheel	:	or his *langot* or underwear and then thrown down.
Pachhari	:	The neck is usually held tight bet-
Or	:	ween the knees and then by turning
To throw	:	the opponent an attempt is made to
off	:	fell him.

Dress

The wrestling uniform is invariably locally called *langot* underwear covering hips and the genital organs in the front. A minimum clothing is thus used. It costs .75 P. requiring half a metre of mill made long cloth of red colour. Red colour is preferred because it is the favourite colour of Hanuman to whom the sport is dedicated.

Leisure and Recreation

Recreation falls under two heads: (1) Sports (2) Music. Both are fairly well organised. The popular sports are: (1) Wrestling Indian style, (2) *Kabaddi*, (3) *Khokho*. Jagdish Singh is a good wrestler and is well known in the nearby districts. He hails from the Ahir community and has fought at Jhansi, Gwalior and other nearby towns. His father too in his days used to be a good wrestler and so there is a tradition in the family. It appears that wrestling was introduced through the old State army. In the State times there were as many as 5-10 persons from the village serving with the Datia State Forces. Among the troops wrestling was a very favourite sport. Thus these persons introduced the sport in the village.

Today there were as many as 30/35 members training in wrestling and there are four *akhadas* or fighting arenas for wrestling in the village. One of these has been constructed with the help of the Block. In the whole of Datia district there are no other villages in which wrestling is practised as a sport. For the development of wrestling much credit goes to Jagdish Singh referred to above. Boys above eleven years join in the wrestling. The interest shown by the school boys assures a good future for wrestling in the village. *Kabaddi* and *khokho* are popular in the school boys. The elders join in *kabaddi* often in the months of February-March (*Phalgun*) when it is moon lit and there is little work to be done at home.

Music

A few villagers join in singing the *alha* an epic based on the heroism of *Alha* and *Udal* the two brothers

PLATE XXVI

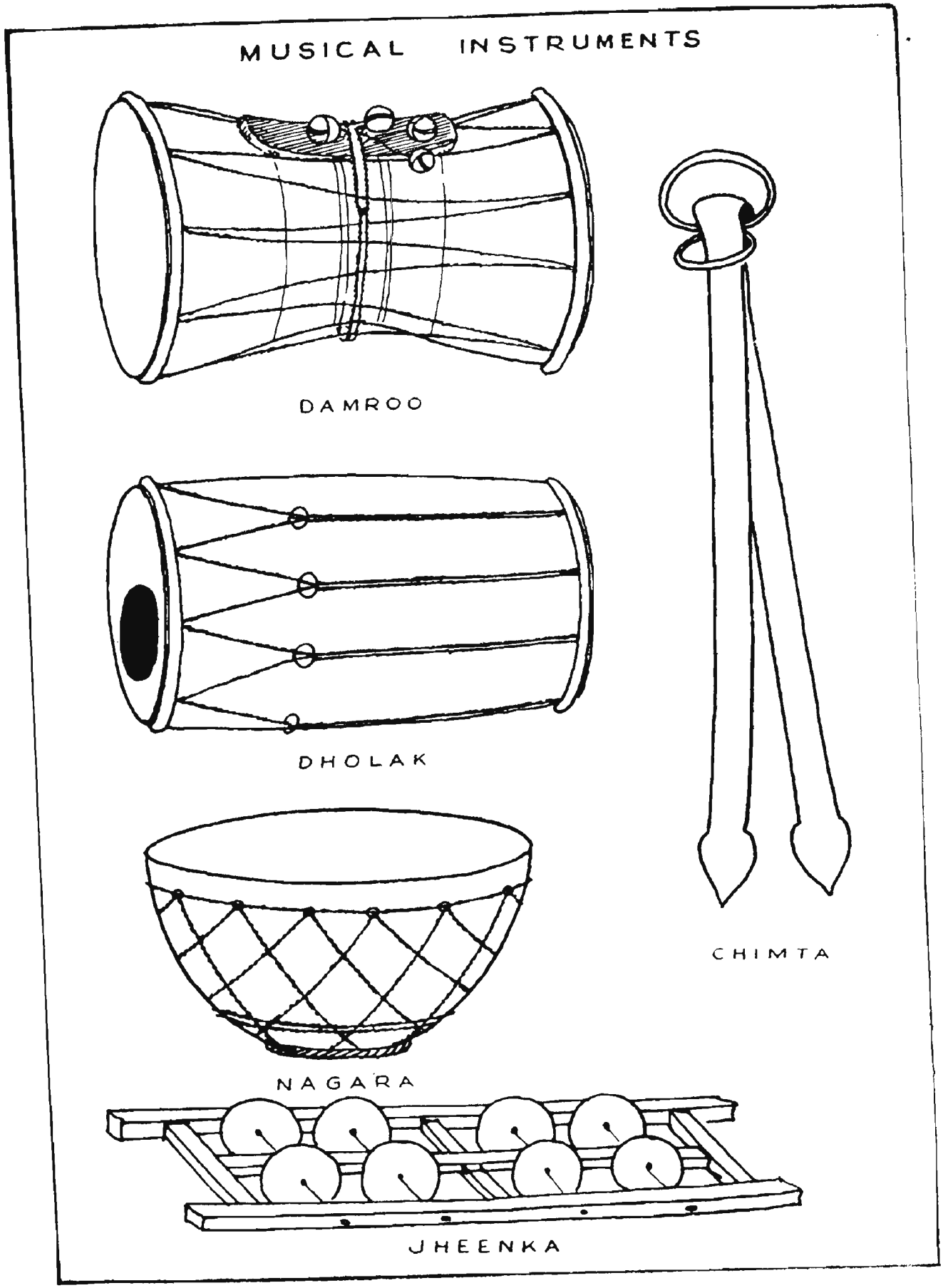


The place is being decorated to receive the Devta



The Devta has arrived (The Singer is the Devta)

PLATE XXVII



who fought valiantly in Bundelkhand. The epic is sung in Bundelkhandi dialect which forms a part of the Indo Aryan Languages — Inner sub — branch and is spoken in Bundelkhand Agency i. e., Panna, Tikamgarh, Chhatarpur, Satna, besides the districts of Jhansi, Jalaun, Hamirpur in Uttar Pradesh and eastern region of Gwalior division, Damoh, Saugor, in Madhya Pradesh. The singing of *alha* brings plenty of rain according to belief held by the villagers. *Alha* is therefore sung during the rains. The instruments that are used are *dholak, jhanjh, haryeea* and *damru* (Please see plate XXVII).

Apart from this they read the *Ramayan* and *Geeta*. At least four or five persons read the *Ramayan* daily. The above remarks are confined to males only.

The women sing at a wedding or other religious functions associated with the birth of a child. On such occasions they rarely sing solo. One often hears two or three of them singing while grinding the flour or when a few of them return from the fields after some work. Three of such songs are reproduced below:

Song (In Hindi)

Ye jin pahere bajan ghoonghariya
Bahuar jin pahare
Jin galiyare jae,
Sainya tumre ras bailna
Ye tum kon rijhhavan jaye.

Which may be translated as follows:
"O beautiful damsel don't
cultivate the habit of wearing the
ringing bells.
Restrain from moving in the street.
Your husband is far more handsome than
the one whom you are going to fascinate?"

Song II (In Hindi)

Question:— *Are Kon Ke Bharose Liva Lejaraho He Re Moda?*
Are Sainya to Jhoole Vare Palna Re
Tu Kon Ke Bharose Liva Le Jaraho He:
Are Kon Se Katengi Ye Bairain Ratiya Re, Aur Kon Se Kahege Dookh Dubre?

Answer :— *Are Padosi Se Kat Javengi Ye Bairain Ratiya*
Are Galiyan Ke Chhelan Se Kat Javenge Dookh Dubre.

The younger brother of the husband of the bride fetches her to the husband's place (This is a case where wife is elder in age). The song goes on:

Question:— Oh Child, for whom are you taking this bride?
He, for whom you are taking her, is playing in the cradle.
With whom will she spend these long lonely nights?
And with whom will she be sharing her grief?

The Other Party answers:— Worry not the least: the nights could be spent with the neighbour and
She can tell her grief to the Romeos who live nearby.

Song III — A young girl wishes what her husband and her family may be like:—
(In Hindi)
Ye Pati Miliyo Chanda Sarikhe Pati Miliyo Sooraj Sarikhe Ke Jeth — Nand Miliyo Kondha Bijli He Jo Chamke Charo Kor
"Oh my husband should be like the Moon.
The elder brother of my husband should be like the sun.
And finally the sister-in-law should be like a lightening which shines in all the sides."

Gossip

Gossiping and chronicling small beer easily remains the most popular past time. Usually in the winter gossiping is carried on in form of a fire side chat. These talks relate to many subjects. Starting from local politics, happenings in the police stations, tahsils, the courts, the collectorate, to reminiscences of by-gone days. It is here that scandals are discussed thread bare and the village feuds germinate. The usual meeting place is a *chabutara* or the open varandah of some house.

Recently the younger persons (age-group up to 20) have started going to Datia for seeing movies. They prefer the detective types to other pictures. The Panchayat radio is between the villages Murera and Richhari, so for fifteen days it remains in Richhari and is utilised to the maximum. The choice of the listners in village is for film songs. The villagers have also started singing their own songs in accordance with some catchy cinema tunes. In one of the weddings it was observed that a cinema song was sung to the accompaniment of *dholak* and other musical instruments.

Religious Institutions

In the village there are two main temples (1) The Radha-Krishna Temple and (2) Mata-Ka-Mandir. About 13/14 miles away is the Sun Temple at Unao which is

a famous temple in the district and draws pilgrims from far off places. In the district , the Sun Temple is the main religious institution.

The Radha-Krishna Temple

It was constructed in 1944 at the spot where a small *katcha* shed housed a small temple. The *pujari* came when the village was founded. The villagers sent the *pujari* to Mathura to obtain an idol of Radha-Krishna. It was then kept mounted on a small platform surrounded by *katcha* walls. Later the villagers decided to have a *pacca* roof and walls to enclose the idol. They collected Rs. 2000/- and constructed the temple.

The architecture is simple. The walls are of stone, brick and lime. A tin roof covers the walls. A small red flag hung on a thin bamboo indicates the position of the temple. The management of the temple lies with villagers. There is no registered trust. All the villagers form a committee. One member from each family is taken. A *pujari* has been engaged by the villagers. The *pujari* hails from the family which brought the idol from Mathura, and is paid in kind about 5 seers of crops from each family given at the harvest time. If the farmers use a plough then besides 5 seers he also gets about $2\frac{1}{2}$ seer per plough at the time of festivals. When money is offered to the deity he i. e., *pujari* gets it. At the time of marriage or birth he gets some cash or gifts Similarly on religious festivals food and gifts are given to him. The *pujari* however complained that he was under-paid by the villagers and remarked that the Brahmins are no longer respected.

The *pujari* had the misfortune of being visited by some local dacoits two years ago. He lived in a semi-*pacca* house towards the top of a hill. There were couple of houses round about. The dacoits ransacked the house and took away everything he had. He described the visitation, saying that he was visited by the dacoits 'thrice'. The first time the real dacoits visited him. Then came the relations from nearby place when they heard about the dacoity. The house had been completely denuded of all valuables, even grains were not spared. On top of it the relations who came with their families invariably overstayed. He had to arrange for their food etc., which was quite expensive. He borrowed to feed them. This was the second dacoit invasion — a sympathetitc one. Then came the police party who started picking up a few remnants and asked all sorts of questions. It may be useful to reproduce his own version of the happening.

The Police Head Constable (H. C.) "When did the dacoits come?

Brahmin : About 7 or 8 o'clock in the evening, a little after sun set".

Police H. C. : Where were you?

Brahmin : I was going to sleep, after the dinner.

Police H. C. : What did they look like? How many were they?

Brahmin : They covered their faces with *safas;* perhaps they were 8 or 10 persons.

Police H. C. : By the way, what is the food cooked for us for today?

Brahmin : No reply.

The Brahmin now concluded that this was the third invasion from the dacoit's. He said he was very much hard put to feed the "sympathisers" and "investigators". Including all cash and valuables he lost about Rs. 3,000 and spent another Rs. 300 over the sympathisers and the investigators. So far nothing has been recovered. He does not expect anything to be recovered.

The *pujari* opens the temple in the morning at about 6 A. M., remains open between 6 to 8 A. M. in the morning and 5 to 7 P. M. in the evening. The 'Prasad' is distributed after litany in praise of Lord Krishna has been sung in the evening. Everybody except the Chamars can go up in the verandah which houses the deity. The Chamars only have a 'darshan' from the ground level.

Mata Ka Mandir

This is dedicated to Jagdamba Mata worshipped as Devi or Durga. It was constructed in 1951. The *patel* gave the land for construction and it now stands in his holding. The construction is of brick and lime, roof being of galvanised iron sheets. The idol consists of a stone which is completely smeared with *sindoor;* a pink to red oil paint. In the front there is a well from which water is filled. No regular *puja* is done. Only when persons wish to make some offerings they put on a lighted lamp along with flowers.

On *Ram Navmi* day a small village *mela* is held here. At that time such families who had earlier resolved to honour the deity, perform the *puja*. Usually a person makes a promise that should a particular wish of his be granted he would honour the deity by offering *Jawaras*. *Jawaras* is the wheat or barley plants kept in shade after sowing. They are especially sown nine days before the offering. They are sown in leaf cups — locally known as *daunas*. This type of worship is thus a 'Thanks-giving' ceremony.

On the *Ram Navmi* day the family gathers and to accompaniment of songs and music marches to the temple. Sometimes they lie prostrate on the ground and cover the entire distance by getting up and lying again in the aforesaid manner for the whole distance. The Chamars mostly follow the latter mode of worship. All castes perform the *pooja*. There is no hard and fast convention regarding covering the distance by prostration. Usually the persons concerned decide their own prostrating distances.

Behind this temple is a tree with little open platform. This is often used for "Calling Devata" or invoking the Gods. The occasion for invoking of Gods could be (1) Some happy or sad occasion (2) or to dispel some cares, worries and anxieties. We happened to witness one such occasion in the village. The deity has been invoked to dispel uncertaininty about the impending threat to standing crops. The weather was cloudly and threatening, the wheat crop was ready for harvesting. Rains would have caused severe damage. The person who invoked the deity also had a few other domestic problems to clarify. The deity could be invoked on 4th of every month.

The villagers assembled, for this is a good occasion for sitting together. Two persons tied *dholaks* to their feet keeping the hands free to play it. The deity invoked is the titular deity for the village. The *dholak* is played by means of a thin stick. Some other members in the congregation joined in the orchestra and played on *majeeras*. The incantation went on for about 5 to 10 minutes in which time singing began. Usually *Lila* or *Goat* is sung. The song starts on a very high note. Others join in the refrain a little later. The words of the songs are known to only a few. The singing is usually at the highest pitch of the voice and one, at times feels as the music has crossed over into the realm of shouting at the top of the voice.

