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VILLAGE SURVEY MONOGRAPH

ON

BHUMIJ DHAN SOL

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JALADHI DASGUPTA
Draughtsman

FOREWORD

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

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

Randomness of selection was, therefore, eschewed. There was no intention to build up a picture for the whole State in quantitative terms on the basis of villages selected statistically at random. The selection was avowedly

purposive; the object being as much to find out what was happening and how fast those villages which had fewer reasons to choose change and more to remain lodged in the past as to discover how the more 'normal' types of villages were changing. They were to be primarily type studies which, by virtue of their number and distribution, would also give the reader a 'feel' of what was going on and some kind of a map of the country.

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

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

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

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

It is a unique feature of these village surveys that they rapidly outgrew their original terms of reference, as my colleagues warmed up to their work. This proved for them an absorbing voyage of discovery and their infectious enthusiasm compelled me to enlarge the inquiry's scope again and again. It

was just as well cautiously to feel one's way about at first and then venture further afield, and although it accounts to some extent for a certain unevenness in the quality and coverage of the monographs, it served to compensate the purely honorary and extramural rigours of the task. For the Survey, along with its many ancillaries like the survey of fairs and festivals, of small and rural industry and others, was an 'extra', over and above the crushing load of the 1961 Census.

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

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statistics, to regard social and economic data as interrelated processes, and finally to examine the social and economic processes set in motion through land reforms and other laws, legislative and administrative measures, technological and cultural change. Finally, a study camp was organised in the last week of December 1961 when the whole field was carefully gone through over again and a programme worked out closely knitting the various aims of the Survey together. The Social Studies Section of the Census Commission rendered assistance to State Superintendents by way of scrutiny and technical comment on the frame of Survey and presentation of results.

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

New Delhi
July 30, 1964.

ASOK MITRA
Registrar General, India.

A Passage To Bhumij Dhan Sol,
Tout Ensemble

"I began to doubt how far the normal idea of progress was beneficial for these people and, indeed, whether this was progress at all in any real sense of the word. It was true that they could not be left cut off from the world as they were. Political and economic forces impinged upon them and it was not possible or desirable to isolate them. Equally undesirable, it seemed to me, was to allow these forces to function freely and upset their whole life and culture, which had so much of good in them.....

We cannot allow matters to drift in the tribal areas or just not take interest in them. In the world of today that is not possible or desirable. At the same time we should avoid over-administering these areas and, in particular, sending too many outsiders into tribal territory.

It is between these two extreme positions that we have to function. Development in various ways there has to be, such as communications, medical facilities, education and better agriculture."

—Jawaharlal Nehru

The first bus to Lalgarh was missed. Passengers, bound for different other routes, waiting at the bus-stand in Midnapur town, pitied me for my predicament. They all chuckled at the impending plight, in which, they fancied, I might be landed the same day. The weather had fallen sharp and a flighty piping wind beat about the town. The people in the bus-stop did not commiserate with me for the possible inconveniences, that might be caused by the flying, rumbling clouds, a black speck like a swallow in the tumultuous, leaden chaos of the brazen sky of June ; they were more

worried for the lurking, unknown dangers, I might be faced with, on my arrival at night in a village of alleged hardened criminals. My feeling was indeed eerie and I could pluck up my courage only with some efforts on the eve of my passage to Bhumij Dhan Sol.

The second bus, rather the last bus to be more exact, was a ramshackle with passengers and cargo loaded alike, the former packed up like sardines and the latter laden to the breaking point of the roof atop and the floor of the deck inside. The journey was novel, a little strenuous though for the nerves. Jolting, all along, the bus moved slowly along a *kutcha* road, promises of its being *pucca* being attested by the assurances of the fellow-passengers and also by the stone-chips, heaped up for long by the way. Pools of water accumulated on the route during the shower earlier the same afternoon and in such an eventuality it was a usual practice for the people to negotiate the road on foot, while the bus wended through a diversion-route across an agricultural field for a stretch of some hundred yards or so. Bhumij Dhan Sol was far, very far, not because of its situation at a distance of a little above twenty two miles from Midnapur town, but because of bad communication and inadequate number of transport. In all, two buses plied up and down the route daily and one could at best make two trips both ways the same day, but not more. The villagers of Bhumij Dhan Sol, therefore, lived away from the events at the terminal point of the route, Midnapur town, the district headquarters.

