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VILLAGE SURVEY MONOGRAPH ON CHANDRABHAG

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VILLAGE
SURVEY
MONOGRAPH
ON

CHANDRABHAG

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Collaboration	SUKUMAR SINHA *of the West Bengal Civil Service,* *Officer on Special Duty,* *Census Office, West Bengal*
Art-work & Photographs	ARUNABHA DATTA *Artist-cum-Photographer*
Diagrams, Charts & Maps	JALADHIBHUSAN DASGUPTA *Draughtsman*

FOREWORD

The Census in India has a long tradition of undertaking and promoting investigation on diverse aspects of the socio-economic life of the country. During 1961 Census, on the initiative of my illustrious predecessor Shri A. Mitra, a study of more than 500 villages was taken up. As far as possible these villages were chosen to represent adequately geographical, occupational and ethnic diversity. The brief account of the test of selection is furnished here.

(a) The first group of villages was so selected that each of them would contain one dominant community with one predominating occupation ; for instance, fishermen, forest workers, jhum cultivators, potters, weavers, salt-makers, quarry workers, etc. A village should have a minimum population of 400, the optimum being 500 and 700.

(b) The second group of villages was to be of numerically prominent Scheduled Tribes of the State. Each village would represent a particular tribe. The minimum population should be 400, the optimum being 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 and 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.

While the surveys in most of the villages were undertaken by the qualified personnel appointed by the Census Organization, in some cases reputed scholars were invited to take up projects in collaboration with the Census Organisation. I am glad that Prof. (Miss) Duttagupta offered to take up a village in West Bengal for intensive socio-economic survey.

For the purpose of the survey a schedule drawn up by the Census Organization was made available to Prof. (Miss) Duttagupta. It was, however, entirely left to her discretion to make necessary modifications in the schedule. The Social Studies Unit in the Office of the Superintendent of Census Operations, West Bengal, under the guidance of Shri S. Sinha collaborated with her in this project to a considerable extent. This report is a testimony to a useful collaboration between a government organization and private research. My thanks to Prof. (Miss) Duttagupta and the colleagues in the Census Organization who have collaborated with her in the preparation of this monograph.

A. Chandra Sekhar

Registrar General, India

PREFACE

During my stay abroad, I was constantly made to feel at different seminars on Indian Sociology held at the School of Oriental & African Studies and the London School of Economics & Political Science, that I had not seen 'village India' from within. It is indeed true; I spent mostly in towns in Bengal and in the city of Calcutta and had visited a village in East Bengal only once. My knowledge of the Indian social institutions, particularly in the village level, was thus never primary. So, on my return home in 1961, I wrote a personal letter to Sri Asok Mitra, then Registrar General, Government of India, expressing my desire to undertake a village survey within the competence of the Census department of the Government of India. Mr. Mitra was extremely kind to concede to my wishes. The present monograph is the outcome of a near-adventure request to the Registrar General in 1961.

My full-time teaching assignment at the University of Calcutta stood in the way of doing the field-work in the traditional way, *i.e.*, in one long and single spell. Instead, I had to spread it over a period of time, doing the field-work at intervals. I started doing it during the summer holidays, May-June in 1962. I could not be at it again till January 1964 as I was taken seriously ill for months together in 1963. Since January 1964, I visited the village quite a number of times, during short holidays and week-ends. By my repeated visits I was able to develop an informal relationship with the members of the village and it helped me in establishing a rapport with the villagers. Without this rapport it is not easy to see village India from within. My work at Chandrabhag (the village under survey) had really been a pleasure, an experience too. But for this field study in the village my knowledge and conception of Indian social realities would have remained incomplete and absolutely half-done.

I sincerely thank all the people of Chandrabhag for their kind and the most ungrudging co-operation with me in my work. I owe my debt of affection specially to Sri Nishit Ghosal, Sri Deepak Banerjee and Sm. Arati Banerjee for their constant help throughout the period of survey. I will be failing in my duties if I do not offer my sincerest thanks to the authorities of the Sreekrishna Girls' Higher Secondary School for providing me with accommodation in the School quarters during the period of my survey. Last but not least, I owe my debt of gratitude to the Census department, West Bengal, in general, and to Sri S. Sinha, in particular, for helping me in different ways. Though my investigation in the village was done primarily according to the schedules supplied by the Census department, I took occasional liberty in inserting extra-schedule information whenever possible. I hope this has not marred the scientific rigour of the village study.

Bela Duttagupta

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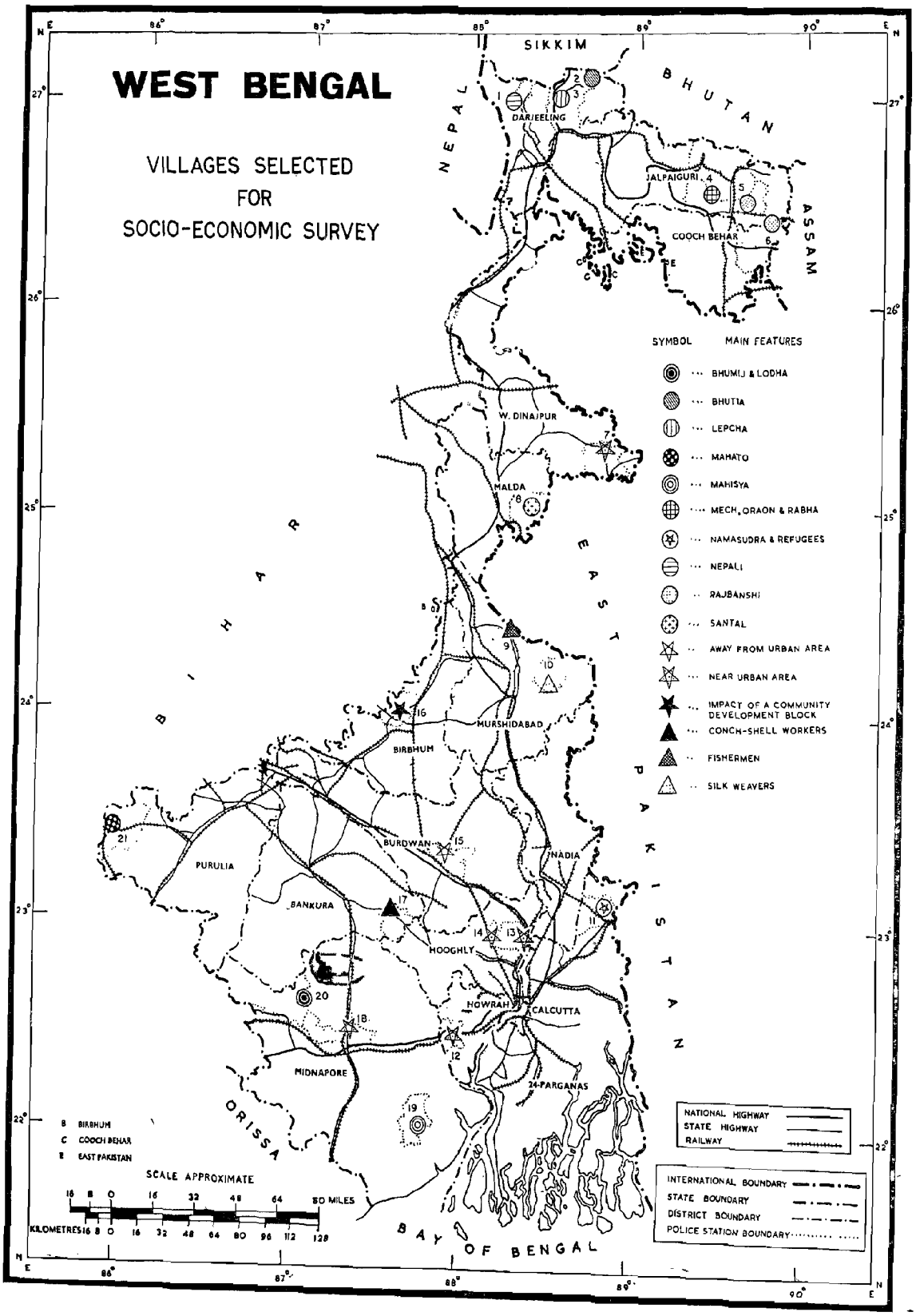
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Photographs

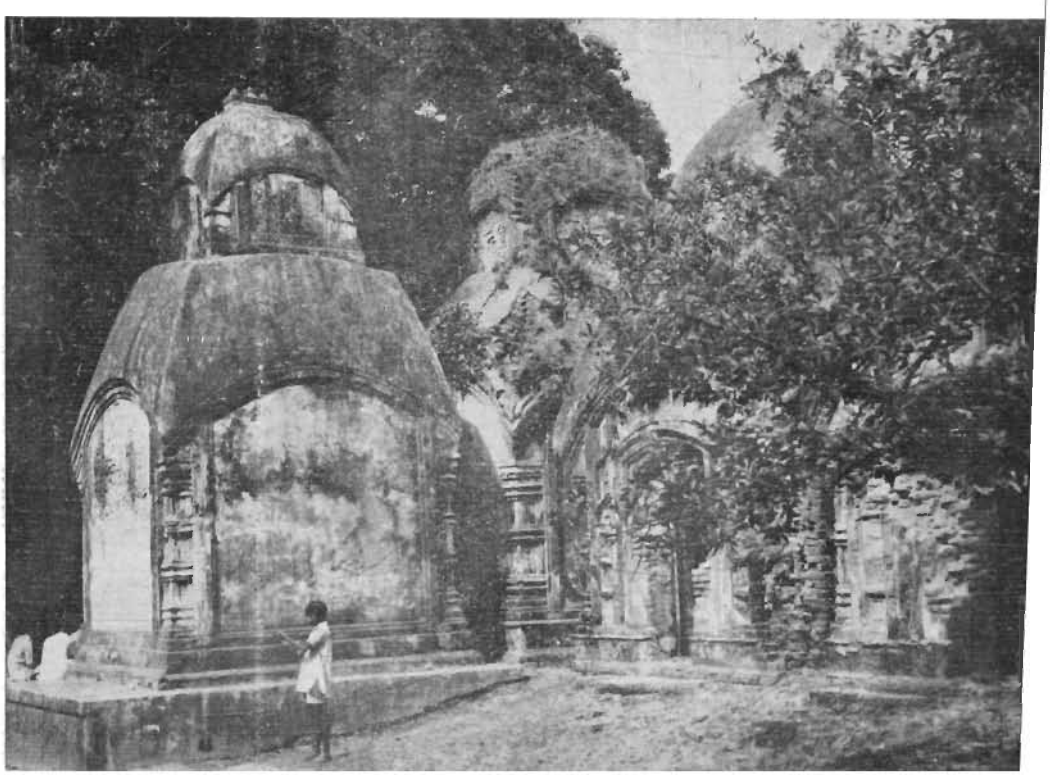
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23	Washerman's house	,,

VILLAGES OF WEST BENGAL SELECTED FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC SURVEY

No.	Village	Police Station	District
1	Rishihat Khasmahal (J. L. No. 12)	Darjeeling	Darjeeling
2	Upper Pedong in Pedong Khasmahal (J. L. No. 6)	Kalimpong	Darjeeling
3	Sindibong Khasmahal (J. L. No. 44)	Kalimpong	Darjeeling
4	Dakshin Mendabari (J. L. No. 41)	Kalchini	Jalpaiguri
5	Tatpara (J. L. No. 119)	Alipur Duars	Jalpaiguri
6	Madhur Bhasa (J. L. No. 1192)	Tufanganj	Cooch Behar
7	Patiram (J. L. No. 187)	Balurghat	West Dinajpur
8	Kharibari (J. L. No. 32)	Habibpur	Malda
9	Bahadurpur in Paharpur (J. L. No. 9)	Lalgola	Murshidabad
10	Harharia Chak (J. L. No. 58)	Raninagar	Murshidabad
11	Chanda (J. L. No. 54)	Bongaon	24-Parganas
12	Chandrabhag (J. L. No. 90)	Bagnan	Howrah
13	Kodalia (J. L. No. 12)	Chinsurah	Hooghly
14	Ghatampur (J. L. No. 50)	Polba	Hooghly
15	Kamnara (J. L. No. 49)	Burdwan	Burdwan
16	Mahammadbazar (J. L. No. 125)	Muhammad Bazar	Birbhum
17	Raibaghini in Mirzapur (J. L. No. 54)	Kotalpur	Bankura
18	Khas Jangal (J. L. No. 167)	Midnapore	Midnapore
19	Ashutia (J. L. No. 171)	Bhagwanpur	Midnapore
20	Bhumij Dhan Sol (J. L. No. 780)	Binpur	Midnapore
21	Ghutia (J. L. No. 22)	Jhalda	Purulia


WEST BENGAL
VILLAGES SELECTED
FOR
SOCIO-ECONOMIC SURVEY
SIKKIM
NEPAL
BHUTAN
ASSAM
DARJEELING
JALPAIGURI
COOCH BEHAR
W. DINAJPUR
MALDA
MURSHIDABAD
BIRBHUM
BURDWAN
NADIA
PURULIA
BANKURA
HOOGHLY
HOWRAH
CALCUTTA
MIDNAPORE
24-PARGANAS
ORISSA
BAY OF BENGAL
BIHAR
EAST PAKISTAN
SYMBOL
MAIN FEATURES
BHUMIJ & LODHA
BHUTIA
LEPCHA
MAHATO
MAHISYA
MECH, ORAON & RABHA
NAMASUDRA & REFUGEES
NEPALI
RAJBANSHI
SANTAL
AWAY FROM URBAN AREA
NEAR URBAN AREA
IMPACT OF A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK
CONCH-SHELL WORKERS
FISHERMEN
SILK WEAVERS
B BIRBHUM
C COOCH BEHAR
E EAST PAKISTAN
SCALE APPROXIMATE
KILOMETRES 16 8 0 16 32 48 64 80 96 112 128
16 8 0 16 32 48 64 80 MILES
NATIONAL HIGHWAY
STATE HIGHWAY
RAILWAY
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY
STATE BOUNDARY
DISTRICT BOUNDARY
POLICE STATION BOUNDARY

Sivam-Sanctum





O tempora O mores

The Primary School

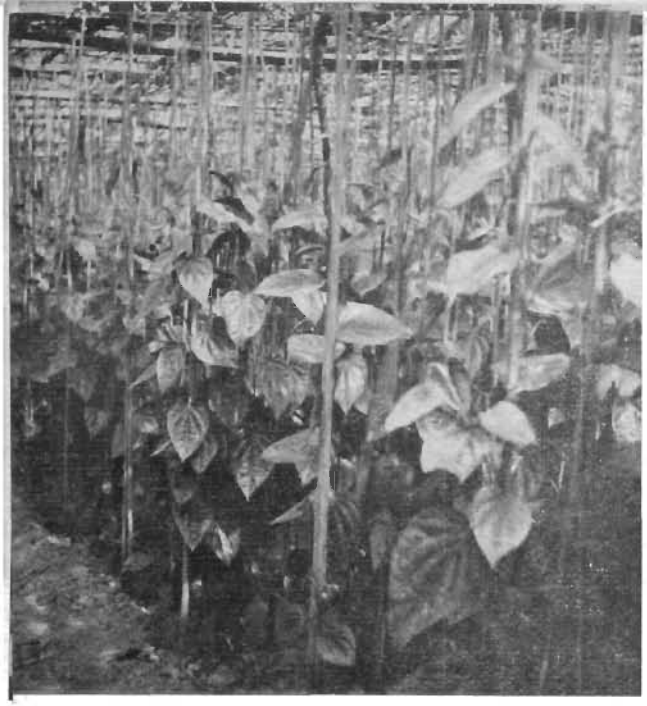




Flag-hoisting



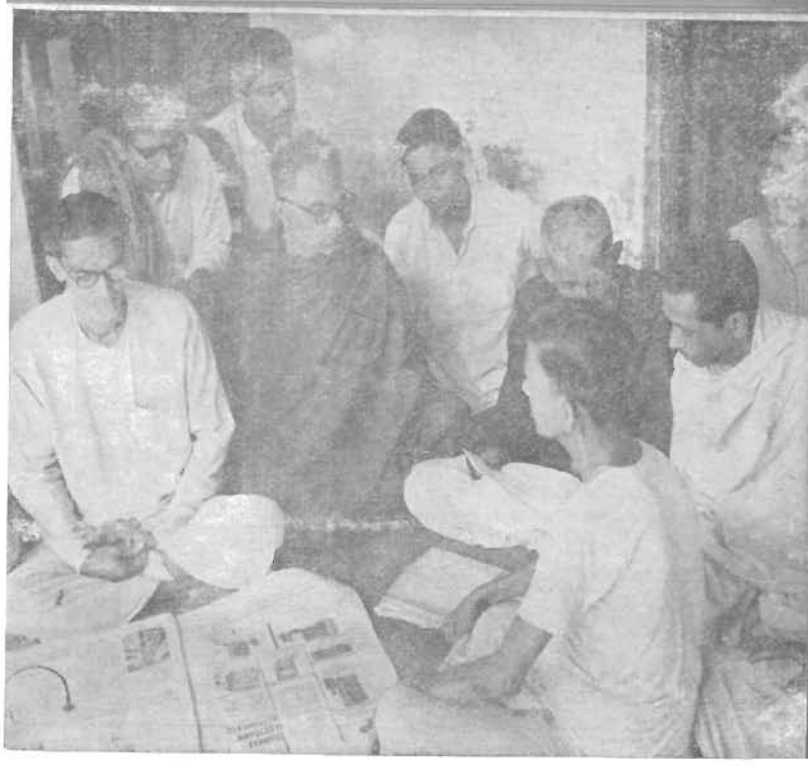
Jaggery pan

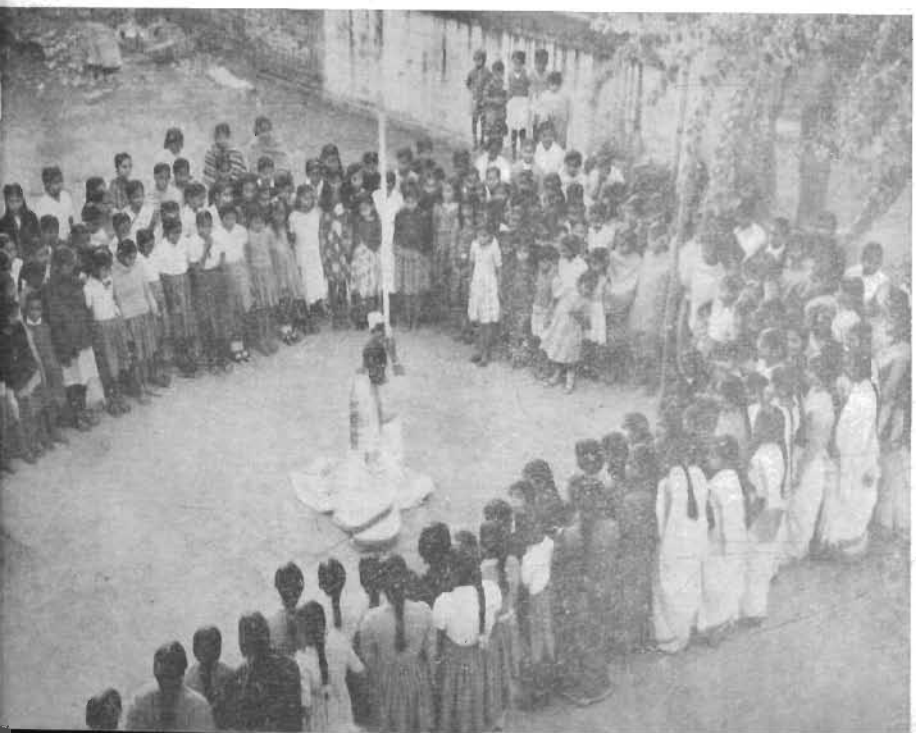


Betel-Vine

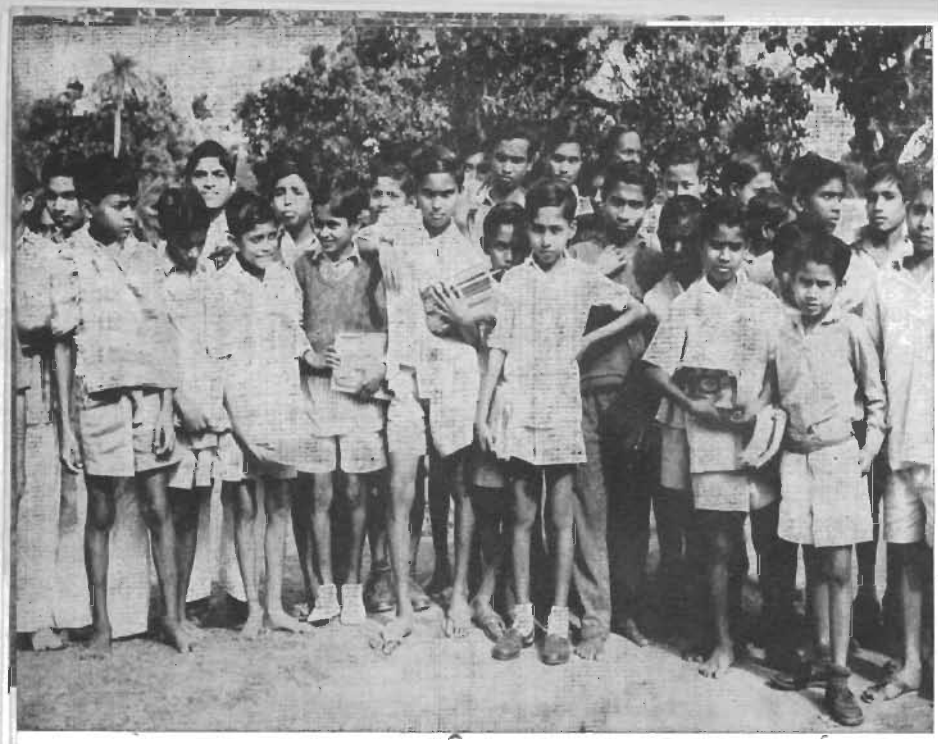
The smith in his smithy







Flag-hoisting



A get-together

A game of dice

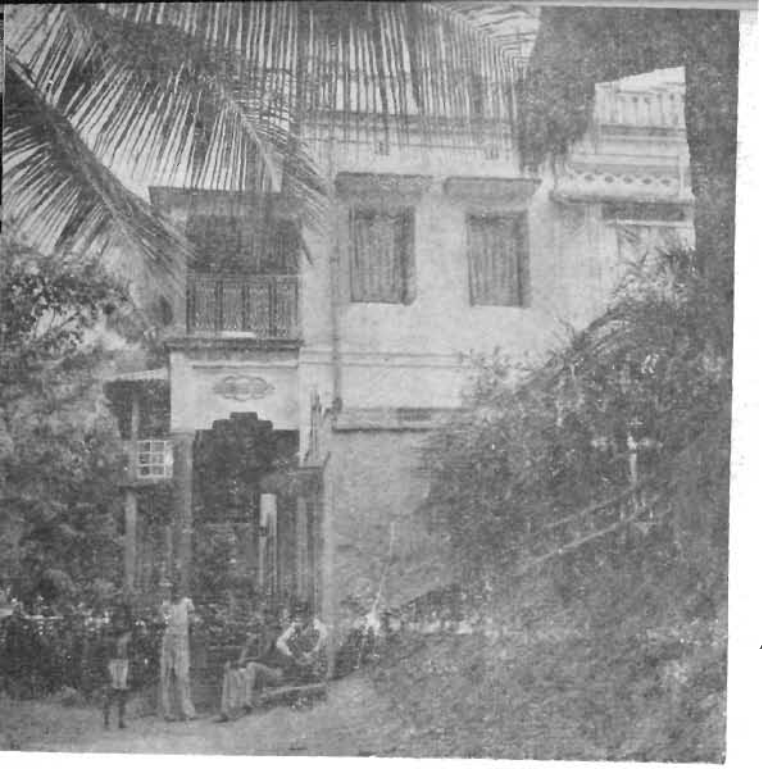




Here lives a rich man



Sunday morning



A pucca house



Leader of the demos—a member of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly elected by the local electorate



A fishy business



Village temples



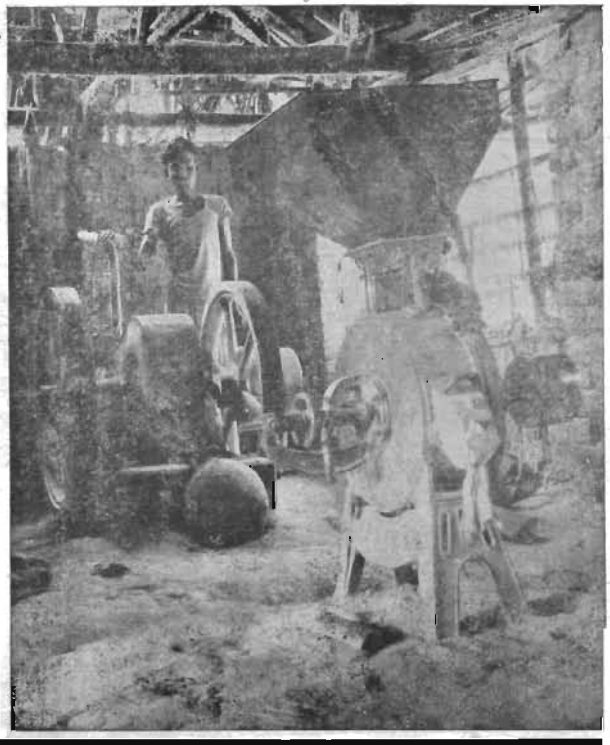
Kali the living one

Chandratala





Corn-thrashing



Husking machine



Grocer's shop

Washerman's house



CHAPTER I

THE VILLAGE

The setting

Physical aspect

Soil

Crops

Flora and fauna

Climate

History

Population

Introducing Chandrabhag

- Location
- History
- Neighbourhood
- Land and soil
- Land-tenure
- Housing and household arrangement
- Flora and fauna
- Extension Service
- Communication
- Education
- Health and medical facilities
- Water-supply and sanitation
- Local Self-Government and co-operatives

CHAPTER I

THE VILLAGE

THE SETTING

The district of Howrah is situated in the south-east of the Burdwan Division between 22° 48′ North Latitude and between 87° 23′ East Longitude. According to the Surveyor General of India, the area of the district is 568.2 square miles, while according to the Director of Land Records and Survey of West Bengal it is 560.1 square miles. In 1951 Census the district had a population of 1,611,373, while in the Census 1961 the population is 2,038,477. Barring Calcutta, Howrah is the smallest district in West Bengal but it holds the 6th place for the most numerous population of all districts in the State. The overall density of population of the district in 1951 was 2,877 to the square mile. The rural density was 2,004, while the urban density per square mile was 31,465. The overall density of population of the district in 1961 Census changed to 3,639 to the square mile. The rural density of population per square mile was 2,353 and that for the urban area was 18,554.

The district is bounded in the north by Arambag and Serampore subdivisions; on the east by Barrackpore, Sadar and Diamond Harbour subdivisions of the 24-Parganas and Calcutta; on the south by Tamluk subdivision of Midnapore, and on the west partly by Tamluk and Ghatal subdivisions of the latter district and partly by Arambag subdivision of Hooghly district. The boundaries are partly natural and partly artificial. On the west and south-west, the river Rupnarayan and on the east and the south-east the river Hooghly constitute natural boundaries, while on the north, the boundary is formed by the Bally *khal* and an artificial line marking the southern limit of the district.

The district of Howrah has two subdivisions —Sadar or Howrah and Uluberia with their headquarters at Howrah city and Uluberia. The Sadar subdivision covers the thanas of Howrah (Bantra, Golabari, Malipanchghara), Sibpur, Bally, Domjur, Jagacha, Sankrail, Jagatballavpur and Panchla; the Uluberia subdivision has in it the thanas of Amta, Bagnan, Uluberia, Shampur and Bawria. There are a total of 847 *mauzas* borne on the Jurisdiction List, of which nine are uninhabited and 815 inhabited. Chandrabhag, the village under survey belongs to the thana of Bagnan, in Uluberia subdivision.

PHYSICAL ASPECT

The district of Howrah has an irregular triangular shape, bounded on two sides by great rivers, the apex of which lies at their confluence near the James and Mary Sands (Gadpur). Its extreme length from east to west is about 28 miles, and its extreme length from north to south is nearly 40 miles. Hemmed in between the Hooghly on the east and the Rupnarayan on the west, and intersected by the Damodar, the Howrah district consists of a flat alluvial plain, with a gradual flow of drainage being consequently to the south and south-east. Three distinct tracts have been formed by the peculiar setting of the rivers in the district, *viz.*, an eastern track stretching away from the Hooghly and its branch the Saraswati, a central tract traversed by the Damodar and its branch the Kana Damodar or Kansiki, and a western tract consisting of the country between the Damodar and the Rupnarayan. The upper courses of the Damodar and the Rupnarayan are somewhat higher than the Hooghly; and in the intervening country are numerous water-courses or creeks, called *Khals*, which run dry or are very shallow in the hot weather, and the beds of a great many of them are now cultivated in summer and put under *Boro* paddy. The villages are situated at great distances. Long embankments to protect the country from inundation is a common sight; roads are few in number and also the number of vehicular traffic is extremely meagre.

SOIL

The soil throughout the district of Howrah is entirely alluvial in nature, being formed of the deposits of the Hooghly, Damodar and Rupnarayan rivers. Soil samples collected from different parts of the lower Damodar Valley

Region collected by the Joint Committee for a Diagnostic Survey of the Damodar Valley Region show local variations as indicated by the nature of soil profiles, differences in PH values and chemical composition. Of every ten soil profiles it appears that as many as six profiles show a zone of clay accumulation at a depth of 24"-36". The results of chemical analysis indicate that the soils of the district are very low in organic matter content, ranging between 0.3 and 3 per cent. in subsoil and 0.9 per cent. in the top soil. It will, therefore, be necessary to add large amounts of organic manure to the soil, if its fertility is to be increased. The PH values indicate that the north-eastern part of the area is almost wholly acidic, whereas the southern and eastern portions are neutral to alkaline. Intensive cultivation of rice is practised in acidic and neutral soils. This accounts for higher percentage of land under rice in Jagatballavpur in the north, Bagnan in the east and Shampur in the south. In certain parts of Jagatballavpur, where soils are strongly acidic, yield of paddy per *Bigha* is very high, 18 to 20 maunds per *Bigha*, where the average for the entire district is 7 to 8 maunds. Rice yield being very high at the Shampur area, there were about 15 rice-husking mills. Finest quality of table rice, it is reported, used to be exported abroad from Shampur area till recently.

Crops

Aman rice is the main crop, which grows in abundance throughout the district. In areas with defective drainage, coarse variety is grown. *Boro rice* is cultivated in the north-western part of the district subject to flooding. *Aus* rice is grown in limited quantities on relatively higher land, and it is slowly being replaced by jute. There is also a tendency to grow jute on *Aman* land and to harvest it before rice seedlings are transplanted. Pulses are grown mainly in the flood-plains of the Damodar, and as a subsidiary crop, wherever local conditions are favourable. Sugarcane and wheat have been recently introduced, and are faring well.

Betelvine or *Pan* is an important cash crop in this district. Large scale cultivation of *Pan* is confined to three areas, Domjur, Amta and Bagnan. Lure of ready money has been so predominant that *Pan* cultivation is replacing rice cultivation in Bagnan area. This switchover, it is locally claimed, is due to the impoverishment of the soil to produce rice in profitable quantities after the flood of 1959. It is time that there should be some restriction in acreage under betelvine or *Pan*, and it should be allowed to grow on land which cannot be put to any other crop cultivation. The crop position of the district will be visualized from the following table:

TABLE 1

ACREAGE UNDER DIFFERENT CROPS, 1960-61

Crops	Acreage under cultivation	Not available for cultivation	Cultivable but not cultivated
Rice	218,100	..	..
Cereals and pulses	11,800	..	..
Other food crops	13,431	..	..
Orchard *etc.*	27,600	..	..
Tobacco and jute	10,500	..	42,000
		Settlement—78,000	
Total cropped area	*286,700*	*Forests—1,257*	

Flora and Fauna

The vegetation is composed almost exclusively of the aquatic and marsh plants commonly met with in the alluvial rice fields of Bengal, such as *Hydrilla, Utricularia, Caesulia,* or of those semi-spontaneous plants that form the village shrubberies of Central Bengal, such as *Glycosmis, Trema, Urena, Solanum, Datura, Leonotis* and the like. Waste places are generally covered by a weedy vegetation, and one of the striking features of the district is the extent of exotic weeds in the area. Many of them, indeed, such as *Scoparia-Ageratum, Evolvulus nummularins* and *Peperomia pellucida,* though now remarkably abundant, were originally natives of America. Apart from these, other common large trees are mango (*Mangifera Indica*), *Bel* (*Aegle Marmelos*), *Lichi* (*Litchi chinensis*), *Jamrul* (*Eugenia Javanica*), date palm (*Phonix sylvestris*), palmyra palm (*Borassus flabillifer*), coconuts (*Cocos nucipera*), banyan (*Ficas bengalensis*), *Pipal* (*Ficus religiosa*), *Sal* (*Shorea rofusta*), *Arjun* (*Terminalic arjuna*), *Neem* (*Melia azadirachta*), *Babla* (*Acacia ferneesiana*). A good variety of cactus is also seen in this district.

Regarding the fauna of the district it can be said that wild animals are rather scarce. The larger species are practically unrepresented as there is no jungle to cover the big animals. Occasionally, however, one or two leopards have been reported. Foxes and wild pigs abound in parts of the Uluberia subdivision. Crocodiles are sometimes to be seen on the banks of the Hooghly and the Damodar rivers during the winter months. In the cold weather snipe of two or three varieties are seen in abundance in the paddy fields in Domjur, Sankrail and Jagatballavpur area, and also in Uluberia subdivision. The common whistling and cotton teal, some of the commoner varieties of duck are also to be found. A large variety of both poisonous and non-poisonous snakes are to be seen in this district during the summer and the rainy seasons.

The district is rather well known for its abundant supply of a large variety of fishes. Being intersticed with a few big rivers and number of *Khals*, Howrah has the advantage of pisciculture as well as normal fish supply all throughout the year. The Hooghly from Uluberia to Diamond Harbour is noted for *Tapsi* or mango-fish (*Polynemus paradiseus*) of which Walter Hamilton (1820) waxed eloquent "as the best and highest flavoured fish not only in Bengal, but in the whole world". It is caught with or without roes in large numbers from April to June; and Uluberia is a centre for its exports. Members of the carp family are found in almost every tank, *Rui* (*Labeo rohita*), *Mrigel* (*Cirrhina mrigala*) and *Katla* (*Catla ctia*) spawn are reared extensively. Besides these four principal fishes there are other varieties and they include *Kharka bata* (*C. reba*), *Bhatgan bata* (*Labeo bata*), *Kalbaus* (*L. Calbasu*), *Air* (*Mystus aor*), *Tangra* (*Mystus vitattus*), *Bagha air* (*Bagarius bagarius*), *Gule Tangra* (*Macrones gulio*), *Rita* (*Rita rita*), *Magur* (*Clarias batrachus*), *Singi* (*Heteropneustes fossilis*), *Pabda* (*Callichrous pabda*), *Boal* (*Wallagonia atta*), *Pangas* (*Pangasius pangasius*), *Silone* (*Silonia silondia*), *Bacha* (*Eutropichthys vacha*), *Ilish* (*Hilsa ilisha*), *Phensa* (*Engranlis telara*), *Khoira* (*Gadusia chapra*), *Kankle* (*Xenentodon cancila*), *Gurjaoli* (*P. tetradactylus*), *Chanda* (*Ambassis nama*), *Byra Chanda* (*Stromatous niger*), *Parse* (*Mugil parsia*), *Bhangore* (*M. Tade*), *Khorsula* (*M. Corsula*), *Cheng* (*Ophicephalus gachu*), *Lata* (*O. Punctatus*), *Sole* (*O. stoiatus*), *Sal* (*O. Marulius*), *Bam* (*Mastacembelus armatus*), *Pankal* (*M. Pancalus*), *Khalse* (*Colisa fasciate*), *Pholui* (*Notopterus notopterus*), *Chital* (*Notopterus chitala*).

Climate

The climate of the district is generally hot and humid. For practical purposes the year may be regarded as consisting of two seasons, the dry season from November to May, and the wet season from June to October; but the dry season may be further subdivided into the cold weather and the hot weather, and the wet season into the advanced south-west monsoon (June to September) and the retreating monsoon (September to October). Humidity for the whole area varies from 78°—79° in April—May to 90° in August; and the temperature varies between 100° in May to 59° in January. Within recent years the minimum temperature fell to as low as 44° in February in 1950. The district receives an abundant rainfall, but the quantity varies greatly. Record has it that the rainfall varied between 25, 99, 54, 39, 66 inches in 1926, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936 respectively.

History

Howrah had been a land of storm and strife for centuries. It may be assumed that Howrah was inhabited long before the Christian era because of its close proximity to *Tamralipti* (Tamluk). This great sea port of Eastern India had very often been mentioned in the *Mahabharata*, in the old scriptures of the Jainas and Buddhists and also in the Periplus of the Erytheran Sea. In the beginning of the 12th C. A. D. the area, now included in the district, was supposed to have accepted the suzerainty of Chodaganga, the first Ganga Kings of Orissa. At the close of the 12th century Muhammedan dominance of the area was recorded; they took possession of Satgaon, and in all probability extended their conquest southwards as far as the mouth of the river Damodar.