The place of the performance is small *chabutra* a raised platform 5′ x 2′ high. On this is a small hollow block about 12″ high, on this stones coloured in *sindoor* are placed. This is known as the place of deity. It is gaily decorated with flowers, buntings and a garland is put over it. Incense and camphor are burnt. The music and singing prepare the back ground for the *devata* to appear and then suddenly a man wearing a garland, rosary and moving a small brush made of young calf's hair called *saheri* appears dancing and widly gesticulating. The *devata* has appeared for this man represents the *Devata*. He keeps dancing moving his arms and appears as though possessed. He keeps moving around vigourously and the tempo of the music increases. The *dholak* pounds faster and moves up to a pitch of high octave. The *dholak* is played remarkably well.

The *dholak* as a musical instrument is not capable of playing in ranging notes. It usually is played in plain bass only. These two *dholak* players by beating it deftly with all the dexterity they were capable of, took it through varying degrees into a high octave and as they played the singers and the dancer responded. Thus mounted the tension and the audience grew excited to watch the 'devata' and hear the oracle.

Then after a while the music toned down. the singers slowed up and a question was hurled at the *devata*.

Question : Will the Gods destroy the corps by sending down the rains?

Answer : Be patient boy. The God's will shall be done and the Gods are merciful.

Question : Tell me Oh *devta* will it rain? My crops are in the *khaliyan* (Open space for clearing and storing grains before taking them to the market).

Answer : The peasants will not suffer. Pray to the Almighty.

It was an excellent performance by all standards. The question was answered, yet the person raising the question was no wiser: no commitment was made, or false hopes kindled and everybody appeared happy at it. One is tempted to think that with such answers worthy of a seasoned diplomat the Panchayat Raj should be a roaring success.

This went on for about an hour or so, questions were asked and replies made. Finally the *devata* departed. Sweets — *Batashas*, coconut and roasted grams were distributed to every body. All this expenditure is borne by the person who called the *devata*. Besides this he also has to pay for the smoking and *pan-supari* expenses of the villagers who agree to be present on the day (Please see plate XXVI).

When the prophecies go wrong the *devta* is invoked again and a complaint is made that the old prophecy went wrong. The *devata* then explains or counsels patience, or again gives some directions. When the prophecy brings in good luck the persons perform a thanks—giving ceremony either by feeding poor, the brahmins or contributing to the temple.

A common story related about the efficacy of invoking *devatas* relates to an English Collector of Jhansi, who happened to ride through a place called Gwaltoli,

at a time when the deity was being invoked. He casually enquired as to why every body was sitting. when told that a *devata* was coming he questioned "Does your *devata* prophesy correctly? Does he speak the truth?" He was told that the *devata* would speak the truth. Whereupon he is reported to have asked the *devata* what would be description of the foal the mare would bear? The reply was that it would be *panch kalyani* female meaning it would have five spots. When the foal was born it had the five white spots four in the legs and the fifth in the forehead. The Collector was so pleased that he got a *chabutara* raised at the spot. The name of the Collector and year of occurence were not known.

All castes participate on this occasion, although the Chamars were not present on that day. Apart from the faith underlying in the supernatural powers, this also stresses the fact that cares and anxieties diminish in their intensity after they have been communicated and expressed to some friendly powers.

The Sun Temple at Unao (Baramju) (see plates XXVIII, XXIX and XXX).

For the persons living in the region the Sun Temple is a very holy and important place of worship. Situated on river Pahuj in Unao village about 11 miles east of Datia, Baramju is an old name for the present village Unao. A circular piece of stone about six inches in diameter represents the Sun. It is mounted on a brick platform with brass plates. Twenty-one triangles marked on the stone represents the phases of the Sun. A mela is held on the *Rang Panchami* day in *Phalgun* each year and draws large crowds.

Sunday is the special day of worship. The worshippers — first bathe in the river Pahuj and while still in wet clothes take a *lota* of river water and the offerings to the temple and offer it there. (Please see plate XXIX). The well-to-do ones offer a brass pot *kalash* or even gold. The worship at the temple is reported to be especially efficacious in curing skin diseases (*chhaj*). The blind, lepers and the childless come in great numbers. A verse in Hindi indicates the efficacy of worship here.

Andhan ko ankh det, kodhan ko kaya,
Banjhan ko putra det, nirdhan to maya.

Which means:

To the blind it gives sight and to lepers the body, The barren beget a son and the poor wealth.

The history of the temple is given as in Appendix There are no persons of any other religion than Hinduism in the village hence there is no church or mosque.

Festivals

The following are the more important festivals observed by the villagers.

1. *Raksha-bandhan* or *Rakhi.*
2. *Janamashtmi.*
3. *Dushera.*
4. *Deewali.*
5. *Holi and Rang Panchmi.*
6. *Ram Navmi.*

Rakshabandhan

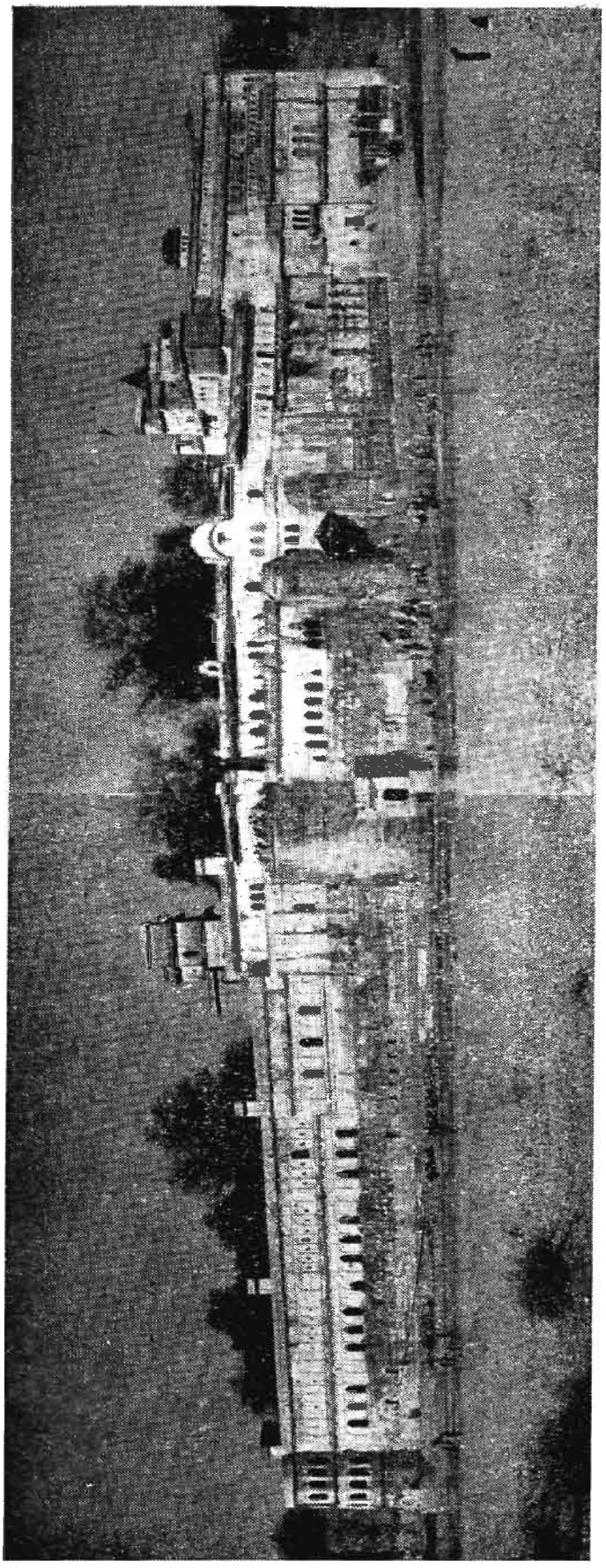
Falls on the full moon day of the *Shrawan.* On this day, sisters tie a small *rakhi* on the hands of their brothers. A 'Rakhi' is a small bracelet like piece of ornament made of good quality paper or silver on which some small toys are attractively mounted. The brother gives some gift usually in cash or a present of wearing apparel. The tying of *rakhi* signifies that the sister shall be protected and cared for by the brother.

Janamashtmi

After eight days of Rakshabandhan comes Janmashtmi, which signifies the birth of Lord Krishna. The Ahirs of the village regard themselves closely connected with Lord Shri Krishna and so they celebrate the day in a big style. In the morning they come to the temple which has been very well decorated with new clothes and other ornaments and offer their prayers. In the evening the whole village gathers before the temple and sing *kirtans* in praise of the God. Legend has it that Lord Krishna was born at mid-night on this day. So a fast is observed for the whole day and devotional singing goes on for the whole evening. At night the birth of the Lord is announced and sweet *kheer* and *puris* are distributed to every one assembled. Only the Brahmins and the Ahirs observe fast although the whole village join in singing the *kirtans* and receiving the sweets.

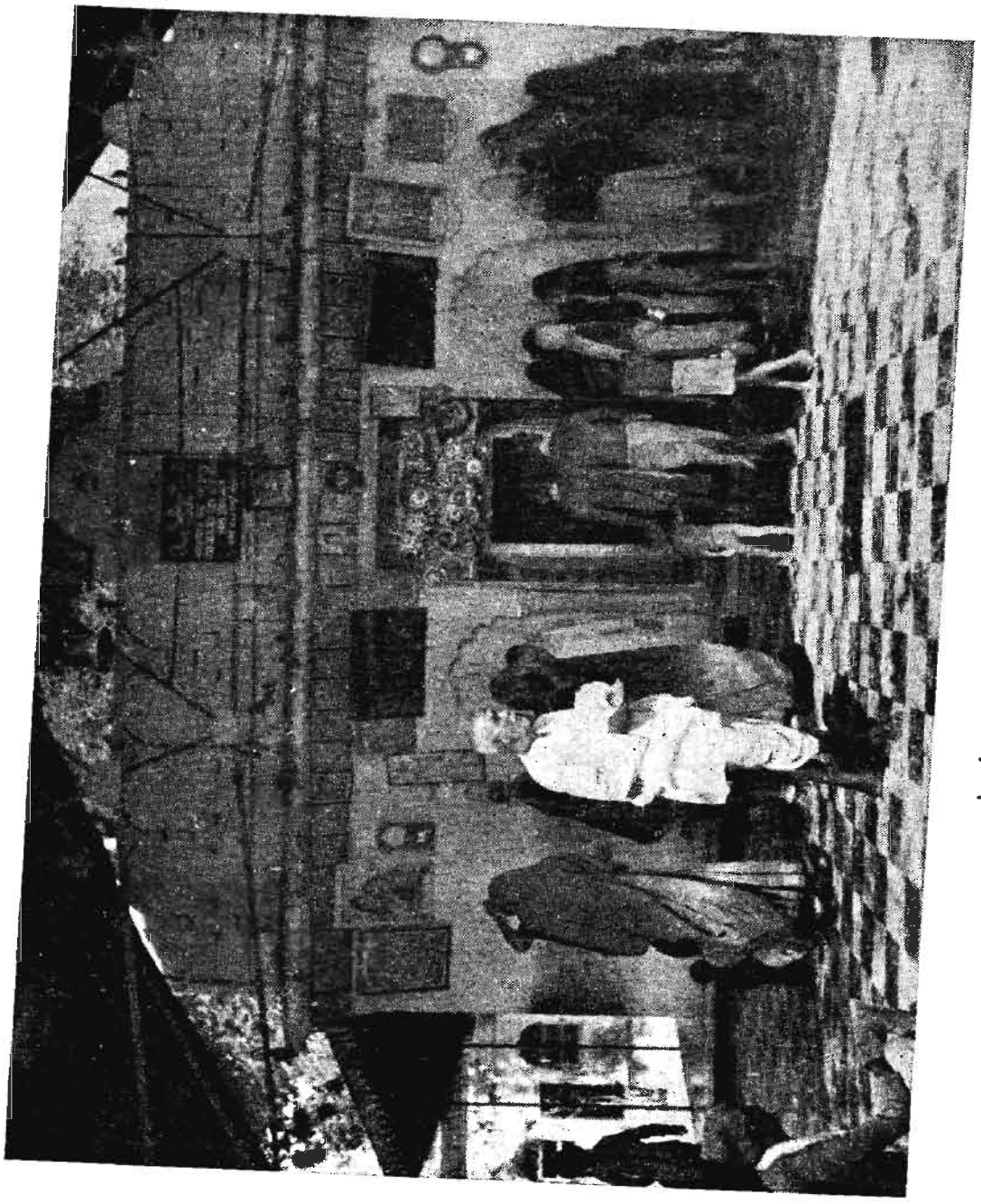
As compared to some time past the Janamashtmi is celebrated in a better and more organised manner today. Fifteen years ago singing of *kirtan* and distribution of sweets was unknown. It did not possess any 'community awareness' then. Today the entire village joins in singing or listening to *kirtans* and do not mind spending some money to celebrate the occasion.