The journey ended in the small hours of the evening. Bhumij Dhan Sol stood there rain-washed, with sleepy huts and a thick, sprawling forest in sight and with yawning villagers about to retire. All on a sudden, I heard a human voice, as if it blared from a radio-set. The uncanny feeling, after I had heard the unseen voice, sent a shiver down my spine. I took it for an illusion or a witchcraft, cryptic stories of which I had gloated over, with carefully concealed raptness, from some of the rurbanised passengers. But, I could shake off the illusion, soon after I was escorted by Sri Bagchi, the Investigator, into the guest-room of *Samaj Sevak Sangha*, a voluntary welfare organisation, where a radio-set was then sending forth a full-throated popular Bengali song. I sensed that I was in a different realm, where I discovered some people in the same room, assembled there not to welcome me, but to listen to the broadcasting of a few lilting songs, without understanding either their meaning or their language. The communicability of Bhumij Dhan Sol was not altogether absent. The people were aware of a larger world around, though not fully aware of what it exactly was or how it exactly looked like.

In the quiet, dark night of Bhumij Dhan Sol the hurricane-lantern flickered in the unspacious room of *Samaj Sevak Sangha*, where on a *charpoy* we were seated. Charan Singh with a robust body and a straight carriage scrutinised my face and asked me if I had met his son Ganesh. Charan Singh was the Bhumij leader of the village and the elected *Adhyaksha* of the statutory *Gram Panchayat*. Ganesh, an unassuming youth within his teens, who stood nearby unnoticed, was a student of Class X in a school at Bhimpur, where he used to go on a bicycle. The bicycle and its owner both held a unique position in the village, for none had this conveyance or any son reading in Class X. Bhumij Dhan Sol was a village of people, not acquainted with the three R's. Ganesh typified the widening of the expanding horizon and represented the dormant aspirations of his parents. Charan Singh reopened the talk saying, "Why should we live like tribals ? Can't my son be equal to a *Babu* of Midnapur town, working in any office, say in the Collectorate, and get dressed in trouser and shirt ?" Ganesh, dressed in 'trouser and shirt', stood there opposite to his father, clad in a *dhoti* of short length, with the upper part of the body remaining bare. I volleyed back a rhetoric question at Charan Singh, "Why not ? But, why are you shy of your way of life and why do you object to the word, *tribal* ? The Lodhas don't say that they aren't tribals. Do they ?" Charan Singh straightened himself up, brought out several *chuttis* (country-cigarettes), gave me one and himself lit one. He puffed out some smoke and replied in a buoyant voice, "We don't love to live like the Lodhas. They are all primitive people. We don't like those stinking criminals. Will you yourself like them eating tubers and toads ? We take tubers, but surely not toads."

The Bhumij had come to the village earlier than the Lodhas and took some of the eatables, as found their place in the Lodha menu. But still, the Bhumij aspired to qualify in the higher echelon of the socio-economic structure of the village, where they were landed cultivators. I could not quite follow what a tuber was or how it tasted. At dinner tuber was an item of our food. I looked askance at Sri Bagchi and asked him, "Where did you first taste it ? Aren't you town-bred ? If so, do you relish it ?" "It is the forest and the people around, that made me change my food-habit," came the cogent answer from Sri Bagchi. No statement could be more explanatory of the material life of the people than the answer itself. It was the same forests that made the Bhumij take to tubers, if not to toads.

The rambles next morning brought me face to face with some playful Lodha children, mostly nature-clad. I could have ascribed the absence of a clothing

to poverty, had I not seen all the Lodha children similarly without clothes. But, therein did not lie the full answer. The Lodha huts looked desolate and forlorn. The Lodha grown-ups were out to earn their daily bread early in the morning. So, I waited till evening to accost one or two of them. But, what an experience I had had, when I tried to do so ! The males were mostly boozy then.