The first mention of any place in the district by a European writer occurs in the journal of the Venetian Casare Federici, who left an interesting account of Bator as early as 1578. His account of the area is worth quoting here: "A good tide's rowing before you come to satgaon you shall have a place which is called Buttor*, and from thence upwards. The river is very

*Bator is mentioned in Bipradasa's Manasamangal (1459). It was one of the villages which the East India Company asked from the Emperor of Delhi in 1714-15. Apart from literary and historical evidences, Bator has also been indicated in several old maps as well as in Rennell's.

shallow, and little water. Every year at Buttor the make and unmake a village with houses and shops made of straw, and with all things necessary to their uses, and this village standeth as long as the ships ride there, and till they depart for the Indies and when they are departed, every man goeth to his plot of houses and then setteth five on the on them, which made me to marvel. For, as I passed upto Satgaon, I saw this village standing with a great number of people, with the infinite number of ships and bazars, and at my return coming down with my captain of the last ship, for whom I tarried, I was amazed to see such a place so soon razed and burnt and nothing left but the sign of the burnt housec". The same impression of Satgaon as a thriving port fed by numerous subsidiary marts is gathered from the account of Ralph Fitch (1586). "Satagam is a fair city for a city of the Moors, and very plentiful of all things. Here is Bengala they have every day in one place or other a great market, and they have many great boats, wherewithal they go from place to place and buy rice and many other things. This magnificent delta port seventeen square miles in extent, had already reached its decaying point by the time of Aini-Akbari (1596). In Sarkar Satgaon there are two *Bandars* about half a *Kos* distant from each other : The one Satgaon, the other Hugli. The latter alone pays revenue. Both are in the hands of the Firinghis".

The Firingis conducted trade which was originally monopolized by the Portugese, it was gradually shared in by the Dutch, the English and the French. After an early struggle with the existing authority, the British was successful in getting *Talukdari* possession of Salica (Salkia), Harirah (Howrah) Cassundeah (Kasundi), Ramkrissnapur, and Batter (Batore) on May 4, 1714. The Maratha invasion of Bengal in 1741-42 is another noteworthy event in the history of the district. The Maratha cavalry under Bhaskar Pandit swept over western Bengal, and forced Alivardi Khan to retire precipitately from Burdwan to Katwa. The whole tract from Akbarnagar (Rajmahal) to Midnapore and Jaleswar came, it is said, into the possession of the Marathas.

Another notable event in the 18th century history of the district was the action which the Dutch fought in the Hooghly in 1759. Eventually the British overpowered the Dutch fleet and made them capitulate. All these go to show that the district has a very chequered history which, however, has been reflected in the socio-economic development of the district.

POPULATION

Population of the district has shown considerable variation from 1872 *i.e.*, when the first

TABLE 2

POPULATION OF THE DISTRICT OF HOWRAH WITH VARIATION FROM 1872—1961

District	Population 1961	Variation 1951-61	Population 1951	Variation 1941-51	Population 1941	Variation 1931-41	Population 1931
Howrah	2,038,477	+427,104	1,611,373	+121,069	1,490,304	+391,437	1,098,867

District	Variation 1921-31	Population 1921	Variation 1911-21	Population 1911	Variation 1901-11	Population 1901
Howrah	+101,464	[,997,403	+53,901	943,502	+92,988	850,514

District	Variation 1891-1901	Population 1891	Variation 1881-91	Population 1881	Variation 1872-81	Population 1872
Howrah	+86,889	763,625	+128,244	635,381	+39,516	595,865

census was taken to the present day *i.e.*, in 1961 Census. Even allowing for a number of changes in the administrative boundaries and a few epidemics and natural calamities, the population has shown on upward swing during the census periods. The increase is chiefly due to the great industrial activity in the metropolis of Calcutta, in Howrah city, and along the river bank as far south as Uluberia. The numerous mills and other industrial concerns have attracted a large number of the labourers from other parts of India, and the local inhabitants have been enriched by the trade they bring. The drainage schemes of Howrah, Barajol and Rajapur made the thanas Domjur and Jagatballavpur less unhealthy. The embankments in the Uluberia subdivision have prevented disastrous floods and facilitated the extension of cultivation, and consequently an increase in the cultivated area. In recent years, the influx of refugees from Pakistan has also inflated the population figure. The following statement shows the variation in population of the police stations and subdivision of the Howrah district between 1872 and 1961.

TABLE 3

PERCENTAGE VARIATIONS IN POPULATIONS, 1872—1961

District	1951-61	1901-51	1921-51	1872-1921	1941-51	1931-41
Howrah	+26·5	+89·5	+61·6	+67·4	+8·1	+35·6
District	1921-31	1911-21	1901-11	1891-1901	1881-91	1872-81
Howrah	+10·2	+5·7	+10·9	+11·4	+20·2	+6·6

The two statements quoted above illustrate the growth of population in the district of Howrah. Apart from natural born population of the district, there had been a considerable number of immigrants in the area down from 1891 down to the present day. The population figure for 1951 includes 61,096 displaced persons from East Bengal. Howrah being an industrial district, large numbers of agriculturists and aboriginals immigrate to seek employment in cultivation, in the brickfields or on railway works. That there is a steady increase of immigrants into the district will be evident from the following table :

TABLE 4

IMMIGRATION AND EMIGRATION IN HOWRAH FROM AND OUTSIDE THE STATE, 1891—1951

Categories	1951	1941	1931	1921	1911	1901	1891
Actual population	1,611,373	1,490,304	1,098,867	997,403	943,502	850,514	763,625
Immigration	201,926	206,350	137,514	120,186	109,304	87,168	46,284
Emigration	6,147	3,670	3,078	3,000	8,005	325	933
Natural population	1,415,594	1,287,624	964,431	871,217	842,203	763,671	718,274
Percentage variation	*—99*	*33·5*	*10·7*	*—3·4*	*—10·3*	*—6·3*	..

This picture of immigration and emigration helps one to understand the multiplicity of languages and nationalities in this district. There are also peoples of diverse religions ranging from animistic to the hieratic ones. Though there are religious groups other than the Hindus, *viz.*, the Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, Muslims, Christians, Jews, Tribal religion, nevertheless the Hindu constitute the majority group. This will be seen in the table following.

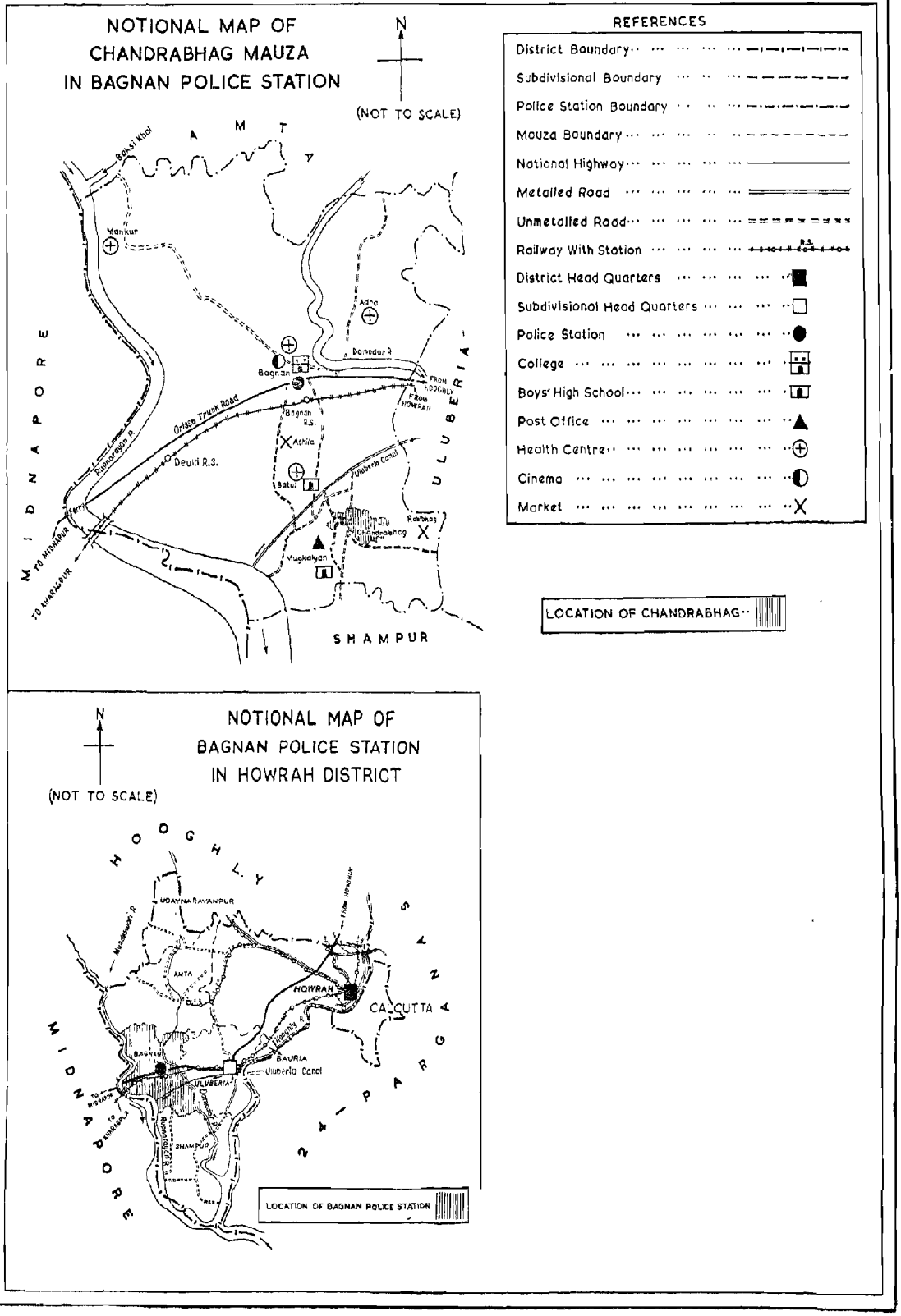

NOTIONAL MAP OF
CHANDRABHAG MAUZA
IN BAGNAN POLICE STATION
N
(NOT TO SCALE)
REFERENCES
District Boundary
Subdivisional Boundary
Police Station Boundary
Mouza Boundary
National Highway
Metalled Road
Unmetalled Road
Railway With Station
District Head Quarters
Subdivisional Head Quarters
Police Station
College
Boys' High School
Post Office
Health Centre
Cinema
Market
LOCATION OF CHANDRABHAG
A M T A
Bakshi Khal
Mankur
Adna
Damodar R.
Bagnan
From HOOGHLY
From HOWRAH
Orissa Trunk Road
Bagnan R.S.
Athila
Deuli R.S.
Batul
Ulberia Canal
Rajbhag
Chandrabhag
Mugkalyan
Rupnarayan R.
TO MIDNAPORE
TO KHARAGPUR
MIDNAPORE
ULUBERIA
SHAMPUR
NOTIONAL MAP OF
BAGNAN POLICE STATION
IN HOWRAH DISTRICT
N
(NOT TO SCALE)
HOOGHLY
UDAYNARAYANPUR
Mundeswari R.
AMTA
HOWRAH
CALCUTTA
From HOWRAH
Hooghly R.
BAGNAN
BAURIA
Ulberia Canal
ULUBERIA
Damodar R.
BHAMPUR
TO MIDNAPORE
TO KHARAGPUR
MIDNAPORE
24-PARGANAS
LOCATION OF BAGNAN POLICE STATION

TABLE 5

TOTAL POPULATION OF HOWRAH DISTRICT, 1961

Religion	Population	Percentage to the total population
Hindus	1,698,306	83·3
Sikhs	2,853	0·1
Jains	402	0·0
Buddhists	194	0·0
Zoroastrians	8	0·0
Muslims	333,481	16·4
Christians	3,170	0·2
Jews	..	..
Other religions	63	0·0
Tribal	..	..
Non-tribal	..	..
Religions not stated	..	..

In spite of this heterogeneity of population in the district, it is the Hindus who are predominant and there are plenty of villages in the district which have only Hindu population. Chandrabhag, the *mauza* village under survey, is one of such one-community villages in the district.

Introducing Chandrabhag

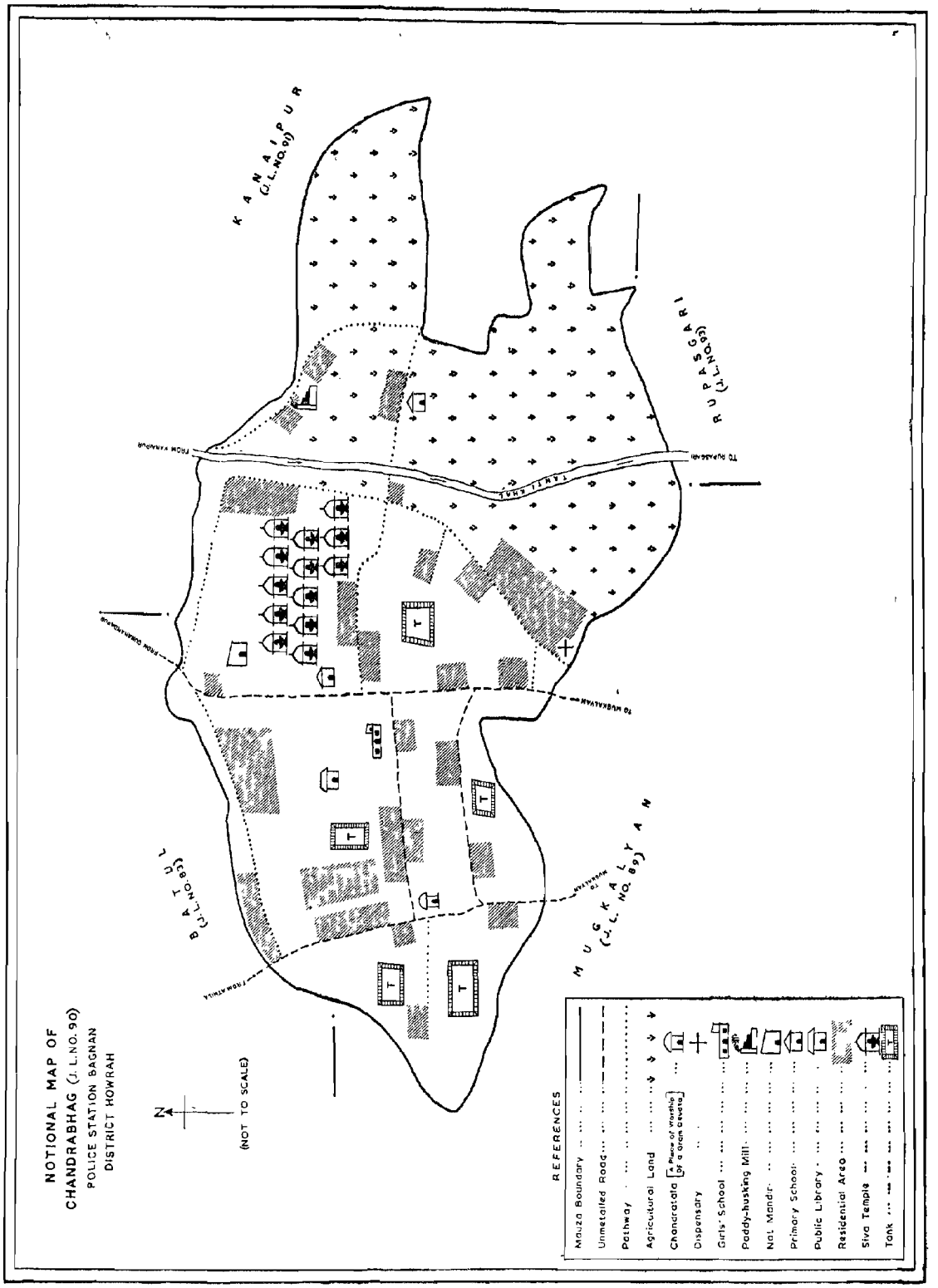
Location

Chandrabhag *mauza** is a middle-sized village within the Chandrabhag Union of the Bagnan police station, Uluberia subdivision in the district of Howrah. The village is easy to reach. Bagnan of South Eastern Railway is the nearest Railway Station of this village. As the crow flies, Chandrabhag is a little over three miles to the south of Bagnan Railway Station. But, since there is no direct road communication from the Railway Station to the village, one has to make a detour and the actual distance of the village from the Railway Station comes upto four and a half miles. The village is about 35 miles away from Calcutta.

History

According to the claims of the older people in the village, Chandrabhag has a fairly long and antiquated history. The time of the establishment of the village could not be ascertained. But people think and do believe that the village was existing in the Gupta period. This is, however, a tall claim. Notwithstanding, the village in its present location must have existed for at least 300 years, if not more. During the early days of the British administration, Chandrabhag was an important *Nimakmahal* or salt-trading centre. It is rather difficult to test the truth of this legend. But its possibility cannot be ruled out altogether. Naupala on the bank of the Rupnarayan is an important salt-collecting centre. It is like this : the waters of both the Rupnarayan and Damodar get salty during the dry months, and hence the mouths of canals joining the two rivers, (*e.g.*, Kantapukur *Khal*, Karia-Birampur *Khal* etc) are to be closed sometime in October and reopened in June after the arrival of the south-east monsoon. Salt is then extracted from the top soils, and is collected from the banks of Rupnarayan especially at Naupala. Naupala is not very far from Chandrabhag and therefore, the possibility of the latter's being a salt-trading point cannot be summarily discarded. Regarding the name of the village different stories are afloat. One story associates Chandrabhag with Chand Rai, one of the twelve famous Bhuiyans of Bengal. Another legend connects the name of the village with the local deities, Chandrai Kalurai, Dakshin Rai, and Bankurarai of this area. L.S.S. O'Malley in his Gazetteer of Howrah has mentioned these minor local deities. There is, to the east of Chandrabhag, a village called Rabibhag. One legend tries to make out that *Chandrabhag* (or the Moon portion) is the female counterpart of its male entity *Rabibhag* (or Sun portion). This sort of belief is predominant among peoples. As there are no tribal fringes at Chandrabhag Union or Bagnan thana it becomes rather difficult to impute a tribal motif to the name of the village. But there is a local deity called *Chandra* and the place of his worship is called *Chandratala*. It is yet to establish if the resemblance between the name of the local deity is just coincidence or not.

* In India the distinction of village from another is, more or less, a matter of tradition. It is one of the functions of the Union Board to give formal recognition to the village for purposes of administration under the designation of *Mauza*. A *mauza* may be a single village or a combination of more than one village.


NOTIONAL MAP OF
CHANDRABHAG (J. L. NO. 90)
POLICE STATION BAGNAN
DISTRICT HOWRAH
(NOT TO SCALE)
N
KANAIPUR
(J.L.NO.91)
RUPASGARI
(J.L.NO.93)
BALI
(J.L.NO.83)
MUGKALYAN
(J.L. NO. 89)
TANK
REFERENCES
Mauza Boundary
Unmetalled Road
Pathway
Agricuturai Land
Chandrotala
Dispensary
Girls' School
Paddy-husking Mill
Nat Mandir
Primary School
Public Library
Residential Area
Siva Temple
Tank

Neighbourhood

Chandrabhag is not an isolated village. It is closely interlinked, in its socio-cultural and economic activities, with other villages in the neighbourhood and also with Calcutta. As it will be seen from the map, Bagnan Railway Station is not at all far from the village. Kolaghat, a very well-known trading centre on the bank of the Rupnarayan, is only at a distance of 10 miles from Chandrabhag. The Bakshishampur Road runs very close by the village. The newly opened Cuttack Road (the National Highway) has also been beneficial to the communication of the village from farflung areas. Betel leaf or *Pan* being the principal export of the village, local people has contact with places like Madras, Andhra, Hyderabad, Delhi etc.

Chandrabhag, the village under survey, cannot be accepted as a representative rural community in West Bengal. Things at Chandrabhag do not show as La Metcalf says that "Village community remains the same". Nor is it, as Sir Henry Maine described, "the least destructible institution of a Society". It is not that tightly-knit community in which every one knows practically every one else. Relations are far from direct and face-to-face. Agriculture is not the sole dependence. Most of the people of the village are service-holders in the jute mills, factories, offices in Howrah and Calcutta and, more often than not, they commute the distance daily. Village-unity is only emphasized in the propitiation of the local deity presiding over the *Chandratala*, the shrine of the village god. He is worshipped by all the villagers throughout the year. Moreover, the village is a single community village. There is no Muslim or a member of any other religion. Also, there are only hieratic castes and those belonging to the Nava-Sakha or the functional castes from whose hands the Brahmin can accept water. There is no member belonging to the *Jalabyabaharya i.e.*, Muchi, Dom etc., in the village. Taking all this into consideration it can be said that Chandrabhag is a type by itself.

Land and soil

The whole of the district of Howrah is a dead level. The spot heights are few and far between. Nevertheless, the slope is from the north to the south. The village under survey too, shows this characteristic feature. The soils are generally alluvial with poor organic matter in them.

The cultivator has a long list of names for different classes of land, judged from various points of view, for they classify the soil according to its level, composition or yield. As regards level, it is *Jata* when below water-level (*i.e.*, usually *Sali* or paddy land), *Suna* when above water-level, and *Danga* at a higher level. On the highest level there are *Bastu*, or homestead land, and *Udbastu*, or land immediately round the homstead. According to composition, the soil may be *Bele* or sandy, *Entel* or clayey, *Penko* or muddy, *Dhasa* or marshy, and so forth. According to the yield, the *Sali* and *Suna* lands are divided into *Awal* or first class, *Doyam* or second class, *Seyam* or third class, *Chaharam* or fourth class and so on. The *Suna* land is used for *Aus* rice, while *Sali* lands for *Aman*. *Aman* is the main crop in this village as usual, and small quantities of *Aus* are grown in *Aman* land before harvesting. There is plenty of fallow land in the district. It has been recorded that Chandrabhag Union consisting of ten villages, has the second highest acreage of fallow lands in Bagnan thana—112 acres, of which 26 acres go to Mugkalyan and 30 acres to Duani Guzarat.

Land-tenure

The land-tenure system in the area was until recently the permanently settled *Zamindary* system. With the institution of land reforms in 1954 by the Government of West Bengal, permanently settled *Zamindaries* were abolished and taken over by the State in 1955. Share-cropping is the usual practice with a half and half share *Ardha-bhag jote*. Pending resurvey and settlement operations necessitated by the reversal of the position of the *Zemindars vis-a-vis* tenants after the Estate Acquisition Act an up-to-date picture of the land-holdings of the village under survey will be difficult to obtain.

Housing and household arrangement

The village has a dispersed type of settlement with nucleated arrangement of two of the major castes in the village, *viz.*, the Brahmins and the Mahisyas. The houses are mostly made of walls of mud with thatched roofs. The supply of mud of this construction purpose is met by excavating ponds or *Dobas* near the *Bastu* land. Consequntly, in the village, there are almost as many *Dobas* as there are houses. The mud walls usually last for at least twenty years if they are properly looked after; and thatched roofs, with occassional minor repairs, last for at

least for five years. But almost all the houses in the village collapsed during the heavy flood of 1959. After that, people are going in, more and more, for pucca structures in the village. There are, however, quite a few brickbuilt houses, sometimes two or three storied, in the village. There are also a number of ringwells and tubewells in the village. They supply drinking water.

Flora and fauna

There is nothing very special about the flora and fauna of Chandrabhag. Trees commonly available in the district are to be found in the village. They include very big *Batas* (*Ficus Indica*), *Asvathvas* (*Ficus religiosa*), the mango (*Magnifera indica*), bamboo (*Bamboo*), the *Bel* (*Aegle marmelos*), the tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), the *Neem* (*Melia azadrachta*), the palm (*Borossus flabetuiformis*), the *Bakul* (*Mimusops elongi*), the *Palash* (*Butea Frondosa*), guava (*Psidium guayaba*), *Papya* (*Carica payaya*), plantain (*Plantoginem*) and many other kinds of minor trees, and shrubs. Lotus is grown in abundance in local ponds for supply to city market in Calcutta.

Apart from the common varieties of domestic animals like cows, buffaloes, goats, dogs, cats, ducks, hen etc., there is quite good number of monkeys and squirrels. Both of them are great menace to the local orchards. Variety of birds are to be seen in the village. Some of them are of the migratory type and are usually seen with the onset of the spring.

Extension Service

Chandrabhag is included in the National Extension Service of the Government of West Bengal. Under the National Extention Service Project an N.E.S. Block was established at Bagnan. A *Gramsevak* and a *Gramsevika* are posted in the village to look after the extension needs of the local people. Their duty is to make people aware of the principles of community developmnt. The most important activity of the N.E.S. during recent years had been the supply of building loans, improved seeds and chemical fertilisers. Though there is an awareness among the villagers regarding the value of Ammonium Sulphate in increasing yields, they are rather conservative in their outlook. Moreover, the price charged for the fertilisers is not to the linking of the villagers, nor is it in their means to pay for the chemical fertilisers supplied by the Block Officer. After the flood of 1959, demand for manuring chemical shows a declining trend. The villagers feel that the soil of the village has been deeply damaged by salty water of the flood and, until and unless, a thorough chemical analysis of the soil is made it is no good using chemicals there. It might do more harm than good. This high seriousness of the village folk has, however, been treated with scant respect.

Communication

The village is not very difficult to reach. The Bakshi-Shampur Road runs very close by the village. There is a regular bus-service plying between Bagnan Railway Station and Shampur along this road. The railway station is at a distance of only about of four miles. A semi-*pucca* road can be used for a motor ride from Calcutta to Chandrabhag. A semi-metalled road connects the village with Mugkalyan, a rather prosperous village to the south. Another *kutcha* road connects Chandrabhag with Batul to the north. In spite of all these redeeming features, the internal communication system is very bad. The flood of 1959 also damaged the already very poor roads and streets of the village. The road situation has not improved a bit since 1959. Road construction on a *Sramdan* basis has not been possible, consequently, roads are all mud and dirt during the wet season. One has to trudge along a knee-deep mire during this period. In the dry season, however, it is smooth-going along the roads in cycles, cycle-rickshaws and bullock or buffalo carts. Cycle-rickshaws are in great demand in the village specially for the train-passengers. Sometimes people from Chandrabhag would walk upto the nearest bus-stop (1½ miles from the village) and then take the bus. It is cheaper this way than a rickshaw-ride straight from the village to the railway station or to a different village. The commuters do not, of course, use cycle-rickshaw so often. They have their cycles which they deposit with a shop-keeper near the railway station at Bagnan on a nominal monthly charge. Cycle-rickshaws are also used for inter-village communication and transport, not only for carrying passengers but also for luggages or merchandise. In view of a fairly high demand for cycle-rickshaws, about 40 rickshaws pullers from different States, *viz.*, Orissa, Andhra, Madras and Bihar have rushed to the village.

Apart from two main roads interlinking Chandrabhag and other villages, numerous foot

tracks and balks in the paddy fields are used by the villagers for inter-village movement.

Postal facilities are not very happy in the village. There is no Post or Telegraph Office at Chandrabhag. Mugkalyan, at a distance of one and a half miles, is the nearest post and telegraph office from Chandrabhag. Letters are, however, daily delivered in the village. The average distance of Chandrabhag from nearest socio-economic centres will give an idea of the village in its total environment. It will also help in understanding the susceptibility of the village to social changes. In fact, proximity to socio-economic centres has, of late, made the village a sort of cultural dormitory of the cities of West Bengal, specially of Calcutta.

TABLE 6

AVERAGE DISTANCE OF CHANDRABHAG FROM NEAREST SOCIO-ECONOMIC CENTRES

1 Railway Station	4½ Miles
2 Block Development Office	4 Miles
3 Post Office	2 Miles
4 Co-operative Society	4½ Miles
5 Health Centres	1½ Miles
6 Dispensary	..
7 High School (Boys)	2 Miles
8 High School (Girls)	Within the village
9 College (Co-education)	4 Miles
10 Market	½ Mile
11 Pucca Road	1½ Miles
12 Hat	2 Miles
13 Bank	4½ Miles

Education

One Higher Secondary Multipurpose School for girls and two Free Primary Schools are located within the village. The girls' school has a hostel attached to it and students of both the community, the Hindus and the Muslims are staying in the hostel in perfect harmony. Muslim girls are from the neighbouring villages of Halyan, Robibhag etc. About 400 students are there in the roll of the school and quite a few of them are from Calcutta, Burdwan, Berhampore and other outlying towns. Teachers are mostly from outside. The two Free Primary Schools cater to the needs of the majority of primary age-group children in the area. Local teachers, both male and female, are working in the primary schools under the special cadre scheme of the Government of West Bengal. Since primary education is free but not compulsory many villagers refrain from sending their wards to the school. Such recalcitrant guardians usually come from the agricultural labourer class or the like. They complain of other expenses (purchase of books, exercise books, pencils, slates etc.) involved in education, even if it is free.

There is no boys' high school in the village nor is there any centre for adult education. For schooling beyond the primary stage, boys of this village have to go either to Mugkalyan or to Batul, both at a distance of about two miles. There is a college teaching Arts and Commerce upto the B.A. standard at Bagnan. Students from Chandrabhag, seeking higher education, usual go to the Bagnan College. Students doing science courses, either for the medical or engineering studies, come to Uluberia College or to Calcutta colleges. The proportion of commuters among the students of the village is not at all negligible.

Health and medical facilities

Two qualified medical practitioners are there in the village. One of them is a member of the Legislative Assembly, West Bengal and is eminently popular both as a doctor and as a man of great social qualities. He has a dispensary in his house and medicines are dispensed cheap. There are also two more chemists' shop in the village where one can buy not very unusual medicines at a fair price. The major diseases in the village are dysentery, enteric fever, bronchial congestion, avitaminosis etc. Most of the villagers are not in a position to bear the expenses of treatment of these diseases. The absence of a charitable dispensary, or of a polyclinic is sorely felt by one and all. Unfortunately, nothing like that looks possible in the very near future. In the Howrah District Handbook, complied after the Census of 1951, a dispensary has been shown against the name of the village of Chandrabhag. But at the time of the present investigation in 1962, no dispensary could be traced and the information was that the dispensary, which was already tottering had long since been defunct. Naturally, in eventualities like a fracture or a burn case people of Chandrabhag is compelled to come down to Cal-

cutta or to Howrah General Hospital for treatment and care. Nevertheless, the health potential of the village, as it was reported at the time of the investigation, has improved during the recent decade. The most heartening feature is that malaria, which used to take a heavy toll of human lives every year, has been completely eradicated. Death-rate is rather low in the village.

Water supply and sanitation

There are three sources of water supply in the village, village ponds, ring wells, tube-wells. The village ponds contain, in most cases, stagnant rain water and are not considered suitable for drinking purposes. They are used for bathing, washing clothes and utensils. Drinking water is drawn mainly from the tube-wells. Some of the *Dobas* are used for small scale irrigation of vegetable gardens.

Except in the moderately well-off houses, there are very few latrines in the village. Nor is there any proper arrangements for the disposal of excreta, and domestic refuse. Male members in poorer households usually go to the fields or in the bamboo groves to answer their nature's call ; for female members there is some sort of improvised latrines. There is no *Mehtar* or carrier of the night soil in the village. One railway sweeper from the Bagnan Railway Station comes once a week to make necessary cleaning and sweeping in the girls' hostel attached to the local girls' school. The sweeper, after he has finished his work in the hostel and the school building, is sometimes called in by some of the well-to-do people in the village to do some cleaning work. The school building, the attached hostel and also the houses of these well-to-do are furnished with sanitary latrines. The sweeper has, therefore, not to carry excreta or other refuse from those places.

Villagers, male and female, mostly take their bath in the village ponds. They wash their garments too, in those ponds. During the seasons of cholera and small-pox a little care is taken to keep the ponds free from contamination of washing.

Local Self-Government and co-operatives

The village was administered by the system of Local Self-Government which was introduced under the Bengal Village Self-Government Act 1919. Chandrabhag is one of the ten villages in the Union of Chandrabhag. There was a Union Board with elected President, Vice-President, Secretary and Members to look after the local administration. After the Panchayat Act of West Bengal 1956, the Union Board has been replaced by Gram Panchayet and Anchal Panchayet. The new establishment was introduced only in 1961 and it is too early (at the time of investigation in 1962) to say anything about the functions of the Panchayet at Chandrabhag.

At present, there is no co-operative society in the village. The villagers have become rather sceptic about these organization after they (co-operatives) went into liquidation following mismanagement and misappropriation of funds in the late thirties. People of Chandrabhag feel the necessity of having co-operative societies again as the local *Mahajans* are simply exploiting their debtors in interest payment. The per capita indebtedness of the village is not very negligible. As consumers' commodities are becoming rarer and rarer at the present moment, demand for a consumers' co-operative has become more and more pressing. But, just now, nothing is going to be implemented. As a measure of relief, the Government has introduced modified rationing in the area.

CHAPTER II

PEOPLE AND THEIR MATERIAL CULTURE

Demographic pattern

Caste composition

Population of Chandrabhag according to caste and sex

Marital status

Residential patterns and resources of Chandrabhag

Buildings and dwelling houses

Household goods

Dress

Food

Family and kinship pattern

Structure

Actual birth

Namakarana and *Annaprasana* (Naming and the first rice-taking ceremony)
Paita or *Upanayana*

Marriage

Disposal of the dead and the funeral rites (*Sraddha*)

The commuters

CHAPTER II

PEOPLE AND THEIR MATERIAL CULTURE

DEMOGRAPHIC PATTERN

Chandrabhag is a *mauza* (Revenue unit). The village is practically divided into two areas *viz.*, Chandrabhag and Mirjapur by a canal called *Tantikhal.* Chandrabhag is to the west of the canal while Mirjapur is to the east. So much so, Chandrabhag may be called the 'West End' and Mirjapur, the 'East End'. Not only in geographical lay-out but also in population characteristics the two sobriquets seem justified. Brahmins and other high castes live in Chandrabhag while lower castes, including occupational caste people live in Mirjapur. About this peculiar distribution of population, there is a legend in the village. It is said that about 300 years ago, the Chatterjee families came to this village from the district of Nadia. Since the village was Mahisya dominated, the Chatterjees brought a few families of the "Nava Sakha" caste and helped them settle there. These people were given land at Mirjapur and they settled at Mirjapur. The order has not been disturbed since its inception—this is what the local people say.

One of the most important characteristic features of Chandrabhag is that it is a one community village. There is not a single Muslim family in the *mauza;* there are other peculiarities too. The village is without a barber. There is, however, a hair-cutting saloon in the market place of the village. There is no scavenger in the village; non-Bengali *Mehtars* from Bagnan town or from Bagnan Railway Station are hired when occasion arises. This absence of scavengers definitely tells upon the sanitation and cleanliness of the village but things remain beyond one's control. There is no cobbler either in Chandrabhag. He makes his itinerary to the village usually once a week. Obviously, he is in great demand in the village, particularly among the students of the girls' hostel. There were a few potters in the village, specialising in earthen pitchers. They not only supplied local needs but also exported earthen pitchers to Calcutta and other adjoining areas. But today, one has to buy an earthen pitcher from Bagnan or from Calcutta. Not a single potter is there in the village. They have either left the village or have taken up some other occupation following a change in the hydraulic character of the area after the construction of the D.V.C. Dam. There is no *Dule-Behara* (Palanquin or litter carriers), no *Dhuli* (Drummer) no *Sanaidar* (Piper), no *Dom* (Burning *ghat* or cremation ground attendant) at Chandrabhag. The place of the *Dule-Behara's* has been taken by the ubiquitous cycle *Rickshawwallas* and *Dhuli* and *Sanaidares* are very little in demand. During festive occasions, a *Dhuli* and a *Sanaidar* are brought on hire from a neighbouring village. If one is a bit ostentatious, one gets a band party from Calcutta. Absence of a *Dom* does, sometimes, pose a difficulty but that too is not insurmountable as local young boys prove always very handy.

The Mahisyas are the local people of the area. Numerically they are predominant at Chandrabhag. But economically and culturally, the Brahmins constitute the dominant caste. They own the lion's share of the land in the village; they lead in literacy and also in white-collar jobs. They have, thus, more or less, the characteristics of a landed 'gentry' in the locality. The Mahisya are, traditionally, a cultivating caste but there has, of late, been a great change in the aspirations of the Mahisyas. They are drifting, more and more, from their occupation of cultivation of white-collar and other specialised jobs.

According to 1961 Census the total number of households in Chandrabhag was 267 and the total population was 1,616. In the present survey of 1962-63, 216 households could be located with a total population 1,398. This works out to an average size of 6.4 per household in the village under survey as against the census figure of 6.0. Compared to other rural areas in West Bengal, the family size in Chandrabhag is a bit large. This rise in the average size of the family is rather interesting, specially in the context of a sizeable amount of out-migration since the census was taken. From 1960 onwards, 12

Tantubai (Weaver), one *Kamar* (Blacksmith), four *Swarnakar* (Goldsmith), two *Dhoba* (Washerman), 12 *Kumar* (Potters), one *Napit* (Barber) families left the village in search of livelihood elsewhere. Construction of the D.V.C. Dams had the effect of changing the character of the economy in the area ; this led to an emigration of potters from the area; goldsmith left the village after Gold Control Order ; the *Tantubais* were not getting yarn for their looms. Economic reverses, caused by a variety of factors led all these families to migrate from Chandrabhag. Apart from these, 14/15 families could not be traced. The present survey has, therefore, a shortfall of a few families.

Caste composition

The caste composition of Chandrabhag is also interesting. Besides Brahmin, Kayastha and Mahisyas, there are castes which belong to the *Navasakha* group. The *Navasakhas or* the *Naba Sayaks* refer to a cluster of nine castes from whom a Brahmin takes water. They are mostly occupational and functional castes. Since a Brahmin can take water from the hands of a caste people belonging to the *Nava Sakha* group, the *Navasakhas,* enbloc, are *Jalacharaniya.* This category of *Jalacharaniya* castes is not, however, found outside Bengal. Ghurye has given a very clear exposition of this situation in Bengal in his *Caste and Class in India.* "In Bengal the castes are divided into two main groups the Brahmins and the Sudras. The second class is further subdivided into four sub-classes, indicating their status as regards food and water:

(a) the *Sat-Sudra* group includes such castes as the Kayastha and *Navasakha.*

(b) the *Jalacharaniya* Sudras "being those castes, not technically belonging to the *Navasakha* group from whom Brahmins and members of higher castes can take water".