PLATE XXVIII



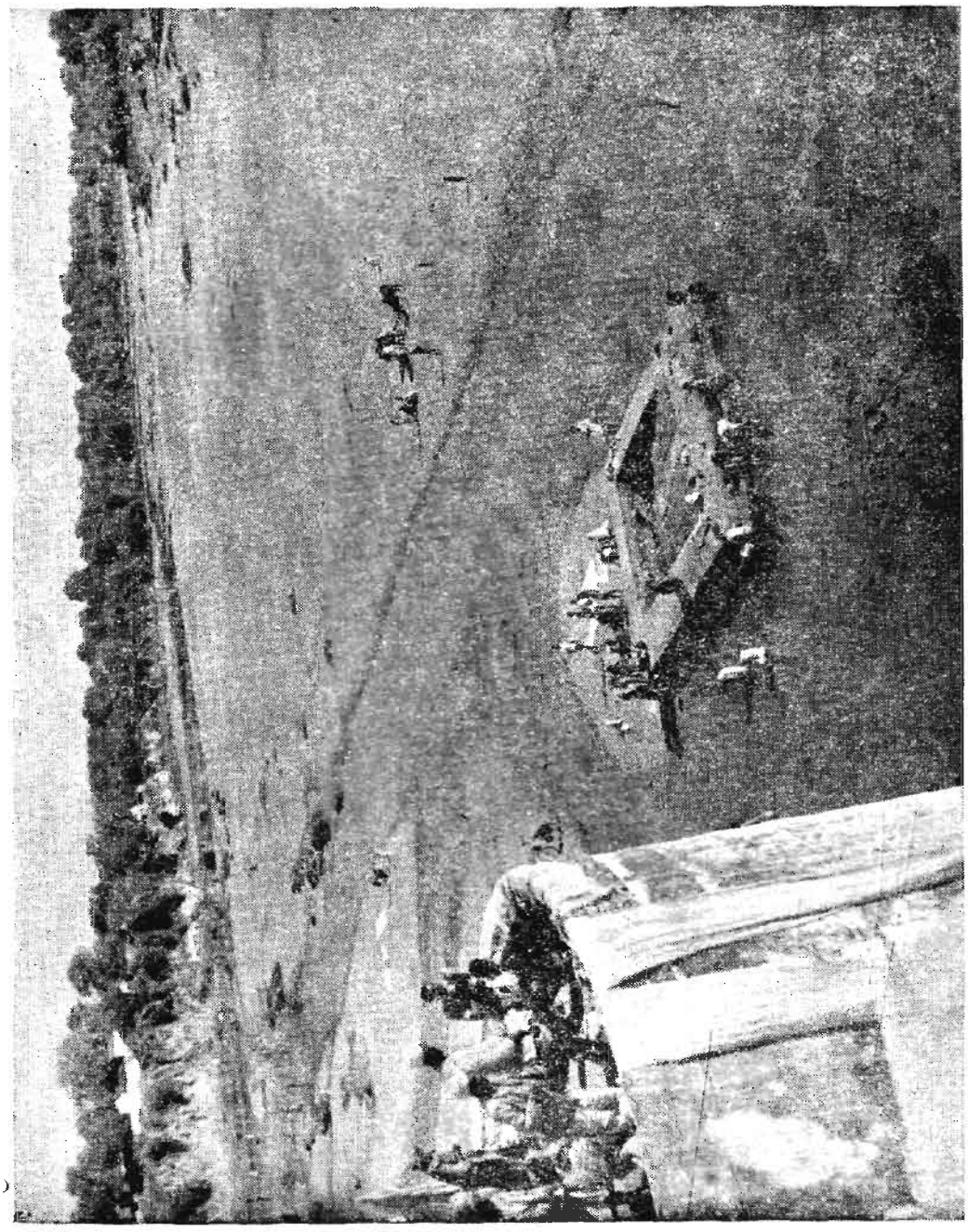
A complete view of the Sun Temple at Unao as seen from across the river Pahuj

PLATE XXIX



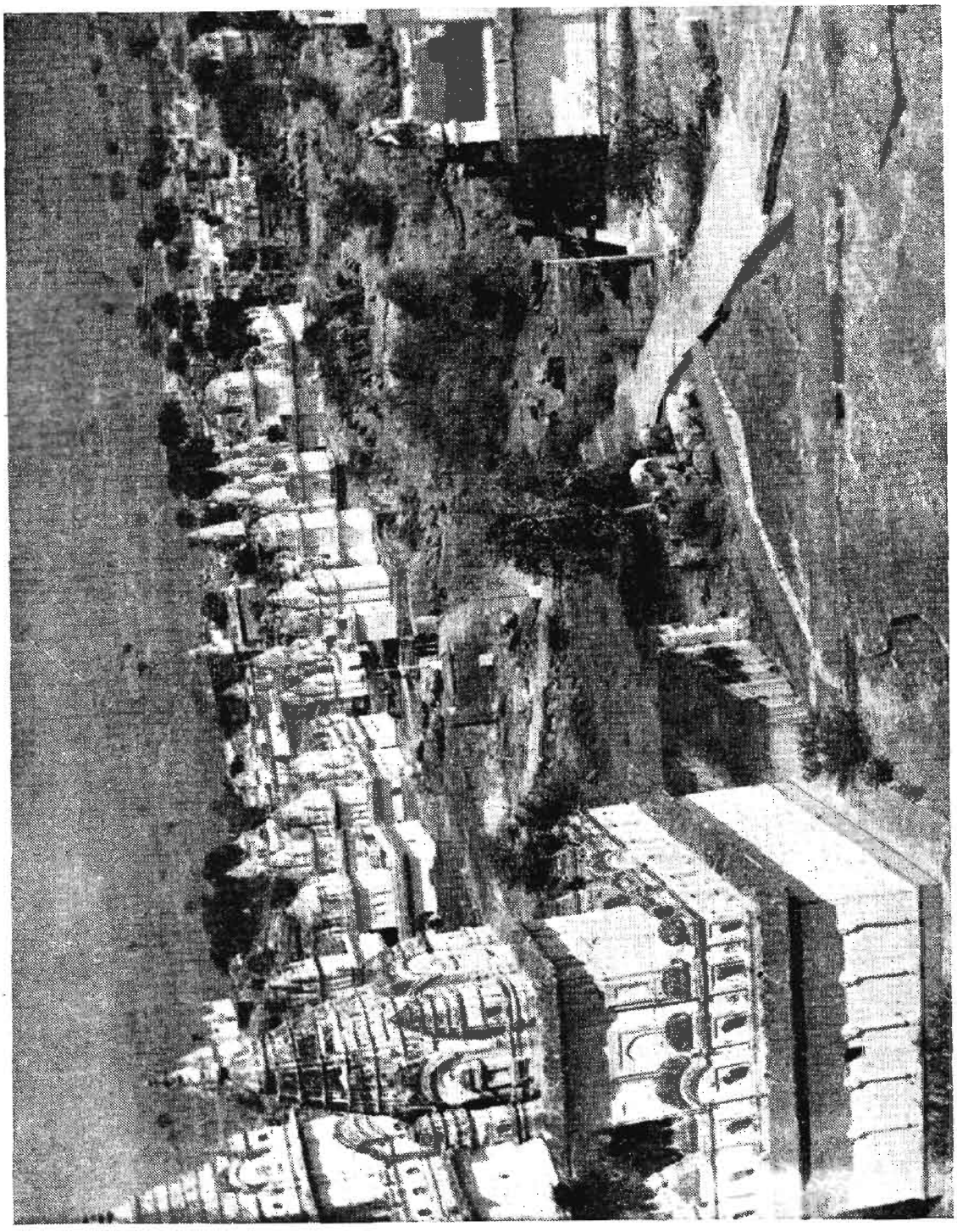
An inner view of the Sun Temple

PLATE XXX



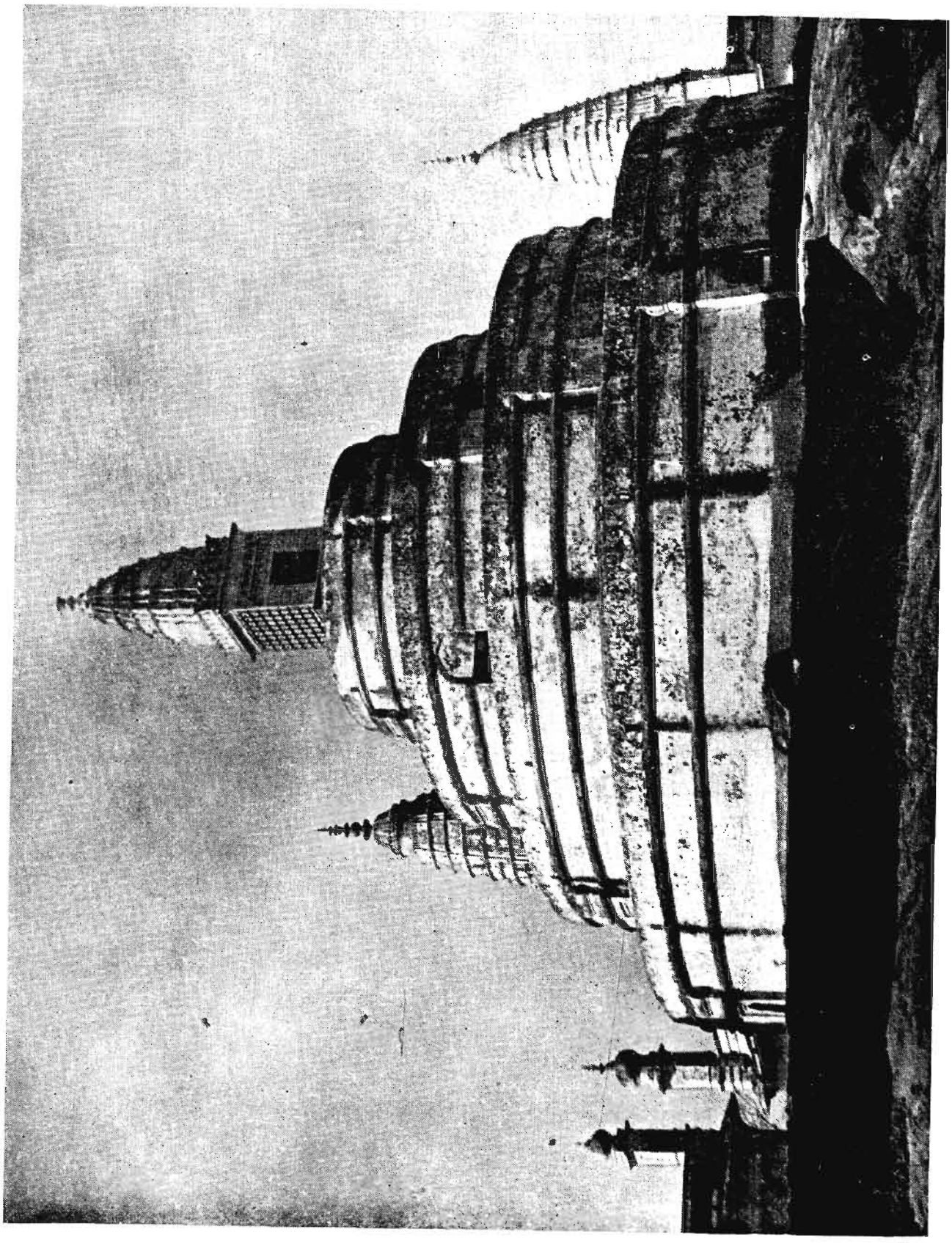
The river Pahuj winding its eastly course as seen from the temple rempart

PLATE XXXI



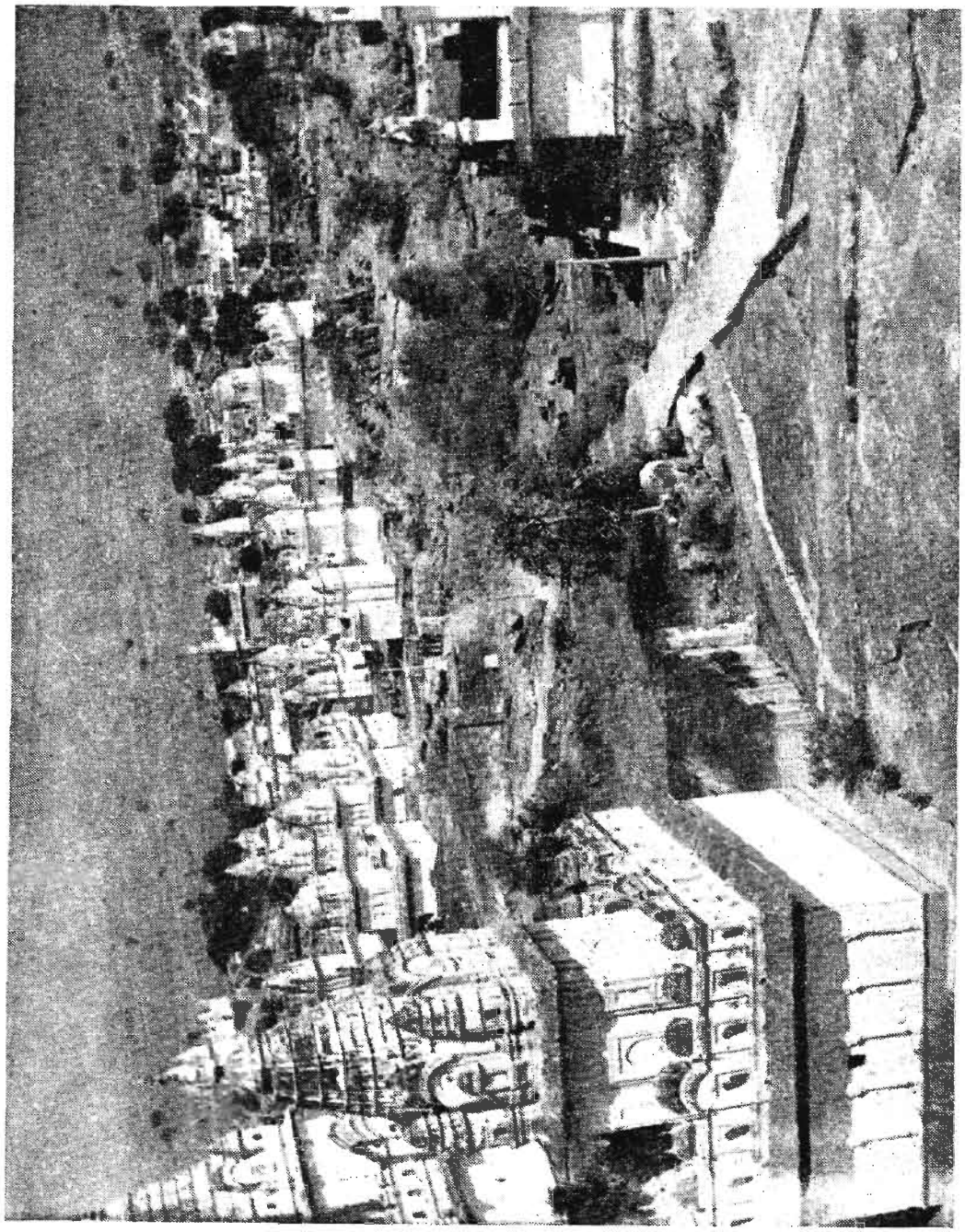
The Jain Temples at Sonagir
Courtesy—Shri P. K. Dixit