A little late in the afternoon the village awakened, as if from the sleep of *Rip Van Winkle.* Noisy quarrels of women in shrill voices, cries of babies and incoherent words of some intoxicated men drew me to the Lodha Colony. I sauntered to reach the place, to be eyed by curious people from a distance. As I reached the heart of their locality, I was greeted by the icy look of no concern of a few Lodha villagers. Mothers clutching their sickly babies hurried indoors and fowls cackling with fright scurried to safety. Only a handful of amused children with their lips and cheeks very pale and wan, and a small group of bemused youths remained there to scan me from head to foot, if I looked like an ogre. I did not allow the distance to disturb me in the least, nor frigid silence was continued long to keep the people remain at a distance. I accosted one or two more familiar-looking men first and asked them where they had gone that day to work and how much they had earned by their labour. A few rupees and some odd *paise* were the average income of most of the households, the members of which offered a violent contrast in appearance and dress to the Bhumij and the Mahatos, the other two communities of the village, whom I could meet earlier at noon. The effects of incomplete diet and chronic malnutrition were furrowed on the body of the tired workers. They seemed to suffer from quantitative hunger—lack of energy to cover the needs of living and working. Yet, they worked and the deficiency in food-requirements was supposedly made up by the country liquor, sold freely in a shop in the neighbourhood against payment in cash from the hard-earned daily wage or for bondage of eternal indebtedness to the shopkeeper.

During my leisurely walk in the Lodha Colony I came across a trader measuring the skin of an iguana, just flayed. A Lodha had sold it for a price, fantastically low, when compared to the equitable price prevailing in towns or elsewhere. The trader looked at me with the dubious smile of a beguiler, who had successfully played his tricks on some simple people ; the smile was one of triumphant exploitation over a group of people, whose simplicity was parabolic, but economically suicidal.

I returned to my Camp and mused on the village, the socio-economic study of

which was ready for drafting. It was a village with the same old story, which little differed from another ; yet it had a singularity of its own, an aroma of a different order. Bhumij Dhan Sol remained a village of simple tribals, whose poverty and disease, love and happiness ruled with equal strength as their anxiety about their land, their crops, their lonesome forests and their absorbing hunts ; their hacking worries about their next meal were as disquieting as the crawling agony of their rolling thought about the problems of their living ; their optimism to exist was as dominant as their *tour de force* to resist grinding poverty, out for their gradual effacement.

II

Bhumij Dhan Sol is really an old village, where the Bhumij have their human and property rights, held aloft and maitained intact, as because they are the first settlers. Their ego is unmistakably written on their attitude, revealed only during a probe into their history or into the past of their village. The name of the village itself suggests that the human habitations that came in the wake of the settlement of a group of agricultural labourers here in the midst of jungles were theirs some hundred years ago. Their association with the village was given an indelible seal of permanence by appending the name of the village to that of their community. The name Bhumij means 'one born of the soil' and the interpretation holds good here with as much logic as elsewhere. But, the Bhumij cling to their belief that the village is theirs and it is difficult to unhinge them from this popular belief. When none but the Zemindars of Lalgarh and Ramgarh settled them as tenants in this hitherto unnamed and unmanned territory, how otherwise could they nurse their belief that they were not the autochthons of the area ? History and tradition, myth and legend also tell the same tale. So, they stayed in the village in possession of the agricultural land, not too fertile to meet their needs, yet not unyielding to their ceaseless toil to bear and grow the crops, they raised. The labour, they infused into the land, made them landed too, an aristocrat among the landless tribals of the region.

Plots of land of varying sizes, that they had acquired in course of time, anchored them further to the village-soil, accentuated their urge to fall in line with the cultural currents of the region and heightened their desire to gradually shear off their tribal characteristics in stages, after adopting some of the Hindu beliefs and practices. They were the sole monarch of the village, their

tutelage on paper to the Zemindars virtually not affecting their *de facto* position. Seasoned cultivators as they had become, their pride had also the prop of the tradition of their mythological origin, which dates them back to the age of the *Mahabharata*. Their martial prowess of hoary fame, quite becoming of the soldiers from which the Bhumij traced their lineage, melted away but had not evaporated altogether. It mellowed into the tenacious zeal and never-ending energy of an agrarian worker, determined to tame the barren land to be bounteous in its fruits. This enviable position of satiety was then not open to any forces of change or opposition from any co-sharer. Needs of life having been limited and few, the Bhumij had built their own world in Bhumij Dhan Sol.