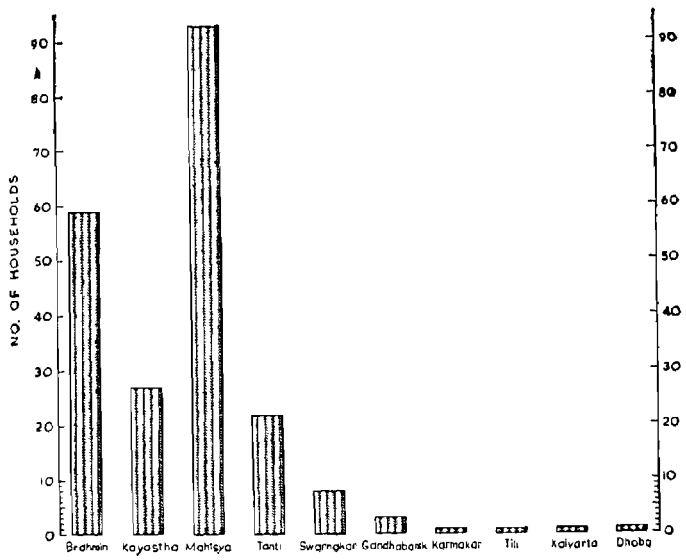
(c) the *Jalabyaharya* Sudras, *i.e.,* castes from whose hands a Brahman cannot take water.

(d) *Asprisya Sudra,* castes whose touch is so impure as to pollute even the Ganges water, and hence their contact must be avoided. They are untouchables.

The population of Chandrabhag consists, mainly, of Brahmins, Kayastha, *Jalacharaniya* Mahisyas, and castes belonging to the *Navasakha* or *Navasayaka* group. There is however, one Kaivarta family belonging to the *Jalabyabatrarya* or *Jal-achal* caste-group.

Navasakhas or the new group of nine castes have got their sanction in the *Parasar Samhita.*

DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS (COMMUNITY-WISE)



There are ten different castes at Chandrabhag *viz.*, Brahmin, Kayastha, Mahisya, Tili, Kaivarta, Swarnakar, Tantubai, Gandhabanik, Karmakar and Dhoba. The Brahmin is at the apex at the ritual and social hierarchy and Dhoba is at the base, so far this village is concerned. Many of the castes residing in the village, as per tenet of *Parasar Samhita*, belong to the *Navasakha* group. Their touch does not pollute and Brahmins can take water from them. As such, there is no segregated well or tank at Chandrabhag. The number of households of each of the ten castes at the village is given in table below :

TABLE 7

HOUSEHOLD AND TOTAL POPULATION BY CASTES

Caste	No. of households in each caste	Total population in each caste
Brahmin	59	439
Kayastha	27	169
Mahisya	93	547
Tanti	22	153
Swarnakar	8	48
Gandhabanik	3	25
Karmakar	1	7
Tili	1	2
Kaivarta	1	2
Dhoba	1	6
All castes	216	1,398

In the caste hierarchy traditionally the Brahmins come first, then the Kayasthas. But after that there is difference of opinion regarding the status of other castes in the village. The Mahisyas think that their social and ritual status is just the same as those of the Swarnakars in the village. It is locally believed that the present Swarnakar caste in the village is not Swarnakar *per se*. A group of Mahisyas who has taken up goldsmithy is now calling itself Swarnakar. There are at present three Gandhabanik families in the village. It is again, said that the Gandhabaniks at Chandrabhag were not all Gandhabaniks originally. There were quite a few Subarnabaniks or Sonar Bene's among them. Since Gandhabaniks are supposed to be of a superior social status, people of the Bene caste are now trying to register themselves as Gandhabaniks. An under-current of social and status mobility could thus be felt in Chandrabhag. But there is nothing unusual about it. This upward or vertical mobility has been detected by the Census authorities as early as 1911.

TABLE 8

CHART OF CASTE-HIERARCHY

Brahmin	..
Kayastha	..
Mahisya	Swarnakar
Karmakar (Bene)	Tanti
Gandhabanik	..
Subarnabanik	..
Tili	..
Kaivarta	Dhoba

Regarding the social origin and social status of the different occupational castes, Risley has given some detailed account. But the occupational castes at Chandrabhag do not, at times, fit in with the description of Risley. According to Risley, "Swarnakar senkra the working goldsmith and silversmith caste of Bengal an artisan group—is probably traceable to the Karmakar. Swarnakars are divided into four sub-castes *Brahman Deshi, Dakshin-Rahri, Khatangi, Uttar-Rahri*. Their social position is low. None of the higher castes will take water from them". So far the Swarnakars of Chandrabhag are concerned, they do not suffer from the disabilities mentioned by Risley. Nor are they aware of any sub-caste pattern among themselves. Also, acceptance of water from a Swarnakar is not that inauspicious as is mentioned by Risley.

The Tantis, the weaver caste of Bengal, have, according to Risley, "developed under the pressure of the natural demand for woven cloth. *In* western Bengal Vaisnavism is the characteristic belief of the caste. Viswakarma is looked upon as the tutelary deity of the caste, and is worshipped twice a year under the supervision of a Purohit who chants appropriate teats". In the monograph on *Cotton Fabrics of Bengal* Mr. N. N. Banerjee has given some description of the Tanti caste. He writes, "Tanti (Bengal), or Tantwa (Bihar), is the generic term for all weavers, but the Tantis in Bengal themselves form a separate caste, being one of the nine pure castes or Nabasakhas of Ballal Sen."

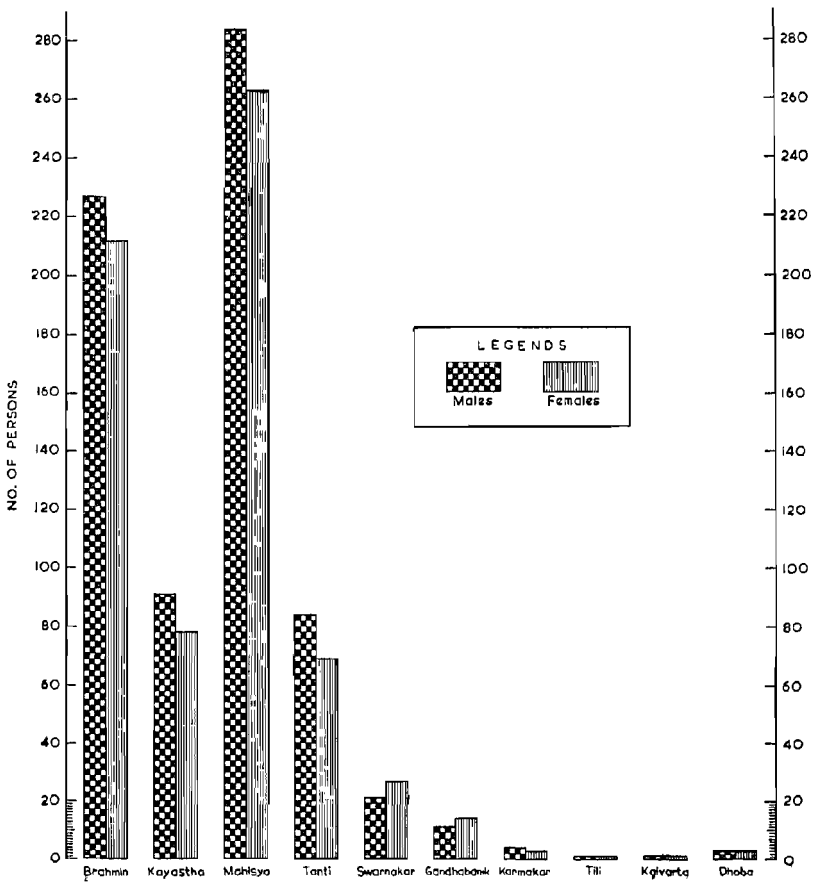
The Tantis of Chandrabhag show clear deviations from the pattern observed by Risley. Vaisnavism is not their religion at Chandrabhag. Worship of *Viswakarma* is not frequent there. It is true that the village Tanties and other caste groups perform this *Puja*. This is done once a year and not twice. But the Tantis of Chandrabhag do not show any special enthusiasm for the worship of *Viswakarma*.

The Kamar or the Karmakar of Chandrabhag is Lohar Kamar and does not do the work of any other Kamar. According to Risley, there are six subdivisions of the Kamar. A *Lohar Kamar* is one who works in iron; a *Pitule Kamar* works in brass; a *Kansari Kamar*, in bell-metal; a *Swarna Kamar* works in gold; a *Ghatra Kamar* is one who makes imitation fruits, iron figures of owls used in the worship of *Laksmi*; and a *Chand Kamar* is the maker of brass-mirrors. No such nice distinctions of the caste is observed at Chandrabhag. There is only one Kamar family at the village working on iron. But it might take up brass and bell-metal work if it was needed. The caste structure at Chandrabhag, therefore, shows some local variations and it does not conform to tally with the pattern depicted by Risley and Dalton.

Population of Chandrabhag according to caste and sex

In the sex composition of the village, there is a general preponderance of males over females. This is specially the case with the higher castes in the village, *viz.*, Brahmin, Kayastha, Mahisya, and also Tanti. On the other hand, the lower castes register a reverse trend in their sex composition. The position of the sex composition of the different castes at Chandrabhag is given in the table overleaf.

DISTRIBUTION OF MALES AND FEMALES (COMMUNITY-WISE)



DISTRIBUTION OF MALES AND FEMALES (AGE-WISE)

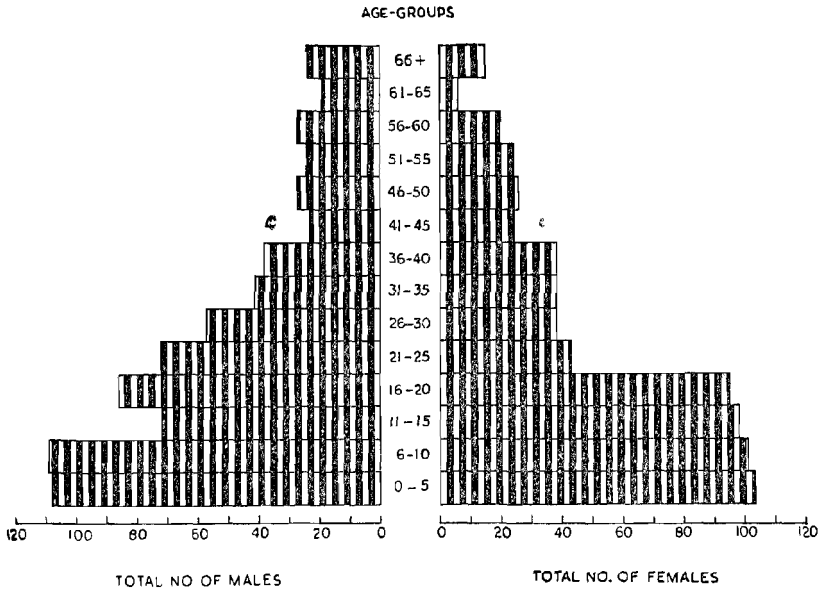


TABLE 9

SEX COMPOSITION

Caste	No. of households	Male	Female
Brahmin	59	227	212
Kayastha	27	91	78
Mahisya	93	284	263
Tanti	22	84	69
Swarnakar	8	21	27
Gandhabanik	3	11	14
Karmakar	1	4	3
Tili	1	1	1
Kaivarta	1	1	1
Dhoba	1	3	3
All castes	**216**	**727**	**671**

TABLE 10

DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY AGE-GROUP

Total population 1,398
Total households 216

Age-group	Male	Female	Total
0— 5	108	103	211
6—10	109	101	210
11—15	72	98	170
16—20	86	95	181
21—25	72	43	115
26—30	57	38	95
31—35	41	38	79
36—40	38	38	76
41—45	23	25	48
46—50	27	26	53
51—55	24	25	49
56—60	27	20	47
61—65	19	6	25
65+	24	15	39
All ages	**727**	**671**	**1,398**

The above table may be represented in a different way.

TABLE 11

PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION

Age-group	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
0— 5	108	7·72	103	7·38	211	15·10
6—15	181	12·94	199	14·23	380	27·17
16—35	256	18·31	214	15·30	470	33·61
36—55	112	8·01	114	8·15	226	16·16
56+	70	5·00	41	2·93	111	7·93
All ages	727	51·98	671	47·99	1,398	99·97

The age distribution in the above table shows significant differences between the two sexes. 42.27 per cent. of the total population in the age-group 0—15 consist of 21.61 per cent. females and 20.66 per cent. males. On the other extreme, in the age-group 56 and above there are only 2.93 per cent. females while males constitute five per cent. Between the age-group 16—55, *i.e.*, in the reproductive age-group, there are 368 males and 328 females, *i.e.*, 16.32 per cent. and 23.45 per cent. respectively. From the point of view of economic demography, it can be said that there is a comparatively high percentage of people in the dependent and non-productive age-set. Since the number of adult males in the reproductive age-group is 1.6 per household, the economy of the village remains at a significantly low level.

The population of the village has also been studied castewise. The following table will show the population of different age-groups in different castes at Chandrabhag.

TABLE 12

DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AT CHANDRABHAG AGE AND CASTE BASIS

Age-group	Brahmin		Kayastha		Mahisya		Tanti		Swarnakar		Gandhabanik	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
0— 5	26	31	11	8	52	46	14	9	3	7	1	1
6—10	37	29	12	16	45	39	8	10	3	3	2	4
11—15	25	36	10	11	28	35	5	10	1	3	2	2
16—20	26	40	14	8	30	32	9	9	4	4	2	1
21—25	20	9	7	6	28	21	13	6	3	1	1	..
26—30	22	16	9	5	16	14	6	2	2	..	..	1
31—35	15	8	3	5	16	16	6	5	1	1	..	3
36—40	12	9	4	7	16	17	5	2	..	2	1	..
41—45	7	7	4	1	9	10	2	3	1	2	..	..
46—50	9	10	2	2	10	7	3	6	1	..	2	..
51—55	3	8	3	3	13	9	3	2	1	2	..	1
56+	25	9	12	6	21	17	10	5	1	2	..	1
Total	**227**	**212**	**91**	**78**	**284**	**263**	**84**	**69**	**21**	**27**	**11**	**14**

TABLE 12—*contd.*

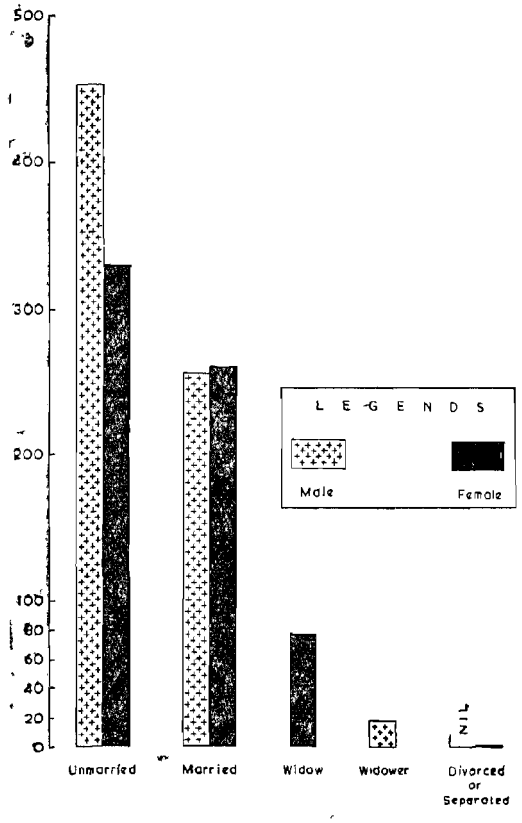
Age-group	Karmakar		Tili		Kaivarta		Dhoba		All castes		Percentage		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
0— 5	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	108	103	7·72	7·38	15·10
6—10	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	109	101	7·79	7·22	15·01
11—15	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	72	98	5·15	7·01	12·16
16—20	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	86	95	6·15	6·79	12·94
21—25	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	72	43	5·15	3·07	8·22
26—30	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	57	38	4·07	2·71	6·78
31—35	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	41	38	2·93	2·71	5·64
36—40	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	38	38	2·71	2·71	5·42
41—45	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	23	25	1·64	1·78	3·42
46—50	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	27	26	1·93	1·85	3·78
51—55	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	24	25	1·71	1·78	3·49
56+	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	70	41	5·00	2·93	7·93
Total	**4**	**3**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**3**	**3**	**727**	**671**	**51·95**	**47·94**	**99·89**

NOTES :

1. Total population—1,398
2. Total households—216

Two very important findings transpire from the table. It presents an idea of the number of women of the reproductive age (*i.e.*, between 11—45) when this number is considered along with the factor of marital status of women in the village, one gets an idea of the raising of the age of marriage girls in the village. Villagers are more conservative than the urbanites and early marriage of girls is an usual practice. But even in villages today, marriage of girls is postponed to a later date and no social opprobrium attaches such acts. Another fact which was brought to light in the table is the number of potential school-going children *i.e.*, the population, male and female in the age-group 6—15. The number of such children is 380 of whom 181 are males and 199 females. In spite of such potentiality, education of these children is not always aimed at. Except the upper caste guardians, others would rather have their sons and wards as their helps in their own work, *viz.*, agriculture, betelvine cultivation, smithy and so on.

MARITAL STATUS



MARITAL STATUS

The classification of marital status followed here is a fivefold one-unmarried, married, widow, widower and divorced. It was found that considerable portion of the population of Chandrabhag are unmarried. The proportions of unmarried, married, widow, widowers are 56.08 per cent., 36.98 per cent., 5.57 per cent., and

1.3 per cent. respectively. There is one or two cases of desertion or separation from the husband. No case of divorced men or women was found at the village; nor any case of judicial separation. The excess of widows in the village is to be accounted to a factor quite different from the normal demographic one. Many secondary kins, of whom the number of widows is the greatest, live in the different households at Chandrabhag. The relation of the heads of the households with these widows may be very distant and remote; nevertheless, the latter, being stranded, take shelter in this village. This is why there is an excess of widows at Chandrabhag. The number of unmarried girls of all ages in all the different castes is also considerable. This tends to reflect the socio-economic condition of the village. Girls are not easily married due to an excessive demand of dowries and other incidental expenses of marriage.

TABLE 13

DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY MARITAL STATUS (CASTE-WISE)

Marital status	Brahmin		Kayastha		Mahisya		Tanti	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Unmarried	149	121	62	38	161	115	56	34
Married	70	73	28	32	116	116	26	26
Widow	..	18	..	7	..	32	..	9
Widower	8	..	1	..	7	..	2	..
Divorced/Separated	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..
Total population	**227**	**212**	**91**	**78**	**284**	**263**	**84**	69

Marital status	Swarnakar		Karmakar		Gandhabanik		Kaivarta	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Unmarried	11	13	3	1	8	8	1	..
Married	10	8	1	1	3	3	..	..
Widow	..	6	..	1	..	3	..	1
Widower	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Divorced/Separated	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total population	**21**	**27**	**4**	**3**	**11**	**14**	1	1

Marital status	Tili		Dhoba		Total	Percentage
	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Unmarried	..	..	2	1	783	56·08
Married	1	1	1	1	517	36·98
Widow	..	..	..	1	78	5·57
Widower	..	..	..	..	19	1·36
Divorced/Separated	..	..	..	..	1	..
Total population	**1**	**1**	**3**	**3**	**1,398**	**100**

The excess of married females over married males among the two upper, *viz.*, the Brahmin and the Kayastha is due to change in the economic set-up. The working population of this village are mostly commuters. They work in and around Calcutta and since, Chandrabhag is easily accessible by train services, they avail of the railway facilities. 'Daily passengers' are how they are known. But, there are persons who would not commute the distance daily. They would rather stay in cheap hotels and messes in the towns and cities where they work, and come to visit their wives and children at the village during the week ends. The outcome of such a situation is that there is an excess of married females over married males. Among lower castes in the village such variation is not observed. The gradual increase in the age of marriage of the girls at Chandrabhag is also another significant finding. Excluding female population of the age-group 0--5 and 6—10, it is observed that the number of unmarried girls between ages 11- 25, works up to 61 among Brahmins, 15 among Kayasthas, 30 among Mahisyas, 14 among Tantis, three among Swarnakar and Gandhabaniks, and one among Karmakar and Dhoba, respectively. In respect of a village like Chandrabhag, this is a significant social change.

Residential patterns and resources of Chandrabhag

Buildings and dwelling houses

Buildings and dwelling houses are an indication of the economic position of the villagers. In the villages of India, the structures of dwelling houses, usually, have mud walls, *kutcha* floor with a plaster of mud and a thatched roof. Another variety is houses with mud walls and corrugated tin roof or tile roof. *Pucca* buildings are usually rare in village except when such buildings are constructed for special purpose like School, Block Office, Village Dispensary and so on. Chandrabhag seems to be an exception. One finds many more *pucca* buildings than one can normally expect in this small village of not much of commercial importance. Apart from the multistoried buildings of the Girls Higher Secondary Multipurpose School and the attached hostel for girls, and also single storied construction of the Sreekrishna Pathagar or the local public library and the dispensary, now defunct, there are twentyseven more *pucca* structures of all brick and masonry both one storied and multistoried. These are all for residential purposes and this means that 12.03 per cent. of the dwelling houses at Chandrabhag have brick and masonry work. These constructions, are, however, fairly oldish and were built by the fathers of the present heads of the households. Some new structures with brick walls and tile or tin roofs have lately come into being. These new buildings were constructed after the flood of 1959 when many a house was completely razed to the ground. The Block Development Office came forward with loan and also with a Scheme "Build your Own House". Loans were taken but very few of the persons taking loan took pains to build *pucca* structures. The reasons they put forward were scarcity of building materials and the unusual delay in procuring them. So, barring a few constructions, most of the houses at Chandrabhag are built on materials obtained locally. The usual procedure is to cut a dug-out or *doba*, the earth of which is used for the plinth as well as for the walls of the rooms. The mud walls usually, have thickness of about 10 inches. Sometimes, mud is reinforced with bits of straw and cowdung; sometime, again, bamboo lattices, coated inside and outside with mud, are used for walls. For roofing straw or hay is used. This is economical as the owner-cultivator as well as the share croppers have their respective shares of hay at the time of distribution of corn. A share of the hay for the share cropper is not always obtained in the villages of Bengal. For angles and joists, the villagers at Chandrabhag used bamboo which is readily available.

Those who are a little well-off, replace thatch roof with tile and/or corrugated tin roof. About ten to twelve years ago, tiles were easily available in the area and could be had cheap. Recently, consequent upon a change in the natural flow of the river systems of the area, pantile manufacture has received a severe blow. Whatever little pantile is produced, it is exported outside for better prices. In this situation of scarcity of pantiles and high prices thereof, people at Chandrabhag stick to thatch roofs, more or less. Bulk import of corrugated tins also is not very easy. The Midnapur Canal Reach No. 7 is not workworthy all throughout the year. One has to wait till the rainy season, when the canal is full, for one's supply of corrugated tins and other building materials like cement, sand etc. The difficulty works double aged - the economic potential of a person and communication difficulties in procuring materials. Brick kilns did not prove to be very successful at Chandrabhag. All these personal and

non-personal, economic and non-economic factors have been instrumental to the constructional plan of dwelling houses at Chandrabhag.

Houses at Chandrabhag are all residential houses. The idea of letting or sub-letting houses on a monthly rent was absolutely foreign to the minds of the villagers at Chandrabhag. Since five or six years, the question of letting houses has appeared before them. In 1959, a refugee family from East Bengal come to stay in the village. In 1960, a *Gramsevika* was assigned for Chandrabhag. These new comers had to be accommodated and rooms were let on monthly rentals. Room/house rents varied between Rupees twenty to Rupees forty per month. It was doubtful if the refugee family was really in a position to pay rentals regularly, if at all. Households with four or more rooms were in a position to let out rooms. House types at Chandrabhag vary from one roomed mud thatch but to multistoried brick built dwellings and accommodation per household in each of the ten castes will be realised from the table below :

TABLE 14

HOUSE-TYPES AT CHANDRABHAG

House-types		Brahmin	Kayastha	Mahisya	Tanti	Swarnakar
Mud wall & thatched roof	One Room	6	..	25	6	1
	Two Room	4	..	17	2	1
	Three/More Room	8	4	5	2*	2
Mud wall & tiled roof	One Room	2	..	5	1	..
	Two Room	6	1	18	..	..
	Three/More Room	10	1	4*	1	1
Mud wall & tinned roof	One Room	..	..	6	1	..
	Two Room	4	..	3	1	..
	Three/More Room	6	..	4	4	2*
Brick wall & thatched roof	One Room	..	..	..	..	..
	Two Room	..	2	..	..	..
	Three/More Room	..	3	..	..	..
Brick wall & tiled roof	One Room	..	..	..	..	..
	Two Room	..	..	..	..	1
	Three/More Room	1*	4	2	..	..
Brick wall & tinned roof	One Room	..	..	..	..	..
	Two Room	..	..	1	..	..
	Three/More Room	1	2	..	1	..
Pucca building	One Storied (average 4 rooms)	6	5	3	2	..
	Two Storied (average 6 rooms)	5	5	..	1	..
Others		..	..	..	..	..
Total households		**59**	**27**	**93**	**22**	**8**

TABLE 14—*contd.*

House types		Gandha-banik	Karma-kar	Tili	Kaivarta	Dhoba	Total rooms
Mud wall & thatched roof	One Room	..	..	..	1	..	39
	Two Room	1	..	..	..	..	50
	Three/More Room	..	..	..	.	.	61
Mud wall & tiled roof	One Room	..	..	..	..	..	8
	Two Room	..	1	..	..	1	54
	Three/More Room	..	..	..	..	..	56
Mud wall & tinned roof	One Room	1	..	..	..	..	8
	Two Room	1*	..	..	..	..	20
	Three/More Room	..	..	..	..	..	50
Brick wall & thatched roof	One Room	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Two Room	..	..	..	..	..	4
	Three/More Room	..	..	..	..	..	9
Brick wall & tiled roof	One Room	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Two Room	..	..	..	.	..	2
	Three More Room	..	..	..	..	..	28
Brick wall & tinned roof	One Room	..	..	1	..	..	2
	Two Room	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Three/More Room	..	..	..	..	..	14
Pucca building	One Storied (average 4 rooms)	..	..	..	..	..	64
	Two Storied (average 6 rooms)	..	..	..	.	..	66
Others		..	..	..	..	..	..
Total households		3	1	1	1	1	535

*Indicates two stories.

NOTE : Average 2-4 rooms per household

It will also be seen from the chart that better houses and superior type buildings belong mostly to the upper castes of the village. The Brahmins have 40 *Bighas* 15 *Cottahs* for their homestead ; the Kayasthas have 12 *Bighas* and 10 *Cottahs* whereas the Mahisyas have only 42 *Bighas* and 12 *Cottahs* as homestead for 93 households. The position of the Tantis, Swarnakars, Karmakars is not very happy either. They have 13 *Bighas*, five *Bighas* and one *Bigha* respectively for their homestead. The end result of such a situation is overcrowding. Moreover, there is hardly any distinction between buildings and structures used solely for residential purposes and those for production and business purposes. That the weaver keeps his handloom/looms in his dwelling house and or in his sleeping room will be evident from the photograph. The house shown in the photograph has, in fact, one big room and the loom is kept in one corner of it. During day the loom is at work, at night it is the sleeping room. Similar is the case with the farmers and goldsmiths. The farmer, more often than not, stores

his things, corn, implements etc., in his dwelling house; the Swarnakar has his small smithy in his own house. In a village like Chandrabhag, it is difficult for a goldsmith to run a separate establishment for his business which can be done in towns. A Brahmin gentleman has also been running a stationery shop in one of the rooms of his house.

HOUSEHOLD GOODS

The standard of living and the pattern of consumer expenditure in rural areas will be easily ascertained from the number of durable consumer goods in use in different caste households. The Brahmin households have the highest number of such durable consumer goods as they constitute the better off section in the village. A mosquito-net and a hurricane lantern constitute the absolute minimum of the consumption standard and each and every household at Chandrabhag possesses these two commodities. Other consumer goods like chair, table, radio, bicycle, torch are mostly owned by the upper caste families of the village. Some of these consumer goods have come very recently in use. Radios and transistors fall in this category. More often than not, the radios and transistors have been purchased within 5 years of the date of interview. The extent to which semi-durable consumer goods are used also shows the direction of social change. Modern households must-needs be more and more streamlined consequent upon a change in the economy of the country. Use of kerosene stove, bicycles is being gradually taken up by village households. The relative position of the use of consumer goods by different caste households at Chandrabhag will be discernible from the table below :

TABLE 15

HOUSEHOLD EFFECTS OF DIFFERENT CASTES AT CHANDRABHAG

Consumer's goods	Brahmin	Kayastha	Mahisya	Tanti	Swarnakar
Bed-stead	55	24	31+1*	14+	4+1*
Khatia	29	12	45	8	2+1*
Chair	45+3*	20+1*	7+12*	5+3*	..
Table	43+1*	18+3*	3+2*	3	..
Mirror	59	25	82	19	6
Bench	47	14	23+9*	13	..
Stool	50	22	39	15	1
Jalchowki	58	23	80+4*	19	5
Wall-shelf	44+1*	20	27+1*	9+2*	2
Mosquito-net	59+	27+	91+	22+	8+
Hurricane lantern	59+	27+	92	22+	8+
Petromax	10	3	2+1*	3	..
Battery torch	39+3*	17	19+5*	8	1+1*
Kerosene stove	26+10*	11+3*	4+2*	3	..
Bicycle	30+8*	17+1*	5+7*	3+1*	..
Gramophone	..	1	..	1	..
Radio	13*	7*	6*	1*	..
Harmonium	3	2	1	2	..
Tanpura	..	..	..	1	..
Others	..	..	1*	..	..

TABLE 15—*contd.*

Consumer's goods	Karmakar	Gandha-banik	Kaivarta	Tili	Dhoba	Total of all castes
Bed-stead	1	2	..	1	..	134
Khatia	..	1	..	..	..	98
Chair	..	..	..	..	..	96
Table	..	..	..	..	..	73
Mirror	1	3	..	..	1	196
Bench	1	1+1*	..	..	..	109
Stool	..	2	..	1	..	130
Jalchowki	1	1+1*	..	1	..	193
Wall-shelf	1*	..	..	..	1	108
Mosquito-net	1	3+	1	1	1	214
Hurricane lantern	1	3	1	1	1	215
Petromax	..	..	..	..	..	19
Battery torch	..	1*	..	..	..	94
Kerosene stove	..	..	..	..	..	59
Bicycle	1*	..	..	..	..	73
Gramophone	..	..	..	..	..	2
Radio	1*	..	..	..	..	28
Harmonium	..	..	..	..	..	8
Tanpura	..	..	..	..	..	1
Others	..	..	..	..	..	1

* Indicates bought within 5 years.

DRESS

The pattern of dress of the people of Chandrabhag exhibits no special characteristics. *Dhuti, Panjabi, Shirt, Banian, Fatua, Merjai* are the usual apparel of the menfolk at Chandrabhag as they are in other villages of West Bengal. European style dresses are also in much use at Chandrabhag. But the dresses vary according to the economic condition of the people there. The peasants as Chandrabhag are seen mostly in their loin cloths or in a simple *Dhoti* with no upper garment. During the winter they put on a shirt or use a *Chadar* only. The middle class people use *Panjabi*, shirt, *Dhoti* or the European style dress. The young group from the middle class families are much in favour of shirts and trousers than *Dhotis* and *Panjabis*. The older generation of both the middle and the well-to-do class prefer *Dhotis* and *Panjabis* to shirts and trousers. They use *Panjabi* or the upper garment usually when they move out of the village, either to the place of work or on some business errand. But when they keep in the village they would hardly put on their *Panjabi*. At best they would put on a *Genji* as their upper garment. The younger group of the middle class, on the other hand, is very particular about using an upper garment. They do not like to be seen in bare bodies. They use *Panjabis* or shirts on top of their *Genjis* even when keeping in the village, when they move out of the village, to their places of work or to any other place, they dress quite

spick and span, sometimes with neckties and cravats. The very old gentlemen of the middle and the well-to-do class have been found to be using *Merjai,* a kind of short coat with string fastenings. During the cold season they have also been seen using *Balaposh,* a kind of quilled wrapper.

Apart from *Dhoti* another kind of apparel is in use much use in the villages of West Bengal and this is called *Lungi.* This apparel has a close resemblance with the *"Sarong"* of the people of the South-East Asia. *Lungi* is cheap, durable and very easy to handle. It is worn as a lower garment from waist downwards and in times of rain it can be tucked up conveniently. Most of the peasants and menfolk from the lower class at Chandrabhag use *Lungi* all throughout the year. Menfolk of the middle and the upper class also use *Lungi* but not when moving out of the village.

In the dresses of women too similar gradations in consumption and use are discernible. Most of the women of the poor households put on a piece of *Sari* only. They cannot afford a blouse or a petticoat. Women from the middle income group also put on a piece of *Sari* only when they keep indoors. For outdoor movement they dress properly with chemise, blouse, petticoat. There is a difference of dress in generations also. Teenager girls would hardly agree to put a piece of *Sari* only. They use frock till the age of twelve or thirteen since when they switch on to *Saries.* They dress fully with chemise, blouse, petticoat and *Sari* for outdoor movement. Indoors, they may go without a blouse or a petticoat but they must put on a chemise (the upper garment) before they put on a *Sari.* Teenager girls of the poor families too, use a chemise as an upper garment.

Small girls and small boys between the age five to ten usually do not use any upper garment during summer and specially when they are not out to school or to any other errand. When going to the school they put on their full vestments.

Moving about on bare feet is quite usual inside the village for all socio-economic groups. The office-goers use shoes (Oxford, Casual) at time of going to the office. At home, they either move bare-footed or use a *Kharom* or a wooden sandal. Plimsolls or keds are also in great use among those who have to do a good deal of movement from one village to another. Recently, *Hawaii chappals* have in fact, replaced leather slippers and shoes in the country as a whole.

Ornaments are not much in use at Chandrabhag. Women of the poor households did not seem to possess any ornament, gold or silver, at all. In most cases, they were seen with glass bangles or with an iron bangle which stand for the auspicious sign that her husband is living. Sometimes again, a pair of conch-shell bangles go with the iron bangle. But conch-shell bangles have become very dear these days, so women of the poor households use an iron bangle only.

Women of the middle class families and also of the well-to-do households do not use too many ornaments. They may not use any gold ornament at all except a special kind of nose ornament which is inserted across the septum of the nose. The traditional belief is that this ornament protects the user from many kinds of diseases.

Women of the very well-off households were seen using bangles, earrings and a short necklace. No heavy gold ornaments is worn these days. School-going girls, specially the older ones, have a craze for a ring and this is in most cases, what they use at their ornaments. They have a feeling that use of ornaments has gone out of fashion. Moreover, the gold control order of the Govt. of India had its effects felt in the consumption pattern of ornament in this village.

Food

What they eat at Chandrabhag is an important socio-economic index of the people of Chandrabhag. The economically backward section fare rather ill in their consumption of food whereas the better off section of the population may exhibit a touch of conspicuous consumption in food. But the average consumption pattern has nothing to commend with.

Fish is in absolute demand in the village. It is not always that fish must be bought in the local market. There are plenty of ponds, tanks and dug-outs in the village. Most of them abound in fishes. Angling is the most important pastime of the elderly and out of work males as well as of the aged females of the village. Ladies, after their midday meals would sit with a fishing rod for hours together. And they mostly have a good catch with a waiting of two hours. Thus, fish enters, more often than not, in the daily menu of a villager of Chandra-

bhag. Apart from this, the daily consumption of food at Chandrabhag follows a stereotyped pattern, varying occasionally with the level of income of a villager. The well-to-do families eat well than the economically unsound families. In the poor households there is usually two meals, one in the early morning and the other are at dusk. It is only in the middle class and upper class families that one can hope to see arrangements of having two principal meals and two subsidiary meals or tiffins during a day. The two principal meals are usually very heavy. As such tiffins are very light. Sometimes, only tea is taken as tiffin.

The pattern of food consumption at Chandrabhag is very much influenced by the excessive number of commuters from the village. They attend offices and other establishments at Calcutta and other subdivisional towns like Uluberia, Kolaghat. For these commuters food is cooked early by the housewives. No elaborate cooking is possible as food is to be served in time. Office-goers having left the housewives take to cooking rather elaborately for the whole family. School-going children usually take a few morsels of what had been left from the early morning dishes made for the office-goers. They take their heavy dinner after coming back from the school. So, in many cases, specially in the households of the commuters the arrangement of meals is like this : tea in the early morning between 6 A.M. to 6-30 A.M. Breakfast-*cum*-lunch consisting of rice, a vegetable curry, *Dal* or fish or egg curry between 8-30 A.M. to 9 A.M. Lunch-*cum*-afternoon tiffin specially for the school-going children consisting of rice, curry, *Dal* between 4-30 P.M. to 5 P.M. Dinner at night (9-30-10 P.M.) consisting of rice, *Dal*, fish curry and sometimes milk. But for the non-commuter households and for households having no school-going children the time table is a bit different. The daily food taken by such families is usually as follows :

Morning (7-8 A.M.)	Tea (for adult males usually) and a morsel of *Muri*
Lunch or midday meal (1-2 P.M.)	Rice, *Dal*, fish curry
Evening tiffin (5-6 P.M.)	Tea, *Ruti*, *Gur*
Night meal or dinner	Same as in the lunch with occasional variations

In the peasant households a still more different time schedule is followed. Those who work in the field start very early in the morning having soaked rice from overnight. With soaked rice and onion they take their very early breakfast. They may come for lunch at home or the lunch may be brought to them in the field. The midday meal is taken usually at 2 P.M. It is usually a heavy meal for the workers in the field. After day's work they come back home in the evening. This is their tea time. Usually, they would take a cup of tea and a small bowlfull of *Muri* (Puffed rice). Though very hungry they prefer to take a small quantity of food during this period of the day. They do not want to spoil their dinner at night by taking too much food at dusk or evening.