PLATE XXXII



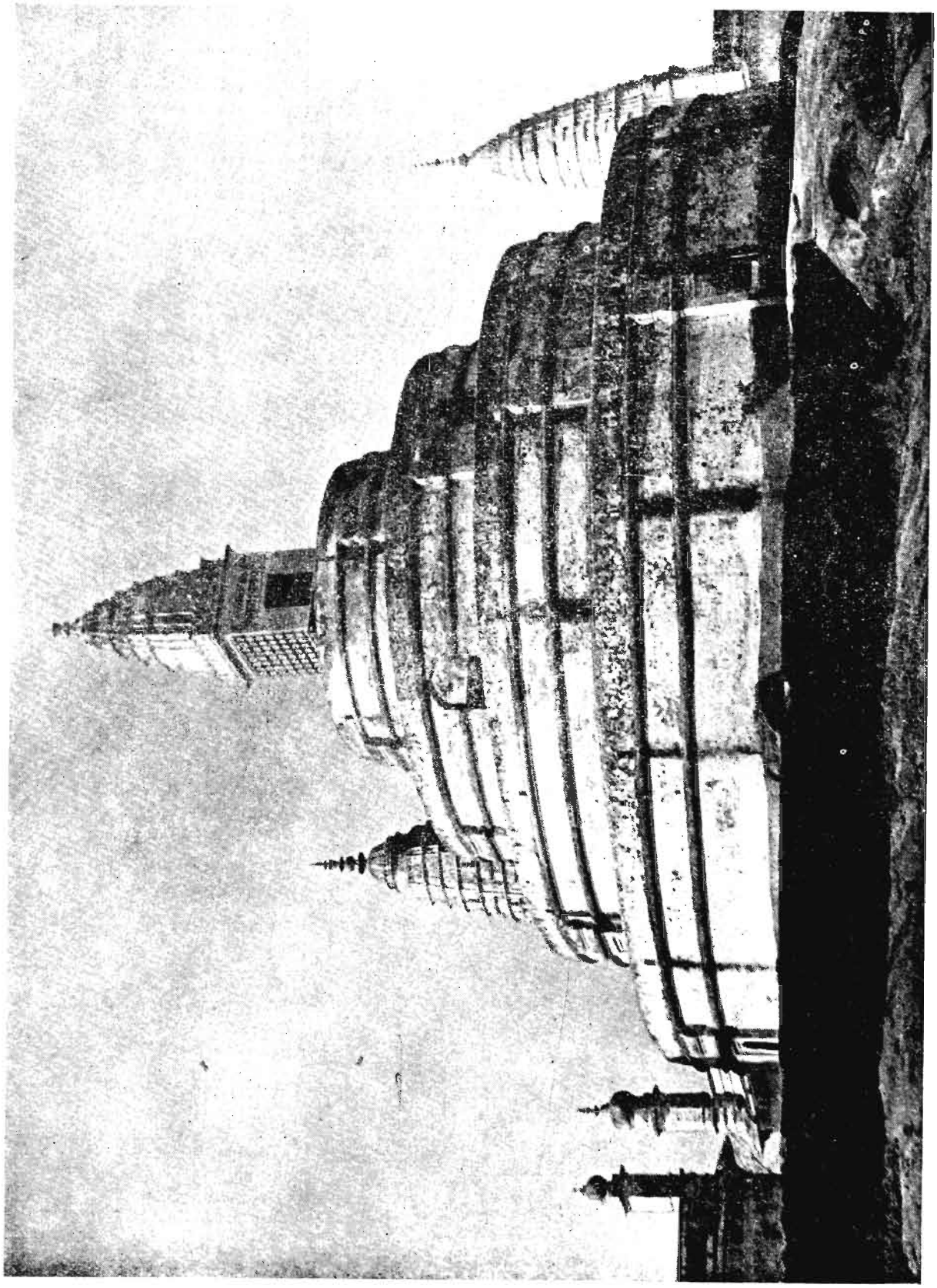
The Sonagir Temple
Courtesy—Shri P. K. Dixit

PLATE XXXI



The Jain Temples at Sonagir
Courtesy—Shri P. K. Dixit

PLATE XXXII



The Sonagir Temple
Courtesy—Shri P. K. Dixit

Dushera

Dushera is celebrated by all communities. Dushera celebration used to be an important event in the erstwhile Datia State. The villagers had taken the cue accordingly. The Gadariya has to supply one ram and a goat for being sacrified on the day. All communities celebrate the festival with great gaiety and enthusiasm. Members from each community gather in their groups. The *pandit* purchases a coconut on behalf of the village. They go to the *Mata-Ka-Mandir* and perform a *puja* by applying a *teeka* on the deity and breaking the coconut. In the evening they gather outside the village slaughter a ram or goat to signify the killing of Ravan, the demon king whom Ram killed. The Ravan must be killed with one blow. The meat is then distributed among the following communities; Chamars, Gadariya, Ahir and Kachhi. The Brahmins and Nai do not take the meat. Next morning the villagers move around making social calls and presenting *Sauri* tree leaves. In mythology it is said that Lanka or Ceylon the kingdom of Ravan was of gold. When it was captured the gold was distributed by the conquerors, so today too, they follow the tradition and there being no gold to go around, leaves are good substitutes.

In the olden days the sacrifice of the goat was followed by a feast in which every one participated. Locally brewed liquor flowed freely and every body had a good time. Today liquor is drunk in a few houses only. There is no community drinking. On these occasions the lower castes ate separately.

Deewali

Deewali is celebrated for three days by all the castes but for four by the Brahmins and Ahirs only. *Dhan Teras* is celebrated on the thirteenth day of *Kartik* month. On this day silver and gold ornaments are worshipped. Usually some new utensils are purchased.

Then comes the main day of the festival. The *Amavasya* or the moonless night which is celebrated by one and all. Goddess of wealth *Lakshmi* is worshipped on this day. The houses are cleaned up and lighted in the evening. Every house is very gaily decorated and lighted. Except Brahmin and Ahirs no other castes worship *Lakshmi.*

The third day is also celebrated as *Gobardhan Puja* by all castes. They make a small figure from cowdung. Lamps are placed near its heads. Four *poories* are put inside the cowdung. In the morning buffaloes and cows are worshipped. During the day bullocks and other male cattle are worshipped. They are carefully washed and cleaned, decorated with colours and peacock feathers. The cattle is then paraded in the village and taken outside. It is a sort of a cattle show; but there is no competition and no prizes are given away.

On the last day i. e., two days after *Deewali, Bhai-Dooj* is observed. On this day the sister applies *teeka* on her brother's forehead and is given some useful gifts . All communities observe this day. It is purely a family festival.

Holi

On *Phalgun* (March) full moon day the festivals of sprinkling of colour is observed. A few days (7 to 10) days before this day a small tree or big piece of wood is planted in the earth. Then on the full moon day along with other wood timber etc., a fire is lighted. Usually the *patel* or the headman of the village ignites it.

Next day coloured water and *gulal,* a coloured powder is sprinkled on each other. Every body joins in it to the accompaniment of singing and music. They carry *gulal,* red powder and water colours and visit all houses of the village. When a house has been visited the members join the congregation and move to the next. This is one festival in which every body joins irrespective of his caste or social standing.

Among other things Holi festival is also an unclean one. Dirt, mud, and other rubbish is thrown upon each other. There was a lot of drinking on this day once, but gradually drinking is becoming less common because lately it has been looked down upon and has become more expensive. When the day is over the singing and merry making goes on for the next 3/4 days. Some of the villagers used to remain drunk from Holi to *Rang-panchmi* that is for about five days continuously but it is not so now. On the fifth day is the *Rang-panchmi* or the fifth day of colour. Only *Gulal* (red-powder) and wet colours are used on this day. Villagers again go to each other to meet. Many of them go away to visit the Sun Temple at Unao. some for deeply religious offerings and others for attending the fair with all the attractions.

Ram Navmi

Only the Ahirs, Brahmins and Bhat observe this festival. They worship the deity at the Jagdamba Mandir described earlier. Although the worship is limited to these castes only yet other communities join in visiting the shrine.

Other Beliefs and Practices

There are many superstitions in which the villagers believe. Some of them are narrated below:—

(a) When starting for some work if one accosts on oil presser — *Teli*, it is considered inauspicious.

(b) When moving out if a one eyed man is met with it is inauspicious.

(c) When going out, if any one sneezes in front of you it is inauspicious.

(d) If some body sneezes from behind and if the person at whose back sneezing has taken place, happens to be going for a bath or to take his meals, it is considered auspicious.

'Chhehkat Khayio: Chhehkat nahaiyo
Chhehkat par ghar na jayio'.

translated it would read:

You may eat or bathe after sneezing but do not go to another house after sneezing.

(e) If a crow, crows from the roof top, it is considered unlucky.

(f) If a cat crosses across one's path while one is going out, then it is considered unlucky.

(g) Women bringing empty pots from opposite direction bring bad luck.

(h) A cat's, dog's or jackal's cry is regarded as unlucky.

(i) If a crow cries at night it is inauspicious.
A verse describes these supertitions very aptly.

"Aye panhariya, chhehkat nikri chhelo panhariya,
Magre bolo kaag — keto phute sir ki gagar,
Nai rahe nadi ba-paar.
literally — Oh maiden! after sneezing
starts the maiden for filling water —
and from the roof top
crows a crow — Either will the pitcher on the head break or she may remain on the other side of the river.

Two incidents dog her efforts. She starts with a sneeze and a crow crows from the house top. These are omnious signs. Perhaps it will be the pitcher which will break or she may have to remain on the other side, and all because of the sneeze and crowing.

No reasons are given.

The Evil Spirits

The villagers have a faith in the evil spirits. Evil spirits arise where people die unnatural deaths or die young. They feel that these persons assume the form of evil spirits and harrass others. These spirits have their special jurisdictions in isolated places or burning *ghats*. They claim to see these spirits flitting across some hills on the western side of the village. Their dress is all white. One reported case is as follows:—

A married woman (mother of two children) while going alone towards the fields on the western side suddenly began shouting and stating that she had been seized by ghosts, who threatened to kill her. A few villagers ran to her rescue and later one quack by a magic cure cured her completely. The victim complained that the evil spirit which seized her wanted to kill her alleging that she (the woman) had mal-treated her (the evil spirit) in a previous life and that now she would kill her.

Incidentally this also underlines their faith in the transmigration of souls, and *Karma*. The villagers believe that a soul is not destroyed and one has to pass through a cycle, of births and deaths. The beliefs narrated apply to all sections of the population.

Village Organisation

There is a village *patel* or the headman appointed by the Collector of the district. He is an Ahir and is primarily responsible for the collection of land revenue and other revenues due to the Government. Besides this he also keeps an eye over the happenings in the village and nearly always is a man of good standing and influence. He is paid remuneration at the scale given at page 28.

He must however receive Rs. 36/- which is the bare minimum.

The *patel* is assisted by a mehtar *choukidar* who stays in Murera village and is paid Rs. 18/- by the Government. There is no separate *choukidar* for the village. Owing to recent dacoities in the region, the villagers have hired a sweeper who possesses a muzzle loading gun, to patrol the village at night time. He is paid Re. 1/- by each family every month. Two villagers keep the vigil along with them. The village Panchayat is at Murera. There are three *panchas* or councillors from the village. The villagers appear

rather dissatisfied at the working of the Panchayat. They feel that the councillors are partial and the Panchayat has not been able to do any useful work. The location of the Panchayat about one and half mile has been the reason for annoyance. Apart from this there are individual differences. All this has lead to the reaction described above.

The Caste Panchayats

An Ahir elder recited the following verse:—
"Yadapi jug darrun dookh nana
Sabse Kathin Jaat apmana".

Although there are many grievous sorrows in this world but the most difficult is a caste insult. The stranglehold of caste is undisputed and every body is bound by its judgment.

All the castes have their caste Panchayats and in addition there is a general 'Village Panchayat' for deciding matters concerning the village. It is different from the Panchayats constituted under the Act.

A brief description of the caste Panchayat for each castes is given below:

Nai, Bhats

There is only one family hence in the village there is no Panchayat. The Bhat affirmed that there was a caste Panchayat among but he had never been in one nor attended any. The Nai's position is similar, but he emphasised two points strongly: (1) whatever decision the Panchayat may take, the same is communicated to him through friends or relations forthwith. (2) matters pertaining to inter-caste relationships are invariably decided by the Caste Panchayat e. g., whether the Nais would shave a particular caste was a matter for the whole Panchayat to decide. The Nai did not know any more details.

The Gadariyas

The Gadariyas have formed a caste Panchayat in the village and no other persons of the community from outside villages are called by them. They claim that they have bigger caste Panchayats, but since neither have they been called by such Panchayat, nor have they called any *panchas*, so they do not know about the working or the composition of these Panchayats. Whenever disputes occur among themselves, they gather all the heads of families and settle the quarrels. These quarrels are of trifling nature: e. g., quarrels between two families over children's behaviours: damage caused by goats or sheep; domestic quarrels etc. Most of these quarrels are of minor nature and the Panchayat settles these amicably.

There are only two Kachhi households in the village. There is no Panchayat. They are not invited to any other caste Panchayat of their own.

The Ahir Panchayat

The Ahirs have a fairly powerful caste Panchayat. In the tahsil, this is perhaps the only village where Ahirs are found in some numbers. It appears that they have (a) a Panchayat consisting only of the residents of the village; (b) a Panchayat in which *panchas* are invited from other villages: this is known as *Ghar Panchayat*, perhaps derived from the Hindi word *Ghera* or circle. The Panchayat (a) usually deals with minor disputes between the residents of the village. Such disputes relate to observance of customs at various festivals, minor matrimonial offences, minor land disputes between members of the caste, partition of lands etc. The Panchayat (b) is summoned when a bull or cow is killed or in a murder case or in offence punishable with expulsion from the caste.

Village Caste Panchayat

Constitution: All the heads of the families are invited to it. When two or more brothers live separately only the eldest is invited. The meeting is held near the temple or in somebody's house. No President is nominated for the meeting. The complainant usually visits everybody. He may have to offer *biris* tobacco or *pan-supari* to those who attend. Apart from this he incurs no other expenditure. In the meeting general discussion about the matter referred to takes place and a solution, usually a compromise, is arrived at. Here are some cases:

(1) 'X' (27) of this village, had been to a place in Karera tahsil and from there brought a married woman to stay with him. The village caste Panchayat met for the villagers were annoyed because one of them had enticed another man's wife. In the Panchayat they obtained the views of 'X' and his mistress who deposed that she came with consent and was happy to stay with 'X'. This salvaged the village reputation. They allowed him to retain the woman, provided he gave feast to the caste. 'X' complied and the matter was closed. The former husband in the present case made no claim to his wife.

(2) 'A' is a cultivator and has a well in his field. He intends to irrigate it by *charas* or leather bucket drawn by a pair of bullocks. As the bullocks drew

the charas in their follow through they crossed into 'B's fields. 'B' objected and a Panchayat was called. The Panchayat suggested a compromise on a little payment but 'B' refused. The matter is still before Panchayat, in the meanwhile 'A's fields have not been irrigated.

(3) The families of 'C' and 'D' were on unfriendly terms. During a daughter's marriage the different families in the caste, helped each other by doing all types of odd jobs. C's daughter was to be married. 'D' and other relations of his refused to visit C's place, let alone perform minor tasks. The other members of the caste knowing about this tension, prevailed upon them to call a Panchayat and compose their differences. On intervention the Panchayat succeeded in composing the differences and 'D's' family participated in the function.

(4) When a marriage party returns to its village after the marriage, the bride-groom's father is supposed to treat the members of the *barat* to a dinner. 'E' refused. In future whenever there was such a feast in the village, 'E' was excluded. He was repentant and approached the Panchayat for appropriate punishment and reinstatement. The Panchayat demanded a feast and 'E' complied.

It would have been observed that this Panchayat is convened to settle minor differences or quarrels of the members of the community in the village. The villagers find it convenient and economical.

The Ghar Panchayat

A *ghar* is comprised of ten villages in which Ahir community lives in the region. *Ghar* Panchayat is convened to consider the expulsion from caste which is a very serious matter. In cases where a cow or a bull has been killed a *ghar* Panchayat could be called. Killing of cows and bulls is a very serious offence and is ofen punishable by expulsion from the caste.

Its Constitution

Two *panchas* from each village will be called. The *panch* should be a man of good status, well-to-do economically and of elderly age (about 40-45 years of age) and should command respect in the village. The person who is suspected of having committed the offence, is sent to summon the *panchas;* where he has absconded or is not otherwise available, his relatives will be required to summon them. The intimation is verbal. The *panchas,* usually have heard of the case of incident, for which they are required to preside. Sometimes the messenger is asked questions and he supplies information regarding calling of the Panchayat. The Panchayat then assembles in the village where the incident has taken place.