The *deus ex machina* entrance of the Lodhas at a later stage in the village-scene was viewed by the Bhumij with their usual tribal circumspection, though the former had not appeared in the arena to wrest land from the Bhumij owners or to partake of the fruits of the Bhumij labour. The Lodhas, haunted althrough by the spectre of the Criminal Tribes Act, 1871, could not banish from their mind the tremulous shame of criminality even in their newly found habitat. Tribals as they were, they had neither any desire nor any motivation to upgrade their status by connecting traditions of their origin with eloquent lores of yore, with gorgeous royality of the past or with glorious pageantry of the *Puranas*. Their scorn of the Brahmans, bred of the unhealing wound in their heart because of the alleged theft of their godhead *Jagannath* by those, who placed themselves at the apex of the Hindu society, was hard to go. They were looked upon as forest-tribals, who in the village were silently stripping the green forests of the well-grown branches at the paid call by the timber merchants from the towns, till all was bare. The sylvan haven, out of which they had emerged, having gone, the Lodhas were homeless, even though they had huts in the village to live in.

They became immobile in all respects, economically and socially. Occupationally unsettled, they were all along chased by the bogle of criminal imputation, even when most of them were innocent. One or two delinquents might have been lured by the temptation of easy virtue to feed their hungry wives and children on the spoils of petty pilferage. But, this lapse was not a characteristic of the whole community ; rather it was adventitious. Viewed in this historical perspective, the gradual passage of the tribe into a morass of an alleged moral dissolution gains a plausible explanation. The Lodhas, who might have been involved in rebellions in the 19th century, were, according to some anthropologists, victimised by the operation of a political vendetta of

British administrators, who notified them as Criminal Tribes, thus forcing many of them to crime. Whatever the historical explanation of their criminality, the Lodhas were brought to an ignoble position of helpless wanderers of forest-tribes, against whom the stringent forest-laws were applied with rigour and on whom the chariot of injustice, in the name of justice, rolled heavily. In Bhumij Dhan Sol the Lodhas were in a predicament likewise, without land, without home, without occupation, but saddled with the responsibility of many mouths to feed and many members to look after. A frantic search for shelter resulted in the emigration of one or two adventurous youths to distant districts like Jessore ; but the majority stayed on, as they considered this bid futile. Though they were nonplussed, this climacteric of their perplexed helplessness and starvation was resolved by their struggle to rise on top of the problem.

Human labour, abundantly available among them, was their only resource, they could capitalise by mortgage, sale or hire, to prevent a debacle. So, they set out daily all around, with their central refuge pitched up at Bhumij Dhan Sol. Their labour was incredibly cheap ; they were forced to undersell their labour to withstand the stiff competition from other agricultural labourers. A paltry wage was enough for them to make both ends meet. Forests, that still remained at the threshold of the village, supplied them most items of their traditional food, which they obviously sneaked or poached to avoid the long hands of the forest laws. Their other wants were few, much fewer than those of the Bhumij. In the scale of socio-economic standards the Lodhas ranked far below.

This new chapter in the story of their struggle against odds saved them from a crisis, but their life did not turn over a new leaf. Spring was yet too far and they still bled on the thorns of life in their primeval efforts and primitive ways to survive. The experience gained them the bread of adversity and they specialised in agricultural work. But, being landless, they could not attain the status of a cultivator. They lived in the village in traditional huts of their own, ate indigenous roots, tubers and animal meat of the hunted games, whipped up their waning energy with a bout of country-liquor, relaxed themselves sometimes in their festive songs and dance, enwrapped themselves in their own beliefs about diseases and death, gods and religion and coexisted with innumerable elphs and goblins of the other world in their cocooned life at Bhumij Dhan Sol. Apparently settled, at least physically, the Lodhas lived in isolation, hermetically sealed against any other current of life in the village. This way of life had been breeding mistrust and suspicion against them without anybody's knowledge. The repeal of the Criminal Tribes Act in 1952