Except beef and pork, hardly any restriction is observed about meat in the village. Chicken used to be and still is a taboo of the Brahmin caste. But this taboo seems to have been waived in the case of the Brahmin males and not Brahmin females. In the village food-front there exists therefore, a sort of "two nation" ideas. Tea has entered quite unware in the village. Not only is it consumed daily at home, there are also one or two tea stalls at Chandrabhag. Tea drinking is common in all households, rich or poor. Not a single household at Chandrabhag was found to be an exception.

Family and kinship pattern

Structure

The two hundred and sixteen families at Chandrabhag exhibit variations in their kinship structure. It is, thus, not possible to make a clear polar dichotomy, nuclear and 'extended' or 'joint' in respect of them. The families can be classified into nuclear or simple, extended, intermediate and irregular families. A simple or nuclear family is the unit consisting of husband and wife and or without children. It has also been called a conjugal family. An extended or joint family is that in which two or more conjugal families, related lineally, collaterally or in any other way, live in the same household. An intermediate family does not fall within the confine of any of the above two categories. An intermediate family type can be explained better by a few examples : when a widowed sister comes to live in the family of her married brother or when a widowed daughter lives in the family of her father or when the mother-in-law comes to stay in the household of her son-in-law. Such irregular relatives have been christened as 'adhesions' by the late Prof. K. Chattopadhya.

In his opinion, the presence of 'adhesions' in a family makes for the latter's development into an intermediate family. An 'Irregular' family is one in which a man and a woman live as husband and wife, though not wedded. Another category may be presented and that is family of the 'incomplete' type. It is characterised by the absence of any married couple in it. All these different varieties with their numerous ramifications are to be seen at Chandrabhag. The presence of a number of families of the intermediate type just obviates the possibility of a rapid disintegration of the extended family system in India. The different variations in the kinship organisation in the family of the Brahmins are given below :

TABLE 16

BRAHMIN

TYPE A

Incomplete family	No. of households	Total no. of households
Bachelor living alone	..	59
Bachelor living with mother, brother, sister	2	..
Widow living alone	2	..
Widow living with children and grand children	2	..
Widower living alone	..	..
Widower living with children and grand children, married daughter	1	..
Total	7	59

TYPE B

Conjugal or nuclear type		
Childless couple	2	59
Couple with children	27	..
Total	29	59

TYPE C

Extended or Joint	..	..
Lineal generation families	9	..
Collateral *i.e.* brothers and their families	6	..
Total	15	59

TABLE 16—*contd.*

TYPE D

Intermediate families	No. of households	Total no. of households
Childless couple with added kin	..	59
Conjugal family with widowed mother/widowed sister or mother, sister, father's mother, wife's mother etc.	2	..
Brother's, married sister's and married daughters' family living together	6	..
Total	8	59

TYPE E

Irregular		
..	..	..

From the above tables it will be seen that nuclear or conjugal or simple families constitute 49.15 per cent. of the Brahmin households. Extended or joint families constitute 25.42 per cent., and intermediate and incomplete families together constitute another 25.42 per cent. Intermediate families by themselves constitute 13.44 per cent. of the Brahmin households. If the intermediate families are considered with the extended families, they together make up for 39 per cent. of the Brahmin households. This means that relationship with secondary and tertiary kins is still important at Chandrabhag. Though there is a preponderance of nuclear families over other types of families at Chandrabhag, it can, nevertheless, be said that the family is not totally atomised or disorganised. Also in Chandrabhag, such arrangements of leaving wife and children as in Le Play's "Stem family" are pragmatically inescapable for those who earn money away from the village. Thus, "Joint family by choice" as one of our anthropologists opine, "which is based on economic considerations and conscious appraisal of alternatives, at least on the levels of expectations and values, is something qualitatively different from the classic model of the joint family" is also to be found in Chandrabhag.

The pattern of families and extension of kinship among castes other than the Brahmin at Chandrabhag exhibit just the similar trend as that of the Brahmin. The variations of the pattern of kinship among different castes may be discernible from the following table.

TABLE 17

STRUCTURE OF FAMILIES OF DIFFERENT CASTES AT CHANDRABHAG

Types of families	Kayastha	Mahisya	Swarnakar	Tanti	Karmakar
Type A (Incomplete)					
Bachelor living alone	2	1	..	..	..
Bachelor living with mother and	..	3	..	2	..
Widow living alone	..	2	..	..	..
Widow living with children	2	1	..	2	..
Widow living alone	..	..	..	..	..
Widower living with children and grand children	..	3	..	1	..
Type B (Nuclear or Conjugal)					
Childless couple	1	8	1	..	..
Couple with children	13	38	2	6	.
Type C (Extended or Joint)					
Lineal (3 generations)	4	7	1	6	..
Collaterals	1	3	1	1	..
Compound	1	1	..	..	..
Type D (Intermediate)					
Childless couple with added kin	..	4	..	..	..
Conjugal family with widowed mother/widowed sister, mother's sister, father's mother, wife's mother, etc.	3	18	1	4	1
Brother's married sister's and married daughter's family living together	..	4	2	1	..
Total households	**27**	**93**	**8**	**22**	**1**

Types of families	Gandhabanik	Tili	Kaivarta	Dhoba	Total
Type A (Incomplete)					
Bachelor living alone	..	..	..	..	3
Bachelor living with mother and	1	..	..	..	6
Widow living alone	..	..	..	..	2
Widow living with children	..	..	1	..	6
Widow living alone	..	..	..	..	..
Widower living with children and grand children	..	..	..	..	4
Type B (Nuclear or Conjugal)					
Childless couple	..	1	..	..	11
Couple with children	1	..	..	..	57
Type C (Extended or Joint)					
Lineal (3 generations)	..	..	..	..	18
Collaterals	..	..	..	..	6
Compound	..	..	..	..	2
Type D (Intermediate)					
Childless couple with added kin	..	..	..	..	4
Conjugal family with widowed mother/widowed sister, mother's sister, father's mother, wife's mother, etc.	1	..	..	1	29
Brother's married sister's and married daughter's family living together	..	..	..	..	7
Total households	**3**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**157**

The structure of the family, among different castes, at Chandrabhag has undergone some changes no doubt. But the main trend is the adjustment of the institution with the changing social situations and the economy of the village.

The size of the family among different castes at Chandrabhag also varies while the average size of all the households at Chandrabhag is 6.4 persons, the mean size of the families of Brahmin, Kayastha, Mahisya and other ranges between 2.0 to 8.3 persons per household. The mean size of the families of different castes will be seen in the table below :

TABLE 18

MEAN SIZE OF THE FAMILIES OF DIFFERENT CASTES

Caste	No. of households	No. of population in the household of each caste	Mean size of the household
Brahmin	59	439	7·5
Kayastha	27	169	6·3
Mahisya	93	547	5·9
Swarnakar	8	48	6·0
Tanti	22	153	6·9
Karmakar	1	7	7·0
Gandhabanik	3	25	8·3
Tili	1	2	2·0
Kaivarta	1	2	2·0
Dhoba	1	6	6·0

The average size of the family, excepting four families of Karmakar, Tili, Kaivarta and Dhoba where average did not work, tends to be higher among higher castes. The Brahmin families being more extended in their relationship (*vide* Table 17) show a high figure. The mean size of the family of the Gandhabanik appears the highest in the table, the model size varies according to the aggregate of members in each Gandhabanik family.

The composition of the family among different castes at Chandrabhag is going to exhibit further changes as the people of Chandrabhag become more conscious of family planning or planned parenthood. The number of children among young couples of the upper castes has already registered a decline.

Though the composition of the family is changing, the power structure within the family of different castes of Chandrabhag has shown not a very significant change. Father is still the controlling figure. Even an adult son, financially quite independent, has, normally, to accept what his father says. Education, service, marriage, and in other affairs the father has always a say. Daughters are expected to be given in marriage early. Employment of girls is tried to be discouraged as far as possible. Nevertheless, young men and women of the village are showing signs of independence, more and more. Quite a few boys and girls have married on their own. Since, in most of the cases, bride and bridegroom belonged to the same caste. the parents, though annoyed, did not take very unkindly to them. A girl have her own story how she came to marry the boy of her choice. In this case, both the boy and girl belonged to the same caste and the same economic status. There had, however, been one or two cases of intercaste marriages. After preliminary difficulties, parent and sons and daughter-in-laws became reconciled. This is a step forward to more and more accommodation to new ways of life.

"New ways of life" are also adopted by lower castes when they follow or try to follow the ritual patterns and ways of life of the Brahmins in the village. The Brahmins constitute the dominant caste by virtue of their economic, social and educational status. Many of the castes in the village have tried to change their social position by changing their ritual patterns, and invariably they have tried to emulate the Brahmins. It is all very known to everybody in India that the Hindus observe a number of rituals from birth to death. The observance of these rituals ensures the ritual status of a Hindu. A twice-born caste man has to perform many more rituals than a Sudra or a member of the once-born caste. To attain status, therefore, not only wealth but also an appropriate structure of rituals is necessary. In the daily life of the people at Chandrabhag, one, thus comes across a series of ritual observances connected with birth, *Sasthi*, first rice-taking ceremony, sacred thread ceremony, marriage, *Punarvivaha*, funerary right, and so on. Though the age of the marriage of the girls at Chandrabhag is much higher today, there remains, nevertheless, stray cases of prepuberty marriage. *Punarvivaha* is the ceremony which is performed when the child wife attains puberty. The age of menarche in Bengal is usually 11.8 to 12 years. *Punarvivaha* ceremony takes place, usually, at house of the

parents of the girl. She is supposed to stay at her parents' house till she has attained puberty and undergone the ceremony of *Punarvivaha*. But this is getting fewer and fewer.

The life-cycles of the villagers at Chandrabhag are interspersed with the following rituals connected with the major crises of life, namely, birth, marriage and death;

(i) *Garbhadhan* (Conception ceremony)

(ii) *Sadhbhaksana* (Eating of some desired object by an expectant mother)

(iii) Birth Ceremony

(iv) *Sashthipuja* (Propitiation of the presiding deity of children on the 6th day after the birth of the child)

(v) *Namakarana and Annaprasana* (First rice-taking and naming of the child)

(vi) *Paita* or *Upanayana* (Sacred thread wearing ceremony, mainly of the twice--born castes)

(vii) Marriage

(viii) *Sraddha* (Funeral rites)

Conception ceremony, except in the case of the first child-birth in the family, is not properly done. That a woman is *Enceinte* is known when she stops menstruating. So the *Garbhadhan* or the foetus-laying ceremony is never performed. An *Enceinte* woman has, nevertheless, to observe quite a few do's and don'ts. These do's and don'ts are mostly maintained by pseudo-religious sanctions. Though the young section of the village just give a damn to these numerous strictures, they cannot also flout these restrictions openly. An *Enceinte* woman is not allowed to go out in the evening. She must not visit the burning *ghat*, nor should she go by certain trees in the village.

At the fifth or the seventh month of pregnancy, an *Enceinte* woman is generally fed on with eatables of her desire or choice. Usually, the children of the household and the children in the neighbourhood partake of the food that has been offered to the *Enceinte* woman. This ceremony is observed by all the different castes, high or low in the village.

ACTUAL BIRTH

During the time of confinement of the local *Dais* (indigenous midwives) is sought after. All the local *Dais* were given maternity training by the late Dr. Bhupendra Ghosh Choudhury, father of Dr. Ranjit Roy Choudhury, the M.L.A. from the village. So the *Dais* in Chandrabhag and its neighbouring areas can very well be taken as trained *Dais* or midwives. Complicated cases of maternity are taken either to the Maternity Home at Khajurnan, about two and a half miles away from Chandrabhag or at Calcutta. The maternity home at Khajurnan was started by the Gram Seva Sangha with donations from the Tata Trust of Bombay.

Contrary to the usual practices, the *Dais* at Chandrabhag use a pair of sterilized scissors at the time of cutting the umbilical cord during parturition. Infant mortality at birth is practically nil at Chandrabhag.

After the delivery of the child the mother has to remain confined in the lying-in-room for a period of twenty days. This twenty-day segregation is for the Brahmin and the Kaysthas only. The Mahisya has thirty day segregation sanction. Among still lower castes the new mother remains totally segregated in the lying-in-room for seven days. But she has to observe certain restrictions of touch for another three weeks. In this case social emulation becomes difficult because of the economic imperative. Women of low castes can rarely, if ever, afford to stay idle for consecutive spell of days.

On the sixth day of the birth of the child, *Sasthipuja* or the propitiation of *Sasthi*, the goddess of children, is performed. *Sasthipuja* is performed during daytime. It is a non-hieratical observance, as such, no priest is required. But those who are well off would perform this *Sasthipuja* with all gala. Normally, a senior female member of the family would observe fast and perform the worship in a *Vrata* (Folk ritual) way. Stories depicting the efficacy of *Sasthipuja* are read out and children of the neighbourhood are fed with some toothfuls. During night, a pen, a bottle of ink, a few grains of paddy, a lighted lamp and the twig of a tree are kept ready by the new-born baby in the lying-in-room. The belief has it that the *Vidhata*

Purusha (God) would descend into the lying-in-room and would write the future, fate and destiny of the child in his forehead. Plenty of legends are about how the attendant of the lying-in-room had some accosting with the *Vidhata Purusha* and how he was forced to change his writings on the forehead of the child. Again, the mother would say how that great man looked like as tall as the sky, as resplendent as the sun and so on. Mothers who claim to have seen *Vidhata Purusha* make most of the fate of their children.

On the eighth day comes another ceremony, called *Atkoure* or *Atkalai* All the children of the neighbourhood are invited and they sing songs in honour of the child. Eight kinds of fried pulses (আট =eight : কলাই =pulses) are distributed among the children. The most common song in this ceremonial occasion is the following couplet

At Karai, Sat Karai, Chhele Achhe Bhalo,
Mayer Kole Ranga Khoka Ghar Korechhe Alo.
(Eight pulses, pulses of the road, the child is well.
The handsome baby in the mother's lap has made the room aglow)

The pulses which are distributed to the children must not be eaten on the spot. They should be taken home for consumption. *Kaman* is another ceremony which is connected with the child-birth. It signifies the end of pollution of the mother and the child.

Sometimes, *Jatyashoucha* (Pollution caused by a birth in the family) is observed by all the members of the family. But it is almost an exception. On the 21st or on the 30th day, as the case may be, the new mother and the child come out of the lying-in-room. The village barber comes and pares the nails of the mother and the child. Sometimes, he pares the nails of all the members of the household. Chandrabhag is without a barber of its own ; so a barber is to be called in from a different village on such occasions. Naturally, he demands a sizeable amount for this pollution cleansing activities. The washerman of the village has also a part to play in this occasion. The water of the washerman's vat is supposed to be ritually clean. So the washerman comes with his special water and sprinkles on the mother and the child and also on the articles used by them in the lying-in-room. Articles used in the lying-in-room are supposed to be unclean and not fit for use again. They are meant for throwing away or to be given to the washerman or *Dom* (scavenger). But, in these days of economic stringency, some sort of rationalised feeling is at work and the articles are ritually sanctified in the most traditional process by the washerman. A nice juxtaposition indeed! If economic conditions permit, a small feast for the ladies who have their husbands living, in the neighbourhood. A *Sasthipuja* is also arranged for the welfare of the child.

Namakarana and Annaprasana (*Naming and the first rice-taking ceremony*)

These two ceremonies, more often than not, take place simultaneously. *Annaprasana* is, usually, performed on the 5th (in the case of girls) or on the 6th (in the case of boys) month from the birth. According to medical sciences, it is time that a child should take some solid food along with the liquid diet. With the rich families of the village, specially in the case of a male child, this first rice-taking ceremony is observed with great pomp. A Brahmin priest is called in. The father of the child or the uncle (paternal) should observe fasting perform *Vriddhi Sraddha* (offering of oblations to the forefathers) and other *Shastric* rites. When the *Shastric* rituals are over, the child is taken out to the local shrine for a *Darshan* by the local god or goddess. The local village deity of Chandrabhag, *Chandrai,* is propitiated in all domestic affairs including rites connected birth, *Annaprasana,* first going to school, journey outside the village, marriage and so on. Back home, the child is offered rice, rice-pudding. After that, a number of articles, pen & book, earth & paddy, a one rupee coin are kept before the child and he is induced to put his hand on one of these articles. The traditional belief has it that the life's vocation of the child will be determined by the nature of the commodities he will put his hands on. Thus, if he touches pen and book he will live a literary and an academic life ; if he touches earth and paddy, he will be taken up by agricultural vocations and so on. A formal name (specially the name with which he will be identified in later life) is be given to the child. This name may not be the same with the *Rasi* (Zodiac) name which is obtained, through astrological calculations, during the time of making a horoscope for the child *Annaprasana* or the first rice-taking ceremony is much less pompous and ceremonious with a female child and with the poorer sections of the population in the village. In such cases, on the appointd day, a *Bhog* (offering) of rice-pudding is offered to the local deity *Narayan* or *Kali,* as it

may be ; then a portion of that *Bhog* is brought home to feed the child. But the other ceremony of *Namakarana* is, more or less, the same with all castes and all sections of the village. The Mahisyas and other occupational groups are gradually emulating the rituals of the higher castes. *Annaprasana* and the *Namakarana* ceremonies of these castes have very much been influenced by the like ceremonies of the Brahmins and Kayasthas.

Paita or Upanayana

This is a very important socio-religious ceremony in the life-cycle of the Hindus. This ceremony is performed by the Brahmin caste only and it signifies the change of status of a man. Before *Upanayana* there is hardly any difference between a Brahmin boy and a Sudra boy. It is *Upanayana* which brings in the difference. With *Upanayana* one attains the status of a *Dwija* or one of the twice-born. After *Upanayana* one becomes eligible to discharge his social and religious obligations. During this *Paita* or *Upanayana* a boy (there is no sanction of *Upanayana* for a girl) has to undergo a series of rituals. He must shave his head, keep on restricted and vegetarian diet, should observe certain regulations upto a period of one year from the date of *Upanayana*. The Kayasthas, the Mahisyas and other occupational castes do not observe this ceremony. It is not sanctioned for them ; social emultion of Brahminical rites does not obtain here.

MARRIAGE

Marriage rituals occupy the largest slice in the life-cycle pie of Chandrabhag. The rituals, again, vary according to the principles of *Varna*, occupational status, religious sects, and also according to the principle of a particular family. It is true that non-Brahmin lower castes have a tendency to imitate the rituals of the higher, specially the Brahmin castes. This is all the more true at Chandrabhag where there is a majority of the Brahmins, culturally and ritually. I was told by Mahisya boys and girls that the Mahisyas have, of late, taken many of the rituals and ceremonies of the Brahmins making it difficult to distinguish between. Brahmanic rituals are also serving as a model to other lower castes. The major difference between a high caste marriage and low caste marriage is the payment of dowry. In a high caste marriage bridegroom-price or dowry is paid while in a low caste marriage one has to pay the bride-price. Also, in a low caste marriage, negotiation of marriage is started by the bridegroom's party. Since there is hardly any really low caste people at Chandrabhag, the ritual structure of the different caste people there has been influenced by the Brahmanic pattern.

The pattern of marriage rituals followed by the Brahmins at Chandrabhag is worth reviewing here.

Marriage is desirable within the same caste and not outside. In spite of the legal sanction of *Swagotra* (same *Gotra*) marriage, care is taken not to select a bride or a groom from the same *Gotra*. Also, the restrictions of prohibited degree is meticulously observed. After the preliminary talks have been concluded, the elder members of the bridegroom's family come to the house of the bride to see her for selection. According to the sacred texts there are various ways of judging the suitability of a girl as a bride. In *Asvalayana Grihyasutra* and the *Apastambha Grihyasutra* we get that in order to know the particular characteristic possessed by a girl she was made to choose one of the several clods of earth presented to her. They were seven in number and each possessed a particular characteristic. Selection or rejection of a girl depended upon what she had chosen. Though little care is paid to this method of selecting a bride today, a very detailed account is, nevertheless, taken of her physical appearance, capabilities and attainments. Horoscopes of both the subjects (the bridegroom and the bride) are also consulted. If the elders of the two parties have agreed the match, an auspicious day is selected and the father or the guardian of the bride sends a formal letter of proposals to the father/guardian of the bridegroom. From the day the letter of proposal is sent, the girl is regarded as betrothed and the ritual is known as *Vagdana* or giving of words of marriage. In the villages and the semi-urban areas of India, *Vagdana* is a very important ritual. It usually takes place after much care and consideration. Once *Vagdana* is complete, revocation is attended with much social censure. The father of the bride may also find it difficult to arrange another match for the daughter pretty soon.

When *Vagdana* is complete, the parties have to wait for suitable time of marriage. Months propitious for marriage in Bengal include *Baisakh* (April-May), *Jaistha* (May-June), *Asar* (June-July), *Sravana* (July-August), *Agrahayan* (November-December), *Magh* (January-February),

Falgun (February-March). In selecting the months of marriage some other considerations are also taken into account. The eldest son or the eldest daughter should not be married in the month of *Jaistha*. Also, the month of birth of the subjects is avoided for this purpose. Hence, after the *Vagdana* ritual, the parties have, sometimes, to wait for the auspicious month. The day of actual celebration of the marriage is then fixed in consultation with an almanac and every care is taken to select a day with the influence of the maximum number of good planets. When the month and the day for celebration, have been finally settled, letter announcing marriage is sent by both the families of the bride and bridegroom to relatives and friends. Since the spirit of the Joint Family still lingers in Bengal, the letter of invitation is issued in the name of the eldest male member of the family and not in the name of the father of the bride or the bridegroom. In the patriarchal set-up of the Joint family in Bengal, there is a good deal of privileged superiority of the family of the bridegroom. The family of the bride, while sending the formal letter of wedding to the family of the bridegroom, is thus under some customary obligations to send some sweets and betel leaves. The custom is not reciprocal. The ceremony of pounding turmeric (*Halood Kota*) is the next important ceremony to be observed. *Halood Kota* is performed on an auspicious day, specially specified in the Hindu almanac. On such a day five married women, relative or non-relative, ceremonially pound some turmeric along with five cowrie shells. This is pounded in a special wooden implement (*Dhenki*) or in a mortar and pestle. Religious songs are sung during the pounding of turmeric. When turmeric has been pounded, it is ceremonially put into an earthen jar. Every care is taken not to pollute this pounded turmeric. It must not be touched by a menstruating woman nor by any one who has suffered a death in the family within a month from the day of pounding of turmeric. This pounded turmeric is kept in a ritually pure state for the ceremony of annointment of the subject with turmeric. This annointing ceremony (*Gatraharidrà* or *Gayehalood*) too, is performed on an auspicious day. This ceremony is performed entirely by women. Annointing of turmeric of the bridegroom takes place first. The ceremony of the bride follows. What happens is a bit of turmeric paste touched to the body of the groom is sent to the house of the bride. Along with the turmeric paste is sent a fish and some sweets. The bride is then smeared with that paste and she has a ceremonial bath. Married women and children of the neighbourhood are invited to join in the ceremony. They also smear turmeric paste on the body of each other and have fun. After the ceremonial bath of the bride, participants, excluding the bride, go to *Chandratala* for seeking benediction of the local deity.

On the night previous to the night of marriage a male member of the families of the bride and the bridegroom go to their respective priest's home and get some cooked rice. This is called *Ai Buro Bhat*. This rice is taken by the bride and the bridegroom at their houses very early in the morning of the day of marriage. This is their last feed of rice as a maid and a bachelor. On the day of marriage, till the actual wedding ceremony is over, the bride and the bridegroom are to observe ritual fasting.

In the morning of the day of marriage, the women members (five in the bride's house and nine in the bridegroom's house) observe *Sasthipuja*. This *Sasthipuja* is performed with water brought ritually by five *Eostri* from a nearby pond. The way of collecting water is also interesting. The seniormost of the five *Eostris* with a pot on her head would take a dip in the pond five times and the water thus collected would be used in the *Sasthipuja*.

Early in the afternoon, *Kira* or *Abhyuddaika Sraddha* or *Briddhi Sraddha* is performed. The actual performance of the ceremony devolves on the senior-most male member of the bride's family. In this ritual he offers oblations of water, rice and fruit towards ancestors upto three generations on both the sides of his father and mother. The idea of this ritual is to propitiate the souls of the forefathers so that they might shower blessing on the newly wed couple. Similar ritual is also performed at the house of the bridegroom.

When the ritual of *Abhyudaika Sraddha* is being performed at the bride's house, the bride is prepared for the actual ritual of *Sampradana*. Five married women make the bride bathe with water ceremonially collected from nine or five different households. Before her ceremonial bath she gets her nails pared by a barber. After the bath she puts on a new, red bordered *Sari* and sits on a new mat in a room made ritually pure for the occasion. She holds in her hand the tender shoot of a plaintain leaf wrapped in a piece of cloth dyed in turmeric. The bride sits in that ritually pure state till the time she is

brought into the marriage-booth or *Chhandnatala* for *Sampradana.* At the time of wedding she is to put on the dress sent from the house of the bridegroom.

The marriage-booth comprises an area of four cubits square, bounded by four plantain saplings at four corners. A thread dyed in turmeric is wound round the four saplings seven times at a height of five cubits. In the centre of the enclosed area is a small dug-out, twentyone finger breadth square. It is filled with water. A new carthen pot with a symbolic figure of *Ganesh* painted on it is placed in the dug-out. A *Salgramsila* representing god *Narayan* is also placed in the place of marriage. It is believed that the *Salgramsila* acts as a witness to the ceremony of wedding from the beginning to the end. Other things that are placed in the *Chhandnatala* are as follows: two rings made of *Kusha* grass, flower, sandal-paste, sunned rice, leaves of the wood-apple tree, a winnowing fan containing five kinds of grains (*Panchasashya*), five kinds of fruit, cups of curd, milk, honey and sugar, small figurines made from rice pastes.

At the appointed time, before the commencement of the ceremony, the bridegroom with his party arrives at the house of the bride. The father of the bride receives him with *Madhuparka.* This is the highest honour that can be offered to a guest. After the bridegroom has been duly received and honoured by the father of the bride, he is given a silk *Dhoti* to put on and gets ready for the ceremony. The bride is now brought to the *Chhandnatala.*

When the bride has been brought to the *Chhandnatala* and the bridegroom is ready for the ceremony, the father or the guardian of the bride asks the permission of the father or the guardian of the bridegroom for the commencement of the ceremony. Gift of the girl or *Sampradana* constitutes to core of the Hindu marriage. There is an order of preference of the relatives of the bride who can give her away in *Sampradana.* The most preferred relative is the maternal uncle of the bride. Next to him come paternal uncles, brothers, fathers, agnates, cognates and *Sapindas* follow in a descending order. The relative who is to perform the *Sampradana* ceremony now come forward and requests the bridegroom to take his seat in the enclosed area. On assuming his seat, the bridegroom makes offerings to *Ganesh,* the god of success, to nine planets, to *Siva, Brahma, Yama, Agni, Maruta, Varuna,* to the gods of the *Urdhalok* (upper world) and to the deities of the *Pretaloka* (nether world). When his invocation of the deities of ten directions has been completed, the bride is ceremonially given to the bridegroom in *Sampradana.* He holds the right palm of the bride in his right palm in such a way that the hairy side of the bride's palm lay in the inner side of the palm of the bridegroom. The priest of the bride's family places five kinds of fruit in their joined palms and binds them with a *Kusa* grass. He then places the joined palms of the bride and the bridegroom on the mouth of the earthen pot placed in the small dug-out. The person performing the ritual of *Sampradana* now utters the following *Mantra,* "I do give away to you this girl, decked with ornaments and garments after I have paid due homage to god *Prajapati*". The bridegroom accepts the gift with an offering to the god of love. *Sampradana* is followed by *Subhadristi* or the auspicious exchange of glances of the pair. Simultaneously with this exchange of glances or looks goes on the exchange of garlands of the bride and the bridegroom. These ceremonies of *Malabadal* (exchange of garlands) and *Subhadristi* (auspicious exchange of glances) are, more often than not, attended with mirth and levity of the participants. *Sampradana* is only the half of the total ceremonies of marriage. *Sampradana,* indeed, makes for the transfer of the bride to the *Gotra* of the bridegroom. But this ritual transfer of the bride into the *Gotra* of the bridegroom does not, forthwith, make the marriage complete and irrevocable *Vivahahoma* completes the marriage ceremony. If the bridegroom happens to die before *Vivahahoma* is performed, the bride, in spite of *Sampradana,* will not be reckoned a widow.

Vivahahoma/Kusandika or *Kusumdinge* (in local parlance) is expected to be performed on the night of the wedding. But everything depends on the duration of the auspicious moments or *Lagna.* If the *Lagna* is over, the ceremony is deferred till the next morning. *Vivahahoma* or *Kusumdinge* is not a single ritual; rather it is a complex of a number of rituals. The central theme of this ritual is a fire oblation. All the articles for *Kusandika* or *Kusumdinge* have to be brought from the house of the bridegroom. Articles necessary for its performance include sand, wood of wild fig tree, cowdung, a platter of sunned rice, pulses, clarified butter, curd, some parched grains, leaves of *Sami* tree, vermilion, a new pitcher, a stone pestle, a flat stone, a few leaves of holy basil, a

few grains of sesamum, a few myrobalan, a bundle of the dried pith of jute plant.

Kusandika or *Kusumdinge* is to start with *Vivahahoma*. In the enclosed area of the marriage-booth, sand is spread on the earth in the shape of an altar. It is one cubit square in area. The new pitcher filled with water is placed to the south of this altar; a new winnowing fan containing a few parched grains and a few *Sami* leaves is placed to the north of the altar. To the west of the winnowing fan a flat stone is placed. Now the bride and the bridegroom sit side by side facing the fire which has been lit on the altar of sand. They make oblations to the fire jointly thus making the bride's *Sahadharmini* or a co-performer of religious acts. This offering of oblations to the fire jointly is followed by *Panigrahana*, the next importance ritual in the *Kusandika* complex. Another ritual of this complex is the ritual of *Lajahoma*.

When the oblation to the fire is made, *Lajahoma* is done in her individual capacity. In this ritual the bride makes an offering of fried grains to the fire. This fried grain is poured into her hands by her brother who carries them in a *Syala* or winnowing fan. It will be of some interest to note here that the kinship term for wife's brother is *Sala* in most of the Indo-Aryan languages. Though the word is in much abuse today, it has its origin in the Sanskrit word *Syalaka* or *Syala i.e.*, the person who carried the *Syala* or the winnowing fan for his sister during the ceremony of *Lajahoma*.

After *Lajahoma* comes *Asmakramana* another ritual of *Kusandika*. *Lajahoma* being over, the bride and the bridegroom get up from their seats and the bride stands in front of the bridegroom. Both of them then go together near the flat stone placed to the north of the sacrificial fire and stand there facing the north. The bridegroom then asks the bride to tread on the stone placing her right foot first. She treads on the stone while bridegroom recites the *Mantra*.

" Mount on this stone;
Be firm like the stone,
Overcome thy enemies,
As you are now
Treading on this stone "

Now they perform circumambulation of fire. Three times the bridegroom leads the bride round the nuptial fire and recites the following *Mantra:*

" This I am,
Thou art that.
Heaven I am
Thou art the earth.
I as Saman
And thou art *Rik*.
Let us marry,
Raise a family,
And live
One hundred years."

At the end of the circumambulation of the sacrificial fire, the bride again steps on the flat stone. Near the stone are drawn seven big squares with powdered rice mixed with water. Sometimes, instead of these squares drawn by powdered rice-paste, seven small earthen wares are placed bottom up. The bridegroom then holds the right hand of the bride and makes her take seven steps along over the seven squares or makes her tread on the seven earthen wares. This ceremony of *Saptapadi* is an essential ritual in Hindu marriage. After the ceremony of *Saptapadi* the bridegroom makes the bride chant some *Mantras* which mean that the husband is showing her *Arundhati* (a star in the constellation of the Pleides) and *Dhruva Nakshatra* or the Pole star. In local custom this *Vedic* ritual has been vulgarised and in marriages today the bridegroom or the husband shows the sun to his wife. She has to look eastwards peeping through an out-let specially deviced by the interwining position of the fingers of both the palms of the husband. The ceremony of vermilion then takes place. The husband applies vermilion on the parting of the hair of the wife either with his wedding ring or with the raised edge of a small cane basket for measuring grains.

All these various rituals make up the ritual complex of *Kusandika* or *Kusumdinge* in popular term. It may take place on the night of marriage or may be kept for the next morning or *Basi Biye*. If it is completed on the night of marriage, *Basi Biye* rituals consist only of local and non-Sanskritic rituals like *Pukur Khela*, *Chal Khela*, ceremonies of good omen etc. The married couple must depart from the bride's house before sunset. Before their departure they have to see some good omen, *viz.*, the *Salgramsila*, five *Eostris* (five married ladies who have their husbands living), *Purna Kumbha* (a pitcher filled with water), a pair of fish, curd and image of *Ganesh*. The mother of the bride is not to see the departure of her daughter She shuts herself up in a room and does not come out till the couple have gone. At the time of

departure the bride performs a ceremony. She takes a gold coin, a pinch of earth, a few grains of unhusked paddy and makes them out to her father telling that she is hereby repaying back all she had been brought up with. Then the bridegroom pays *Dakshina* (Fee) to the priest of the bride's family. He also pays for the services of the barber, the washerman, the potter, the carpenter, the garlander and all those occupational group persons who were connected with the marriage. The barber performs the ritual paring before the ceremonial bath of the subjects; the potter supplies all the new earthen pitchers required on the occasional of marriage; the washerman 'sanctifies' the water of the ceremonial bath of the bride and the bridegroom; the smith supplies the new brass mirror and the cutter (*Darpan* and *Katari*) which the bridegroom has to hold in his right hand till the end of *Basi Biye* or the next-day marriage; the carpenter supplies the new wooden seats (*Piri*) which the couple sit on in the marriage-booth; the garlander supplies the pitch coronets which the bride and the bridegroom are to put on the occasion; the garlander also supplies the flower garlands needed in the marriage. In recognition of the services of all these persons or the members of the community at the bride's place, the bridegroom has to pay a sizeable amount. The amount is, usually, handed over to the guardian of the bride and he makes necessary distribution and disbursement later on.

When the bride and the bridegroom have departed, the mother of the bride comes out of her room and spills a pitcherful of water near the front entrance of the house, wishing that the couple may have a smoothe journey.

When the couple reach the house of the bridegroom a series of rituals is performed. They cannot enter the house till they are ceremonially welcomed (*Baran*) by five married ladies. These ladies carry in their hands, fan, a small pitcher filled with water, a live fish, a vermilion box, a winnowing fan containing *Durva* grass, some unhusked paddy and a lit lamp. They welcome the couple and put the fish basket with a live fish in it in the hand of the bride. The sisters of the bridegroom then touch a pinch of honey into her mouth, ears and eyes. She is supposed to see to no ill, speak no ill, and hear no ill of her husband's family. The mother of the husband then performs the ceremony of iron bangle and conch shell bangle. She makes the new bride put on iron bangle and conch shell bangle which are the marks of good omen. On the first night of the arrival at the bridegroom's place, the couple do not stay together at night. The first night is called *Kalratri* with some mythological significance attached to it. They can stay together on the fourth night from the day of marriage. Even when the daughter-in-law has been ceremonially welcomed she does not become a full member of her husband's family till the ceremony of *Pakasparsa* or *Boubhat*. Before this ceremony is performed she is not expected to take any food of her husband's family. She is to take food prepared from the ration she has brought from her parents.

On the eighth or the tenth day of marriage the couple return to the house of the bride. This is called *Ashtamangal* or *Dasamangal*. With this marriage rituals come to an end.

Disposal of the Dead and the Funeral Rites (*Sraddha*)

The cycle of life comes to a stop in death. Chandrabhag is a single community village. In the disposal of the dead, therefore, one single practice is followed, cremation. Still-born babies or very young children of about a year of age are, usually, buried and not cremated. Persons dying from snake-bite are also spared cremation. On the contrary, the dead body is placed in a plantain tree barge and made to float in a river. The idea is that the dead body, like the mythological *Lakhindar*, might get back its life. But such a practice is fast dying out. People have become too rational to accept these figments of imagination.

On the death of either of the parents one has to observe a number of rules and restrictions. After the disposal of the dead the mourning period starts. The duration of this mourning period is different with different castes. Brahmins have mourning of ten days, the Vaidyas thirteen days, the Kayasthas twentyone or thirty days, and other lower castes along with the various occupational groups observe mourning for full one month. During the period of mourning, kins of the dead are debarred from certain things. They must not eat fish, meat or egg during the period; try to avoid cohabitation, must not shave, pare nails, have hair-cut, must not seat on a chair but should sit on the ground while covering it with a piece of blanket. In the expiry of the mourning period the mourners have to perform *Sraddha* or the ceremony of respect offering. This rite of *Sraddha* is very inclusive. There are quite a few kinds of

Sraddha depending on the pocket and purse of the family in which a *Sraddha* is being performed. There are *Tilkanchana, Baitarani, Sorosh Ekodwista, Brishotswarga. Sorosh* and *Brishotswarga* are very expensive ; in the former sixteen kinds of gifts are to be made for the satisfaction of the departed soul, the latter includes of (a) land or money in lieu of land ; (b) *Ashan* or a seat woven with silk ; (c) a cow or its money equivalent ; (d) silver coin ; (e) one gold coin; (f) a piece of silk *Dhoti ;* (g) one silk *Uttariya* (a big scarf) ; (h) a pair of shoes ; (i) bedstead, bed mattress, bed linen, pillows with cases, a mosquito-net ; (j) a brass pot ; (k) a brass lamp ; (l) a copper platter ; (m) a bell-metal container for betel leaves; (n) an umbrella ; (o) a piece of sandal wood ; (p) a garland of flower ; (q) a metal fruit box. In *Brishotswarga,* a cow with calves have to be offered over and above the offerings mentioned in the list of *Sorosh.* The villagers at Chandrabhag are too poor to undertake *Sorosh* and *Brishotswarga* rites in their funerary ceremonies.