In Richhari the 'Ghar' Panchayat has not yet assembled but residents of the village have been invited to attend it on a couple of occasions. It is not often that such Panchayat meetings are convened. In the past 10 years they have only been convened twice within this *ghar.* When the Panchayat assembled one of the *panchas* acts as their spokesman and begins asking the accused to explain his position and conduct. The accused then tries to explain the circumstances and judgment is pronounced. The caste judgments are very sacrosanct.

A typical case is given below:

A woman drowned herself in a well. The police enquiries ruled it to be a suicide. The caste-fellows began to accuse her husband as having driven the deceased to suicide and insisted that he call a village Panchayat, who advised that the *ghar Panchayat* be called. The *ghar Panchayat* was called and he was held responsible for having mal-treated the wife. The Panchayat heard the non-applicant and finally decided that the entire caste would exclude him, until he married his daughters. The marriage of daughters being considered a holy duty and hence sufficient atonement.

The villagers have great faith in justice meted out to them at the hands of caste Panchayat. They admit that in these Panchayats the accused comes out with the truth more often than in the courts. The punishments given are carried out for there is no appeal and the fear of expulsion very potent.

Chamars

For deciding minor disputes the Chamars call a local village Panchayat consisting of all the heads of tht family. In the village eleven *panchas* constitute the Panchayat. For deciding major offences like the killing of a cow or murder the bigger caste Panchayat is called. This consists of about 50 persons called from about 15 villages. These villages lie as far as Datia, and Bhitarwar, 30 miles by road but less by a cross country path. *Panchas* from the places are called because the Chamars of the village have relations in the tract and further there are more Chamar households in this area.

The *panchas* should be of unimpeachable character, generally respected and of good standing. The chamar leader or *mukhiya* of the village attends as the *panchas.*

The proceedings are similar to those of Ahirs. An important case has been discussed earlier. The expenses for convening a big Panchayat is borne by the person who calls it.

Inter-Hamlet Relationship

These are very limited since, Datia satisfies most of their economic needs and it is only about 3/4 miles away. Apart from Datia they go to Murera which is the Panchayat headquarters. Another place with which the villagers remain in contact is Sinawal, the railway station being Sonagir. Sonagir is a centre of Jain pilgrimage. In *Phalgun* a great fair is held and it is well attended by Jains from far off places. During this period the villagers hire out their bullock carts and earn a little money. But for these, their contacts with other villagers are very limited. (Please see plates XXXI and XXXII).

INTER-CASTE RELATIONSHIP

Ahirs and other Castes

The Brahmin ranks highest in heirarchy. The Ahirs along with Brahmins observe most of the Hindu festivals. Their relations in the village are cordial. The Brahmin will eat only *pacca* food at an Ahir's place, and drink freshly drawn well water in cleaned utensil. A Brahmin is called to officiate at birth and marriage rituals.

Ahirs and Chamars

Their relations are cordial. The Chamars will eat *katcha* and *pacca* at an Ahir's place, but will not sit on the cot nor will an Ahir offer one. The Ahirs will not eat anything at Chamar's place. The Chamar will do all petty odd jobs for Ahirs.

Ahirs — Nai — Gadariya — Bhat and Kachhi

An Ahir will drink water with any caste but will only partake of *pacca* food with them. Their relations are cordial. Only the Bhat will sit with Ahir: the others will sit below him.

Chamars and other Castes

The Chamars are at the lowest level of social hierarchy. A Brahmin will neither drink nor eat with them. At a marriage in Chamar households the Brahmin will go and accept the rations and other provisions but not cooked food. The food will be cooked by himself. An Ahir will not attend a wedding at Chamar's house. The Nai will do every service for the Chamars but would neither sit with them nor partake food cooked by them. He usually allies himself with the Brahmin and eats from the food cooked by the latter. The Gadariyas, Kachhis and Bhats like the Ahirs will not go to a Chamar family in a marriage.

Nai, Gadariya and Kachhi with others

In the caste hierarchy Nais, Kachhis and Gadariyas rank after each other. Among themselves and with Ahirs and Brahmins they eat *katcha* and *pacca* food. The Nai will serve these persons willingly and without feeling superior.

Bhats and others

The Bhat occupies some what dubious position, whereas he would like to regard himself like a Brahmins but the others are not prepared to accept him at that level. The Brahmin and Ahir will only take *pacca* food with him, but the others viz, Nai, Gadariya, Kachhi, Chamar would eat *katcha* and *pacca* foods with him.

Reform Measures

Some of the reform measures introduced have already been dealt with under various heads. It is proposed to take up the remaining ones now. There is no family planning at present nor are there any indications that very soon one such programme will be taken up. The males are agreed on the limiting family but also realise that such a thing is not possible. They are against any methods for limiting the growth. All aids and methods according to them are unnatural hence they should not be followed for unnatural things bring one to grief.

The women feel that a family should not exceed four children. Too frequent child births ruin their health and cause difficulty in feeding. They feel that each child should be so spaced as to have a three year's age, difference. In practice, however, this is not so. The average age difference between successive children in half a dozen cases was less than 2 years only and in one case 3 years. How the latter was brought about was not explained. The females avered that it was nutural with some women. A spacing of three years by all standards is good. It was obvious that births were beyond their control. It was a phenomenon going by accidents.

The women while agreeing upon limiting their families are unwilling to use any contraceptive or other devices. They fear that it will injure them in some form. The use may lead to barreness or divine wrath may be incurred by them. According to themself re-

straint can only be the solution. So far no efforts on the account have been made by any official or non-official agencies. Family planning then, is not practised in the village.

N. E. S. Block and the Village

N. E. S. Block was declared open in Datia on 2-10-53 but Richhari was not included in it. It is now in its second stage. The village has now after 2-10-60 been included in the Block, but practically nothing has been done so far. The villagers do not know who the V. L. W. (Village Level Worker) is. The Gram Sevika visited the village only once and that too, recently in connection with the present survey. In 1960-61 two grants were made by the Block, Rs. 100/- were sanctioned for a well and 400/- for constructing a small wrestling shed. Both works were in progress in the summer of 1962. Barring a few villagers (who can be counted on fingers tips) the rest know nothing about the Block or its activities. Only one mile away lies village Murera which has been declared as the best developed village of the Block area. It is a long one mile, if one views the comparative neglect of village Richhari.

The villagers complained that in the Block Development Council they had no member. Member from Murera succeeded in getting more favours. It may not be true, but it will really need some explaining the fact that within one mile of each other lie the best developed and probably, the not at all developed village.

PLATE XXXIII

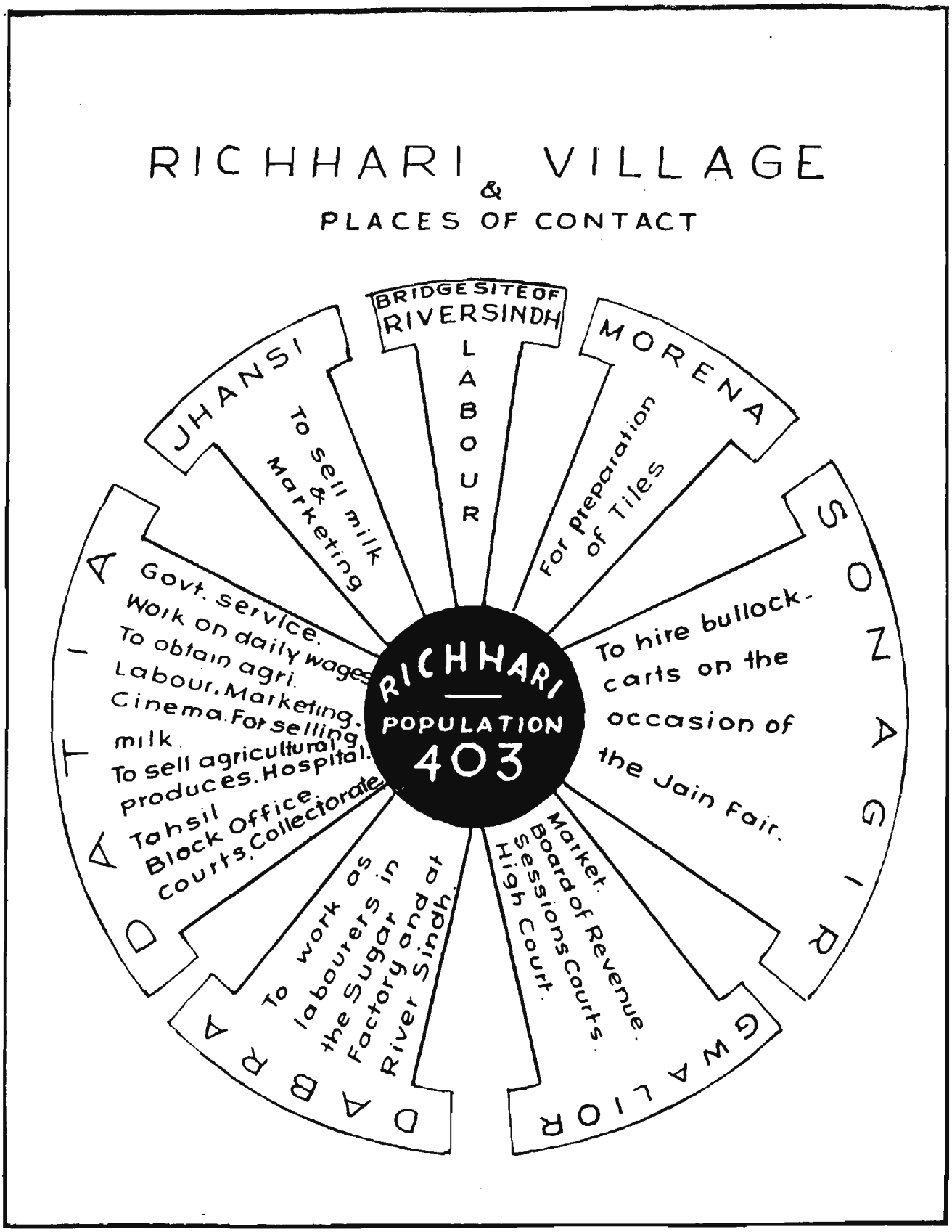
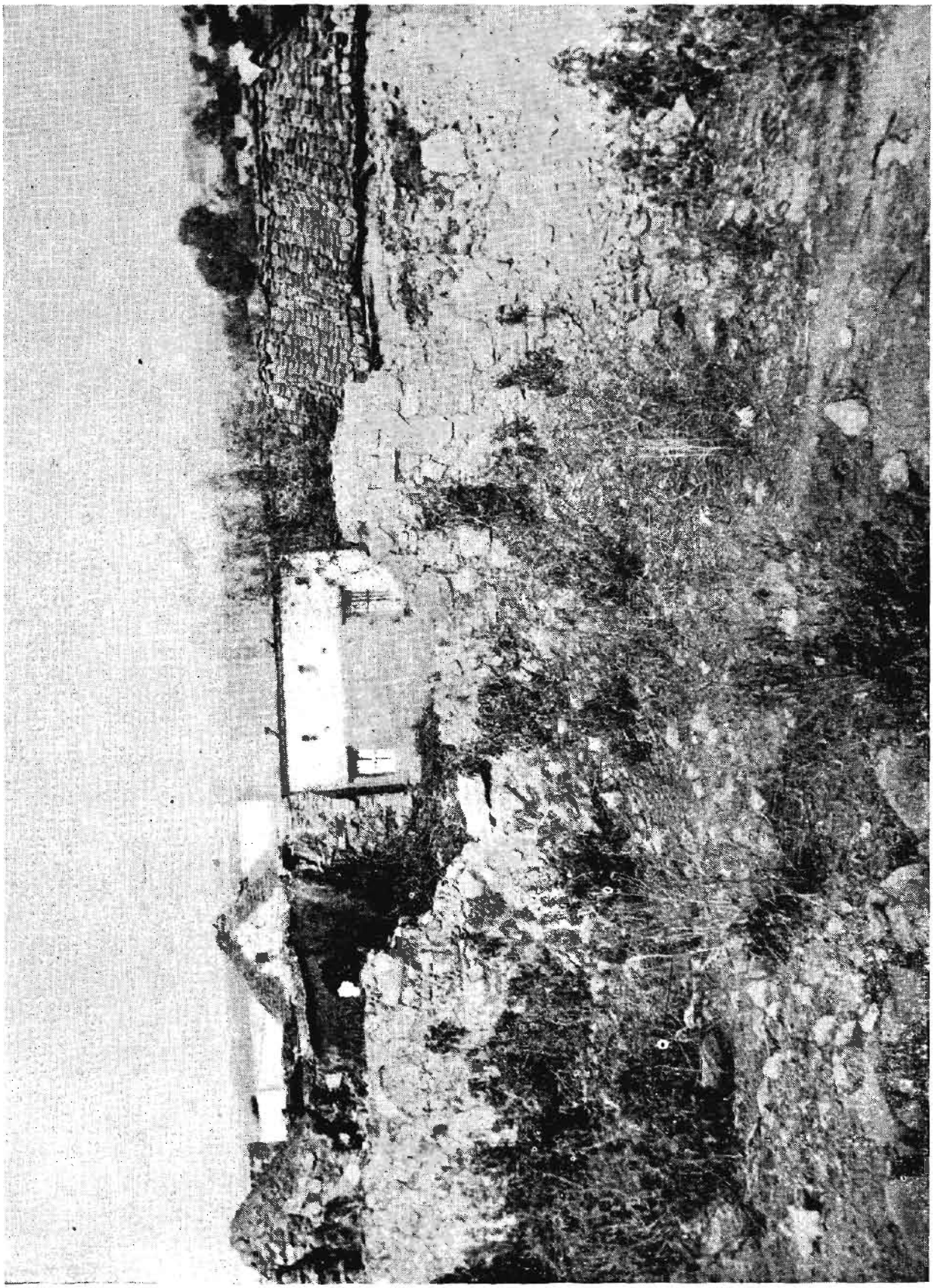


PLATE XXXIV



Remnants of the deserted Brahmin household.