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little changed the outlook of others, who had bad blood against the Lodhas. In 1961 the outlet was found by the Bhumij and the Mahatos in a flimsy pretext to give vent to their discontent. The settled Lodhas were again unsettled, when their life and property fell an easy prey to organised arson and vandalism. Now, the attention of the outside world was focussed on the tiny village, where philanthropists and administrators, sociologists and social workers rushed to take a serious view of an utterly neglected community.

Lodha Rehabilitation Scheme, as conceived by *Samaj Sevak Sangha*, and blessed by the Government of West Bengal, is a reflection of the anthropologists' anxiety for the Lodhas, the settlement of whom was not easy to effect with only charitable dispensation of money and mercy. The Lodhas were placed under the caressing care of social workers and the watchful look of specialists. Huts were built anew and allocated to the families, livestock distributed for rearing and land purchased for distribution. The Lodhas had by then somewhat recovered from the shock. But, the picture of their life did not alter much. If it did not change, it was not the fault of the agency, which executed the scheme or of the Government, which sanctioned it. The malady is deep-rooted and the socio-economic malaise is the outcome of several forces, seen and unseen.

The historical force, which placed a weighty load of criminal stigma on the Lodhas, was the manoeuvre of the British suzerains, who were out in their bid to smother any attempt to organise political or military functions. The blow of the Chuar Rebellion of 1799, Bhumij Rebellion of 1832 and the Santal Rebellion of 1855 scared the representatives of the British Crown in India of the "terrible indigenes" of the *Jungle Mahals*. The pathogenic fear of the British administration about the tribals in the *Jungle Mahals* at the close of the 18th Century may be evident from the Fifth Report (*Madras Reprint, 1883, pp. 767-68*), "*Within the district of Midnapur there existed a considerable extent of forest country, called the Jungle Mahals ; the inhabitants of these wilds are little better than savages, and their only principle of obedience seems to be their devotion to the native chiefs..... They sided with the discarded zamindars, condemned the authority of the police officers, and were frequently guilty of great disorders.*" Like burnt child the British started dreading the fire, even when the situation did not warrant the heartless, cruel measures, in the trail of which was clamped down the Criminal Tribes Act on the alleged trouble-makers of tribal origin. Inspite of all apologia for the policy which actually "helped to breed increasing dissatisfaction" and to beat "down weak subjects to their knees" and force "down their throats a dose of revenue which they

would not take except under force and compulsion," the repression became a patent feature of the apparent administrative reform. Mr. Stephen eloquently moved the Criminal Tribes Bill on the 12th October, 1871, at Simla in the Council of Governor General of India, presided over by the-then Viceroy Lord Mayo and attended by the-then C-in-C, Sir Richard Temple, Messrs. B. H. Ellis, R. E. Egerton, J. Strachey, F. R. Cockerell, Major-General H. W. Norman, and Maharaja of Jaypur. Even during the discussion Mr. Stephen admitted that "in any measure of this sort, it was difficult not to confound the innocent with the guilty and to avoid entrusting the unfit depositaries of power the means of exercising oppression". Their objectives get all the more gruesome meaning, when one examines the proceedings further and finds the Commander-in-Chief expressing satisfaction about a measure, which "though apparently one of executive severity" "was really calculated to be of great benefit to large classes of people of India who, though in a certain sense criminal, were yet wanting in one element of criminality, in as much they were unconscious of the nature of their acts, having been educated to consider them as innocent, and trained from their earliest youth for the purposes of crime" (*Abstracts of the Proceedings of the Council of the Governor General of India assembled for the purpose of making Laws and Regulation, 1871, Vol. X, pp. 651-58*). When the authors of legislation were so outspoken about the purpose of the Bill, one need not have to rack one's brain to imagine the course of events after. Police and executive officials were immunised by the Act against censures by the judiciary through nullification of their overzealous and extra-legal measures. Premeditated persecution drove the Lodhas to their wit's end and driven from pillory to the post, they arrived at the village of Bhumij Dhan Sol with the unceremonious appendage of "criminal horde," an unwanted liability forced on them. In any village-society people are apt to raise brows with consternation for such an entry of undesirable people. The Lodhas suffered a similar fate here.