On the day following the day of *Sraddha,* resumption of fish, meat and egg-eating is done and this is also punctuated with a ceremony called *Matsyamukhi.* On the *Matsyamukhi* day, the kins of the dead, the bier bearers, and those who assisted in the cremation of the dead are invited. Three Brahmins are also to be invited and fed on this day.

As in other rituals, in funerary rites also, lower castes are trying to emulate the Brahmin caste and in this way try to enhance their ritual status. This raising of the ritual status may not be feasible.

The life cycle of the village revolves round the set pattern of the ritual structure of the sacred texts. There are local variations no doubt, but on the whole the influence of Sanskritisation is much discernible at Chandrabhag, a Brahmin dominated village.

The commuters

The commuters constitute a new socio-economic category in these days of industrialisation and urbanisation when the separation of home and work, if not inevitable, is more usual. A little over two decades ago Liepmann, K.K. in her *The Journey to Work* (N.Y.O.U.P. 1944) found a functional correlation in this separation of home and work and suggested that these recurrent daily movements supplement migration and enhance the stability of community structure by contributing to the flexibility of industrial-economic organisation. That the daily journey to work might be tending to supersede migration as a means of adjustment to change, since the lengthening commuting radius of the automobile has reduced the amount of migration necessary within local areas.

In the backdrop of this general situation, the problem of commutation and commuters of Chandrabhag is being looked into.

Today, about 350/400 men, women students commute to their place of work and study. The number is important indeed ! But commutation is not all that new in the village of Chandrabhag. Since the middle of the last century a minimal outflow was there. During the fiftees of the last century, the firstever jute mill was established at Fort Gloster in Bauria and this had a " pull " effect even then. Moreover, the different agency houses like the Ralli Brothers, Andrew Yule, Begg Dunlop, Martin Burn spread their lure of steady and secure jobs, both white-collar and non-white collar, over the villagers within a radius of forty miles from Calcutta. So these foreign super-establishments had, since their very inception, made people trickle out of their stayput existence in the villages. Commutation increased slowly but steadily with growing years till it assumed its, present position. Moreover, with ever decreasing man-land ratio, it becomes imperative to bring in money from other sources. Also, to work outside the village and to take up jobs not connected with land is considered more prestigious these days. And finally, there might be technical reasons for going to a different place for work, absence of courts for pleaders or mukteers for example. Commuters in Chandrabhag can be divided into several categories (1) Factory workers working in the belt of Chengail, Fuleswar, Uluberia and Bauria ; (2) Students studying at Uluberia, Howrah and Calcutta (3) Office workers for offices at Howrah, Calcutta ; (4) Pleaders and Mukteers practising at Uluberia. Commutation has become all the more easier since the introduction of electric traction in the South Eastern Railway of which Bagnan is one of the most convenient stations. Both up and down trains are conveniently timed to suit all the above four categories of commuters. Workday at Chandrabhag starts as early as half past four in the morning when the housewife has to prepare food for the factory going inmate of the house. This hectic movement of the housewives of the commuters continue till half-past eight in the morn-

ing. Nine is usually the village-leaving time for the commuters, students and non-student workers alike. From nine in the morning onwards till eight in the evening the village is female dominated. But this spell of female dominance becomes disturbed when the factory workers have a change in their shift of duty. During the duty on night shifts workers stay in the village during day-time. This makes for a day-time-night-time differential in the population of Chandrabhag.

Commuters give a new complexion to the village life. Since they are out all the six days in the week, they feel a sort of 'clinging' to the village on Sundays and turn more intently to things 'village' during this respite. One has yet to discover a 'could'nt careless' attitude among the commuters at Chandrabhag. Integration and unity of the village is thus emphasized all the more. They are cultural catalysts too. They bring home news and views of the city. Commuting students bring the news of probable strikes and student unrests much earlier than newspaper of the morrow. Commutation of so many white collars workers has also elevated the levels of political and cultural sophistication of the village. The way the girls and boys debated. the manner in which they dressed, the books they read, the magazines they subscribed to and the cultural functions they made demonstration of—all gave a clear proof of city-country symbiosis.

But the separation of home and work has never and nowhere been without its disfunctional features. Chandrabhag is no exception to the general rule. Apart from the possibility of severe physiological and psychological strain upon individual employees who must travel long distance to work, the cost of daily movement becomes telling upon the family budget. Enquiry revealed that many a family of the commuter has to economise on many essential items. One of such item is the text book of the children. Local school authorities are requested not to change text books frequently so much so old books could be purchased second hand. In the villages, and in Chandrabhag too, velocity of circulation of old books is indeed great. This give a kind of economic dividend to the ham-handed parents.

There is another group of workers at Chandrabhag who stay in the place of work during weekdays and come home on weekdays. In the weekends, therefore, a new kind of week and weekend differential of male population is evinced. These weekend visitors are mostly familymen but they leave their family in the village, either on their own or in the care of somebody. Sometimes, a new pattern of crypto-jointness in the family might arise due to this situation. The allegiance of this group of workers who come home weekends is, by no means, less pronounced. They take special care to render their services in the village during the *Pujas* and also, if any eventuality arises.

Commutation or the daily journey to work may, therefore, be considered as something normal in the community organization today. One of the serious students of human ecology opines that the regular ebb and flow of community activity may be viewed as itself expressive of community structure. According to him :

*" Recurrent movements, as the name indicates, comprise all those movements that are routine and repetitive. They might also be called functional, for it is by this type of movement that the functioning of the community is carried on. Each is an integral part in an established organisation and is therefore essential to the maintenance of the organization. Recurrent movements involve no break with the past, no disruption of an established order. They are the means by which an existing equilibrium is maintained."

This is, more or less, true of Chandrabhag.

*A.H. Howley-Human Ecology, N.Y. 1950.

CHAPTER III

ECONOMY OF THE VILLAGE

Economic structure

Land

Cultivable land lying fallow

Farming of land

Livestock

Tools and implements

Village economy

Agricultural operations

Indebtedness at Chandrabhag

Reasons for mobility

CHAPTER III

ECONOMY OF THE VILLAGE

ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

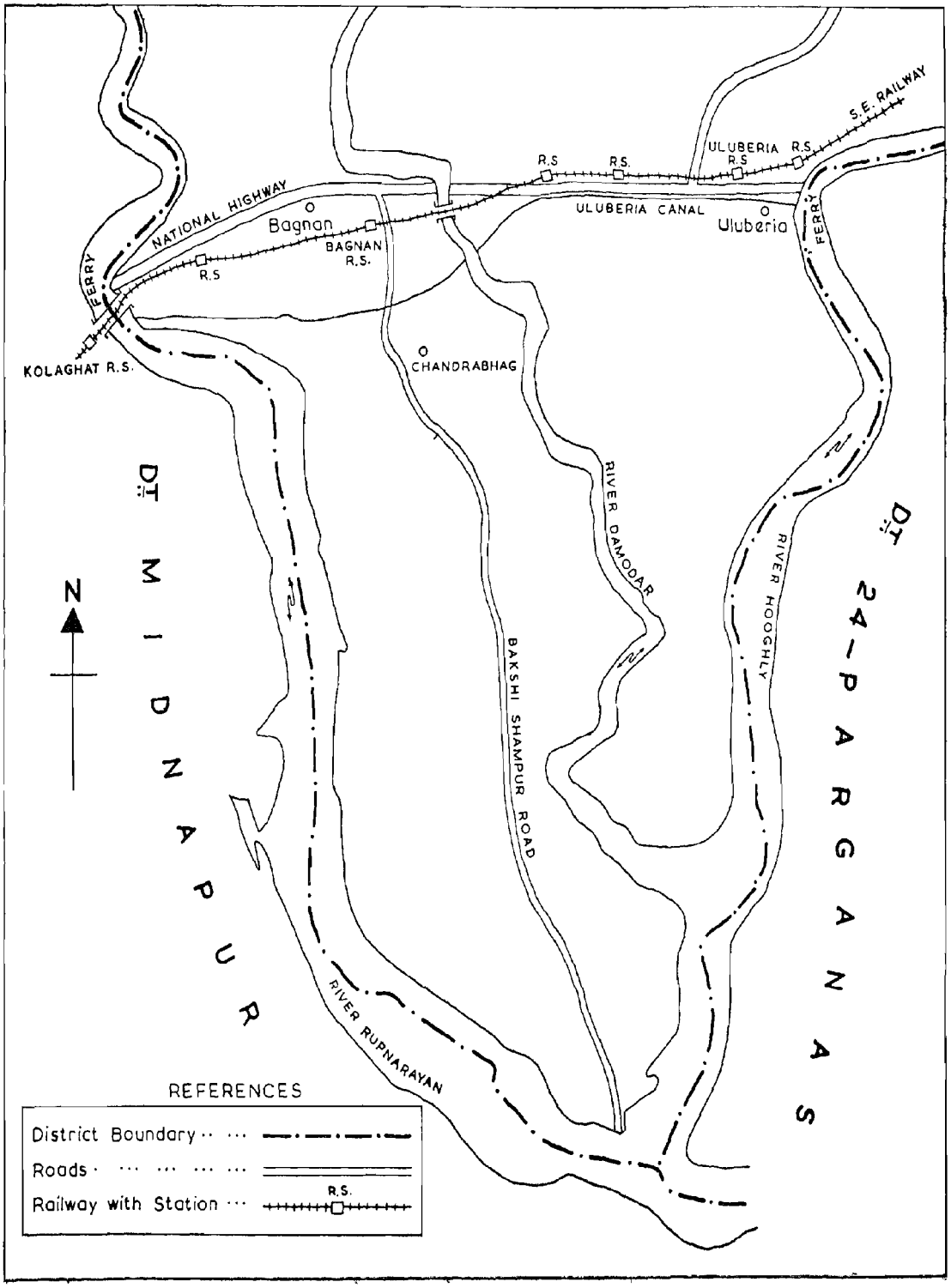
The economic structure of Chandrabhag can be well understood in the macro-geographical and macro-economic perspective of Bagnan section of the lower Damodar area. Bagnan section is to the south of the Amta subregion. The meandering Rupnarayan forms its western boundary and flows through a wide bed with sand banks. It has washed away part of the Naupala village including the western end of the Cuttack Road in Howrah district, but has, on the other hand, given rise to a big *Char*, covering hundreds of acres of good arable land, further north in Mellock. The Damodar, though a much smaller river, exerts considerable influence on agricultural activities. A number of *Khals* which connect these two rivers from east to west, got silted up, rendering thousands of acres of arable land unproductive, either because of water logging during the rainy season or of draught during the dry weather. The Kantapukur Khal is a typical example of a silted up canal. Another *Khal*, the Karia-Birampur, which flows through the Bainan and Kalyanpur Unions has its mouth on Rupnarayan silted up.

The Bagnan section of the lower Damodar area is traversed by the main line of the South Eastern Railway parallel to which runs the metalled Cuttack Road from the east to the west. Railway communication has thus been very much facilitated in this area. The railway communication has of course, changed the economy of the area profoundly. It has made people look more to Calcutta for their subsistence, and to concentrate on such crops as having a ready sale in Calcutta and its neighbourhood. Of the cash crops, betel vine (*Pan*) is by far the most important, which is sent by rail from Bagnan Station to Calcutta and other cities of India.

The water of both the Rupnarayan and the Damodar get saline during the dry months, and hence the mouths of canals are to be closed sometimes in October and reopened in June after the arrival of the south-east monsoon. Salt is extracted from the top soils, and is collected from the banks of the Rupnarayan especially at Naupala.

The Bagnan section has a population of 1,23,654, the density of population per square mile being slightly over 2,000. The lands of this thana, which cover 37,979 acres, are divided into 1,34,873 plots, the fragmentation of land is slightly more than the district average (Howrah district). The average of unutilised land in this section comes to only 746 acres that is to say, hardly two per cent. of the total area. This is divided into 3,255 plots. This does not include the huge *Char* land, which was built in recent years by the Rupnarayan in the neighbourhood of Mellock. This remains to be utilised. In addition there are 1,283 acres of submarginal land, which is kept fallow from time to time. Of the available plots, 289 covering 9.22 acres, are too small to be of any use but for building new houses; 688 plots, covering 21,573 acres, are suitable for growing market garden crops as well. The number of *Dobas* (Dug-outs) in Bagnan thana is 5,926 which has made 617 acres of land practically useless. Of the eight Unions in Bagnan thana, Mellock on the Rupnarayan alone has about one-half of the total idle land. The greater part of the remaining idle land is found in the flood plains of the three other Unions—Bagnan, Batul and Chandrabhag.

Chandrabhag Union is one of the most prosperous Unions in Bagnan thana, extending from the south of the Uluberia canal to the right bank of the Damodar River. This Union consists of 10 villages (of which Chandrabhag the village under study is one), and has an area of 4,314 acres. It has a population of 13,881, density of population being slightly over 2,000 per square mile. The conditions of *Khals* are far from satisfactory, except that of the Naoda Halyan, which has been recently excavated making it possible to bring another 300 acres of land under the plough. Most of the *Khals* can be used only in the rainy season, and have to be closed during other seasons to prevent salt water getting into the fields. Chandrabhag Union has the second highest acreage of fallow land in Bagnan


S.E. RAILWAY
R.S
R.S.
ULUBERIA R.S.
R.S
NATIONAL HIGHWAY
Bagnan
BAGNAN R.S.
R.S
ULUBERIA CANAL
Uluberia
FERRY
FERRY
KOLAGHAT R.S.
CHANDRABHAG
RIVER DAMODAR
RIVER HOOGHLY
BAKSHI SHAMPUR ROAD
RIVER RUPNARAYAN
DT MIDNAPUR
DT 24-PARGANAS
N
REFERENCES
District Boundary
Roads
Railway with Station
R.S.

thana—112 acres, with some concentration of fallow land in two villages—Duani Guzrat (40 acres) and Mugkalyan (26 acres). While the fallow land of Duani Guzrat occurs mainly on the Damodar and consists of sandy *Char*, much of the fallow land at Mugkalyan is scattered all over the village. In recent years, land is being left more and more fallow because of the fact that most of the able bodied youngmen go for work to Calcutta and other industrial towns, and those who stay back devote themselves to *pan* cultivation. The overall picture of economic activities in the area is that most of the cultivators share the crop with the owner of the land, and hence neither the owner nor the tiller has much interest in the land. Many prefer to work other in factories in the brick or tile field. *Aman* is the main crop as usual, and small quantities of *Aus* are grown in *Aman*-land before harvesting the main crop. As *Pan* brings more profit than paddy, people are more inclined to cultivate *Pan* than paddy. *Khari* is another product which is grown abundantly. *Kharis* are used for *Pan Baroj*. Bamboo is another produce and bamboo and *Pan* cultivation have adversely affected neighbouring good arable land and have been instrumental to increasing acreage of fallow land in the area.

In considering the economic world of the area, another factor should be taken into consideration—the construction of the D.V.C.—a Multiproject Dam in the upper reaches of the river Damodar. The construction of this Dam seriously disturbed the hydrological and pedological character of the area and thereby affecting the nature of produce and also the set up of occupation.

There are three principal river systems in the area—the Damodar, the Rupnarayan and the Hooghly. During rainy seasons silt was collected naturally on the two banks of the Damodar in its middle reaches. The natural ebb and flow of the Hooghly and the Rupnarayan helped maintain a normal flow of the Damodar also. The level of subsoil water was maintained. This normal hydrological condition has been disturbed by the construction of the Multiproject Dam of the D.V.C. at the upper reaches of the Damodar. Ever since the dam was built, the outflow of water in the Damodar has become thinner, with the result that overflowing of the river with silt carrying current has become less frequent. With a lesser supply of water in the Damodar, the level of subsoil water has also gone down considerably. Moreover, when water from the Dam is released, the area has the chance of being flooded, as it happened in 1959. This flooding or inundation affects the soil in two ways, first, the humus compost which is absolutely necessary for agricultural production is washed away, and second, a saline crust is left on the top layer of the soil and this is extremely prejudicial to agriculture.

The change of pedological character not only affects agricultural production but also interferes with other occupaional patterns. Change over to other products becomes necessary. A process is set whereby occupational shifts follow territorial shifts. Both the processes are in operation in the area under study and survey.

The 'induced' change of the D.V.C. Dam had also the effect of disturbing the communication system, with its primary and derivative effects, in the area. Before the construction of the D.V.C. Dam, the Midnapore canal, joining the two rivers, the Hooghly and the Rupnarayan, could be used all throughout the year. Building materials and other merchandise could be traded in and out with Calcutta straightway. Now, with the lowering of the level of water of Damodar following a short-release of water at the upper reaches of the river, this possibility of an easy-and regular supply of merchandise seems to be ruled out. The canal is no more navigable all throughout the year. The vegetable-growing *Char* areas of the Damodar have also been adversely affected since the construction of the Dam. As a result, vegetable production and persons dependent on it have been hard hit.

In this wide backdrop of natural, physical and technological changes, the economy of Chandrabhag, the village under survey, is to be studied. Since economic structure is composed of economic institutions which centre around production, distribution and consumption of goods and services, all the different ramifications of economic activities at Chandrabhag have been delineated in this chapter.

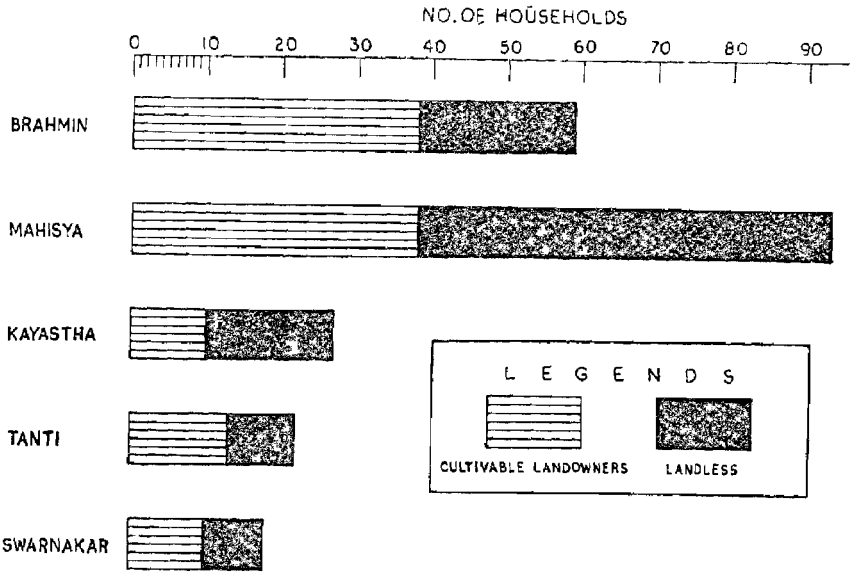
Land

Next to the human population, land is probably the most important of the economic resources available in the village. As an index of power and prestige (relations in rural areas are dependent mostly on who owns how much land) land is socially prestigious. Any realignment of the rural economy and social life is, therefore, impossible without a proper under-

standing of the man-land relationship in our villages.

In the Census of 1951 the total area of Chandrabhag *mauza* was given as 150.70 acres *i.e.*, about 453 *Bighas*. This comprised total land surface of the *mauza i.e.*, fallow land, land under cultivation and homestead included. During the present survey it was found that the Brahmins alone have 496 *Bighas* of land distributed among 59 families. This is a bit bigger figure than the total area of the village. This applies to other castes as well. The apparent discrepancy can be resolved if we take into account two different categories in respect of land in a village. One, land as recorded in official record and two, the total land resources of a villager. In the official records we get that land which lies within accredited boundary of a village for purposes of revenue assessment; whereas the total land resources of a village consist of the entire area of land which is held by the village population, either for cultivation or for some other purpose. Villagers may have land outside the village. The recorded area of a village, therefore, does not necessarily give a real picture of the land resources of a village. Normally, most of the villagers at Chandrabhag are without land. The Brahmins of Chandrabhag are not indigenous to the area. They are immigrant from Nadia. Nevertheless they have been well able to establish themselves economically, socially and politically. Contrary to the expected idea that the Mahisyas (being agricultural and indigenous simultaneously) would have the lion's share in landholding, the Brahmins hold the largest slice of the land-pie. The position of ownership and non-ownership of land at Chandrabhag will be seen in the following chart.

THE LANDLESS AND THE LANDOWNERS (MAJOR CASTES ONLY)



In the chart five bars have been given representing the land position of five principal castes in the village. The other set of five castes has been ignored here as the position of landholding of them is not very significant for statistical analyses.

The bar chart is not enough to give an accurate picture of the nature of land ownership in different households of different castes. Moreover, in many cases, households may comprise two or three families having separate claims and right over the land held in the name of the household. So a detailed analysis of landownership of the families of different landowning caste is necessary. A caste-wise break-down of the landownership position is detailed here :

TABLE 19

CULTIVABLE LANDHOLDING AMONG DIFFERENT CASTES AT CHANDRABHAG

	Brahmin	Kayastha	Mahisya	Tanti	Swarnakar
Total households of each caste	59	27	93	22	8
No. of cultivable landowning households	38	10	38	13	4
No. of landowning households	47	12	44	17	6
Total cultivable land of the landowning households	496 *Bighas*	108 *Bighas*	142 *Bighas*	224 *Bighas*	33 *Bighas*
Cultivable landholding per family	10·5	9	3·2	13·1	5·5

From the table it is evident that the Mahisyas hold the least land per family in the village while the Tantis own most land. In the case of the Mahisyas it is true that they are getting more and more impoverished. The number of day-labourers has also swelled among the Mahisyas. But the prosperity index of the Tantis is more apparent than real. Brahmin families own really large sized lands and their ownership is diffused among different income and status groups. On the other hand, most of the Tantis possess no land; only a few rich peasants hold large slice of land among themselves. There is no *Jotedar* in the real sense of the term among the Tantis. Actual position of landholdings of the different castes at Chandrabhag will not be understood if the actual number of occupiers in each size group of holdings (in *Bighas*) is not worked out. This has been done caste-wise in the following tables :

TABLE 20

BRAHMINS

Size-group of holdings (*Bighas*)	Households owning	Percentage of the total households	Land owned	
			Bighas	*Kottahs*
0— 1	5	8·5	4	2
1½— 5	8	13·5	22	10
6—10	7	11·8	62	..
11—20	10	17·0	143	..
20+	8	13·5	265	..
Total	**38**	**64·3**	**496**	**12**

TABLE 21

KAYASTHAS

Size-group of holdings (*Bighas*)	Households owning	Percentage of the total households	Land owned	
			Bighas	*Kottahs*
0— 1	1	3·9	1	..
1½— 5	..	..	..	..
6—10	..	..	..	..
11—20	9	33·3	104	..
Total	**10**	**37·2**	**105**	..

TABLE 22

MAHISYAS

Size-group of holdings (*Bighas*)	Households owning	Percentage of the total households	Land owned	
			Bighas	*Kottahs*
0— 1	6	6·4	5	10
1½— 5	25	26·8	60	..
6—10	4	4·3	34	..
11—20	3	3·2	42	..
20+	..	..	..	..
Total	**38**	**40·7**	**141**	**10**

TABLE 23

TANTIS

Size-group of holdings (*Bighas*)	Households owning	Percentage of the total households	Land owned	
			Bighas	*Kottahs*
0— 1	..	.	..	..
1½— 5	3	13·6	6	10
6—10	2	9·1	18	..
11—20	1	4·5	20	..
20 +	7	31·8	203	..
Total	**13**	**59·0**	**247**	**10**

A study of the above tables will show that average size of holdings per household is 8.4 *Bighas* among the Brahmins; 11.2 among the Tantis; 4.1 among the Kayasthas and 1.5 among the Mahisyas. This poor holding of land by the Mahisyas accounts for their number of day-labourers.

CULTIVABLE LAND LYING FALLOW

In Chandrabhag there is not much land which can be said to be remaining idle or fallow. Land not fit for cultivation has, however, been used for purposes of small dug outs when a house was being constructed. Or, it may put this way that owing to the peculiar character of the layout of houses at Chandrabhag, many a dug out has perforce be made for the supply of earth. Even a casual visit to Chandrabhag will convince one of the ubiquity of dug outs there. May be, quite some *Bighas* of land have been turned into dug outs and this is an economic waste of land. Another way of assessing the fallow land is to take into consideration the number of rotation of crop in the cultivable areas. At Chandrabhag, there are households who own land to the extent of less than one *Bigha*, one *Bigha* or one and a half *Bighas*. These small areas are not fit for cultivation on a share-cropping basis. Since the owners of such plots are engaged in some other avocations they would engage agricultural labourer for the cultivation of the plots. But this they cannot do all throughout the year. After the main crop, *Aman*, therefore, the land remains idle. Moreover, after the flood of 1959, most of the land at Chandrabhag and also in the adjoining villages, have lost their fertility potential to a great extent. Rotation of crops or double cropping was out of the question even at the time of investigation. To that extent, potential fallow land is much greater than actual fallow land at Chandrabhag.

FARMING OF LAND

At Chandrabhag, farming of land follow three distinct patterns, *viz.*, (i) *Nijchas*, where the cultivation of land and farming is done by the owner and members of his family (ii) *Jan-Chas* or *Mahindarichas* where the owner of the land took help of day labourers but kept the entire organisation of land in his own hands (iii) *Bhagchas* or *Bargachas* where annual leasing of land is accompanied by crop-sharing. In this crop-sharing, again, *Sanja* element prevail. In the practice of *Sanja*, a fixed amount of the produce is to be paid by the cultivator irrespective of the yield. *Sanja* is generally equivalent to the half share between the owner and the cropper.

The extent of share-cropping and own cultivation among the different castes at Chandrabhag will be discerned from the following table.

TABLE 24

SHARE-CROPPING AND CULTIVATION

Caste	No. of house-holds	Land under share-cropping	Land under own cultivation
		(*Bighas*)	(*Bighas*)
Brahmin	59	444	52
Kayastha	27	92	16
Mahisya	93	51	91
Tanti	22	203	21
Swarnakar	8	28	5

The practice of share-cropping is quite common and it has been found in course of investigation that small plots of land of 1/1½ *Bighas* are given for crop-sharing. This is true even among the Mahisyas, the traditional agricultural caste of the region. The reasons for this are many; some landowners are too old, some are women, some invalid and some are otherwise engaged in business, service etc. Those who follow *Nijchas* or own cultivation may be divided again into (i) those who use *Mahindars* or day labourers for the purpose of cultivation and (ii) those who cultivate the land by the members

of the family. Share-croppers can also be classified into cultivating owners and non-cultivating owners. Brahmins belong to the latter class. By tradition, they are supposed not to take to ploughing. Also, the Brahmins at Chandrabhag are mostly engaged in salaried employment and services outside the village. For all practical purposes, therefore, they are not in a position to look after the farm management. Moreover, since *Sanja* system prevailed in the *Barga* arrangement, they did not demur crop-sharing. It was to their advantage. A section of the Brahmin households may be said to belong to the rent-receiving class. Rent-receivers are by definition non-cultivators. Cultivation on small pieces of land is done only by agricultural labourers. Cultivation on own by the Brahmin caste and other high castes has followed the passing of the Land Reforms Act 1955. The Act includes the rights given to the *Bargadars* earlier by the Bargadar Act of 1950; contains provisions as to the fixation of revenue and lays down principles regarding distribution of lands, consolidation of holdings and formation of co-operative farming societies. The Act of 1950 directed that in the absence of a written agreement between the *Bargadar* and the owner with regard to the sharing of produce "(i) the bargadar or the owner, as the case may be, who supplies any seed for growing crop shall be entitled to an amount of the produce equivalent to the quantity of the seed supplied (ii) the bargadar and the owner shall each be entitled to one-third of the balance of the produce which remains after deducting the amount of the produce referred to in para (i); Provided that the bargadar shall receive a greater share of the balance of the produce, if he is entitled to such greater share under a written contract between himself and the owner or under any local custom or usage. (ii) the remainder of the produce left after deducting the quantities referred to in (i) and (ii) shall be divided between the bargadar and the owner in such proportion as would be fair and reasonable having regard to their respective contributions to the cost of cultivation including in particular the supply of plough-cattle, plough and other agricultural implements and manure and to the cost of production or irrigation of the land".

The Act also had it that the *Bargadar* shall have prior right to supply agricultural implements and cattle, and also that unless the *Bargadar* neglects the fields or fails to give the share of the owner, or the owner himself wants to cultivate, the *Bargadar* cannot be driven out.

The position of the *Bargadar* and the arrangement of the division of the produce came to be further redefined in the West Bengal Land Reforms Act 1955. It was obtained there that—

"16 (i) The produce of any land cultivated by a bargadar shall be divided as between bargadar and the persons whose land he cultivates

(a) in the proportion of 50:50, in a case where plough, cattle, manure and seeds necessary for cultivation are supplied by the person owing the land

(b) in the proportion of 60:40 in all other cases."

In this Act of 1955, provision was also made for the registration of the share-croppers to prevent them being evicted from the land *i.e.*, from share cropping by the owner.

Since the passing of the Bengal Land Reforms Act 1955, there have been some changes in the arrangements of land holding and tenancy farming at Chandrabhag. Since the new Act introduced some regularity in the distribution of the share of the produce and also that it introduced measures in favour of the share-croppers, the Brahmin land owner became rather apprehensive. They tried to resort to 'own cultivation' with the help of hired labourers. In cases where *Barga* was being followed, the owners of the land tried to realise the produce of their land according to the old practice *i.e.*, on a 50:50 share, even, if the *Bargadar* supplied cattle, plough, seed are other accessories. The share-croppers or the *Bargadars* feel helpless in the situation. Failing to register themselves as share croppers, the *Bargadars* have developed a kind of insecure feeling in them. And the net result has been an increased demand for daily labour and also a swelling in their rank. That ejectment of share-croppers has taken place, quite liberally all over India, was reported by Prof. M. L. Dantwalla in his article in the A.I.C.C. Economic Review. He said that the number of peasants all over India, evicted from land in a decade or so exceeded the number evicted during a century. Ejectment of *Bargadars* has also been reported from Bengal but no such ejectment could be detected at Chandrabhag as people felt intimidated to speak out the truth.

The end-result has been a sure and steady deterioration in agricultural production in villages. The landlord, being in a position to

exploit cheap labour in his land, feels no urge, whatsoever, towards improvement in agricultural production. It will be evident from an illustration following later on, the agricultural implements used by the farmers in the village, are extremely dated. Since the livelihood of the big landholders is assured by the present relations of production, they are just could'nt-careless about introducing new forms of agricultural technology. They are completely alien to "innovation and diffusion" in agriculture.

The attitude of the reformers and the programmes of the political parties that rights to land belong to the tillers of the soil has made the non-cultivating owners of the area rather restive. They apprehend that rights to land may ultimately be transferred to the tillers and the fate of the non-cultivating owners will be like that of the *Zemindar* and the *Madhyaswattabhogis* or the intermediaries. Before the passing of the Act of 1955, political parties were raising slogans "land to the tillers", but afterwards it was found that the slogan, if put into practice, will create difficulties not only for the big landowners but also for the small owners, who pursue agriculture as a subsidiary occupation. Protests against the political party, specially the C.P.I. [C.P.I.(M) was non-existent then] became very strong. Since the area is supposed to be the stronghold of the Congress party, such politico-economic slogans became the spearhead of attack of the landed gentry, more or less, aligned with the ideologies of the Congress Party. Regular scuffles took place between the two groups preaching antagonistic ideologies. It happened round about the years 1953-54. Since then, no one is showing any reformatory zeal so far the tiller of the soil are concerned.

The Land Reforms measures, by initiating new arrangements in land-holdings and farming, have been instrumental to a series of changes in the village. The most significant one has been the emergence of new occupation pattern and a new mobility of labour. There has also been a change in the occupation pattern following a change the hydrological character of the area, consequent upon the construction of the D.V.C. Dam and it will be discussed later on.

Livestock

Next to land, livestock constitute the second important economic assets of a village. The livestock resources of a village consists of all the draft, milch and other animals which the villagers possess at a particular point of time. Their number may vary because of natural increase or purchase or gift. Economic change may also affect their number *i.e.*, if there has been a change or shift over in the pattern of cultivation, there might also ensue a decrease or an increase in the livestock population. A comparative study of the livestock wealth at Chandrabhag is a bit difficult since there had been no census of livestock in the area in the recent past. But a guess not unwarranted here that the livestock position of the village has deteriorated since 1959 till the year of investigation of the village in 1962. In the flood of 1959, loss of livestock had been if not considerable, moderate. Even that moderate loss has not been made good because of the straitened financial conditions of the people which the flood brought them to. Moreover, shift of agriculture from paddy to *Pan* has also been instrumental in obviating the use of draft bullock to no mean extent. Also, it is extremely difficult to keep milch cows at Chandrabhag. Milch cows are expensive and also grazing grounds are rather rare in the village. In the circumstances, people would prefer buying milk to keeping their own cows. Nevertheless, the village is not without its population other than human.

At Chandrabhag, the position of livestock is the best with the Mahisyas, the traditional agricultural caste of West Bengal. At Chandrabhag the Mahisyas constitute not only the main agricultural caste, but also the main body of share croppers *i.e.*, cultivators of land wholly unowned. Since a share-cropper is expected to supply agricultural implements, draught cattle etc to the owner at the time of cultivation, the Mahisyas have fortified their livestock position much better than any other caste at Chandrabhag. The Brahmins are occupied in the tertiary occupations; (Here tertiary is used in the same sense as G.D.H. Cole used in his Studies in Class Structure) since-touching a plough is a taboo, they depend on Mahisyas for the supply of labour as well as for plough, ladder, draught bullock and agricultural implements. Obviously, the Mahisyas have a far better livestock position. The Kayasthas too, are similarly situated. As such, the Brahmins and the Kayasthas do not feel the need of improving their livestock position. Instead of draught cattle, they would rather have milch cow and goat to get milk pure and cheap. There is no organised poultry farm in the village. People keep geese and hen at

their homes; there are more geese and ducks than hen. Since the village is Brahmin dominated, some outward norms (not to keep hens at house) are still maintained. It is more so, because ladies belonging to older generation, object to such *anti-sashtric* acts.

Castes other than the Branmin, Kayastha and the Mahisya, *viz*, the Swarnakar, Karmakar, Tanti, Gandhabanik, Tili, Kaivarta and Dhoba have very insignificant livestock wealth. The Tili and the Kaivarta possess no livestock at all. Other caste-groups, *viz.*, the Swarnakar, Karmakar, Tanti etc., possess milch cows and they try to improve the possession. Milk is a rarity at the local market and milk is an absolute necessity for babies and weaning children. Surplus milk *i.e.*, milk left after babies and children have taken their share is, more often than not, consumed at home. Instances are not rare when surplus milk has been brought to the local bazar for sell. The acute shortage of milk supply at Chandrabhag can only be solved by a thorough and over-all planning of agriculture and cattle. But that is a very long term proposition.

The local feeling, however, is that the livestock position will not be improved unless a proper pasturage is ensured and improved varieties of bullocks are brought in for better progeny. The livestock statistics below will indicate the man-animal ratio at Chandrabhag.

TABLE 25

LIVESTOCK

Castes	All house-holds	Milch cow	Cow	Calves	Draught bullock	Goats	Pigs	Ducks, geese	Hen	All animals
Brahmin	59	40	12	8	1	13	..	8	..	82
Kayastha	27	7	3	4	..	..	..	4	..	18
Mahisya	93	40	16	14	41	6	..	10	7	134
Swarnakar	8	3	2	..	..	..	..	2	..	7
Tanti	22	10	4	2	..	..	..	..	1	17
Gandhabanik	3	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	2
Karmakar	1	1	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	3
Dhoba	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	2	..	3
All castes and all households	**214**	**102**	**39**	**28**	**42**	**21**	..	**26**	**8**	**266**

There are 266 animals in all for 214 households. This works up to a very lamentable average 1.2 livestock for each household. This position may possibly be corrected with the deterioration of agriculture at Chandrabhag at the present moment. The factor of change in hydrological conditions has been noted, realignment of tenancy laws has also been taken into account. Both of these factors can go very well with the acute shortage in the livestock position at Chandrabhag. Intensive as well as extensive cultivation is dependent not only on manpower but also on animal potential. Improved cattle depends on better varieties of bullocks; unfortunately, no artificial insemination measures are there at Chandrabhag. Nor is there a veterinary surgeon in the village. This stands in the way of good cattle breeding in the village. Supply of good stud bulls is not also ensured as there is no regular cattle market in the area. There is one cattle-hat at Harinarayanpur, an adjoining village with a concentration of Muslim population. This cattle-*hat* assembles sometimes weekly, sometimes fortnightly. Since keeping of cows has become very strenuous economically, people from Chandrabhag are not regular visitors of the cattle-*hat*. Also, the price of milch cows and stud bulls has gone very high indeed. A milch cow giving one seer of milk a day is considered to be a rather good one and would cost something between Rs. 250 to Rs. 300 at the least. And a stud bull or a pair of bullocks,

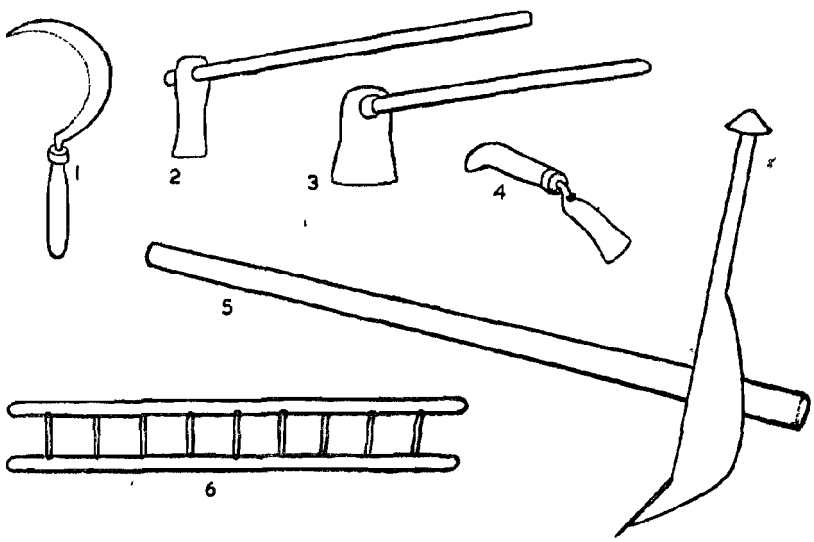
something like Rs. 300 to Rs. 500 minimum. Absence of adequate pasturage within the village, exorbitant price of fodder, oilcake etc., make one think twice before one can really purchase. Moreover, there is another disadvantage of cattle getting into another man's land and then being put into cattle pound. Release of the cattle from the pound is not without its monetary penalty. Sometimes, again, it leads to litigation, not unoften, prolonged. All these factors have made people chary about cattle. Rearing of cattle in share is the practice is some villages of Bengal. The practice is like this—"If anybody rears milch cow from the young stage, he will receive all the milk of the cow after its first issue and also the calf. In case of goats giving birth to more than one kid, half the number of kids will be taken by the man, who rears it. He will return the cow or goat to the owner, only after it becomes ready to give the second birth. If the bullocks are reared, the person who rears them, will realise his share by deducting the price of the calf from the price of the grown up bullock. And the price is determined according to the current market rate". During my investigation of the village Chandrabhag no such practice came to my notice. The Brahmin land owners are too "uppish" to follow the practice. The Kayasthas are ill-equipped in cattle-wealth nor do they have much need for the same. The Mahisyas who keep cattle can well afford to keep it on their own.