PLATE XXXIII

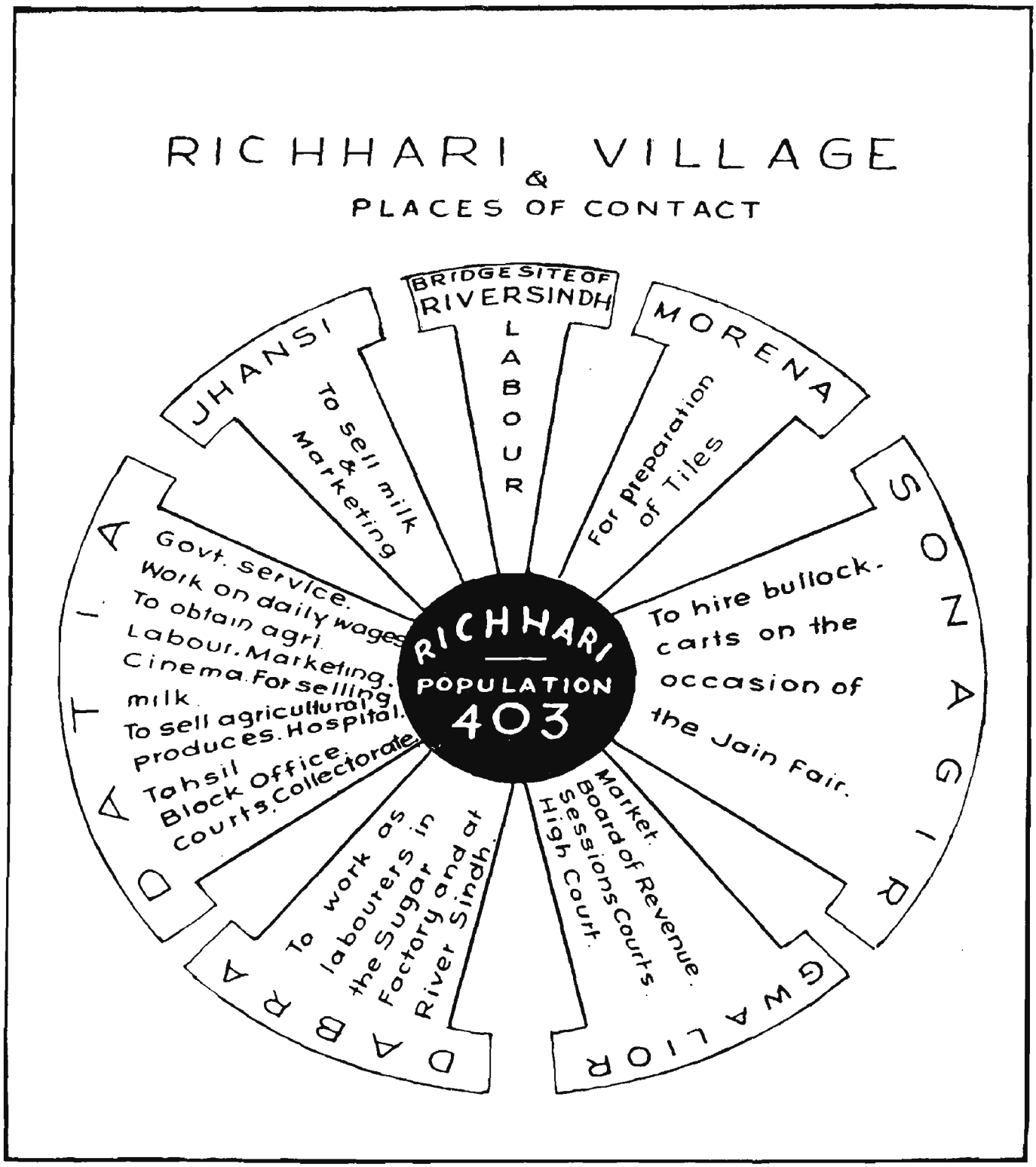
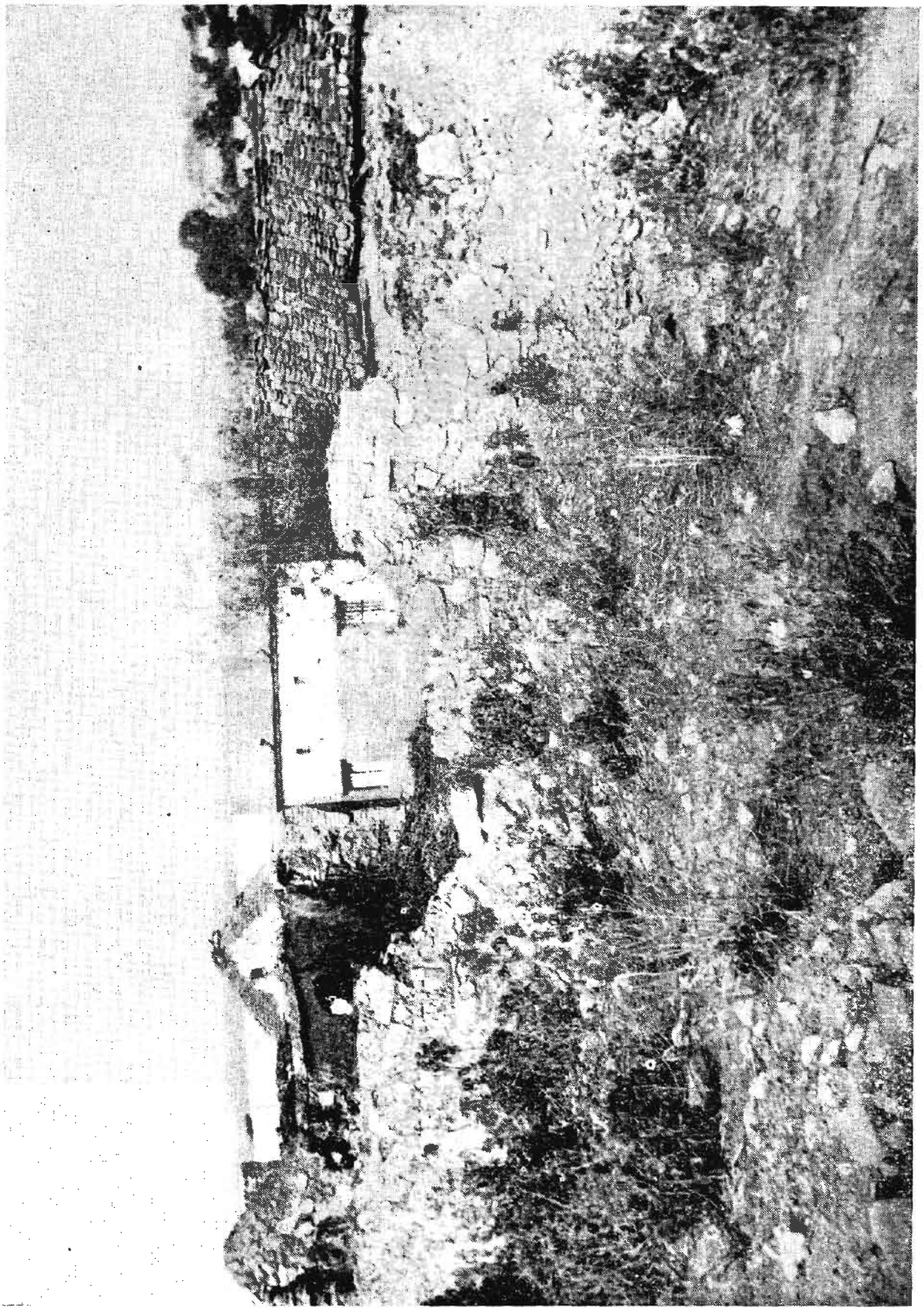


PLATE XXXIV



Remnants of the deserted Brahmin household.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Richhari; A Bundelkhand Village

Richhari reflects the atmosphere of a typical Bundelkhand village where Hindi is spoken with Bundelkhandi dialect and the people sing the *Alha*, extol and worship Hardaul. Materially backward, it has lately not made any economic progress. Socially the castes still cling to the groupism, the newer concept of a society above casteism is yet to appear on the scene. The people hardly seem prepared for it. 'There lies our past; why change it'? sums up their attitude towards some of the social changes. The roots of caste system have gone deeper than some of the reformers are inclined to imagine.

The Caste Barriers

Although the above may be generally true, yet a certain amount of liberal views are seeping through the fissures of steel-frame—that was caste system. To begin with they are showing greater tolerance for lower castes. Chamars fifteen years ago were a much browbeaten, down-trodden caste. Today although they are not equated with the caste Hindus, yet they are sufficiently well treated and tolerated. The Chamars will not sit side by side with the other caste Hindus, prefering to sit a little below them. There is no tension amongst the villagers. Their relations among themselves and with other castes are quite good. Usually people are slow in accepting changes of a social nature and Richhari is no exception. The Ahirs were the former zemindars of the village and as such they employed Chamars for *begar* i. e., for forced labour and forced them to work for no payment. A Chamar was thus required to render personal services for no or very little payment. Forced labour was abolished by the Constitution: but it was quite sometime before the Chamars grew conscious of the abolition. When the Chamars grew conscious of this they began to evade the orders given to them and gradually grew bold enough and started refusing. This angered the Ahirs and they started with reprisals. On very slight pretext the Chamars were harrased and even beaten. If cattle belonging to Chamar entered an Ahir farm, he was badly beaten, but this was on an individual scale only. It never happened that Chamars or Ahirs indulged in an open fight. The hatred was there and kept simmering: but luckily no case of mass reprisal occured and there was never a state of continued uneasy tension between the two communities. A detailed note regarding the social changes of Chamars would be found in Appendix A, of Survey Report of Village Dikhatpura, Morena District.

When the Chamars refused to perform *begar* the Ahirs reacted in yet a different way. Heretofore for performance of *begar* a Chamar was invited for the dinner at the time of marriage. The Ahirs stopped inviting them. This in local parlance was known as *Notey band karna* (stopping invitations). As time went on the Ahirs probably realised that *begar* was a matter of past. The social reforms ushered in have come to stay and the Chamars rose towards a better status. Therefore, thought Ahirs, it is as well that they may be accepted in the society. As the initial anger frittered away, they started inviting the Chamars again to their feasts. So today, the Chamars are invited at the feast, but are made to sit separately, as in the past.

It would be idle to deny that prejudice against the Chamars has died down. Even today if a Chamar happens to touch a Brahmin inadvertently, specially in latter's home, the Brahmin would sprinkle a few drops of water over himself for purifying. The sprinkling should be done by some one who has not thus been pollutted. This done he regards himself clean. This is limited to one or two cases only. Yet while wrestling, such distinction is not observed. There are two Chamar boys who are the members of wrestling *akhara* and with them members of all castes fight without any inhibitions. Sports are a wonderful leveller and one is left to wonder at the mingled stuff, of which this 'prejudice' is made of.

When the Chamars announced their intention of giving up their traditional profession of skinning and flaying, the other castes specially the Brahmins and Ahirs were not much pleased. Their reaction was, that the Chamars are now trying to equal the other Hindus socially: a thing which appeared repugnant to them. Today the shoes that are worn are procured from Datia and Chamars have by their firm resolve demonstrated clearly that they are not going back to the days of skinning and flaying. Though prejudices

linger but their sharpness is taken away as time passes. This is the usual fate of a social reform but the thing that should be borne in mind is that half-hearted measures hardly satisfy and yield no results.

There was one fine feature of co-operation which was noticed in the Brahmin, Ahir and Kachhi communities. When any of them construct a house, the members of the other castes are called for lending a helping hand. This is done willingly and without any payment, the only condition followed is that whenever the other community desires such help it shall be forthcoming. No account for total number of days worked etc., is maintained. The only criteria is that there must be no refusal. The Chamars have not been included in this arrangement. Whenever their services are obtained, they are paid for in cash. From these inter-caste relationships, one may infer that though the village is unable to forget its caste structure yet the rigid walls of pride in ones own caste and prejudice against others are caving in, albeit very slowly.

The Economy of the Village

The economy remains primarily agricultural. Although the village is very well connected by road and rail road, yet there is no produce for which the village which could make use of these facilities. By and large the people are poor and lead a precarious existence. There appears not much scope for any small scale industry. There being neither any raw material nor manpower for it: but growing contacts with Datia unmistakably point to some tendency of the population to go over to the cities in search of employment or for trade. Datia 3 miles, by short cut Dabra 16 miles and Jhansi (21) amply satisfy the above requirements. There was a proposal for constructing a canal from Ramsagar, a tank about 5 miles away: but the same has not materialised, although the villagers were required to surrender some portion of their lands. The villagers feel that with the canals passing through their village their economic lot would be much improved. There appears little possibility of this at present. Agriculture being the main stay of the village economy, it deserves more attention than has hitherto been given.

The Fear of Dacoits

Datia district like Gwalior, Morena, Bhind and Shivpuri is also a dacoit infested one. Towards Seondha tahsil where the forest is thicker the dacoit gangs are more active. Village Richhari has had more than its quota of visitations from the dacoits. Twice in the year 1960-61 the dacoits raided the village, once ransacking an Ahir household and on the other occasion a Brahmin household. The Brahmin has abandoned the house, which was on the outward fringe of village, on the sloping hill. The Ahir household was looted on the next day after Deewali in 1960, and gold silver ornaments worth about Rs. 3,000 to 4,000 along with clothes were taken away. The dacoits about 8 to 10 in number, two armed with guns, rest with *lathis* and swords, appeared at about 9.00 P. M. . Some villagers had retired to bed. The household consisted to twelve members, four being adult males. One of these was absent on that day. The family had retired to bed. The dacoits came from the western side and climbed the walls opened fire in the air to scare away the villagers. Some of the dacoits descended and began searching, beating the women, extorting ornaments and information from them. In about 10-15 minutes when they had collected enough and the villagers had raised a hue and cry throwing stones and opening fire with muzzle loading gun at the dacoits, the gang took to its heels. The men and women of the raided house had been beaten up, no serious injuries however, were suffered by them. The property has not been recovered no arrests have been made. The villagers feel that it was not the work of a regular gang but some anti-social elements of some nearby village.

This dacoity was followed by another depradation at Brahmin's house in March 1961. The abandoned house is shown in plate XXXIV. There were 8 men in the dacoits party, 4 armed with guns. The inmates of the raided house were about 5 persons, one elderly male and rest were women and children. The dacoits raided the house in the early part of the night. The villagers could not come to rescue. Cash and valuables worth Rs. 1,000/- were taken. It was on this point that the Brahmin remarked that a dacoit visit is followed, by two more visits of the same tribe once by the relations and the second is of course the police. This view is also corroborated from an old record which says:—

"Side by side with all these tyrannical arrangements, the police of the State was far from reliable, it indulged in extortions and it was a common occurrence that on the report of a theft being made to the police, the police officer and his staff, would be the forced guests of the men on whom the theft had been committed and he would be fortunate if he escaped with the cost of hospitality only and was not made to pay the police officer and his staff, for the trouble

they had taken in coming over to his place for enquiry".* Like old soldiers, the police habits never die.

Once when the Investigator was staying in the village, some suspicious characters about eight to ten in number were seen moving in the fields. The villagers thereupon collected together, shouted for help from the nearby villages and opened up firing with the only muzzle loader in the village. The suspicious characters took to heels. Today in the village there are ten guns, all muzzle loaders and the villagers are more than ever. confident of themselves in facing the dacoits. They are quite courageous and would love to put up a fight. Each day two or three persons keep a careful vigil and sleep with loaded guns. Besides this the villagers have employed a whole time night watchman who possesses a gun. He along with two or three other villagers who keep changing their duties patrol the area. Recently there have been no outrage.

During the General Elections in February 1962, while assigned some duties regarding polling arrangements, I reached a village at about 11 p. m. in the jeep. The doors of all the houses in the village were bolted and on the top of two double storied buildings stood some persons with guns in their hands (one was D. B. 12 Bore and the other Muzzle loading gun) who challenged us when the vehicle stopped. We disclosed our identities but they would not believe it. Finally the tahsil peon who accompanied me got down and recognising him in the powerful jeep light the persons came down to talk. They warned us against careless movements at night, because in many villages, villagers were guarding their houses in above manner. It is not uncommon to see villagers depending on themselves in such manner in these regions.