Economically the Lodhas were an anachronism in a village, dependent largely on agriculture. Nurtured in the forests by which they were succoured in body and spirit, the Lodhas were like fish out of water, when placed in the context of a deforested village, which could offer them little means of subsistence. An attempt to rehabilitate them in agricultural occupation was slow to produce any tangible effect. Agriculture being the occupation of the settled community, it required generations of experience and labour to acquire proficiency in this occupation, if one was to compete with another neighbouring agriculturist community like the Bhumij. The Lodhas did not get the opportunity or time to specialise as cultivators. The formidable adversary in this regard was the barren nature of the soil, to reclaim which one required money and technical

skill. Landlessness was another handicap with the Lodhas against their striking roots in the soil as cultivators, while the prerequisites of the occupation of an agriculturist were not readily available for them. Furthermore, depleted forests and stringent enforcement of the rules of the forests drove a nail to the coffin of their dying forest-economy. But, even more important factor for the gradual impoverishment of the Lodhas, the economically lowest of the lows, was the tentacles spread by a greedy trader in the area, who dominated the scene and dictated the course of their fate. The wine-seller very well knew that like all the tribals the Lodhas too were fond of liquor. So, with all designs, covert and overt, he sucked the life-blood of the Lodhas and others. In the case of the Lodhas the exploitation suffered by contrast ; for poor wage-earners as they were, they grew poorer day by day. The lurid story of exploitation did not end by this single clever stroke of ingenuity. The avaricious trader, through his liquor-shop, grocery and usurious loans, sapped the roots of economic rehabilitation of the Lodhas, to which end the Government and the anthropologists had been directing all their resources and manpower for some time. Lucifer did not cry a halt to his infernal designs even at that. An incontestable trader with all the buying and selling power set forth to purchase at an unbelievably cheap price whatever was produced or grown by the people in the village, he sold in his turn all the needs of life at sky-high price, at the cost of the helplessness of the villagers. The grip was not relaxed even at these contrived schemes. Actuating a few criminals to further their criminal motives, some interested persons in one breath received stolen property for unusually low price and branded all the Lodhas as criminals in the next breath.

While the machinery of economic exploitation was thus very well set against the Lodhas, the community bore the burden of an intricate socio-religious complex. The costs of their marriage ceremonies, the expenses of the rites and rituals to propitiate their multiple gods and goddesses, witches and spirits or to expiate the self imposed sin at the outbreak of any disease or to mollify the unpacified souls of the dead cannot be treated as too insignificant to be ignored as trivial. These practices were all traditional and sanctified by a long usage ; nevertheless, as a consequence, their economy, however simple or rudimentary it might be, had been corroded very slowly without any corresponding economic regeneration. The loss was palpable and had been mutely borne by the suffering mass.

Sociologically, the Lodhas, treated as "poor cousin", "dirty, simple and primitive" by their more sophisticated compatriots, the Bhumij, were initially meted