Tools and implements

Man power, animal power both of them are necessary for agriculture; along with them go tools and implements used for agriculture, with traditional tools no significant improvement in agriculture could be expected.

Agricultural tools and implements used by the agriculturists at Chandrabhag are extremely traditional. The usual implements used are *Lengal* (Plough), *Moi* (Harrow), *Kodali* (Spade), *Kural* (Axe), *Kaste* (Sickle) and *Khurpi* (Hoe). Some of them are, however, to be found in non-agricultural or non-farming households also, *viz.*, *Kodali*, *Kural*, *Kaste* and *Khurpi*. They are used for spading ground for kitchen garden or for flower garden; for felling trees as well as for chopping wood, for weeding out gardens and to cut undergrowths and *Khurpis* are used hoeing in all seasons of the year. The enclosed drawings will show the pattern of the implements used.

AGRICULTURAL TOOLS AND IMPLEMENTS



1 *Kaste* 2 *Kural* 3 *Kodal*

4 *Khurpi* 5 Plough 6 *Moi*

As the drawings show, the implements are really of the age-old type. The quality of the implements is not very satisfactory either. Before Independence, people could buy Birmingham, Sheffield implement parts cheap. The indigenous implement parts today have not come upto the satisfaction of the agriculturists.

The way of acquiring tools and their valuations too presents certain difficulties in the case of peasants or agriculturists at Chandrabhag. Generally, most of the tools and implements used by the agriculturists are manufactured by the village artisans with the raw materials usually available in the village. Traditionally, there is an understanding between the cultivating peasant and the village artisan that the former would pay a portion of his produce for the services rendered by the artisans. But this sort of arrangement is dying out in the village. There are very few blacksmiths at work at Chandrabhag. The traditional blacksmith family is now following a different occupation. As a result, the peasants at Chandrabhag have to go to the neighbouring town (Bagnan) for the purchase of implements as well as for repairing of the implements in case of a breakdown. This implies that agriculturists must keep liquid money for making such purchases. This also accounts for a portion of indebtedness of the agriculturists at Chandrabhag. Though a stock of agricultural implements was not made at the time of the present survey, it can be presumed that all the share-cropping households and the households having their own cultivation have ploughs, harrows and other major agricultural implements. All together they will work upto go plough and harrows. The number of draught bullocks has already been mentioned in the table of the livestock.

Apart from the agricultural implements there are a few more major tools and implements, one weaver's loom and a few tools of the local blacksmiths. The rice husking implements is to be seen in the photograph.

A first approximation of the tools and implements of Chandrabhag, barring draught bullocks, will be about Rs. 6,000. It is not possible to know from the villagers how much money they spent on the purchase of tools and implements.

VILLAGE ECONOMY

Though not the sole but one of major economic pursuits at Chandrabhag is agriculture. About 100 acres or 300 *Bighas* of land is for cultivation paddy, *Pan* and other ancillary crops. The area including the village Chandrabhag was a heavy rice-producing area. As it has been noted before, paddy cultivation has received a set back due to a change in hydrological conditions. Yield per *Bigha* has fallen from 10 maunds per *Bigha* to 4-5 maunds. Naturally paddy cultivation is being replaced by *Pan* (Betel leaves) cultivation. The local opinion is that the economy of Chandrabhag is gradually being turned into an agricultural garden economy. Nevertheless, the amount of paddy harvested in the year of the investigation is not very negligible. In this change of crop pattern the ownership of the land is to be taken into consideration. Brahmins are the highest owners of land in the village. Their interest in the land and its cultivation is not primary as majority of the Brahmin heads of the households and other adult members are gainfully employed in governmental, commercial, mercantile and other establishments. They do not bother so much as those who depend solely on land (the Mahisyas) on the question of falling output per area. The Brahmins have not, thus, reverted to *Pan* cultivation like the Mahisyas. So much so, paddy still remains the chief agricultural product of Chandrabhag. A rough approximation of the agricultural produce of Chandrabhag, during the year of investigation, is given below.

TABLE 26

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

Caste	Paddy (Mds.)	*Pan* (Leaves)	Pulses (Mds.)	Bamboo (Pieces)	Fruit			
					Cocoanut	Mango	Banana	Lichee
Brahmin	2,446	..	70	250	400	4,000	200	4,000
Kayastha	504	..	15	100	400	5,000	..	..
Mahisya	698	300,000	20	100	30	..	..	..
Tanti	993	50,000	..	..	..	..	..	..
Bene	40	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Swarnakar	130	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total all castes	**4,811**	**350,000**	**105**	**450**	**830**	**9,000**	**200**	**4,000**

Most of the Brahmin families cultivate their lands on a share cropper basis. While most of the Mahisya families do their own cultivation. It is quite natural that with the diminishing return from rice cultivation, they would revert to *Pan* economy. It is only the Mahisyas at Chandrabhag and also of the neighbouring villages that have taken to more prospective *Pan* cultivation. Farm management and crop pattern depend very much on the nature of irrigation available in a particular village. At Chandrabhag, prospects of irrigation are very dim. It has to depend mostly on rain-water. There are not many *Khals* which can be utilised for irrigation. The only one is the *Tantikhal* and this one too becomes serviceable only during the rainy season. Apart from rain-water, most of the irrigation is done from the number of tanks and ponds that Chandrabhag abounds in. This difficulty of irrigation facilities has something to contribute to the agricultural shift (from paddy to *Pan*) in recent years. It has been already mentioned that the area (Chandrabhag and the contiguous villages) suffered a change in soil composition consequent upon a flood in the area. Salt water of flood left a saline deposit in the fields. It also destroyed the natural compost potential of the area. Had irrigation facilities been effective and sound, all these temporary set backs could be made good. Owing to this change in the character of the soil, area under paddy cultivation has, of necessity, been given for *Pan* cultivation. *Pan* and *Khari* (a kind of reed) constitute the main crop of the village now. *Pan* is a cash crop and its cultivation is very lucrative. Ever since the village made a switch over to *Pan* cultivation, the price of agricultural land had gone up by leaps and bounds. Increased *Pan* cultivation has also been prompted by the fact that it requires no efforts on the part of the cultivator either in land, or manure or any other accessories. The only important thing is required is high land. The price of *Pan* land is more than Rs. 1,000 per *Bigha* today. Another factor that has contributed to the increase in the price of land in the area is the construction the Haldia Port. In view of the future development of the area, a lot of speculation in land is rife in the area.

Agricultural operations

Though increased *Pan* cultivation is trying to oust cultivation of paddy by and large, paddy cultivation remains, nevertheless, or important agricultural pursuit. *Aman* rice is the predominant crop which grows profusely almost everywhere. Since Chandrabhag has not very commendable drainage system, *Aman* rice of the very fine quality, that one gets in Midnapore region, has a rather small yield. *Aus* rice is grown on relatively higher land. A little quantity of jute is also grown at Chandrabhag. There is a tendency to grow jute on *Aman* land and to harvest it before rice saplings are transplanted. Pulses are grown, as a subsidiary crop, if local conditions are favourable. *Sitasal, Rupsal, Kanakchur* are some of the names of the five varieties of *Aman* and *Aus* rice at Chandrabhag. The average yield of rice per *Bigha* used to be eight to ten maunds before the flood in 1959. Since then, there has been a considerable fall in yield per *Bigha*. It is now about four to five maunds per *Bigha*. The yield could have been better if supply of manure could be assured to the villagers. There is the Block Development Office No. II at Bagnan which is supposed to supply fertilisers to the cultivators in the area. But there are difficulties : first in the demand side, the inertia of the villagers to use the new fangled devices of manure has to be overcome and second, in the supply side, the red tape delays have to be countered. The end result is that the villagers would prefer to go without chemical fertilisers and depend mostly on the traditional things, *i.e.*, cowdung and *Dhaincha* green plants. They are also of opinion that chemical fertilisers, though very helpful at the outset, tend to damage the land in the long run.

In agricultural operations at Chandrabhag, the cultivation of land by Japanese method is singularly lacking. During the time of investigation I asked the village cultivators about its prospect at Chandrabhag. They appeared rather skeptic about it. They have also been given to understand that cultivation by the Japanese method is more expensive than the indigenous method. Any way, no one was willing to give the Japanese method a try.

Apart from paddy and *Pan*, cultivation of potato, gourd and other vegetables is very insignificant. A very small quantity is grown but it has no marketable significance. It is grown mostly in the kitchen-gardens to be consumed by the individual householders. There are quite a few people at Chandrabhag who trade in vegetables. But that vegetable is not of local origin. They take advantage of the vegetable production, growing mainly in the flood plains of the Damodar. Vegetables growing in the *Char* land are brought in the local market and are

also sent to Calcutta markets. There is no production of wheat and sugar cane worth the name.

The system of distribution of the local produce is also interesting to note here. Chandrabhag is easily reached by buses, trains and riparian vessels. Except a small-scale daily market to cater for local needs, there is no centre for buying and selling, on a large scale, at Chandrabhag. But this difficulty of bulk buying and selling has been very much eliminated by a number of seasonal markets (*Hats*) in the neighbourhood of Chandrabhag. All these *Hats* are held within a distance of not more than five miles from the village. The *Hat* at Nuntia (about four miles from the village) is held on Tuesdays and Saturdays; at Dewantala (five miles from the village) on Wednesdays and Sundays; at Naul, on Mondays and Thursdays, at Harinarayanpur once a week or fortnightly. *Pan*, pulses, bamboo are the main merchandise sent from Chandrabhag. Rice is mostly consumed locally. The surplus, if any, is not brought to the *Hat*. It is sold in bulk to those who do bulk buying. It is only the big landowners who have ware house type storage for rice. So they are in a position to secure better price of rice by holding its supply.

Indebtedness at Chandrabhag

No study of the economic structure of a village will be complete unless one takes into account the liabilities along with its assets. The extent of indebtedness of a village is a great index of its economic developmental potential.

Indebtedness in the village India is proverbial—"one is born in debt, lives in debt and dies in debt". In course of the very comprehensive investigation of the All-India Rural Credit Survey it transpried that only four per cent. of the sample households could manage to purchase new houses while ninety per cent. of the households just managed to spend on an average Rs. 75 or like per annum. A major part of this reported expenditure was, however, an annual maintenance and repair. [*All-India Rural Credit Survey Report*—Part 1 (Rural Families), 1957-58, Reserve Bank of India, Bombay, pp. 143 and 732]. Another study, Agricultural Labour in India. Report of the *Second Enquiry*, Vol I, pp. 126, 1956 (Ministry of Labour, Govt. of India) revealed that labour families could spare only rupees four per family per annum and this constituted 0.8 per cent. of their total expenditure on this item. In some parts of the country, the expenditure did hardly exceed one rupee even. Not very dissimilar pictures have been presented by the very probing studies conducted by the Agro-Economic Research Centres in different States of India.

TABLE 27

EXPENDITURE-PATTERN IN SOME OTHER STATES

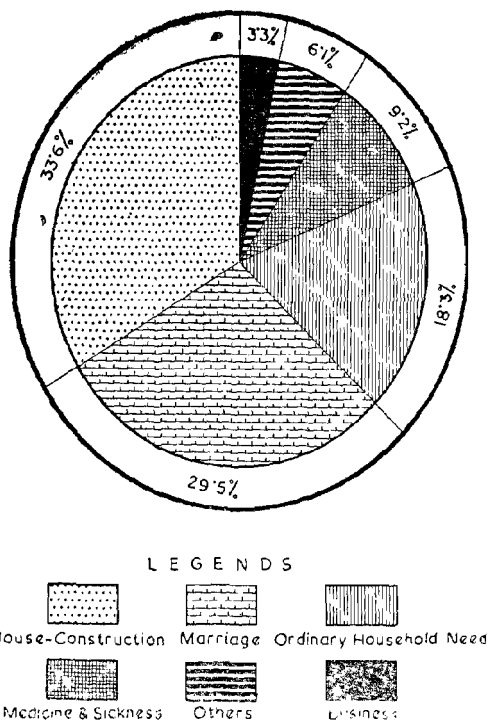
Name of State	No. of villages	Proportion of expenditure during the year on housing to total household expenditure (*in percentage*)
Gujarat	1	0·7
	2	2·6
	3	0·5
Rajasthan	1	0·2
	2	1·5
Madhya Pradesh	1	4·2
	2	1·4
	3	1·3
	4	2·1
Bihar	1	10·3
	2	6·4
	3	7·3

The fact that 62 per cent. of the rural households were in debts in 1962 was a definite index of the abysmal economic insufficiency. *The All-India Rural Debt and Investment Survey*, Reserve Bank of India, 1961-62 disclosed that the incidence of debt per reporting cultivator and non-cultivator was Rs. 719 and Rs. 429 as compared with Rs. 526 and Rs. 249 respectively in 1952.

The micro-sociological study of Chandrabhag will also have to incorporate the debt position of the villagers. As usual Chandrabhag is in debt to a considerable extent. Loans are always to be incurred for marriage, funeral, education, social and other expenses connected with day to day living. The financial position became completely confounded when the village was faced with a flood in 1959. About seventy-five per cent. of the dwelling houses were levelled to the ground, personal effects washed away, and the village visited by a host of diseases.

Houses had to be built, personal effects purchased and diseases fought against. All this required money and failing to make the both ends meet with their slender resources, the villagers irrespective of occupational positions, took to borrowing. Under the circumstances it is but natural that the balance sheet of Chandrabhag would show a debit account. Expenses at marriages of daughters need also be reckoned with in assessing the position of indebtedness.

PURPOSE OF INDEBTEDNESS



More often than not dowry has to be given in marrying of a daughter. In the process of giving three to four daughters in marriage debts pile up. High price index and the inflationary spiral compel a man to go out of his way in the day to day living. For daily household requirements, therefore, one has to incur multiple loans. Moreover, Chandrabhag suffers seriously from a lack of a dispensary or a medical unit where preliminaries of advice and medication, if not the full course of treatment, can be obtained. Medicines are sold rather dear. So, for an expert medical advice, one has to come to Calcutta, stay, and consult doctor for hospitalization. This is a lengthy process requiring time and money. Ready cash, almost always, fails the villagers. One has to take to borrowing either interest-free or with interest. Loans incurred for day to day requirements and also for medical purposes constitute the third large head for indebtedness. The pie-diagram will show the relative importance of heads on which loan money is expended.

Again, the bar diagram will show the distribution of debt among different caste-groups. The majority of the households of most of the caste-groups are in debt at Chandrabhag. This, as already mentioned, is to be accounted to the fact of the flood in 1959. Replacement of personal effects has been such a trying job with the villagers that they have hardly been free of debt till now. Even when old debts are paid off, new ones have to be incurred.

The sources for the purveying of loans and credit at Chandrabhag are not really many. There are a few steady supplier of loans in the village. The Block Development Office is there to supply a special kind of loan—building loan—to the villagers. Those, among the villagers, who are employed with the Government or in commercial firms, have other sources—provident funds or the office co-operative society to take loans and advances from. Loans are also advanced by relatives or friends in the village or in the adjoining village. Rates of interest and exigency will determine whom to go to for a loan in case of an acute necessity. Local money-lenders usually charge an interest of four annas per rupee or 25 per cent. Sometimes, the rate is even higher 3 n.p. per rupee per month. This makes the interest rate something like forty per cent. per annum. On the other hand the rate of interest in government loans and co-operative society loans are, usually, $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. per annum. With the government offices and co-operative societies there is another advantage of rebate in interest rate for timely repayment of instalments. In spite of all the exorbitant and usurious rate with the local money-lenders, village people, specially those who have no other sources will borrow locally. And it is they who are " born in debt, live in debt and die in debt ". The sources of credit and finance at Chandrabhag will be easily visualized from the table over leaf.

NUMBER OF INDEBTED AND DEBT-FREE HOUSEHOLDS

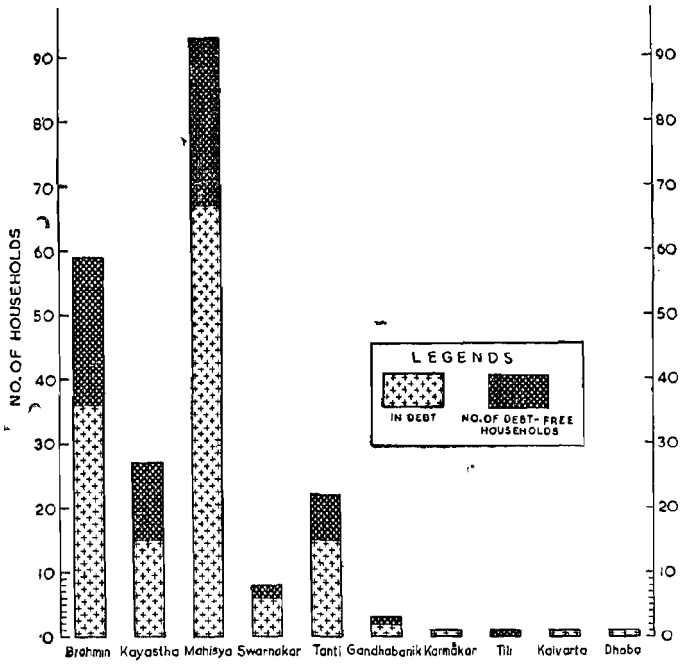


TABLE 28

SOURCES OF CREDIT

Source from which borrowed	No. of households
Government office or other offices in which heads of the household serve	8
Block Development Office	8
Village zemindar	..
Village money-lender	30
Friend	79
Relative	17
Office co-operative	4
Unspecified	2
Total	**148**

There is no Co-operative Credit Society in the village. One has to take advantage of the office co-operatives in case of such loans. The village money-lender is not a money-lender by profession. It is a side business with him. As a result, interest rate follows a monopoly model and is not determined by the usual price mechanism of demand and supply of the market.

The extent of debt in the village is next to be considered. Loans include both minimal and maximal points. That is, people may have a loan of 20, 30, or 40 rupees in the minimal side and more than Rs. 500 on the maximal side. Only cash debts have been taken into account to show the extent of indebtedness in the table overleaf.

TABLE 29

HOUSEHOLDS IN DEBT AT CHANDRABHAG CASTEWISE

Total families 216

Amount of debt (Rs.)	Brahmin	Kayastha	Mahisya	Swarnakar	Tanti	Gandha Banik	Karmakar	Tili	Kaivarta	Dhoba
1— 50	3	3	14	1	1	..	..	..	1	1
51—100	11	4	19	..	3	..	..	..	..	..
101—150	5	4	10	1	2	1	1	..	..	..
151—200	5	3	11	..	3	1	..	..	..	..
201—250	4	..	..	2	1	..	..	..	..	..
251—300	3	1	3	1	2	..	..	..	..	..
301—350	..	..	..	1	2	..	..	..	..	..
351—400	..	..	6	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
401—500	4	..	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
500+	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..
No. of households in debt	36	15	67	6	15	2	1	..	1	1
Amount of indebtedness	11,000	2,000	11,405	1,150	3,000	350	150	..	40	50
Average indebtedness per household in debt	305	133	170	191	200	175	150	..	40	50

One of the heads of the households mentioned that he has an outstanding debt of Rs. 4,000. The figure seems to be rather inflated and I have reasons to consider it so. When I reached the village and expressed my desire to make a house to house survey of the Socio-Economic condition of the people there, the news was received with some reservations and people, mainly of the middle and upper middle classes, repeatedly enquired of me if my survey has got anything to do with income tax measures. They felt that if they could register their liabilities more than their assets they would be spared the governmental guillotin. The gentleman referred to above might also have done the same thing. He is only a small pleader and he is most unlikely to get such a heavy amount as loan either from money-lenders or from any other source. I also believe that majority of the households gave an inflated picture of their indebtedness and the reason is the same as that of the petty pleader.

TABLE 30

OCCUPATIONAL PATTERN OF THE INDUSTRIALISED DISTRICT OF HOWRAH

District	Total population	Urban population	Urban population as percentage of total population	Working population	Working population as percentage of total population	Agricultural labourer	Agricultural labourer as percentage of working population	Cultivation
Howrah	2,038,477	825,092	40·4	629,519	31·4	60,002	9·5	89,848

District	Agricultural labourer as percentage of total population	Agricultural (7+9) as percentage of working population	Household industries	12 as percentage of 5	Manufacturing population	14 as percentage of 5	Trade and commerce	16 as percentage of 5
Howrah	14·3	23·8	20,337	3·2	227,095	36·0	76,590	12·0

This steady but incipient urbanisation process had its effects on the occupational structure in the remote villages as well. Chandrabhag too, is not an exception to this general process of social change. "Status seekers" could not be satisfied with the traditional and "ascripted" positions. A state of fluidity in occupation could be discernible as early as the middle of the last century. White-collar mobility came in as a matter of course with the development of trade, commerce and industries. The lower occupational groups and the agriculturist did not show much flare for occupational mobility in general. In recent years, with the construction of the D.V.C. and its control of the flow of the Damodar the lower sections of the community have been caught in the swirl of occupational changes too. But for the engineering endeavour, most of them would not have moved out of their traditional occupational niche.

Before the construction of the D.V.C., Midnapur Canal Reach No. 7 was boat worthy all throughout the year. Not only that its flow has been arrested but its silt deposit too has been affected very much. Pottery industry which was rather well known in the area is now non-existent. There were 56 pantile units, they too had to withdraw. The potter class has completely withdrawn from the area. The fisherman caste too has found it difficult to pursue its traditional occupation. The enclosed map will show the geographical position of the village and the river system of the area.

A cursory glance at the table below will show the extent of shift from traditional occupations by the heads of households of different caste.

TABLE 31

OCCUPATION

Caste	Traditional occupation	No. of households	No. of households		No. of households exclusively following pursuit other than caste occupation	Head of households no. with employment
			Main	Subsidiary		
Brahmin	Priest	59	5	..	43	7+4 female heads of household
Kayastha	Scribe	27	12	..	6	7+2 female heads
Mahisya	Agriculture	93	30	25	24	6
Gandhabanik	Spice dealer	3	1	..	2	..
Karmakar	Blacksmith	1	..	..	1	..
Swarnakar	Goldsmith	9	6	1	2	..
Tanti	Weaver	22	..	1	17	4
Kaivarta	Fisherman	1	..	..	1	..
Tili	Oilpresser	1	..	..	1	..
Dhoba	Washerman	1	1	..	..	..
All castes		**217**	**55**	**27**	**97**	**28**

The table shows that there has been movement away from the traditional occupations even in a village, more or less argiculturally oriented. But the table gives no idea at all of the different new occupations which the castes have adopted at Chandrabhag. From the table over leaf an idea of ramification of occupations among different caste will be clear.

TABLE 32

TABLE SHOWING DIVERSIFICATION OF OCCUPATIONS AND THEIR DISTRIBUTION AMONG DIFFERENT CASTES AT CHANDRABHAG

Caste heads of households	Cultivation		Arts and Crafts			
	Rice	Other than rice	Mechanical	Jewellery	Match making	Carpentry
Brahmin	1	..	..	..	..	..
Mahisya	22	8	..	1	..	3
Kayastha	..	..	..	..	..	..
Tanti	4	..	..	..	..	2
Swarnakar	1	..	..	..	..	..
Karmakar	..	..	..	..	..	..
Gandhabanik	..	..	..	..	..	..
Tili	..	..	..	..	..	..
Kaivarta	..	..	..	..	..	..
Dhoba	..	..	..	..	..	..

Caste heads of households	Trade and Commerce					
	Grocer shop	Stationery shop	Cloth shop	Chemist shop	Sweetmeat shop	Tea shop
Brahmin	1	1	..	1	..	1
Mahisya	1	..	1	1	..	..
Kayastha	..	..	..	..	..	..
Tanti	..	..	1	..	..	..
Swarnakar	..	..	..	..	1	..
Karmakar	..	..	..	..	..	..
Gandhabanik	1	..	..	..	..	..
Tili	1	..	..	..	..	..
Kaivarta	..	..	..	..	..	..
Dhoba	..	..	..	..	..	..

Caste heads of households	Profession					
	Teacher	Kaviraj	Doctor	Compounder	Pleader	Caste occupation
Brahmin	2	..	..	1	1	5
Mahisya	..	..	..	1	..	..
Kayastha	1	..	1	..	..	..
Tanti	1	..	..	..	..	1
Swarnakar	..	..	..	..	..	6
Karmakar	..	..	..	..	..	..
Gandhabanik	..	..	..	..	..	..
Tili	..	..	..	..	..	..
Kaivarta	..	..	..	..	..	..
Dhoba	..	..	..	..	..	1

TABLE 32—*contd.*

Caste heads of households	Service				
	Domestic labour	Agricultural labour	Non-agricultural labour	White-collar job/office work	Transport
Brahmin	..	..	1	25	5
Mahisya	..	25	..	11	..
Kayastha	..	..	..	16	..
Tanti	..	2	1	4	1
Swarnakar	..	..	..	..	..
Karmakar	..	..	..	1	..
Gandhabanik	..	..	..	2	..
Tili	..	..	..	..	..
Kaivarta	1	..	..	..	..
Dhoba	..	..	..	..	..

Caste heads of households	Sundry work	Unemployed/ Retired	Business wholesale/ retail	Total	Remarks
Brahmin	1	7	2	55	4 female heads of household excluded
Mahisya	1	3	12	90	3 female heads of household excluded
Kayastha	1	5	2	26	1 female head of household
Tanti	..	4	1	22	
Swarnakar	1	..	..	9	
Karmakar	..	..	..	1	
Gandhabanik	..	..	..	3	
Tili	..	..	..	1	
Kaivarta	..	..	..	1	
Dhoba	..	..	..	1	

The table shows that castes have not infrequently taken up occupation other than their own. Shifts in occupations between two generations, *i.e.*, between the present head of the household and his father was, already in progress during the last 3 or 4 decades. But this shift in occupation has been different in respect of different castes at Chandrabhag. The Mahisyas at Chandrabhag had been the agricultural class. They are retaining these characteristics in their occupations. There have been some normal shifts in the occupation between the father and the son but, till now, the sons are mostly following father's occupation *viz*, agriculture and allied activities. A relative picture of the shifts in the occupations of two generations among the three major castes at Chandrabhag will be seen in the following tables. The figures in the cells along the diagonal (left to right) on the tables indicate the number of sons (the present heads of the households) who followed the same occupation as that of the father. They may be termed as occupationally immobile sons.

TABLE 33

OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY OF THE MAHISYAS

Fathers of the head of the household or fathers	Heads of the households or sons							
	Agriculture	*Pan* cultivation	Arts and crafts	Business, trade and commerce	Service	Day labourer	Miscellaneous	Total
Agriculture	46	4	4	5	8	10	..	77
Pan cultivation	2	2	..	..	..	..	..	4
Arts and crafts	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Business, trade and commerce	9	..	..	4	..	2	1	16
Service	10	1	2	3	3	..	..	19
Day labourer	22	..	1	1	1	20	..	45
Miscellaneous	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	2
Total	**90**	**7**	**7**	**13**	**12**	**32**	**2**	**163**

NOTES : (i) Of the father pursuing business, 2 sons are unemployed.
(ii) Of the service-holding father's 1 son is unemployed.

TABLE 34

OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY OF THE KAYASTHAS

	Heads of the households and siblings							
	Agriculture	*Pan* cultivation	Arts	Business	Profession	Service	Miscellaneous	Total
Cultivation	2	..	..	..	..	2	..	4
Arts and crafts	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Business, trade and commerce	3	..	..	1	..	2	..	6
Profession	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	2
Service	16	..	..	..	1	17	..	34
Miscellaneous	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total	**22**	..	..	**1**	**2**	**21**	..	**56**

TABLE 35

OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY OF THE BRAHMINS

Occupation of father	Occupations of heads of household or sons							
	Agriculture	*Pan* cultivation	Arts and crafts	Business, trade and commerce	Traditional occupation	Profession	Service	Total
Agriculture	15	..	1	4	..	..	9	29
Arts and crafts	2	..	1	..	..	..	1	4
Business, trade and commerce	3	..	..	..	..	..	3	6
Traditional occupation	7	..	..	1	4	..	2	14
Profession	3	..	..	1	..	..	2	6
Service	28	..	..	3	..	1	25	57
Total	**58**	..	**2**	**9**	**4**	**1**	**42**	**116**

REASONS FOR MOBILITY

Though occupation-mobility between generations was inevitable consequent upon a change in the economic development of the country for the last few decades, nevertheless, questions were put to the subjects about the reasons of their shifts in occupation or occupational-mobility. In most of the cases, the persons involved were themselves not very sure about the reasons of their change of occupations. But, on pressing, they gave some reasons for such shifts. Lack of alternatives was the predominant cause for the occupationally immobile sons. For those who made conscious choice for a change in their occupation from that of their fathers, loss of land on father's death through either partition or transfer, desire for better financial assignments, desire for an intellectual pursuit, aspiration for a secure job and income, adventurism, physical inability or incompatibility with the old occupation—all these and several other factors played their part. The underlying note had always been a demand for ready money to meet the growing commitments of the households in recent periods. The occupational shifts today, as distinguished from that of the heads of the present household, discussed above, show a greater mobility in the backdrop of India's present take-off economy.

It is true that industrialisation of the country as a whole has opened many new avenues of employment and people of Chandrabhag have not lagged behind in taking their opportunities. Still, a large section of the people, denuded of land and deprived of the opportunities of share-cropping, came to be reduced to day labourers and agricultural labourers. The distinction is not very strict and rigid. Agricultural labourers become day labourers in ex-harvest months and day labourers too become agricultural labourers in harvest months. It depends usually, three classes of agricultural labourer/day labourer are found in the village. One class consists of labourers engaged on daily charge basis (*Jan*); the second consists of those who are in some kind of debtor-creditor relation with the owner of the land. May be, they had to take loans from the owner of the land and they agreed to some kind of implicit contract that they would serve for the owner till the loan is repaid (*Nagare*); and the third consists of those who stay with the owners of the land as regular members of the household (*Mahindar*).

People would, if they can help, like to be engaged as daily labourer, than otherwise. Work, on a daily basis, is more lucrative and has more freedom. Daily labourers, whether agricultural or not, can go to a different village, if a better rate with more amenities is ensured. Day labourers constitute the most mobile portion of the working population of Chandrabhag. They would move within a radius of ten miles, sometimes more, in ex-harvest seasons. The rate of wages of a daily labourer, ranges between Rs. 2.50 to Rs. 3. Average daily wage rates for field labourer (man) in West Bengal is as follows as found in West Bengal Sample Villages C/O. Studies in Economics of Farm Management 1954-55 (Ministry of Food & Agriculture Govt. of India).

TABLE 36

WEST BENGAL (SAMPLE VILLAGES)

Months	District			
	Hooghly		24-Parganas	
	Rs.	P.	Rs.	P.
July	1	61	1	53
August	1	65	1	64
September	1	63	1	60
October	1	53	1	39
November	1	49	1	36
December	1	63	1	50
January	1	57	1	48
February	1	53	1	36
March	1	44	1	21
April	1	40	1	20
May	1	40	1	42
June	1	73	1	65

Compared to 1954-55 rates in Bengal, the rate of wages in 1962 at Chandrabhag does not look very promising. The increase in price index has automatically cancelled in the increase in wage rate. The daily labourer is supplied with his midday meal and *Biri*. Daily labourers, not working in fields, also demand tea and snacks. They also demand higher wages than those who work on field.

Agricultural labourer on a *Nagare* basis swelled its rank after the flood of 1959 Loans

had to be made to build houses, replace personal effects, to meet the bill of doctors and so on. As a method of repaying loans, quite a few people accepted *Nagare.* Of course, it is the most indigent section of people who accepted this practice. They included those who had no land, those who were not very mobile, and those who were unable to take up any factory work. *Nagare* worker has to work on a fixed rate of daily wage till the debt is paid. In..... months, however, they are free to find out some other employment. As the debtor does not pay any interest to the creditor, the latter can ask the former to do any odd job for him, *e.g.,* clearing overgrowth in the yards of the household, making faggot, pruning trees, and so on. One meal is supplied by the employer but that too depends whether the *Nagare* is doing work in the field or casual work like making faggot etc. But supply of *Biri* and matches is a must.

Mahindars are not many at Chandrabhag. Only one Mahisya family (the Adaks) is well capable of keeping Mahindars. They are engaged annually and they stay with the employer. The employer is, therefore, under obligations to look after the *Mahindar* for food, clothing, medicine and others. This is an expensive proposition. So, *Mahindars* are not in rage at Chandrabhag.

Economically, it is difficult to categorize Chandrabhag. Agricultural pursuit is definitely a predominant feature of the village. Employment in tertiary occupations is no less significant and this is borne out by the number of commuters from the village. Strangely enough, there is no industry, (craft or any other indigenous industry) in the village. There is a husking unit only. Only two stationery shops, not really worth the name, are somehow serving as a standby to the daily needs of the growing demands in the village. A very small cloth shop and a tea-stall are maintained in the bazar area.

Considering all this, Chandrabhag cannot claim to have a viable economy. With the introduction of electric traction in South Eastern Railways time taken for reaching Calcutta and its industrial belt has been further shortend. This, in turn, has made for fresh and fresh commuters from Chandrabhag to these areas. And these commuters always prefer to buy things from Calcutta market. Chandrabhag is in all probability, going to be a dormitory of Calcutta and Howrah conurbation in near future.

CHAPTER IV

SOCIO-CULTURAL LIFE

Education and extra-mural activities

Primary education

Secondary education

College education

Community activities

The library

Religious structure

Attitude to social change

CHAPTER IV

SOCIO-CULTURAL LIFE

EDUCATION AND EXTRA-MURAL ACTIVITIES

Chandrabhag has a long-standing tradition of education. About one hundred years ago a Normal School was at work in the village and it was established and run under a joint enterprise of the Mahisyas and the Brahmins. That the village had a sophisticated cultural background is evident from the fact that as early as 1859, Sri Jogendra Nath Chattopadhyaya, a local gentleman, had his writings published in the *Sambad Pravakar*, the renowned journal of the Late Iswar Chandra Gupta, Sri Chattopadhyaya published a novel called *Nilambari* also. In the background of such an erudite atmosphere a century ago, it is only natural to conclude that Chandrabhag has an educational basis, more or less, integrated.

The existence of the Guru Training School is also a positive indicator of this integrated base. But, like other parts of India and other countries of the world, education at Chandrabhag was at the hands of a few philanthropic and well meaning persons of the village. The scope of education was thus limited. Today, with changed socio-economic pattern, education has to orient itself with the existing educational system of the country. The need for primary, secondary, secondary multipurpose, college and technical education is widely felt now. The primary school for girls which started about forty years ago, is now transformed into a higher secondary multipurpose school. The necessity of adult education, for both males and females is, slowly but steadily, being realised. Moreover, alienation from land and land-oriented economy, the ever increasing monetisation of the same have made people run after white-collar and/or technical-supervisory jobs. As a preparation for it, education in technical schools and colleges is gradually getting a priority among the village people. According to the Census of 1961, the number of educated males and females at Chandrabhag is 604 and 402 respectively, making a population of 1,006 educated males and females out of the total population of 1,616. Such a situation means that 37.4 per cent. of the total males and 24.8 per cent. of the total females at Chandrabhag are educated. This blanket statistics gives us a rather blurred picture of the levels of enlightenment of the population of Chandrabhag. It also fails to answer the questions "Who goes to school"? "Has caste anything to do with education"? and "Is woman to be educated along with man"?

In the present chapter, educational structure of Chandrabhag has been broken into three sub-structures, *viz.*, primary, secondary and college education. Then a castewise classification of illiterates, semi-literates, literates and educated has been tried.