The facts that stand out prominently are the villagers live in constant fear of lawless elements in some places and in a few cases they are making efforts to defend themselves. This augurs well for the growth of village leadership and a spirit of self reliance.

Regarding Dacoities

Most of the dacoities could be reduced to three motivating factors. (1) Personal vendetta (2) Kidnapping for ransom (3) the regular dacoity for obtaining some money, gold and ornaments. Personal vendetta is perhaps the strongest reason for committing dacoities. It starts with killing the enemy and ends up by robbery, setting up a vicious circle of revenge and murders. There can be infinite number of reasons for seeking vengeance. It may start with a simple dispute over the boundary of fields, or an exchange of hot words and then may flare up into a fight. Usually the fight is not decisive and hence the parties nourish a grudge against each other. Bearing grudge is like a smouldering fire which may flare up at any moment. When a quarrel has taken place, the aggrieved party seeks support of some friends, who usually belong to his caste. Thus a gang is formed. These persons then plan their move carefully and either way lay the victim or attack him directly. In sheer desperation they would attack the village and kill the person. This may be followed by robbery.

Having committed a crime of the above type the assailant takes to the jungle lives a precarious life dodging the police or the victim's people, now in search of him for revenge or the informers of the police. Since to do all this he needs money; he may take to kidnapping for ransom. This mode of offence has lately been greatly preferred over others, because according to the dacoits this is comparatively a 'harmless' method. A person who can pay a good ransom price is selected or it could be any member of the above person's family who may become the target. Having made a selection, efforts are made to trap him or beguile him into the hands of the miscreants. In case the intended victim is in the habit of going out, then he is conveniently picked up and a message is sent with the ransom demand. The villagers rarely complain to the police about the ransom money. After a day or two, negotiations for reducing the amount of ransom money are started. More often than not, a bargain is struck, the money is paid and one fine morning the kidnapped man returns to the village. In whispers, the whole incident dies out and the unfortunate man feels that "Its wonderful to be alive, after all". In the police registers since the kidnapped person has returned not much remains to be done, for the case would be put up when the accused is apprehended. All concerned apparently appear satisfied.

In a few cases money is not easily forthcoming. These may end up in either the man being killed or released. He may be released only when the dacoits come to know that he is not in a position to pay because he lacks the means, or perhaps he was wrongly abducted, being mistaken for someone else. Most of

* Extract from "Administrative Reforms introduced in Datia State" from 1 Aug. 1914 to 31 July 1916 by H. H. the Maharaja Lokendra Govind Singh Bahadur. Prepared and submitted informally on the occasion of the visit of the Hon. O. V. Bosanquet. C. S. I., C. I. E., I. C. S., A. G. G., G. I. .

the dacoits would not commit more mischief than what appears as being absolutely necessary. Mischief, after all is a 'precious virtue' and should not be thrown away. The kidnapping for ransom appears to have become a very popular practice these days, because it achieves the purpose at comparatively less expense and assures a continued existence.

Those gangs indulging in dacoity for pure acquisition of wealth are comparatively few. Very often behind the screen of these bigger gangs some undesirable elements group together and commit a dacoity. It was one such gang which is said to have committed the dacoity in the village. These persons are what may be called comparative amateurs at the old profession, but some how manage to thrive because of the rather complex back-ground in which they operate.

Very often when gangs are pushed hard by the police in Gwalior and Bhind districts, they seek refuge in Seondha and Datia tahsils. Datia has not been responsible for producing any outstanding dacoit gangs, (without any regrets) like Bhind or Morena or Shivpuri but it reflects truly the general conditions of the region in these matters, and dacoity is thus very much a part and parcel of these difficult environments.

The Village Leadership

The village leadership has thus far remained with the Ahir *patel*, essentially because he is an old man, and old age commands respect, he is fair, honest and is otherwise impartial. The entire village consults him in all important matters pertaining to its welfare. Besides this he was the erstwhile zamindar and is still the biggest land holder in the village. At times he would also oblige people by advancing loans to them although he is not a regular money-lender. His is a case where the traditional leadership has continued. The village wrestler Jagdish Singh also hails from his family and because most of the youngsters are under his sway, this helps to continue the authority of the *patel*. No fissiparious tendencies are noticeable. The *patel's* authority is usually accepted and apart from this, the villagers are bold, sturdy and self reliant as was indicated in their capacity to organise their defence against dacoits. This speaks of their dash, initiative and flair for leadership.

Panchayats

The Panchayat under whose jurisdiction the village is situated is at Murera. The villagers are rather critical of the working of the Panchayat although village Murera received the Block award of being the best village of the Block. The main complaint, noticed was that the village *panchas* are never invited to the Panchayat meeting and the Panchayat has not been helpful in fulfilling some of the demands of the village, *viz.*, for the village *akhara* (wrestling arena), a grant has been made by the Block but the Panchayat has not done anything to get it constructed. They are rather critical of the *sarpanch*, who according to them keeps neglecting Richhari and pays more attention to Murera. It appears that they do not have any healthy respect for the Panchayat.

Block Agency

Richhari has not received much attention from the Block authorities. The oldest Block in the district was Datia Block formed on 2-10-53. It comprised of 155 villages spread over in Seondha and Datia tahsils. Richhari was not included in it. Later on 2-10-1960 a new Block at Seondha was started and all villages of Seondha tahsil which had been included in Datia block were transferred to this new Block. In the meanwhile Datia block entered stage second in April 1959. Richhari therefore came under the Block in 1960. In fact most of the villagers do not even know who the Village Level Worker or their Gram Sevak is? The above is also true of other Block staff. Till about the middle of 1962 the Block had only given two grants *viz.*, one of Rs. 400/- for constructing an *akhara* (wrestling arena) and (ii) loan for purchasing bullocks. The villagers know very little regarding the Block activities. Enquiries reveal that excepting for Social Education Organiser (S. E. O.) and a Gram Sevika, none from the Block has ever paid a visit. In the nearby village compost pits, demonstration plots were laid out but yet no body informed nor showed these to the villagers at Richhari. In this respect they feel that they have been badly neglected. According to them the Block authorities are inclined to lean heavily on the advice of the *sarpanch* and the *sarpanch* is not very helpful to Richhari.

Regarding Panchayati Raj

They did not appear very enthusiastic about the Panchayati Raj. Accordng to them it will increase quarrels and create party feelings. The party in power will be able to do everything it wants. Those who are in opposition would suffer. They also feel that it would lead to corruption for the *panchas* can easily be won over.

The feeling that elections for Panchayats will in-

variably lead to quarrels among different groups and castes, is very strong. At present, they see little advantage accruing from Panchayati Raj.

From a sleepy village in erstwhile Datia state to a small undistinguished but more wakeful than ever in Datia district of the new State of Madhya Pradesh, the journey has been long, arduous and eventful. It could be summarised under a few sub heads.

Cultivation

There has been progress in all directions although much still remains to be done. The conditions of the tenantry, thanks to progressive legislation and better prices, has improved. The condition during the early period of the present century is best described in the words of the Ruler.

"The Administration[1] of the village was entrusted to a *Zamindar* or in fact to a number of *zamindars* who as *Thekadars* or *Ijardars* of the village were responsible to the State for payment of its land revenue and other taxes. They were at liberty to enhance or reduce the demand of each holding for virtually every man by whom the land was held was a mere tenant at will liable every season to be turned out to give place to any other man that might offer more for the holding.

The lower classes were not much better than slaves of the *zamindars* and had to do all their work in *begar* with only a nominal remuneration: the zemindar possessing power of inflicting any punishment on these poor people short of death or grievous hurt: any attempt on their part to seek redress in State Courts was sure to cause their ruin on account of the influence the *zamindar* possessed: the fallow land of each village was the property of the *zamindar* and even grazing was not available to the other cultivators except on payment of dues demanded by *zamindar*. Thus it came to happen that the best land in each village had passed in the hands of the *zamindars* and no better class of cultivators except Chamars and other low Classes could thrive in any village, in this way as the *zamindar* became the sole master of the village, the rights of *zamindari* became exceedingly valuable and gradually passed in the hands of rich people irrespective of the class of population that inhabited the village with the result that no sympathy existed between, grasping rulers and the degraded peasantry".

As would be obvious from the above, the cultivators were in a sad plight. Their only hope lay in being on the right side of the *zamindar*, who barring a few happy exceptions were generally capricious and had little interest in the welfare of the tenantry. The above report related to a period when things were at their worst. Soon thereafter the system of *thekedari* was abolished and gradually the revenue administration was brought on the lines of *ryotwari* pattern. Today the land is held directly by the tenant from the Government and he pays fixed rent to the *patel*. Thus from capricious whims of a *zamindar* to settled pattern of land tenure, has been a long journey full of suffering and hardships.

Agriculture

The district being mostly agricultural the need for improving the pattern of methods cannot be over emphasised. The village has still to be acquainted with the use of fertilisers, digging of compost pits and better implements. Distribution of the improved variety of seeds would help the problem. Greater attention for laying demonstration plots seems necessary. The villagers had been given the impression that irrigation facilities for them are just around the corner. This hope has not yet been fulfilled, and because chances of its being fulfilled do not appear bright frustration is writ large among the people.

Literacy, General Education and Culture

The literacy figures show an improvement from the past. Among Ahirs and Brahmins all male children are attending schools. Some of them even go to Datia daily to attend them. Among Gadariyas, and Chamars the tendency is to make use of the children for doing various tasks at home. They look after the cattle, and help in other miscellaneous operations. They do not send them to school because they feel that children would be more useful in the farm. Few girls are sent to the school but they do not seem to favour female education. No news-paper is received in the village. There is no radio set. In fact the villagers feel sore at the *sarpanch* for not making the radio set available for 15 days in a month as per rules. No villager seems interested in catching up with the news when the school master comes from Datia, he usually brings some local news which are spread over the village. Some times the boys also bring news from Datia.

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[1]. The Brief summary of Administrative Reforms introduced in Datia State (1 Aug. 1914 to 31 July 1916) by H. H. Maharaja Lokendra Bahadur Singh, prepared and submitted informally on the occasion of the visit of the Hon., O. V. Bosanquet C. S. I., C. I. E., I. C. S. Agent to the Governor General in Central India. pp. 1 to 5.

The villagers are fond of singing to the accompaniment of *dholak, manjira* and harmonium. The theme is devotional. All communities join in these songs. Women only sing at the time of some marriage and that too in a group. Men however would get together some time in the month of *Phalgun, Shravan, Bhado* and sing. There is however no outstanding musician but every body joins in and though to a purist it may have little to please, the joy they feel is unmistakable.

Apart from music wrestling is the only other activity in which the whole village appears interested.

Their Views on various other matters

Dowry System

This system does not seem to prevail in its accepted sense. Although every body is 'Status conscious' and gives according to his means yet no pre-conditions are stipulated. Even the Brahmins in the village do not complain of being oppressed by it. This however must not give an impression that no dowry is given with bride. Every father of the bride feels it his moral duty to give the best to bride, but this is limited by his means. The other party however makes no demands but would not spare the bride or her father if sufficient presents are not given and would mock and insult the bride's people. This tends to lower the prestige of the bride's father and locally it is known as *nak kat gai* or 'nose has been cut'.

Family Planning

They have no faith in family planning. It cannot be morally justified, for children are the gift of God and we must not come in the way. The efforts at family planning according to them are ill conceived and all efforts are not likely to yield any results *"Is se hota kya hai"* i.e., What happens with this?

The Lady Health Visitor was also given a suitable reply on above lines by the women. The people maintained that in cultivations it is these children who would be of some help and so they are necessary. They did not appear worried at the growing population's staggering demands. Their reply was of very philosophical fatalism *viz.*

"Bhagwan jis ko chonch dega"
(God whom beak gives)
"Use choong bhi dega"
(Him feed also gives)

Literal rendition given above. Translated it means to whom God gives a beak, him it will also feed. Family planning is good only because it provides employment to some needy persons.

Administration

They appeared rather critical about the administrative set up. Their main complaint was that in order to get things done, one had to "pay" or rather grease the palm. They said that this was true whether one wanted a bag of cement, a sheet of galvanised iron, a bed in the hospital, a tacavi loan for well or rehat or an adjournment in a case or making a complaint at a police station. It appeared that they seemed to emphasise that corruption has increased in almost all spheres of public administration.

When told that it takes two even for corruption and so why do they offer bribe? The reply, a curt one was equally devasting "nothing would ever be done in the normal way and because we must have things so we have to find ways and means to get it: and this is the only way".

A wordly wise reply, but otherwise a sad commentary. As compared to the State times they concede that they are far better off both materially, and as men they are given more respect, treated humanely and not burdened *begar* or other such tasks. All this they concede but *coup de-grace* came with a counter question to me. It was "But does this make your administration less corrupt or would you justify corruption because of it"?

The Summing Up

Richhari is one of the only few villages in Datia tahsil which has an Ahir majority. Often Richhari is referred to as *Ahiron-ki-Richhari*. The people are regarded as fairly brave having faced and resisted dacoits once. They have also organised their village defence on bold pattern. Once there were two or three persons in Datia State Army from the village and they have left indelible mark on the mode of life of the people. Jagdish Singh's father was a Sepoy with Datia Army for some time and along with a few others the villagers learnt to handle a gun with the result that 20/25 persons can now fire a gun. So far none has joined the Army: but about two or three persons appeared quite anxious in joining the same. They have already contributed Rs. 325 for N.D.F. . Wrestling has added to the strength and unity of the village. They are more confident and courageous now and are not afraid in moving out at nights or of dacoits. The people bold, courageous and industrious look towards future, not with a calm assurance, but with a feeling in which their is powerful under current of frustration; or perhaps it is in this that an inherent will to further prosperity and greater efforts lies.

APPENDIX

The Legend Regarding The Sun Temple

Maharaj Marut performed a 'Yagna' (a religious sacrifice) near Varanasi and invited all the Gods to it. The God of fire or Sun could not attend due to some skin disease. The Maharaj then told the assembled Brahmins that the presence of Sun was necessary and so the Brahmins recited *mantras* to call the Sun God. The Sun is stated to have told the Brahmins that they may go ahead with the 'Yagna' and make out a stone statue for him in which he would enter. This was done and the 'Yagna' completed. All the Gods dispersed but the Sun remained there.

After a long while, during the period of Jagat Guru Shankaracharya, one Amar Singh Seonra, who was extremely well versed in 'tantric' sciences, was, along with other pandits called by the Raja of Kashi. The Raja asked, as to what was the 'tithi' or day of the moon? All replied that it was *Amavasya* or moonless day but Seonra said that it was *poornima* or the full moon day. When asked to prove he did it by means of the stone — the statue left earlier. He placed the statue in the brass plate (*thali*) lifted it in the air and gave it a swirl. This caused light: something like moonlight and every body was bewildered. The Raja thereupon called the other pandits to tell them that Seonra was right. They protested and said that this was only an artificial light extending upto 12 Kos or about 24 miles only. A check was made and the protest found to be true. Seonra thereupon returned and carried along with him this Statue. He now came to Unao and left it near the village on the river bank.