out a treatment of indifference, for they had arrrived late in the village as casual labourers, as mercenaries under the service of the lessee timber merchants. As soon as the employers had effected their exits, the Lodhas could not be left out of the orbit of the village-life. But, what social intercourse could be expected of two incompatible tribal groups, one economically placed better than the other ? The Bhumij of this village along with others outside wore the mantle of employers and the Lodhas voluntarily accepted the servility of labourers in agricultural fields. The two groups lived in isolation and village-unity was more a myth than a reality. The kind of social symbiosis in the village, an outcome of economic imbalance, led to a peculiar adjustment, a maladjustment truly speaking, which did neither organically sythetise the two tribal groups nor did create any amity between them. Strangely enough, the Lodhas, who had occasions to go outside and to pick up, in course of their temporary sojourn in alien soil, cultural contagions through contacts with urban people or with people with more developed traits of material and social culture, were far behind in the process of acculturation, obviously for economic reasons, whereas the Bhumij, who lived in internment within the village, developed a highly sensitive nature with pronounced keenness to move forward with the distant forces of progress and change, which had not even touched the fringe of village-life in course of the last few decades or so. That is why, the Bhumij did not evince much eagerness to be treated as any other tribals and one or two socially powerful persons in their community cherished in disguise a latent ambition to educate their children, who might one day ascend the higher rung of the socio-economic ladder, to acquire a culture and attain a status of equality with the urban *Babus* of the Midnapore Collectorate. This awakening from the slumber of ages, this social awareness, this alacrity of the human spirit, somnolent so long, this neophyte alertness are not explained with a clarity by the ecological factors, which failed to reveal any startling impact of any measures of improvement on certain basic things like transport and communication, health and sanitation.

In the village itself the area of cooperation between the Lodhas and the Bhumij had indeed been very limited, circumscribed by an attitude of contempt and dissension, a spirit of jealousy and ill feeling, sometimes manifested in the behaviour of the Bhumij and the Mahato trio against the Lodhas. It is true that tension, that appeared in Bhumij Dhan Sol, was not the handiwork of any person through a veiled effort to make the village-life turgid first and later to fish in troubled waters. Instead, the measures of social reform, undertaken by social reformers and the Government, were not always above the misgivings of the Bhumij, who failed to realise why tribals even though they

were, they did not receive the same beneficial help as the Lodhas. The subtle nuances of sociological terms like advanced or backward, so common in the parlance of the anthropologists, could not be all understood by them. Their failure to follow the implications and objectives of the measures of social welfare of the Government consequenced in their growing hatred against the Lodha recipients of these benefits. The poisoned social climate was not conducive to the sustained development of either of the groups, far less to the permanent rehabilitation of the Lodhas.

Bhumij Dhan Sol thus stands static, set against a jungle-background, with cruel earth miserly in her returns. The silence of the village is broken only occasionally "in thunder, lightning or in rain", but- ruffled almost daily in the sad twilight when Lodha babies raise the pitch of their voice in shrieking cries of hunger, because their mothers are away for the whole day in fields or forest to earn their living. Poverty, stamped immutably on the vacant looks of emaciated children, casts its lengthening shadow on the dress and food of the elders. The only escape, the people make from the stark reality of the present, is through the corridors of tribal songs and dances once in blue moon, when lovely men and women drink, wandering in the alleys of life, maddening wine of joy and rejuvenation, whose dregs they drain to deep intoxication. The storm and strife within the village, the hard labour of everyday life for a bread, the disenchanting prohibitions under the forest laws, the excruciating misery of the pettines of daily existence, and the disguised exploitation in dizzy proportions by a few have not paled, or trampled or stilled the people, who have learned to live with 'man and beast, foul and fair', through their experiences of the supernatural world, where fair and foul play together. Farewell is not yet bid to their tender hopes, which their hearts gently bear, for a better life in emancipation and prosperous future for posterity.

III

This is the fifth in the series of the Village Survey Monographs to be published as a part of the Census Programme of 1961, the objectives having been enunciated in clear terms by the Registrar General, India, in his Foreword, which precedes this discourse. The details about how and how many villages were selected have been explained in the prefatory account entitled, 'In The Place Of A Preface', included in the Village Survey Monograph on Raibaghini, published earlier in this series as Monograph No. 4. The schedules adopted

for this Survey are the same as shown there in Appendices. Only the special schedule with pointed questionnaire, specially framed on the eve of the study of villages near forests, has been included in Appendix IV of the present Monograph.

The Tables, specially processed by Sri Swapan Kumar Guha, B. Com., Investigator, for inclusion in Appendix I, in order to utilise as much statistical material from the schedules as possible, in pursuance of the deliberations of the Census Conference at Trivandrum and Cape Comorin, will enable the reader to interpret many facts of life at Bhumij Dhan Sol.