For entry into the primary school six is the ideal and normal age and school-leaving, specially secondary school-leaving age is 18. The number of school-going children, both male and female, therefore, works upto 584—of whom 287 are males and 297 are females. From the educational matrix, castes like Tili, Dhoba and Kaivarta are automatically dropped. These castes do not either have boys and girls of this age-group or have people who are otherwise gainfully employed. A number of married females belonging to the above age-group are also excluded from the educational matrix.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

There are two primary schools at Chandrabhag *mauza*, one is at Chandrabhag proper and the other is at Mirzapur. The primary school at Chandrabhag unit of the *mauza* is about 60 years old whereas the primary school at Mirzapur came into being only in 1961. At the time of investigation both the schools seemed well responded to. But local opinion is rather sceptic. To them, this primary enthusiasm for education is just like a neophytes' zeal and is sure to subside. In fact, the student population of the Mirzapur Primary School showed a decline in roll strength in course of four years from its inception. The reason for such depopulation of the school at the Mirzapur unit of Chandrabhag *mauza* lies in the fact that Mirzapur is inhabited

mostly by occupational caste groups and Mahisya. These occupation-group peoples are not very keen in keeping their sons at school. The fathers, specially the agriculturist father, would rather have their grown-up sons as the father's help instead of a swotter at school. Further, for households, hovering between proverty and starvation, free primary education was not an incentive enough for sending the children to the school. Books are to be purchased, slates, pencils, wearing apparels bought. These cost quite a few quids. On the otherhand, if the children do not go to the school they could well utilise their time gainfully, collecting faggots, dry leaves, cow-dung, arum roots and many other such daily necessities for home consumption as well as for sale. It is really a difficult choice before the poor villager whether or not to send the child to the school. Nevertheless, boys and girls have come for primary education at the primary school of Mirzapur. The primary school at the Chandrabhag unit has a regular inflow of students throughout the year. This regularity of attendance at the primary school at Chandrabhag is due to the fact that the student population comes mainly from upper caste families of the village, *i.e.*, from the Brahmin, the Kayastha and the well-to-do Mahisyas.

Though 6-10 is the proper age-group for primary school-goers, some relaxation has been made in the age in view of the rural set-up. The age-limit has been raised to 15 of this age-group, *i.e.*, 6-15, there are 181 males and 201 females belonging to all castes at Chandrabhag. The detailed composition is given below :

TABLE 37

PRIMARY EDUCATION

Age-group	Caste	Male	Female
6-15	Brahmin	62	65
	Kayastha	22	27
	Mahisya	73	74
	Tanti	13	20
	Swarnakar	4	6
	Gandhabanik	4	6
	Tili	..	..
	Kaivarta	..	..
	Dhoba	1	..
6-15	All castes	181	201

At the time of the surveys of the primary school-going population at Chandrabhag *mauza*, 87 were males and 96 females. These 87 males and 96 females could be distributed among different castes in the following way.

TABLE 38

PRIMARY EDUCATION AT CHANDRABHAG

Caste	Students School-going	
	Male	Female
Brahmin	23	25
Kayastha	10	15
Mahisya	42	41
Tanti	10	11
Swarnakar	2	4
Castes	**87**	**96**
Total no. of boys in the age-group	*181*	..
Total no. of girls in the age-group	..	*201*
Percentage of total (6-15) age-group of children	*48.0%*	*47.7%*

The percentage 48.0 and 47.7 for primary school-going boys and girls respectively is not a very bright one. The reasons for this low percentage of primary education at Chandrabhag are mainly socio-economic. As it has already been mentioned that though primary education is free of tuition fees, one has, nonetheless, to make provision for books, exercise books, slates, pencils etc. The guardians are not, in most of cases, in a position to assure a regular supply of these articles for their wards. Moreover, children are to be clad with a modicum of clothing before they could be sent to the school. Most of the guardians consider it as one of the greatest obstacles for sending their children to the school. Very few heads of the households at Chandrabhag are well able to bear the cost of garments and dresses for their children. The guardians also apprehend that education will ultimately alienate their children from them. They will become a "declassed" entity. So it is better not to educate them. This conservative outlook is gradually disappearing. With the spread of industries and various research plants there has been a shift in the opinion of the villagers.

SECONDARY EDUCATION

For secondary education Chandrabhag has only the Sreekrishna Higher Secondary Multipurpose for girls. The school, with permission to teach education of the secondary level, came into being in 1920. It was housed in a premise

other than the present one. Today the school has been affiliated to teach in more than one streams. The school has a very imposing building and it was made possible only through the munificence of a local gentleman. Later on, grants-in-aid was secured from the Board of the Secondary Education, West Bengal. There were 350 girls on the rolls of the school, at the time of investigation. Except thirty boarders (the school has an attached hostel for girls) there are 320 students, being recruits from adjoining villages of Chandrabhag and Chandrabhag proper. There is another school at Mugkalyan, so girls from Mugkalyan (though an adjoining village of Chandrabhag) do not attend Sreekrishna Girls' School at Chandrabhag. At the time of investigation, there were 14 lady teachers attached to the school. One lady teacher and two male teachers were locally recruited; the rest came from outside. One of the lady teachers came from Lucknow, one from Gauhati and the others from various districts of West Bengal, including Calcutta.

In spite of a fairly constant demand for a high or higher secondary multipurpose school for boys, there is, unfortunately none at Chandrabhag. Boys have to attend one of the two higher secondary schools in the adjoining villages. There is one higher secondary multipurpose school at Mugkalyan and the Mahakali Higher Secondary Multipurpose School at Bantul. The former was established in 1866 and the latter, in 1892. About 100 boys from Chandrabhag are receiving secondary education spread over from class V to class XI. Of these hundred boys receiving secondary education 42 comes from the Brahmin caste, 17 from the Kayasthas, 24 from the Mahisyas and the rest from other castes like Tanti, Swarnakar, Gandhabanik etc. Among the secondary school-going boys there is a preference for Science course over Humanities group. Young boys are mostly aspirant after Technical jobs. They have a "German Dream". Some of the boys from Chandrabhag have already been successful in going over to Germany for higher education.

COLLEGE EDUCATION

Guardians of Chandrabhag do not lag behind in giving their wards higher education in colleges. There are two colleges in the areas, one at Bagnan and the other at Uluberia. Both of them are First Grade Colleges and were established in the fifties. But there is one serious limitation with both of them—they are Arts College, pure and simple. Students wishing to study Science will have to go either to Tamluk or to Midnapur or to Calcutta. About 25 boys and girls from Chandrabhag are receiving education at different colleges mentioned above. But most of them go to Bagnan College which is only four miles away from the village. In the college education also, the Brahmins occupy the best position. Twelve boys and four girls of the Brahmin caste are attached to colleges. The number of boys and girls receiving college education may be seen in the following table.

TABLE 39

COLLEGE EDUCATION

Caste	College-going students		
	Male	Female	Total
Brahmin	12	4	16
Kayastha	3	..	3
Mahisya	2	..	2
Tanti	3	..	3
Caste	**20**	**4**	**24**

Apart from these institutions for general education, there is also a music school called Bhupendra Sangit Academy at Chandrabhag. It came into being in 1959 and is flourishing. About 20 girls of this village receive lessons in classical music, modern and Tagore songs. The teachers of this academy are not local people. They come from Calcutta twice a week. The local M.L.A., Dr. Ranjit Ghosh Chowdhury, a very affable young man has very kindly vacated one room in his house for the music academy to function well.

Some girls from Chandrabhag have taken pains to learn decorative embroidery at the Usha Embroidery Training School, Bagnan. These girls are mostly attached to the Social Education Centre. They in their turn vouch to render service to others.

From what has been said above, the definition of education as "an induction into the learner culture" does not seem to be properly justified. As Chandrabhag is gradually moving away from the agricultural economy, demand for prestige-status-laden education is steadily growing. The total position of literacy, illiteracy, college education, school education etc., can be visualised from the table overleaf.

TABLE 40

LITERACY AND EDUCATIONAL STANDARD AT CHANDRABHAG

	Brahmin		Kayastha		Mahisya	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Literate (can read and sign name)	78	74	7	28	101	16
Completely illiterate	1	13	1	4	42	134
Reading Primary	23	25	10	15	42	41
Class V	4	6	2	3	6	..
Class VI	13	11	1	..	7	2
Class VII	4	5	1	1	3	2
Class VIII	8	6	5	1	3	..
Class IX	3	3	5	3	3	..
Class X	4	1	2	1	..	..
Class XI	6	6	1	..	2	..
Non-Matric (appeared but could not pass)	38	6	19	..	3	1
S. F./Matriculation	39	8	8	1	4	1
Higher Secondary	15	2	3	..	1	..
Reading P. U. .	2	7	1	1	1	..
I. A.	11	..	4	3	4	..
B.A., B.Sc., B.Com.	9	2	3	..	1	..
B.A., B.T., B.L.	2	1	..	..	..	..
M.A., M.Sc., M.Com., M.B.	1	..	5	..	.	..
Read upto Primary Standard	7	8	..	4	5	15
Read upto Class X	..	3	..	..	1	..
Read upto B.A.	1	..	..	..	..	..

	Tanti		Swarnakar		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Literate (can read and sign name)	10	4	4	2	..	..
Completely illiterate	8	18	5	9	..	..
Reading Primary	8	10	6	8	..	..
Class V	3	2	4	2	..	..
Class VI	4	2	3	1	..	..
Class VII	4	1	..	..	..	..
Class VIII	3	1	..	..	..	..
Class IX	..	..	2	1	..	..
Class X	..	..	..	..	..	..
Class XI	..	..	..	..	..	..
Non-Matric (appeared but could not pass)	..	..	1	..	..	..
S.F./Matriculation	4	..	1	..	..	..
Higher Secondary	..	..	..	..	..	..
Reading P.U.	3	..	..	..	..	..
I.A.	..	..	..	..	..	..
B.A., B.Sc., B.Com.	..	..	..	..	..	..
B.A., B.T., B.L	..	..	..	.	..	
M.A., M.Sc., M.Com., M.B.	..	..	..	..	.	
Read upto Primary Standard	6	3	..	..	..	
Read upto Class X	..	..	..	..	..	
Read upto B.A.	..	..	..	.	..	

It is evident from the above table that higher education has come to Chandrabhag. But education at Chandrabhag is far from the ideal of "practice and theoretical study combined". "Practice and theoretical study", as Dr. A. E. Morgan, Chairman of the U.S. Tennessee Trust and Member of the Government of India Universities Commission, 1949, observed, "are like the blades of a pair of scissors. Neither blade is good for cutting by itself, but they cut by being in contact with each other. Conventional education, by and large, was like scissors with only one blade, that of theoretical education". The need for a technical school is sorely felt at Chandrabhag. There are plenty of young boys at the village who do not show any aptitude for academic studies. Had there been an institute for vocational and/or technical education in the village, these local brains could be put to action to the ultimate benefit of both the boys and the village.

Community activities

West Bengal *Panchayat* Act 1956 has introduced rural democracy in West Bengal. This rural democracy is in tune with the democratic decentralisation principle accepted by the Government of India in the post-Independence period. This rural democracy is hierarchically organised with *Gram Sabha* at the base. The *Gram Sabha*, consisting of all persons in the village enlisted as voters in the State, elect the *Gram Panchayats*. These *Gram Panchayats* sent their representatives to the *Anchal Panchayat* but a member of the *Anchal Panchayat* cannot function simultaneously as an *Anchal Panchayat* member and a member of the *Gram Panchayat*. An *Anchal* means a region and several such regions go to make a Block. The Development Officer at the Block or the B.D.O., working under National Extension Service and Community Projects Administration, supervises and guides the activities of the *Gram* and *Anchal Panchayats*.

Panchayati Government under the democratic decentralisation scheme was introduced in Chandrabhag in May 1964. At present there are fifteen members of the *Gram Panchayat*; the caste position of the members of the *Panchayat* is nine Brahmins, two Kayasthas and four Mahisyas. In the *Anchal Panchayat* there are four members who had been returned from the village Chandrabhag. Here the caste position of the members of the *Anchal Panchayat* is rather well-balanced, two from the Brahmins, one of each from Kayastha and Mahisya castes. The *Adhyaksha* of the *Gram Panchayat* a Brahmin by caste, while the *Upadhyaksha* is a Mahisya.

TABLE 41

MEMBERS OF THE *GRAM PANCHAYAT*

	Name	Position	Caste
1	Shri Jibandhan Mukherjee	*Adhyaksha*	Brahmin
2	,, Santosh Kumar Das	*Upadhyaksha*	Mahisya
3	,, Sankar Ch. Chattopadhyaya	Member	Brahmin
4	,, Bharat Chandra ,,	,,	,,
5	,, Balaram Bandopadhyaya	,,	,,
6	,, Keshab Chandra ,, (Sr.)	,,	,,
7	,, Sital Chandra ,,	,,	,,
8	,, Gopikrishna Bhattacharyya	,,	,,
9	,, Tarapada Bhowmik	,,	,,
10	,, Murarimohan Mukhopadhyaya	,,	,,
11	,, Bhabataran Parui	,,	Mahisya
12	,, Kurari Mohan ,,	,,	,,
13	,, Shiv Charan Manna	,,	,,
14	,, Bankim Chandra Das	,,	Kayastha
15	,, Panchanan Sarkar	,,	,,

TABLE 42

MEMBERS OF THE *ANCHAL PANCHAYAT* FROM CHANDRABHAG

	Name	Caste
1	Shri Keshab Chandra Bandopadhyaya (Jr.)	Brahmin
2	,, Sanat Mukhopadhyaya	,,
3	,, Tushar Kanti Ghosh	Kayastha
4	,, Badal Chandra Adak	Mahisya

The *Gram Panchayat* has not yet started functioning properly but people are very willing to have it. Political consciousness is also very strong in the village; Congress, Forward Block, Communist Party, R.S.P. all have their holdings among the villagers. But, by and large, Congress is dominating the village politics. There is one Congress M.L.A. from this village. During

the election of 1967 there had a keen contest between a Congress candidate and a Communist one. The Congress candidate became successful, *i.e.,* the sitting M.L.A. could not be unseated. The *Gram Panchayat* is expected to function well as the people of the village, literate and illiterate, take an active interest in the working of the *Panchayat*. As the village is a single community village, *Panchayat* is less prone to communal hazards. Both the *Adhyaksha* and *Upadhyaksha* are aware of the needs of the village. A move has already been made toward improvement of inter-village communication, establishment of a post-office and a well-equipped dispensary in the village.

Prior to the establishment of the *Panchayat*, N.E.S. Block was catering to the needs of the villages in the Block. The Block has supplied building loans, fertilisers and chemicals to the agriculturists, books to the local library and radio receivers to the girls' schools and also to the community centre in the village. There are two Village Level Workers, one *Gram Sevak* and one *Gram Sevika* at Chandrabhag to enquire into the social requirements of the villagers and they act as a liaison between the B.D.O. and the villagers. The N.E.S. has also extended loans to the co-operative associations in the neighbourhood of Chandrabhag. There is one co-operative society of the makers of conch shell bangles at Antilla. At Chandrabhag, there is a distinct move for opening of consumers' co-operative stores. The Block Development Officer, Bagnan Block II, has also promised a free land for football playing to the young boys of Chandrabhag. At present they have no play-ground and they have to go to a different village for their football games.

THE LIBRARY

The Sreekrishna Village Public Library constitutes the hub of the village. It was established in 1920 and it is being improved and extended ever since. The present *Pucca* building of the library is newly built for about five years. Before that the books were accommodated in the house of a local gentleman. Now the library has building of its own. Though it is a village library, it has, nevertheless, a good collection of old and new books. An old file of *Sambad Pravakar*, published by Sri Iswar Chandra Gupta in the fifties of the last century, is a proud possession of Sreekrishna Pathagar at Chandrabhag. There are also a few books which are more than hundred years old. They include :

(i) ভারতবর্ষের ইতিহাস (শ্রীরামপুর ১৮৩১);

(ii) প্রবোধচন্দ্রিকা—by মৃত্যুঞ্জয় বিদ্যালঙ্কার (শ্রীরামপুর ১৮৩৩)

(iii) সঙ্গীতবিলাস—by মহারাজ মহাতাব চন্দ্রবাহাদুর (কলিকাতা ১৮৫৩)

(iv) Encyclopaedia Bengalensis by Krishnamohan Banerjee (ed) 1840

(v) চীনের ইতিহাস—by কৃষ্ণধন বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় (কলিকাতা ১৮৬৫)

The library subscribes to a number of dailies, weeklies and monthly journals. Newspapers are read in the reading room of the library while books are loaned out. There is a great demand of light literature among the students and literate elderly women of the village. The Library has also a radio set which lends attraction to the library. Most of the youngmen between the age-group 22-32 are service holders at Calcutta or at Howrah and, necessarily, commuters. After their day's labour and toil in the city they feel it refreshing to get together in the Library and amuse themselves with chats and jokes. During the time of the last General Election it is reported, there used to be quite a crowd in the Library to listen to the radio news. Today, one can see the same crowd, if not more, when cricket or football games in Calcutta are being relayed over the radio. Listeners enjoy but their enjoyment is sometimes marred by occasional short fall of dry battery. Since there is no electric connection in the village, one has to operate a radio with dry battery cells.

Apart from the Sreekrishna Library, there is another 'learned' association at Chandrabhag ; it is called *Chandrabhag Saraswat Samiti*. It was established in 1910 by the enthusiastic members of the village. One of them was the late K. P. Mukherjee. He was educated at the Presidency College as early as 1896. After his graduation he settled at Chandrabhag and was taken up with many literary and social activities. The *Saraswat Samiti* aims at literacy activities and research. It also collected a few manuscripts in Bengali from the neighbouring villages. At the present moment, the *Samiti*, though not defunct, had to shed many of its activities. Its place has, mostly, been taken by the Youth Welfare and Recreation Club, established in 1957. The 'felt need' of such a club is understood by the quick and ready response by the young and old alike, of the village. The club has got four

wings, athletic, dramatic, social and recreational and literary. There is an annual sports meet of the club and it is performed in all grandeur. Friendly football matches are played between Chandrabhag eleven and the players of other villages. A very significant feature of the annual sports is this that not only the young boys and girls but also the *Adibasi* (Tribal) boys and girls join freely in the sports. They are also encouraged by special prizes.

Special celebrations like *Rabindra Jayanti, Sarat Smriti Udjapan, Vivekananda Satavarshiki Udjapan* are taken up by the social and recreational wing of the Youth Welfare and Recreation Club. Dramatic performances are also there, but they are rather infrequent. There is no regular team of amateur actors in the village, nor there is any regular stage. During *Durga* and *Kali Pujas* local boys and girls, sometimes, stage a drama ; but there is no regularity in it. There is usually no great fuss over local boys and girls taking roles in the same drama. This is definitely a streak of heterodoxy in an orthodox, Brahmin dominated village.

The literary wing of the Y. W. & R. Club encourages various literary activities by the villagers at Chandrabhag and also by others. Guest speakers consisting of University teachers, litterateurs, are often invited to speak on popular subjects. Essay competition, debate competition are also arranged by the Club.

However well-meaning the Youth Welfare and Recreation Club might have been, it could not make any arrangement for the elderly ladies in the village. Chandrabhag Social Education Centre for women fulfils, to some extent, the needs of women in the village. It was established in 1957 with a local lady at its charge. In the beginning, response was not very good but at the present moment there is quite a sizeable number of participants in the centre. The participants are given lessons in tailoring, embroidery and needle work, cane-work, and also lessons in 3 R's. The centre has no building of its own and has, necessarily, to be housed in the building of the library. Naturally, the centre has to adjust its activities with the working hours of the library, *i.e.,* the centre opens during the time of the day when the library remains closed. Usually, the library is open from 8-30 A.M. to 12 noon and from 7 P.M. to 10-30 P.M. The social education centre works from 2 P.M. to 5-30 P.M. Most of the housewives are free during the period.

Chandrabhag people, it appears, are getting more and more music-minded. Two schools, exclusively for music in the village, prove the love for music there. Of the two, one is very new but the other is about eight years old. The older one, called Bhupendra Sangit Sikshakendra, was started in 1958 and was having its music classes at the house of the present M.L.A. from the village. Modern as well as classical music are taught there. Classes are held, usually, on Saturday evenings and Sunday mornings by music teachers coming from Calcutta. Tagore songs too are in great demand in the village. The fees charged at the Bhupendra Sangit Sikshakendra for music lessons is rupees ten a month. Considering the financial standard of the village, the fee seems a bit high but guardians of prospective brides would bear it without much demur. Recently, another Dance Music Academy called *Murchhana* (মূর্ছনা) has been started at Bagnan. Teaching of dance is an added attraction. Since girls know that a good dancer is appreciated, they are inflating, more and more, the roll strength of *Murchana. Murchhana* is also run by artists coming from Calcutta.

There are quite a few aspirants in music in the village. They come to Calcutta during the week-ends to get music lessons at reputable music schools like *Gitabitan* and/or *Dakshini*. Girls of Chandrabhag who have shown some proficiency in music or in dance are often invited as guest artist at the cultural functions in a neighbouring village. They feel, obviously, flattered at this quick recognition of their merit.

Other community activities include observance of 23rd January or the Birth Day of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, 26th January, the Republic Day and 15th August, the Independence Day. Military Drill, Saluting the National Flag, March Past, these are the items which are included in the celebration. Almost all the members of the village men, women and children, participate in the celebration.

One of the most important community activities of the village is the community dinner exclusively for the ladies of the village. This community dinner usually takes place on the full-moon day of the month of *Bhadra* (August-September). The reason of this observance is unknown. Since it is performed every year with all its sanctity, it serves as a great cementing bond among the women-folk of the village.

RELIGIOUS STRUCTURE

Chandrabhag has legion gods and goddesses, both of the hieratic and non-hieratic order. The presiding deity of the village is *Chandrai* having his abode at Chandratala, under an old, banyan tree. There is no anthropomorphic figure of *Chandrai*, but as is usual with all village godlings, a few biggish pebbles, besmirched with vermilion, constitute the daily Chandrabhag may also be called the village of *Siva* temples as there are thirteen *Siva* temples in the village. In spite of this multiplicity of *Siva* temples in the village, people cannot be called to be belonging to the *Saiva* sect, in the formal sense of the term. Nor do they belong exclusively to either *Siva* or *Bishnu* or *Sakti* cults. Most of the villagers are *Saktas* but in their domestic pantheon they worship *Narayan*, in all his various forms *viz.*, *Narayan, Sridhar, Janardan,* and *Damodara,* and *Laksmi*, the consort of *Narayan*. The usual symbol of *Narayan* or *Vishnu* is a black, roundish stone. It is called the *Salagram Sila* and is very sacred indeed ; *Laksmi* is represented by a small clay or brass anthropomorphic figurine. This anthropomorphic figure is modelled, more often than not, according to the description of *Laksmi* given in the *Sashtras*, the sacred texts of the Hindus. In the *Skandapuran* we find this description of the goddess *Laksmi*.

হিরণ্য বর্ণাং হরিণীং সুবর্ণরজতস্রজম্
চন্দ্রাং হিরন্ময়ীং লক্ষ্মীং জাত বেদসমাবহাম্
গোরবর্ণাস্তু দ্বিভুজাং সিতপদ্মো পরিস্থিতাম্
বিষ্ণোবক্ষঃস্থলস্থাঞ্চ জগচ্ছোভাপ্রকাশিনীম্ ।

Brass idols are also used for *Sridhar, Damodar, Gadadhar.*

Besides these gods of the hieratic order of the Hindu pantheon, there are lesser gods and goddesses, mostly belonging to the shrine of the folk. This folk pantheon includes *Manasa, Chandi, Ghantakarna, Itu Thakur, Dharma Thakur, Sitala, Dakshin Rai, Panchananda Thakur.* Moreover, there are a number of pseudo religious festivals and fairs in the village. These festivals and fairs are good media of inter-village communications and are also a great economic aid.

It is difficult, from what we have known of the village, to disavow the intense religious overtone in the social structure of the village. The thirteen *Siva* temples are but proofs of the religiosity of their founders. The temples were established by the Chatterjees of the village about two hundred and fifty years ago. Though the temples are in an absolutely dilapidated condition now, the worship however, has not been given up. The responsibility of worshipping devolves, by rota, on the present scions of the Chatterjee, the founding father of the temples. There is a belief among the local people of the village that the *Siva* diety is very living (জাগ্রত) and it is only for him that the people of the village are able to withstand adverse social and economic onslaughts. There is also a *Kali* temple in the village. The annual *Kali Puja* is held in this temple. The annual worship of *Durga, Laksmi, Saraswati, Jagatdhatri,* the principal deities of the Hindu pantheon is performed on a community basis. The worship of *Saraswati,* the goddess of learning, is, however, the special preserve of the students of the village. It is held in all the schools, secondary and primary, of the village. Besides, the local community centre has, of late, been rather active in performing the worship of *Saraswati.* Another *Puja* is of great attraction to the elderly and the young alike is the worship of *Viswakarma,* the presiding deity of arts and crafts. On the *Puja*-day, kite-flying constitutes one of the most important festive item. Hundreds of kites are to be seen in the sky on the *Puja* day. Children and the elderly people alike enjoy this kite-flying.

Besides the annual worship of the selected gods and goddesses of the Sanskritic Hinduism, there are irregular, non-recurrent worship of various gods and goddesses connected with local customs, traditions and usages. In accounting for the worship of these lesser godlings one has to take into account the geographical situation of the area, *viz.*, the district of Howrah.

One of the local gods of Chandrabhag and of the district of Howrah is *Dakshinrai,* his image is rather peculiar- -a warrior seated on a tiger. This shows that *Dakshinrai* is considered as the deity of the tiger. There is another deity —*Kalurai* and he is supposed to be presiding god of the crocodile. Though at the present moment anthropomorphic images of *Dakshinrai* and *Kalurai* are not to be found in abundance in the district, their influence dies hard. They are worshipped being embodied in a pebble or stone along with other gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon. This preponderance of the tiger deity and the crocodile deity may be due to the fact that the tiger and other wild animals abounded in the district is not very remote past.

The worship of the tiger and the crocodile may have originated as a sort of religious defence against the menace of wild animals like the tiger, the boar, the crocodile etc. That the district was covered with dense forest infested with wild animals had amply been supported by geological evidences. It is stated in the district Gazetteer, Howrah by E. S. S. O'Malley, that "At a depth of 30 feet below the surface, *i.e.*, about 10 feet below sea levels, beds of peat with wood were found, which indicate the existence of ancient land surfaces. The wood in the upper peat beds was examined and found to be of two kinds, one of which was recognised as belonging to the Sundri tree (Heritiera littor alis), which grows in abundance on the muddy flats of the Ganges delta, while the other was probably the root of a climbing plant, resembling Briedelia". This topographical background may also help explain the preponderance of *Manasa* worship in the area. *Panchananda* alias *Pencho Thakur* is another example of a local god arising out of a situation of propitiation of wild animals like the bear. Bear-cult might, in the gradual process of sanskritisation, have been transformed into *Panchananda* worship or a worship of *Siva*, the great god of the Hindu pantheon. The bear-cult of the autochthones of the district later acquired *mantras* chantings etc., only to be included in the upper order and to look sanskritized. A chanting called the chanting of *Panchananda* is worth quoting here to show the tribal character of godling :

ভল্লুক বাহন, বন্দো পঞ্চানন
নৃত্যগীতে দেহ মন।
অজ্ঞান কিঙ্করে তোমায় স্মরে
ত্যজ হে শাঁওড়ার বন॥
করি যোড় পুটে উর নিজ ঘটে
ত্যাসহে করহে ভর।
পূজা আয়োজন লহ পঞ্চানন
নায়কের দেহ বর॥

In the District Gazetteer we learn "The tradition runs that he (*Panchananda*) was the son of *Siva* by a Konch woman and that on account of his low birth, none paid him reverence until he was made master of eight diseases". The author of the *Panchali* (Chantings) of *Panchananda* has given the following description of the doings of *Panchananda* :

কিড়মিড়ে কাঁসা রোগ, হাসা পিছু পিছু
রুগীকে হাসায় খন, যারে ধনে পাঁচু
শনি মঙ্গল দিনে, সোনার ভাঁটা করি হাতে,
রাখালের বেশে খেলে, তেমাথানী পথে।
ঋতুবতী মেয়ে যদি পথ দিয়া যায়
সুগন্ধ পাইলে পাঁচু ছাড়ে নাইক তায়।
ঋতুবতী মেয়ে যদি আঁচড়ায় কেশ,
পাঁচু তারে পায় যেন মোলায়েম সন্দেশ।
গুণীজনা হয়ে যদি অঙ্গে মারে শর,
ছেড়ে দিয়ে লুকায় পাঁচু, আড়াই গোড় চালের ভিতর।

It is evident from the above chantings that magic, exorcism, ghosts, demonology etc., characterise the worship of *Panchananda* deity. Even today, at the place of worship of the *Panchananda* in the village, on Saturdays and Tuesdays, a seance is held by a woman and she is empowered by the godling to forecast about the future of people of the village. In villages, post-puerperal tetanus cases of children are still believed to have been the execution of *Panchananda*. Such ailments have a local name *Penchoi Pawa i.e.,* one possessed by *Pencho* or *Panchananda*.

There are also goddesses who are revered and worshipped because of their power over diseases, specially, small-pox and cholera ; *Basanta Chandi* is the presiding deity of small-pox and *Olai Chandi* is that of cholera. *Basanta Chandi* is also known as mother *Sitala*. *Sitala* or *Basanta Chandi* has no temple of her own. Usually she has no image and she is worshipped under a tree just outside the village boundary. She is invoked in an earthen ware (a water pot) in lieu of an idol and worshipped as the symbol of the deity and then worshipped. Sometimes, very rarely though, a temple of *Basanta Chandi* or *Sitala* is found and a full-fledged anthropomorphic deity is also there. This image is usually an image of a goddess seated on a donkey, a broom in one hand and a winnowing fan as a halo of the deity. Such images are extremely difficult to find, except only very rarely one or two such deities could be discovered. According to the report of the Archaeological Survey of Mayurbhanj Vol. I, p.xcv8, we know that such an image was discovered at Badshahi, a village in Mayurbhanj. At Chandrabhag or in its neighbourhood no such image was seen at the time of investigation.

Another godling presiding over small-pox and chicken-pox or any other skin disease is *Ghentu* or *Ghantakarna*. He is held to be the consort of mother *Sitala*. That *Ghentu* does not belong

to the hieratic order of deities can be imagined from the chant of origin of *Ghentu* or *Ghantakarna.*

শুন শুন সর্বজন ঘেঁটুর জন্ম বিবরণ।
পিশাচ কুলে জন্মিলেন শাস্ত্রের লিখন ॥
আবার হরিনাম কণ্ঠেতে করবে না শ্রবণ।
তাই দুই কানেতে দুই ঘণ্টা করেছে বন্ধন ॥

There is no regular priest for worshipping *Ghantakarna* or *Ghentu.* The worship is performed on the last day of the month of *Phalgun* (February-March/15-14) by any woman of any caste. On the selected day, the image of *Ghentu* is prepared by adorning a lump of cow-dung pasted on the outer curve of a concave earthen bowl, with *cowries* (shells) and *Ghentu* (*clecedendron infortunatum*) flowers. A saffron cloth is spread over the thing and then it is brought to a place where three roads of the village meet. Then with the chant

"ঘণ্টাকর্ণ মহাবীর সর্ব্বব্যাধি বিনাশন
বিস্ফোটক ভয়ে প্রাপ্তে রক্ষ রক্ষ মহাবল।"

the earthen pot is broken asunder with a stout cudgel. This means that with the breaking of the pot, the potency of the deity too, is destroyed.

Apart from the *Ghentu* and *Sitala Puja,* a community *Sitala* worship (বারোয়ারি) is performed in Chandrabhag every year on the full moon day in the month of *Magh* (January-February). On this occasion, the goddess, being carried in a litter (ডুলি), is brought to the village. The bearers shout that the mother goddess has made her appearance in the village and must she be propitiated. It then devolves on the whole village to perform the *Puja* jointly, on a community basis.

An account of Chandrabhag will be unrepresentative, indeed, if we fail to mention *Motapukur.* The legend goes that a dip in the *Motapukur* will cure all ailments. Thousands and thousands of men and women, from far and near, come to the *Motapukur* for a dip. Every Sunday people suffering ailments will come and take a dip. After they have done it, they will fasten their wearing apparel on a tree near the *Motapukur.* This custom of fastening a piece of cloth for some desired object, is to be found not only in the district of Howrah but also in other parts of India. In a few places of Murshidabad, a piece of cloth, dipped in turmeric paste water, is fastened with a *Bat* or *Shaora* tree to stave off the attack of cholera and small-pox. At the *Darga* of *Pirsaheb* at Nekurshini in Midnapore, a red cloth is fastened against ghosts, demons etc. In the district of Bankura, instead of piece of rag, an earthen horse is dedicated. This sort of cloth-offering and horse-offering has very little sanction in the sacred texts of the Hindus. On the contrary, such customs are rife among the non-sanskritic tribal people of India. The macrocosm of the district of Howrah with its microcosm Chandrabhag has retained many of the folk customs and beliefs. This is reflected in the thousand and one hieratic worships.

There is also a continuous flow of fairs and festivals in and around the village Chandrabhag. Fairs and festivals make for the meeting ground of many religions and many cultures, of ideas and design, of crafts and motifs from far and near. Within a radius of 4/5 miles of the village Chandrabhag, there are the following annual fairs drawing thousands of people from neighbouring villages. *Rathajatra* at Khanjadapur Kalidaha ; *Gajan* at Baidyanathpur ; *Vim Ekadashi* at Radhapur ; *Charak* at Mugkalyan and so on.

Soila is another festival of the village under survey and also of the neighbouring villages. In the months of *Falgun* and *Chaitra,* at the "*Than*" of the village gods or goddesses, *Soila* festival is performed. Ritual friendship is one of the important terms of *Soila* festival. Friendship, as a sociological category, has been accepted and acclaimed in all societies, primitive and modern. In primitive and unsophisticated societies ritual friendship is established with great eclat. In the *Soila* or friendship establishing festival at the village Chandrabhag one can also see great pomp and splendour. Worship of the village deities, community picnic, *Bhasangan* or the song associated with *Manasamangal,* burning of incense, all these accompany the *Soila* festival. At the time of ritual establishment of friendship, specially among women, the following song is sung and after the music is over the two women would garland each other and become friends ; there is no restriction of caste in this sociological category. The song of *Soila* —

সইয়ের গলে মালা দুলে রে দুলে,
এক মালা দুলে রে, আর এক মালা গলে।
আর এক মালা সইয়ের গলে হরি হরি বলে ॥
সইয়ের বাড়ী সই গেল, সইকে বসতে দিলে পিড়ে।

ঝা গুড় গুড় বাদ্যি বাজে খোলায় নাচে চিঁড়ে ।।
সইয়ের বাড়ী কলা গাছ্ তায় ধরেছে মোচা ।
দু' সইয়েতে কোল দিতে সিঁদুর গেল মোছা ।।
হুড়কি ধানের মুড়কি রে ভাই হাবই ধানের খই ।
সইয়ের বাড়ী সই গেল গো গামছা বাঁধা দই ।।
সইয়ের বাড়ী কলা গাছ্ পাত কাটিতে গেলাম ।
বাল্লায় ধরে টান মারিতে খানায় পড়ে গেলাম ।।
আম গাছে জাম রে তেঁতুল গাছে লতা ।
দুই সইয়েতে দেখা হলে কইছে মনের কথা ।।
সইয়ের হ'ল একটি ছেলে তায় হয়েছে কানা ।
দুই সইয়েতে ছেলে লয়ে করছে হানাপানা ।।
সইয়ের কপালে উল্কি, সইকে ভালো সাজে ।
দু' সইয়েতে কোল দিতে সয়া ম'ল লাজে ।।

Chandrabhag has its village deity at Chandratala. *Chandrai* is the *Gramdevata* of Chandrabhag. He has no image; he is represented by three pebbles, smeared with vermilion and has his abode under a big banyan tree. This consecrated place is called *Chandratala*. The village deity or "the collective local divine cabinet which has the affairs of the community under charge" is a symbol of unity of the village. The village deity or the *Gramdevata* is to be found all over India and has more or less, the same characteristic features all over India. The belief that the village deity is the guardian of the village is so much ingrained among the villagers that in some villages of Bengal, clay horses or wooden horses are offered to the deity. The idea is to help the deity go around the village easily and keep greater vigil over the village. In the ritual propitiation of the village deity, it is believed, the integrity of the village is obtained. It is the occasion when the villagers engage in concerted symbolic action and forget the barriers of caste and sex. The atmosphere of co-operation is further heightened by enjoining some restriction on the villagers. Such restrictions may range from avoidance of some food to abstinence in sexual life even.

In the worship of *Chandrai*, the *Gramdevata* of Chandrabhag, similar procedures as well as strictures obtain. *Chandrai* is worshipped twentyfour hours throughout the year. In fact, in the living memory of the villagers, no one has ever seen *Chandrai* without his offering. A lamp is always there at Chandratala as a mark of people's devotion to the deity.

Apart from this daily worship of the village deity, there is one annual worship of the deity. This annual ceremony is, again, peculiar. This annual ceremony is performed on the full moon day in the month of *Bhadra* (August-September). It is a ladies' day of Chandratala. All the women of the village assemble at Chandratala; they perform the necessary rites. After the *Puja*, there is a community dinner, in which every one including Brahmins and Sudras participate. This absence of the restrictive features is nothing peculiar to Chandrabhag. Accounts from other parts of India make out a similar picture, *i.e.*, the privileged position of the low castes and the non-Brahmin in the ritual of village deities. M. N. Srinivas in his community study among the Coorgs of South India has shown how effectively different caste co-operate during the ritual of the village deity (*vide* Religion and Society among the Coorgs p. 44-ff). S. C. Dube finds the same co-operation among the different castes in the village Shamirpet (*vide* Indian Village p. 116).