Near Unao in Kunhecha village of Mau Tahsil in Jhansi district there lived a family of Jhijhotia Brahmins who were great devotees of Sun. One night in a dream, they were told that they should visit the village of Unao to see and be confronted with Sun God 'Bhaskar'. So they (two of them-brothers) came to Unao and stayed with a Kachhi who treated them hospitably.

Now in the village it so happened that the cow of a Lodhi milked itself at a particular spot. The Lodhi after observing it for a few days was so annoyed with it that he struck her a blow with a stick. The cow collapsed and died. The Lodhi was told in a dream that he should leave the village failing which he and his family would come to grief. The Lodhi left accordingly. The spot where the cow milked itself was a hallowed one as was revealed later.

The Brahmin having reached the Kachhi's place, again dreamt that they would see the Sun God underneath a 'big peepal tree'. Underneath this tree was the spot where the cow milked itself. The villagers pointed to the spot and the Brahmins dug for the statue, They found it buried and restored it. Soon the news spread around and pilgrims started pouring in and offered, money, sweets and other things at the spot. The Brahmins became the pujaris and the Kachhi with whom they stayed did the cleaning. This went on for some time.

It is said that the Peshwa's skin disease was cured and in gratitude he wanted to construct a temple costing Rs. 1,25,000 on the bank of the river. The work was started but the ruler of Datia grew suspicious about the intentions of the Peshwa. The work was therefore stopped. After some time Datia rulers got it completed. The Peshwa however got the temple constructed at Bithoor on the Ganga. It was later decided to apportion some income for maintenance and up keep. The Brahmin family had multiplied itself and there were seven male members doing the *pooja*. They all got one share; another share was given to Kachhi for his services and two shares were set aside for defraying maintenance costs. Thus ten shares in all were made. This arrangement continued. Some additions were made from time to time by various partners.

To-day there is a registered trust which looks after the temple. There are about Rs. 36,000 held as assets.

Sources:—(1) Local enquiries;

(2) Pandit Rameshwar Prasad Panda, 'Netaji' Niwasi Gram Unao (Balaji), District Datia, M.P.

(3) 'Bikhara Vaibhav' by Mahant Shri Surveshwar Das.

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GLOSSARY

Abadi — A site reserved for houses in a village.

Agwani (Agvani) — The reception of marriage party.

Akhara — A place for wrestling.

Akshay-Tritiya — A Hindu festival observed on the eighteenth day of Vaisakh.

Alha-Udal — An epic song very popular in Bundelkhand. (The epic is known as Alha only).

Amavasya — The moonless day.

Andhan — The blind.

Angiya — A thin piece of cloth tailored in the brassiere style, tied towards the back by means of string.

Ankh — The eye.

Apmana — An insult.

Arhar — A pulse (*Cysticus cajan*).

Arhatiya — An agent acting as a middleman in grain market.

Babul — *Acacia arabica.*

Bachhiya — A calf.

Bahe — An arm.

Bahu — Daughter-in-law.

Bairin — An enemy (female).

Baithaks — An exercise to strengthen legs and stamina.

Bhajan — A devotional song.

Banjhan — A barren woman.

Bajra — *Pani cum spicatum.*

Bana — Early in the morning small *poories* are made to distribute among ladies called *bana.*

Band — To stop.

Bandi — A jacket from the shoulders to the waist made of thicker cotton.

Baniyas — A caste mostly engaged in business.

Ba-paar — The other side of the (river).

Bara — A silver ornament worn a little above the elbow.

Barahin — A woman from Basor caste.

Barat — A marriage party.

Basa — Stale food.

Basor (Basoran) — A scheduled caste in the district.

Batai — To divide : sharing of crop.

Batashas — A light and spongy cake of sugar.

Begar — Forced labour.

Bela-Dena — To give gifts in dowry.

Beri — *Zizyphus jujuba.*

Besan — Gram (*Cicev avistimum*) flour.

Bhagoni — A brass pot.

Bhagwan — The God.

Bhai — Brother.

Bhai-Dooj — A festival day; this day sister applies *teeka* on her brother's forehead and is given gifts.

Bhandari — A caste of Joshis.

Bhanwar — Circumambulation of sacred fire.

Bharega	—	To fill up.
Bharose	—	Faith or confidence.
Bhaskar	—	The Sun.
Bhooka	—	Hungry.
Bhoomi-Swami	—	Occupancy tenants; under the M. P. Land Revenue Code.
Bhoosa	—	Husk.
Bichauniya	—	A middleman.
Bichhuva	—	An ornament worn on fingers of feet by a lady, a sign for a married woman.
Bigha	—	A measurement for land : One Bigha equals 0.40 acres.
Bijli	—	Lightning.
Brahmin	—	A caste of priest and administrator.
Bukhur	—	An agricultural implement for levelling the land.
Bundela	—	A resident of Bundelkhand, also caste of Rajputs.
Chabutaras	—	Small plat-form near the outer door of the house.
Chadayo (Tel)	—	To offer.
Chaddar	—	A bed sheet.
Chaitra	—	The first month of Hindu year.
Chamarpana	—	Signifying the trade of Chamars (used in contempt).
Chanda	—	The Moon.
Chappaties	—	Cakes of unleavened flour.
Charkha	—	The spinning wheel.
Charu	—	Grass for animals.
Cherua-ka-pani	—	An energy giving decoction of dry fruits given to the mother just after the birth of a child.
Chhaj	—	A skin disease.
Chhati	—	Sixth day celebration after the birth of the child.
Chhaula (Chhokar)	—	*Butea frondosa.*
Chhelan	—	Romeo, (used in contempt).
Chhenkat	—	Sneezing.
Chhoti	—	Small.
Chimta	—	An instrument primarily used in cooking and also on music, tongs.
Choli	—	A short blouse.
Chonch	—	Beak.
Choong	—	To feed.
Chouk	—	Open space in the house.
Chura	—	An ornament worn on wrist.
Churi	—	Bangles.
Daal	—	Pulses.
Daav-Pechs	—	Strategy or tactics.
Daftari	—	Peon.
Dai	—	A midwife.
Damru	—	A musical instrument.
Dan	—	Gift, Charity.
Darrun	—	Terrible.
Darshan	—	The act of seeing or beholding.
Dashtone	—	A tenth day ceremony after the birth of a child.
Dauna	—	A leaf cup.
Devata	—	The God.
Dhan-teras	—	A festival celebrated on the thirteenth day of dark half of *Kartik* month.

Dharamshala — An inn.
Dhobi-Pat — Beating like a dhobi.
Dholak — A musical instrument.
Dhoti — A dress of a man secured by a knot a little below the navel and allowed to go upto the ankles.
Diwali — The festival which falls on the fifteenth day of the dark half of the month of *Kartik*.
Dookh (Dukh) — Pain, suffering.
Doria (Daree) — A cotton carpet (hand made).
Durga — The name of the Goddess of *Sakti* (power)
Dushera — The tenth day of bright half of the month of *Ashvin* — a festival day.
Ek-Langa — One of the tactics of wrestling.
Gadar — Term from which 'Gadaria' name is derived; means sheep.
Gagar — An earthen pot for filling water.
Galiyare (Galiyan) — The Village alleys.
Gange Baba — A titular deity of Kachhis.
Gath-Joda — A couple sitting, secured by a knot.
Gauna — A ceremony after marriage — but before its consummation.
Gauri-Puja (Ganagaur) — Worshipping of the Goddess (Parvati) by women.
Ghagra (Lehnga) — A loose skirt narrow at the top and has a bigger circumference at the bottom.
Ghooghat — A veil.
Ghoora — A village dumping ground.
Ghat — A house.
Ghar-Jamai — A son-in-law staying at wife's place.
Ghat-Puja (Pooja) — Praying at the well by the mother.
Ghee — Butter clarified by boiling and straining.
Goat — A song in praise of God.
God-Bharna — 'Filling the lap'.
Gota — A golden border to decorate silken fabrics.
Gotra — Clans.
Gram-Sevika — A female Village Level Worker.
Gulal — A coloured powder for sprinkling on each other at Holi festitval.
Gur — Jaggery.
Guru — The teacher; A spiritual guide.
Haisiyat — Economic standing.
Haldi — Turmeric.
Halwa — A sweetmeat.
Hanumanjee — A monkey God who assisted Rama against Ravana, the King of Lanka.
Hardaul — A deified hero in Bundelkhand.
Haryaee — A festival celebrated before starting sowing.
Holi — One of the chief festivals of Hinhus or a colour festival.
Hookah — A hubble-bubble — smoking pipe.
Jaat — The caste.
Jagat — The World.
Jagadamba — The name of Goddess.

Jamai — Son-in-law.
Janwasa — Staying place of marriage party.
Jauhar — A mass suicide by Rajput women to save their honour, at the impending defeat in a battle.
Jawaras — This is the wheat or barley plants kept in shade after sowing.
Jeth — Husband's elder brother.
Jhagda — A compensation paid by new husband to the relatives of his wife's previous husband.
Jhanjh — A musical instrument.
Jheenka — A musical instrument.
Jaishta — The third month of the Hindu year.
Kaag — Crow.
Kabar — A type of soil.
Kachhawahas — A clan of Rajput caste.
Kadchhi — A big spoon of iron.
Kadhai — A cauldron.
Kajal — A sooty preparation to darken the eyes.
Kalash — A brass pot.
Kamar-Tega — One of the tactics of wrestling.
Kangana — A coloured thread tied across the wrist.
Kans — A thick grass (*Saccharum spontaneum*).
Kansdeo — A deity of Ahir caste.
Kanya Dan — A ceremony of gifting the daughter or giving the bride away.
Kardhoni — An ornament like a decorative belt worn over the waist over a *saree* or *lehnga* by ladies.
Karma — The law of *karma* : We are punished or rewarded in accordance with our misdeeds or good acts.
Katha — A prayer.
Katori — A brass cup.
Kaunhi — Boiled wheat to be distributed on any ceremony day.
Kaya — The human body.
Kenthri — A quilt made by sewing all unserviceable cloth waitable from clothings.
Khair — *Acacia catechu*.
Khajoor — The palmyra palm (*Phoenix sylvestris*).
Khaliyan — A clearing for threshing the corn.
Khangwari — A solid silver ornament worn around the neck.
Kharif — Crops sown in rains and harvested in winter.
Kheer (Khir) — A preparation by adding rice, sugar or jaggery to boiled milk.
Khurpee — Hoe.
Kirtan — Prayer.
Kothi (Kothia) — An earthen receptacle for storing grains.
Kripal-Kriya — A ceremony taking out burning stick and touching the forehead of the deceased.
Krishna — The Lord Krishna.
Kulhadi — Axe.
Kurta — A loose upper garment of the male.
Lachhe — Silver ringlets worn by girls at the ankles.
Lagoon — An yellow letter containing the programme of marriage ceremony.

Lakshmi — The Goddess of Wealth.
Langot — An underwear — a sort of an athletic supporter.
Lila — Songs before the deity.
Loongra (Loongda) — A cotton cloth usually of a dark colour and a loose flowing garment.
Lota — A brass pot.
Madia — A small memorial.
Magre — Roof top.
Mahadeo — The God Shiva.
Mandap — A small canopy under which the marriage ceremony takes place.
Mandi — The market where grains are sold.
Mandir — The temple.
Manjheera — A musical instrument.
Mata — The Mother.
Mathaniya — A big earthen pot for storing water.
Mehndi — Henna; (*Lawsonia-alba*).
Mela — A fair.
Nadi — The River.
Nag — The cobra.
Nagara — A musical instrument, drum type.
Nai — A barber caste.
Nakshatra — Planets.
Namaskar — Obiesance by bowing head and folding the hands.
Nath — A gold ornament worn in the left nostril.
Nautor — Newly cultivated land.
Neem — *Melia indica*
Nirdhan — The poor.
Note-Band-Karna — Stopping the invitations.
Pachh — A fortnight.
Padosi — A neighbourer.
Padua — A type of soil.
Pahariya — A clan of Chamar caste.
Painjana — Silver ornaments worn on ankles. ...
Pakharna — To wash.
Palka — A cot.
Palka-Poojan — A ceremony just after marriage in which the couple sits on the cot.
Palki — A palanquin.
Palna — A cradle.
Pan — Betel leaf.
Patela — An agricultural implement for levelling the land.
Peepal — *Ficus religiosa*.
Pet-ki-Ukhad — A stratagem in wrestling.
Phalgun — The last month of the Hindu year.
Phavda — Spade.
Phool-Chunna — To collect the remaining bones on the third day after cremation.
Poolas — Small bundles in which the corn is usually gathered.
Poornima — The full-moon day
Puja — Prayer.
Pujari — The priest.

Purdah	—	Veil.
Putra	—	A son.
Rabi	—	Agricultural season. Crops are sown in winter but reaped before summer.
Raidas	—	A saint whose followers are mostly Chamars.
Rakar (Rakad)	—	A type of soil.
Raksha-Bandhan	—	One of the important festivals of Hindus celebrated in the month of Shravana.
Ram	—	The son of Dasharatha, the King of Ayodhya. He is worshipped as a God.
Ramayan	—	The great epic, portraying Lord Rama.
Ram-Navmi	—	The birth day (ninth day of brighter half of Chaitra month) of Rama.
Rang-Panchmi	—	The fifth day after Holi festival, a festival of colour.
Ratiya	—	Nights.
Ratt-Jagga	—	Keeping awake in the night.
Ravan	—	The demon, King of Lanka: slain by Rama.
Ryotwari	—	A system of land management where the cultivators hold lands directly from the State.
Safa	—	A head-wear of long cloth.
Sahukar	—	A money lender.
Sanadya	—	A clan of Brahmin caste.
Savaliya	—	The husband.
Seedha	—	Gifts to the priest.
Seesum	—	*Dalbergia sissu.*
Shankaracharya	—	A great Hindu religious reformer.
Shlokas	—	A Vedic text or Hymn.
Sindoor	—	Vermillion applied by married woman as a votive sign of being married.
Sita-Rasoi	—	A tattooing design on hands, represents kitchen of Sita wife of Rama.
Suryavanshi	—	Descended from the Sun.
Tabeez	—	A small ornament with a spell worn on neck or in the arm.
Tawa	—	An iron plate.
Tel	—	Oil.
Teli	—	Oil Presser.
Tervi	—	The thirteenth day ceremony after the death.
Thal	—	A big brass plate.
Tithi	—	The date of Hindu month.
Tula	—	Weighing.
Upton	—	Turmeric paste.
Urad	—	*Var vadiatus,* a pulse.
Ustad	—	The teacher.
Vaishaka	—	The second month of the Hindu year.
Yadavs	—	A sub-caste of Ahirs which claims to be descended from the Lord Krishna.
Yaduvanshi	—	From the lineage of Yadavas.
Yagna	—	A sacrificial ceremony before fire.
Zamindari	—	A system of having intermediatries in land management.