The rituals and festivals in the village thus, seem to be inextricably connected with the felt-needs of preserving life, a prosperous livelihood, instincts of self-preservation, an adjustment with the fellow-being and with the village as a whole.

Transformation, however, is taking place in all spheres of rural life including the spheres of religion. As the village is gradually getting economically unstable, religious rites are also becoming fewer and fewer. Community worship or *Barwari Puja* is also becoming less frequent.

Attitude to Social Change

Some major trends are discernible in structure of rural societies *vis-a-vis* the structure of urban societies. The trends may be briefly stated as follows "(i) The rapid transformation of the agrarian society from the subsistence-based traditional society to a market-based, project oriented, commercialised agrarian sector of the total Indian society; (ii) the rapid introduction by the Government of modern urban techniques and devices to completely transform the existing loose, scattered and underdeveloped colonial agrarian economy into a well-knit compact one and its organic integration into the total national economy; (iii) attempts by the Government to eliminate some of the classes while at the same time strengthening or creating another group of classes in agrarian India and (iv) the emergence

of a complex network of various association and institutions within the agrarian society having close links with and being shaped by urban influences ".

Chandrabhag, a small village in West Bengal has definitely been caught in the plexus of the changes indicated above. Along with the economic survey, a social survey in the pattern of an opinion survey was also taken up. The object of this opinion survey was to ascertain the awareness of the villagers belonging to different caste-groups about social legislations in the country, caste prejudice, laws of tenancy legislation, community development projects and so on and their reaction to governmental activities. It was found that the villagers are mostly aware of the social legislations that have recently been passed in India. They are critical of the policy of the Government regarding the construction of multi-purpose hydel projects like the D.V.C. The villagers are also not in one with the Government regarding its land reform measures. This opposition comes, however, from the landowning classes and not from the landless classes. The villagers are critical also of the Community Development measures and the Block Offices. About the *Gram Sevak* and the *Gram Sevika* the villagers have taken a very neutral attitude. These are all very significant changes for a village like Chandrabhag. Normally, villagers in other areas of India are not always quite aware of social legislations and what is going on in the society. They would rather co-operate with the authorities that be in the village. Chandrabhag seems to be an exception and this is due to the fact that, for the last hundred years, Chandrabhag had been exposed to some extraneous influences. Chandrabhag had maintained a close liaison with Calcutta, the most important metropolitan city of India. It has already been noted that a village litterateur published a poem in the *Sambad Pravakar* as early as 1859. There was also a gentleman in the village who was a student of the Presidency College as early as 1892. He graduated from the college in 1896. For the last hundred years Brahmins and Kayasthas of this village have taken up jobs in the agency houses and big mercantile establishments, educated their children in the proper way while leaving their families back at the village. They served as reference groups to the other members of the village and the " demonstration effect " played its due role.

There has been change in the food-habit, clothing, footwear and so on. Fifty years ago, tea was a luxury for the majority of the households. But, today, during the present investigation, it was found that 98 per cent of the households take tea. It is the most popular beverage in the village. The villagers also gave a logic for their preference of tea to any other drink. " You don't have to eat much if you take a glass of strong tea ". By strong tea they meant the infusion in which tea has been brewed for a longer time than usual. Such an infusion has more tannin content in it and it makes one feel less hungry.

Not only tea, villagers now seem to have discovered another addiction and that is liquor. It is said that there are many secret breweries, specially in the quarter of the Mahisyas and other low castes, at Mirzapur unit of Chandrabhag *mauza*. Drinking and selling of this country-liquor are equally strong at Mirzapur. They do not feel any qualm of conscience, whatsoever.

Demand for education is another important social change. Education of girls is no longer considered as instrumental to widowhood. The age of marriage of girls has risen considerably. Late marriage of boys and girls is now a rule rather than exception. Dowry has remained in spite of all efforts by the philanthropic bodies and governmental legislation.

Caste also dies hard among the villagers of Chandrabhag. Caste has two major props-commensality and comnubium. Commensality or interdining is less rigid now with the villagers than comnubium (the rule of marriage). At the time of investigation, all the different caste groups expressed the opinion that they would prefer to marry within their respective castes. None of the Brahmin households showed any feeling of relaxation about caste rules. The Mahisyas gave the opinion that caste was divinely ordained and therefore should be maintained. " Just imagine, me a Mahisya marrying the Babu's daughter " Babu's daughter means bride from a high caste family. Only one Kayastha families out of 27 families expressed in his opinion of caste that regulations of caste were quite immaterial to him.

Except Kaivarta, Tili, Karmakar and Dhoba, all other caste peoples are aware of social legislations in India. About 97 per cent. of the Brahmin households, were aware of the Hindu Marriage Bill, the recent changes in the law of adoption and succession. But Brahmins seemed

very very reluctant to give married daughters a portion of the family property. The Kayastha households too were conversant with the items of social legislations that have been recently passed in India. Out of a total of 27 households heads of 22 Kayastha households knew that there had been a change in the law of inheritance by the Hindus, change in the law of adoption and also in the law of succession and inheritance. A more or less conservative outlook was manifested in the conversation with some of the members of Kayastha caste.

The Mahisyas and the other ancillary castes have also exhibited a sort of conservatism in their dealing of the caste question. While they are in the village, they are not very willing to flout any of the caste regulations. When questioned what would they do if their sons married in different castes, they replied that such a situation is to be tolerated. A son cannot be forsaken or given up. The Mahisyas and other occupational castes showed a bit of liberalism regarding the question of inheritance of father's property by the daughter, married or otherwise. "If the law is like that then we must have to follow it"—this is how they answered the query. The villagers showed genuine interest about the problem of family planning. Ten to fifteen years ago any discussion on this subject would have been impossible. Today, housewives expressed eagerness to control family. But they were handicapped by the absence of proper family planning clinic. Sixty per cent. of housewives at Chandrabhag also expressed the feeling that some one should explain 'things' to them before they go in for birth control. At present, there are many social and religio-psychological predispositions against the policy of birth control. The willingness of the housewives to acceed to the idea of family planning is a tremendous social change.

Menfolk too are painfully aware of the necessity of planned parenthood. Fewer issues and greater spacing of them is the most conspicuous feature with the modern parents at Chandrabhag. They are also aware that bringing up of children is more onerous than what it was before. The enlightened, commuting section of the males of Chandrabhag need no tutoring about family planning. It is only for the less privileged section that a clinic of family planning is necessary. Of course, there is a great antipathy for sterilization among the males of this section.

The idea of trim living with a small family is gradually getting hold of the young couples at Chandrabhag. Trim living is also expressed in the way the housewives dress, the names they give their children to, and in attending functions like Rabindrajayanti or Saratjayanti. These are occasions of sombre celebration; nevertheless, songs of Tagore have appeal to the village ladies. At the time of investigation, names of two children at a Mahisya household appeared very unusual *vis-a-vis* the names of their siblings with old fashioned names. The unusual names were Rajarshi and Devarshi. When asked where did the housewife get those names?—the reply was "why, do I not listen to the radio? You know, we have got a transistor set and everyday we listen to it from 12-30 p.m. to 3 p.m."

Transistor sets had been, so to say, ubiquitous. In a small village like Chandrabhag there are about 30 radios, transistor sets and crystal sets. They are no decorations, villagers listen to radios avidly and the daily radio news keep them aware of local and international happenings.

The village public library also serves a purveyor of news and views about things concerning the village and the country as a whole. Quite a few news-papers, specially Bengali newspaper are subscribed by the villager. The library keeps English dailies published from Calcutta.

To take an overall picture of the village, it can be said that the fundamental character of the village community is fast changing into something new. The changes have followed the methods which sociologists like Sims mentioned *viz.*, the Persuasive method (ii) Demonstrative method (iii) the Compulsory method (iv) the Method of social pressure (v) the Contract method and the Educational method.

Chandrabhag is, as it was noted during investigation, not a static village. It has been kept lively and vivacious by continuous flow of new ideas and institutions, some borrowed, some indigenous. Easy access to Calcutta has supplied the village this *elan* and the contributions of the commuting public is no less significant. Had they showed escapism instead of feeling some oneness, Chanrdabhag would have been reduced to a fossilized existence long ago. In their enthusiasm to find out 'glory that was Howrah' they are also turning their attention to this small village. Of this small group of 'revivalists', Sri Tarapada Santra will be remembered with affection and gratitude by one and all.

GMGIPC—S17—5 (PB) Census/67—27-8-69—1,000.

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(as on 17 February, 1964)

AGARTALA—Laxmi Bhandar Books & Scientific Sales . (Rest.)

AGRA—

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

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

AHMEDABAD—

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

AJMER—

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

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

ALLAHABAD

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

AMBALA—

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

AMRITSAR—

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

ANAND—

1 Vijaya Stores, Station Road . . . . . (Rest.)
2 Charto Book Stall, Tulsi Sadan, Stn. Road . . . (Rest.)

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

BANGALORE—

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

BAREILLY—Agarwal Brothers, Bara Bazar . . . (Reg.)

BARODA—

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

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

BELGHARIA—Granthiok, Antiquarian Booksellers & Publishers (24-Parganas), 5/1, Ambica Mukherjee Road . (Reg.)

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

BHOPAL—

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

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

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

BIKANER—Bhandani Bros. . . . . (Rest.)

BILASIPUR—Sharma Book Stall, Sadar Bazar . . . (Rest.)

BOMBAY—

1 Supdt., Printing and Stationery, Queens Road
2 Charles Lambert and Co., 101, Mahatma Gandhi Road . (Reg.)
3 Co-operator's Book Depot, 5/32, Ahmed Sailor Bldg., Dadar . . . . . (Reg.)
4 Current Book House, Maruti Lane, Raghunath Dadaji St. (Reg.)
5 Current Technical Literature Co. P. Ltd., India House, 1st Floor . . . . . (Reg.)
6 International Book House Ltd., 9, Ash Lane, M.G. Road (Reg.)
7 Lakkani Book Depot, Girgaum . . . . . (Reg.)
8 Elpees Agencies, 24, Bhangwadi, Kalbadevi . . . (Reg.)
9 P. P. H. Book Stall, 190-B, Khetwadi Main Road . (Reg.)
10 New Book Co., 188-190, Dr. Dadabhai Naoroji Road . (Reg.)
11 Popular Book Depot, Lamington Road . . (Reg.)
12 Sunder Das Gian Chand, 601, Girgaum Road, Near Princess Street . . . . . (Reg.)
13 D. B. Taraporewala Sons and Co. (P) Ltd., 210, Dr. Dadabhai Naoroji Road . . . . . (Reg.)
14 Thacker and Co., Rampart Row . . . . . (Reg.)
15 N. M. Tripathi Private Ltd., Princess Street . . (Reg.)
16 The Kothari Book Depot, King Edward Road . . (Reg.)
17 P. H. Rama Krishna and Sons, 147, Rajaram Bhuvan, Shivaji Park Road No. 5 . . . . . (Rest.)
18 C. Jamnadas and Co., Booksellers, 146-C, Princess St. . (Reg.)
19 Indo Nath and Co., A-6, Daulat Nagar Borivli . (Reg.)
20 Minerva Book Shop, Shop No. 1/80, N. Subhas Road . (Reg.)
21 Academic Book Co., Association Building, Girgaum Road (Rest.)
22 Dominion Publishers, 23, Bell Building, Sir P.M. Road . (Rest.)
23 Bombay National History Society, 91, Walkeshwar Road (Rest.)
24 Dowamadeo and Co., 16, Naziria Building, Ballard Estate (Rest.)
25 Asian Trading Co., 310, the Miraball. P.B. 1505 . . (Rest.)

CALCUTTA—

1 Chatterjee and Co., 3/1, Bacharam Chatterjee Lane . (Reg.)
2 Dass Gupta and Co. Ltd., 54/3, College Street . . (Reg.)
3 Hindu Library, 69-A, Bolaram De Street . . . (Reg.)
4 S.K. Lahiri and Co. Private Ltd., College Street . . (Reg.)
5 M C. Sarkar and Sons Private Ltd., 14, Bankim Chatterjee Street . . . . . (Reg.)
6 W. Newman and Co. Ltd., 3, Old Court House Street . (Reg.)
7 Oxford Book and Stationery Co., 17, Park Street . . (Reg.)
8 R. Chambray and Co. Ltd., Kent House, P. 33, Mission Road Extension . . . . . (Reg.)
9 S.C. Sarkar and Sons Private Ltd., 1C, College Square . (Reg.)
10 Thacker Spink and Co. (1933) P. Ltd., 3, Esplanade East (Reg.)
11 Firma K. L. Mukhopadhya, 6/1A, Banchha Ram Akrur Lane . . . . . (Reg.)
12 K.K. Roy, P. Box No. 10210, Calcutta-19 . . . (Rest.)
13 Sm. P.D. Upadhyay, 77, Muktaram Babu Street . . (Rest.)
14 Universal Book Dist., 8/2, Hastings Street . . . (Rest.)
15 Modern Book Depot, 9, Chowringhee Centre . . . (Rest.)
16 Soor and Co., 125, Canning Street . . . . (Reg.)
17 S. Bhattacharjee, 49, Dharamtala Street . . . (Rest.)
18 Mukherjee Library, 10, Sarba Khan Road . . . (Reg.)
19 Current Literature Co., 208, Mahatma Gandhi Road . (Reg.)
20 The Book Depository, 4/1, Madan Street (1st Floor) . (Rest.)
21 Scientific Book Agency, Netaji Subhas Road . . (Rest.)
22 Reliance Trading Co., 17/1 Banku Bihari Ghose Lane, District Howrah . . . . . (Rest.)
23 Indian Book Dist. Co., 6512, Mahatma Gandhi Road . (Rest.

CALICUT—Touring Book Stall . . . . (Rest.)

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

CHHINDWARA—The Verma Book Depot . . . . (Rest.)

COCHIN—Saraswat Corporation Ltd., Palliarakav Road . (Reg.)

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

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

DELHI—
1 J. M. Jaina & Brothers, Mori Gate . . . . (Reg.)
2 Atma Ram & Sons, Kashmere Gate . . . . (Reg.)
3 Federal Law Book Depot, Kashmere Gate . . . (Reg.)
4 Bahri Bros., 188, Lajpat Rai Market . . . . (Reg.)
5 Bawa Harkishan Dass Bedi (Vijaya General Agencies), P.B. No. 2027, Ahata Kedara, Chamalian Road . (Reg.)
6 Book-Well, 4, Sant Narankari Colony, P.B. 1565 . . (Reg.)
7 Imperial Publishing Co., 3, Faiz Bazar, Daryaganj . (Reg.)
8 Metropolitan Book Co., 1, Faiz Bazar . . . . (Reg.)
9 Publication Centre, Subzimandi . . . . . (Reg.)
10 Youngman & Co., Nai Sarak . . . . . (Reg.)
11 Indian Army Book Depot, 3, Daryaganj . . . (Reg.)
12 All India Educational Supply Co., Shri Ram Buildings, Jawahar Nagar . . . . . (Rest.)
13 Dhanwant Medical & Law Book House, 1522, Lajpat Rai Market . . . . . (Rest.)
14 University Book House, 15, U. B. Bangalore Road, Jawahar Nagar . . . . . (Rest.)
15 Law Literature House, 2646, Balimaran . . . (Rest.)
16 Summer Brothers, P.O. Birla Lines . . . . (Rest.)
17 Universal Book & Stationery Co., 16, Netaji Subhash Marg . . . . . (Reg.)
18 B. Nath & Bros., 3808, Charakhawalan (Chowri Bazar) (Rest.)
19 Rajkamal Prakashan P. Ltd., 8, Faiz Bazar . . . (Reg.)
20 Premier Book Co., Printers, Publishers & Booksellers, Nai Sarak . . . . . (Rest.)
21 Universal Book Traders, 80, Gokhale Market . . (Reg.)
22 Tech. & Commercial Book Coy., 75, Gokhale Market . (Rest.)
23 Saini Law Publishing Co., 1416, Chabiganj, Kashmere Gate . . . . . (Rest.)
24 G.M. Ahuja, Booksellers & Stationers, 309, Nehru Bazar (Rest.)
25 Sat Narain & Sons, 3141, Mohd. Ali Bazar, Mori Gate . (Reg.)
26 Kitab Mahal (Wholesale Div.) P. Ltd., 28, Faiz Bazar . (Reg.)
27 Hindu Sahitya Sansar, Nai Sarak . . . . (Rest.)
28 Munshi Ram Manohar Lal, Oriental Booksellers & Publishers, P.B. 1165, Nai Sarak . . . . . (Rest.)
29 K.L. Seth, Suppliers of Law, Commercial Tech. Books, Shanti Nagar, Ganeshpura . . . . . (Rest.)
30 Adarsh Publishing Service, 5A/10, Ansari Road . . (Rest.)

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

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

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

FEROZEPUR—English Book Depot, 78, Jhoke Road . . (Reg.)
GAUHATI—Mokshada Pustakalaya . . . . . (Reg.)
GAYA—*Sahitya Sadan, Gautam Budha Marg* . . . . (Reg.)
GHAZIABAD—*Jayana Book Agency* . . . . . (Rest.)
GORAKHPUR—Vishwa Vidyalaya Prakashan, Nakhes Road (Reg.)
GUDUR—The General Manager, The N.D.C. Publishing & Ptg. Society Ltd. . . . . (Rest.)
GUNTUR—Book Lovers Private Ltd., Kodriguda, Chowrasta (Reg.)
GWALIOR—
1 Supdt., Printing & Stationery, M.B.
2 Loyal Book Depot, Patankar Bazar, Laskhar . . (Reg.)
3 M.C. Daftari, Prop. M. B. Jain & Bros., Booksellers, Sarafa, Lashkar . . . . . (Rest.)
HUBLI—*Pervaje's Book House, Koppikar Road* . . . (Reg.)

HYDERABAD—
1 Director, Govt. Press
2 The Swaraj Book Depot, Lakdikapul . . . . (Reg.)
3 Book Lovers Private Ltd. . . . . (Rest.)
4 Labour Law Publications, 873, Sultan Bazar . . (Rest.)
IMPHAL—Tikendra & Sons, Bookseller . . . . (Rest.)
INDORE—
1 Wadhawa & Co., 56, M.G. Road . . . . . (Reg.)
2 Swarup Brother's, Khajuri Bazar . . . . (Rest.)
3 *Madhya Pradesh Book Centre, 41, Ahilya Pura* . . (Rest.)
4 Modern Book House, Shiv Vilas Palace . . . (Rest.)
5 Navyug Sahitya Sadan, Publishers & Booksellers, 10, Khajuri Bazar . . . . . (Rest.)

JABALPUR—
1 Modern Book House, 286, Jawaharganj . . . (Reg.)
2 National Book House, 155, Jai Prakash Narain Marg . (R.)
JAIPUR—
1 *Government Printing and Stationery Department, Rajasthan.*
2 Bharat Law House, Booksellers & Publishers, Opp. Prem Prakash Cinema . . . . . (Reg.)
3 Garg Book Co., Tripolia Bazar . . . . . (Reg.)
4 Vani Mandir, Sawai Mansingh Highway . . . (Reg.)
5 Kalyan Mal & Sons, Tripolia Bazar . . . . (Reg.)
6 *Popular Book Depot, Chaura Rasta* . . . . (Rest.)
7 Krishna Book Depot, Chaura Rasta . . . . (Rest.)
8 Dominion Law Depot, Shah Building, P.B. No. 23 . (Rest.)
JAMNAGAR—Swadeshi Vastu Bhandar . . . . (Reg.)

JAMSHEDPUR—
1 Amar Kitab Ghar, Diagonal Road, P.B. 78 . . . (Reg.)
2 Gupta Stores, Dhatkidih . . . . . (Reg.)
3 Sanyal Bros., Booksellers & News Agents, Bistapur Market . . . . . (Rest.)
JAWALAPUR—Sahyog Book Depot . . . . . (Rest.)
JHUNJHUNU—
1 Shashi Kumar Sarat Chand . . . . . (Rest.)
2 Kapram Prakashan Prasaran, 1/90, Namdha Niwas, Azad Marg . . . . . (R.)
JODHPUR—
1 Dwarka Das Rathi, Wholesale Books and News Agents . (Reg.)
2 Kitab-Ghar, Sojati Gate . . . . . (Reg.)
3 Chopra Brothers, Tripolia Bazar . . . . . (Reg.)
JULLUNDUR—
1 Hazooria Bros., Mai Hiran Gate . . . . . (Rest.)
2 Jain General House, Bazar Bansanwala . . . (Reg.)
3 University Publishers, Railway Road . . . (Rest.)

KANPUR—
1 Advani & Co., P. Box. 100, The Mall . . . . (Reg.)
2 Sahitya Niketan, Shreadhanand Park . . . . (Reg.)
3 The Universal Book Stall, The Mall . . . . (Reg.)
4 Raj Corporation, Raj House, P.B. 200, Chowk . . (Rest.)
KARUR—Shri V. Nagaraja Rao, 26, Srinivasapuram . . (Rest.)
KODARMA—The Bhagwati Press, P.O. Jhumri Tilaiya, Dt. Hazaribagh . . . . . (Reg.)
KOLHAPUR—Maharashtra Granth Bhandar, Mahadwar Road (Rest.)
KOTA—Kota Book Depot . . . . . (Rest.)
KUMTA—S.V. Kamat, Booksellers & Stationers (N. Kanara) (Reg.)

LUCKNOW—
1 Soochna Sahitya Depot (State Book Depot)
2 *Balkrishna Book Co. Ltd., Hazratganj*, ... (Reg.)

LUCKNOW—*contd.*

3 British Book Depot, 84, Hazratganj . . . . (Reg.)
4 Ram Advani, Hazratganj, P.B. 154 . . . . (Reg.)
5 Universal Publishers (P.) Ltd., Hazratganj . . . (Reg.)
6 Eastern Book Co., Lalbagh Road . . . . (Reg.)
7 Civil & Military Educational Stores, 106/B, Sadar Bazar (Rest.)
8 Acquarium Supply Co., 213, Faizabad Road . . . (Rest.)
9 Law Book Mart, Amin-Ud-Daula Park . . . (Rest.)

LUDHIANA—

1 Lyall Book Depot, Chaura Bazar . . . . (Reg.)
2 Mohindra Brothers, Katcheri Road . . . . (Rest.)
3 Nanda Stationery Bhandar, Pustak Bazar . . . (Rest.)
4 The Pharmacy News, Pindi Street . . . . (Rest.)

MADRAS—

1 Supdt., Govt. Press, Mount Road
2 Account Test Institute, P.O. 760 Egmore . . . (Reg.)
3 C. Subbiah Chetty & Co., Triplicane . . . . (Reg.)
4 K. Krishnamurty, Post Box 384 . . . . . (Reg.)
5 Presidency Book Supplies, 8, Pycrofts Road, Triplicane . (Reg.)
6 Vardhachary & Co., 8, Linghi Chetty Street . . (Reg.)
7 Palani Parchuram, 3, Pycrofts Road, Triplicane . (Reg.)
8 NCBH Private Ltd., 199, Mount Road . . . . (Rest.)
9 V. Sadanand, The Personal Bookshop, 10, Congress Building, 111, Mount Road . . . . . (Rest.)

MADURAI—

1 Oriental Book House, 258, West Masi Street . . (Reg.)
2 Vivekananda Press, 48, West Masi Street . . . (Reg.)

MANDYA SUGAR TOWN—K. N. Narimhe Gowda & Sons . (Rest.)

MANGALORE—U.R. Shenoye Sons, Car Street, P. Box 128 . (Reg.)

MANJESHWAR—Mukenda Krishna Nayak . . . (Rest.)

MATHURA—Nath & Co., Tilohi Building, Bengali Ghat . (Rest.)

MEERUT—

1 Prakash Educational Stores, Subhas Bazar . . . (Reg.)
2 Hind Chitra Press, West Kutchery Road . . . (Reg.)
3 Layal Book Depot, Chhipi Tank . . . . . (Reg.)
4 Bharat Educational Stores, Chhipi Tank . . . (Rest.)
5 Universal Book Depot, Book-sellers & News Agents . (Rest.)

MONGHYR—Anusandhan, Minerva Press Building . . (Rest.)

MUSSOORIE—

1 Cambridge Book Depot, The Mall . . . . . (Rest.)
2 Hind Traders . . . . . (Rest.)

MUZAFFARNAGAR—

1 Mittal & Co., 85-C, New Mandi . . . . . (Rest.)
2 B.S. Jain & Co., 71, Abupura . . . . . (Rest.)

MUZAFFARPUR—

1 Scientific & Educational Supply Syndicate . . . (Reg.)
2 Legal Corner, Tikmanio House, Amgola Road . . (Rest.)
3 Tirhut Book Depot . . . . . (Rest.)

MYSORE—

1 H. Venkataramiah & Sons, New Statue Circle . . (Reg.)
2 Peoples Book House, Opp. Jagan Mohan Palace . . (Reg.)
3 Geeta Book House, Booksellers & Publishers, Krishnamurthipuram . . . . . (Rest.)
4 News Papers House, Lansdown Building . . (Rest.)
5 Indian Mercantile Corporation, Toy Palace Ramvila . (Rest.)

NADIAD—R.S. Desay, Station Road . . . . . (Rest.)

NAGPUR—

1 Supdt., Govt. Press & Book Depot . . . . (Reg.)
2 Western Book Depot, Residency Road . (Reg.)
3 The Asstt. Secretary, Mineral Industry Association, Mineral House . . . . . (Rest.)

NAINITAL—Coural Book Depot, Bara Bazar . . . (Rest.)

NANDED—

1 Book Centre, College Law General Books, Station Road . . . . . (Rest.)
2 Hindusthan General Stores, Paper & Stationery Merchants, P. B. No. 51 . . . . . (Rest.)
3 Sanjoy Book Agency, Vazirabad . . . . (Rest.)

NEW DELHI-

1 Amrit Book Co., Connaught Circus . . (Reg.)
2 Bhawani & Sons, 8 F, Connaught Place . . . (Reg.)
3 Central News Agency, 23/90, Connaught Circus . . (Reg.)

NEW DELHI- *contd.*

4 Empire Book Depot, 278, Aliganj . . . . (Reg.)
5 English Book Stores, 7-L, Connaught Circus, P.O.B. 328 . (Reg.)
6 Faqir Chand & Sons, 15-A, Khan Market . . . (Reg.)
7 Jain Book Agency, C-9, Prem House, Connaught Place . (Reg.)
8 Oxford Book & Stationery Co., Scindia House . . (Reg.)
9 Ramkrishna & Sons (of Lahore), 16/B, Connaught Place . (Reg.)
10 Sikh Publishing House, 7-C, Connaught Place . . (Reg.)
11 Suneja Book Centre, 24/90, Connaught Circus . . (Reg.)
12 United Book Agency, 31, Municipal Market, Connaught Circus . . . . . (Reg.)
13 Jayana Book Depot, Chhaparwala Kuan, Karol Bagh . (Reg.)
14 Navayug Traders, Desh Bandhu Gupta Road, Dev Nagar (Reg.)
15 Sarawati Book Depot, 15, Lady Harding Road . . (Reg.)
16 The Secretary, Indian Met. Society, Lodi Road . . (Reg.)
17 New Book Depot, Latest Books, Periodicals, Sty. & Novellts, P.B. 96, Connaught Place . . . . . (Reg.)
18 Mehra Brothers, 50-G, Kalkaji . . . . (Reg.)
19 Luxmi Book Stores, 42, Janpath . . . . . (Rest.)
20 Hindi Book House, 82, Janpath . . . . . (Rest.)
21 People Publishing House (P.) Ltd., Rani Jhansi Road . (Reg.)
22 R. K. Publishers, 23, Beadon Pura, Karol Bagh . . (Rest.)
23 Sharma Bros., 17, New Market, Moti Nagar . . (Reg.)
24 Aapki Dukan, 5/5777, Dev Nagar . . . . . (Rest.)
25 Sarvodaya Service, 66A-1, Rohtak Road, P.B. 2521 . (Rest.)
26 H. Chandson, P.B. No. 3034 . . . . . (Rest.)
27 The Secretary, Federation of Association of Small Industry of India, 23-B/2, Rohtak Road . . . . . (Rest.)
28 Standard Booksellers & Stationers, Palam Enclave . (Rest.)
29 Lakshmi Book Depot, 57, Regarpura . . . . (Rest.)
30 Sant Ram, Booksellers, 16, New Municipal Market, Lody Colony . . . . . (Rest.)

PANJIM

1 Singhals Book House, P.O.B. 70, Near the Church . . (Rest.)
2 Sagoon Gaydev Dhoud, Booksellers, 5-7 Rua, 31 de Jameria . . . . . (Rest.)

PATHANKOT—The Krishna Book Depot, Main Bazar . . (Rest.)

PATIALA—

1 Supdt., Bhupendra State Press
2 Jain & Co., 17, Shah Nashin Bazar . . . . . (Reg.)

PATNA—

1 Supdt., Govt. Printing (Bihar)
2 J.N.P. Agarwal & Co., Padri-Ki-Haveli, Raghunath Bhawan . . . . . (Reg.)
3 Luxmi Trading Co., Padri-Ki-Haveli . . . . (Reg.)
4 Moti Lal Banarsi Dass, Bankipore . . . . (Reg.)
5 Bengal Law House, Chowhatta . . . . . (Rest.)

PITHORAGARH—Maniram Punetha & Sons . . . (Rest.)

PONDICHERRY—M/s. Honesty Book House, 9 Rue Duplix . (R.)

POONA—

1 Deccan Book Stall, Deccan Gymkhana . . . (Reg.)
2 Imperial Book Depot, 266, M.G. Road . . . . (Reg.)
3 International Book Service, Deccan, Gymkhana . . (Reg.)
4 Raka Book Agency, Opp. Natu's Chawl, Near Appa Balwant Chowk . . . . . (Reg.)
5 Utility Book Depot, 1339, Shivaji Nagar . . . (Rest.)

PUDUKOTTAI—Shri P. N. Swaminathan Sivan & Co., East Main Road . . . . . (Rest.)

RAJKOT—Mohan Lal Dosabhai Shah, Booksellers and Sub-Agents . . . . . (Reg.)

RANCHI—

1 Crown Book Depot, Upper Bazar . . . . . (Reg.)
2 Pustak Mahal, Upper Bazar . . . . . (Rest.)

REWA—Supdt., Govt. State Emporium, V.P.

ROURKELA—The Rourkela Review . . . . . (Rest.)

SAHARANPUR—Chandra Bharata Pustak Bhandar, Court Road . . . . . (Rest.)

SECUNDERABAD—Hindustan Diary Publishers, Market Street . . . . . (Reg.)

SILCHAR—Shri Nishitto Sen, Nazirpatti . . . . (Rest.)

SIMLA—

1 Supdt., Himachal Pradesh Govt.
2 Minerva Book Shop, The Mall . . . . . Reg.)
3 The New Book Depot, 70, The Mall . . . . (Reg.

SINNAR—Shri N. N. Jakhadi, Agent, Times of India, Sinnar (Nasik) . . . . . (Rest.)

SHILLONG—
The Officer-in-Charge, Assam Govt. B.D.
Chapla Bookstall, P.B. No. 1 . . . . . (Rest.)
SONEPAT—United Book Agency . . . . . (Reg.)
SRINAGAR—The Kashmir Bookshop, Residency Road . . (Reg.)
SURAT—Shri Gajanan Pustakalaya, Tower Road . . . (Reg.)

TIRUCHIRAPALLI—
1 Kalpana Publishers, Woriur. . . . . (Reg.)
2 S. Krishnaswami & Co., 35, Subhash Chander Bose Road (Reg.)
3 Palamiappa Bros. . . . . (Rest.)

TRIVANDRUM—
1 International Book Depot, Main Road . . . . (Reg.)
2 Reddear Press & Book Depot, P.B. No. 4 . . . (Rest.)
TUTICORIN—Shri K. Thiagarajan, 10-C, French Chapal Road (Rest.)

UDAIPUR—
1 Jagdish & Co., Inside Surajapole . . . . . (Rest.)
2 Book Centre, Maharana, Bhopal Consumers Co-op. Society Ltd. . . . . (Rest.)
UJJAIN—Manak Chand Book Depot, Sati Gate . . . (Rest.)

VARANASI—
1 Students, Friends & Co., Lanka . . . . . (Rest.)
2 Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, Gopal Mandir Road, P.B. 8 . . . . . (Reg.)
3 Globe Book Centre . . . . . (Rest.)
4 Kohinoor Stores, University Road, Lanka . . . (Reg.)
5 B.H.U. Book Depot . . . . . (Rest.)
VELLORE—A. Venkatasubhan, Law Booksellers . . . (Reg.)
VIJAYAWADA—The Book & Review Centre, Eluru Road, Governpet . . . . . (Rest.)

VISAKHAPATNAM—
1 Gupta Brothers, Vizia Building . . . . . (Reg)
2 Book Centre, 11/97, Main Road . . . . . (Reg.)
3 The Secy. Andhra University, General Co-op. Stores Ltd. . . (Rest.)
VIZIANAGARAM—Sarda & Co. . . . . (Rest.)
WARDHA—Swarajeya Bhandar, Bhorji Market . . . (Reg.)

For Local Sale

1 Govt. of India Kitab Mahal, Janpath, Opp. India Coffee House New Delhi
2 Govt. of India Book Depot, 8, Hastings Street, Calcutta
3 High Commissioner for India in London, India House, London, W.C.2

Railway Bookstall holders

1 S/S. A.H. Wheeler & Co., 15, Elgin Road, Allahabad
2 Gahlot Bros., K.E.M. Road, Bikaner
3 Higginbothams & Co. Ltd., Mount Road, Madras
4 M. Gulab Singh & Sons Private Ltd., Mathura Road, New Delhi

Foreign

1 S/S. Education Enterprise Private Ltd., Kathumandu (Nepal)
2 S/S. Aktie Bolagat C.E. Fritzes Kungl, Hovodokhandel, Fredsgation-2, Box 1656, Stockholm-16 (Sweden).
3 Reise-und Verkehrsverlag Stuttgart, Post 730, Gutenbergstra-21, Stuttgart No. 11245, Stuttgart den (Germany West)
4 Shri Iswar Subramanyam 452, Reversite Driv. Apt. 6, New York 27 NWY
5 The Proprietor, Book Centre, Lakshmi Mansons, 40, The Mall, Lahore (Pakistan)

On S. and R. Basis

1 The Head Clerk, Govt. Book Depot, Ahmedabad
2 The Asstt. Director, Extension Centre, Kapileswar Road, Belgium
3 The Employment Officer, Employment Exchange, Dhar
4 The Asstt. Director, Footwear Extension Centre Polo Ground No. 1, Jodhpur
5 The O.I./C., Extension Centre, Club Road, Muzaffarpur
6 The Director, Indian Bureau of Mines, Govt of India, Ministry of Mines & Fuel, Nagpur
7 The Asstt. Director, Industrial Extension Centre, Nadiad (Gujarat)
8 The Head Clerk, Photozincographic Press, 5, Finance Road, Poona
9 Govt. Printing & Stationery, Rajkot
10 The O.I/C., Extension Centre, Industrial Estate, Kokar, Ranchi
11 The Director, S.I.S.I. Industrial Extension Centre, Udhana, Surat
12 The Registrar of Companies, Narayani Building, 27, Brabourne Road, Calcutta-1
13 The Registrar of Companies, Kerala, 50, Feet Road, Ernakulam
14 The Registrar of Companies, H. No. 3-5-83, Hyderguda, Hyderabad
15 Registrar of Companies, Assam, Manipur and Tripura, Shillong
16 Registrar of Companies, Sunlight Insurance Building, Ajmeri Gate Extension, New Delhi
17 Registrar of Companies, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh, Link Road, Jullundhar City
18 Registrar of Companies, Bihar, Jamal Road, Patna-1
19 Registrar of Companies, Raj. & Ajmer, Shri Kamta Prasad House, 1st Floor, 'C' Scheme, Ashok Marg, Jaipur
20 The Registrar of Companies, Andhra Bank Building, 6 Linghi Chetty Street, P.B. 1530, Madras
21 The Registrar of Companies, Mahatma Gandhi Road, West Cott. Bldg. P.B. 334, Kanpur
22 The Registrar of Companies, Everest 100, Marine Drive, Bombay
23 The Registrar of Companies, 162, Brigade Road, Bangalore
24 The Registrar of Companies, Gwalior
25 Asstt. Director, Extension Centre, Bhuli Road, Dhanbad
26 Registrar of Companies, Orissa, Cuttack Chandi, Cuttack
27 The Registrar of Companie Gujarat State, Gujarat Samachar Building, Ahmedabad
28 Publication Division, Sale Depot, North Block, New Delhi
29 The Development Commissioner, Small Scale Industries, New Delhi
30 The O.I/C., University Employment Bureau, Lucknow
31 O.I/C., S.I.S.I. Extension Centre, Malda
32 O.I/C., S.I.S.I. Extension Centre, Habra, Tabaluria, 24-Parganas
33 O.I/C., S.I.S.I. Model Carpentry Workshop, Piyali Nagar, P.O. Burnipur
34 O.I/C., S.I.S.I., Chrontanning Extension Centre, Tangra 33, North Topsia Road, Calcutta-46
35 O.I/C., S.I.S.I. Extension Centre (Footwear), Calcutta
36 Asstt. Director, Extension Centre, Hyderabad
37 Asstt. Director, Extension Centre, Krishna Distt. (A.P.)
38 Employment Officer, Employment Exchange, Jhabua
39 Dy. Director Incharge, S.I.S.I., C/o. Chief Civil Admn. Goa, Panjim
40 The Registrar of Trade Unions, Kanpur
41 The Employment Officer, Employment Exchange, Gopal Bhavan, Mornia.
42 The O.I/C., State Information Centre, Hyderabad
43 The Registrar of Companies, Poudicherry
44 The Asstt. Director of Publicity and Information, Vidhana Sabha (P. B. 271), Bangalore