Apart from a thorough census of the households, structured questions for the family and the village, group-discussions and interviews and participation-observation were resorted to, in studying the village. Impressionistic observations are there, but not without the support of case-studies. Though objective analysis has been attempted on the basis of statistical tables mostly, at times subjectivity, that crept in, could not be left out. Figures do not always speak, specially so when the subject is the mind of man, his attitude and his behaviour.

An apology is due to the readers for the delay in publishing this Monograph. Without, however, shifting the blame on any person or institution, I may be allowed to say that the Press even despite its best efforts could not print the bulky volume more expeditiously because of certain operational problems. Even then, the Report has not outlived its purpose or grown back-dated. Currents in the village-life move at a still slower pace.

The study, conducted in two different periods, once in March-April, 1962, and once in June, 1964, followed up by some more visits later, has produced the present Monograph, which affords one a peep into a microcosm of West Bengal, which is called a village. If the Lodhas, the Bhumij and the Mahatos, the three communities of the village Bhumij Dhan Sol with the former two being tribals and the third being in the minority, view visitors from the outside world with caution and perplexed wonder, people from outside are also overwhelmed with little knowledge, they acquire, of so little known a village with its less known past and practically unknown people. The experience is thrilling mostly but shocking too at times, thrilling because the life of the people is polycladous and yet polychromatic, shocking because a bare living demands so high a price in tears and toil and because 'poisoned tooth of hunger' gnawing the vitals can be so cruel. Scourged by hunger, hatred

and starvation and smothered with cankers and diseases, the people here live a very meek life a life, laden with tears, sorrows and tragedies, only to survive with unfathomable grief in this vast world. They grow like death in life, yet they labour hard, with every drop of moisture not in the men's bottles and flagons in the form of cider raining as perspiration from their foreheads and cheeks, under the monochromatic burning summer sky. And the inevitable question awaits an answer, "Why so ?"

In conclusion one has to agree with Sri Asok Mitra, when he says, "Pundits will always say that this is a country with an ancient culture, with a degree of sophistication and capacity for abstraction which is not always apparent on the surface, discrimination born of an under-current of ancient heritage and so that explains. But one has also seen how grinding poverty, the absence of clear drinking water or the absence of elementary privacy can erode human nature. This is an experience which has to be endured to be fully comprehended". (*Now, dated June 2, 1967.*)

The opinions, here and hereafter, are exclusively mine, made in a personal capacity. They do not represent the views of the Government.

Calcutta,
The 4th September, 1966,
The 13th Bhadra, 1888 Sakabda.

Sukumar Sinha

A Tribute In Quietude

"But love, though misdirected, is among
The things which are immortal, and surpass
All that frail stuff which will be—or which was."

To the Lodha, Bhumij and Mahato villagers of Bhumij Dhan Sol who love to live and live to love life through religion, songs, magic and witchcraft, through expansive joy in liberty and suffering sorrow in confinement, I offer my unstinted respect in unrestrained emotion. They live far away from our society in their own world in freedom, not stifled by the noise, dirt and disturbance of a town, nor prejudiced by any urban sense of values. They worked in jungles and some of them in the agricultural fields and they do so even now. By the legacy of foreign rule the Lodhas were stigmatised as criminals and forced to live a life of isolation, humiliation and sufferance. They were punished more for crimes that they had not committed than they would have been if they had committed the crimes. More sinned against than sinning, the Lodhas were dubbed as sin-born. The post-Independence period apparently rescued them from the bondage after the repeal of the Criminal Tribes Act, but the pathos of their life was not so easy to go. Understanding and appreciation alone could redeem them and assuage their agony. I am now "left with the inconsolable memory of the treasure I went into" their village to find and I shall cherish it as a priceless possession, for which no word is a worthy tribute.

To Sri Asok Mitra, I.C.S., Registrar General, India, and Secretary to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, who knows the tribals, the people and the culture of our country so intimately, I pay my profoundest regards and present the Monograph with some diffidence. Throughout my work and in all my thoughts I was inspired by his great traditlon.

To Sri J. C. Sen Gupta, I.A.S., formerly Superintendent of Census Operations, West Bengal and Sikkim, and now Secretary to the Government of West Bengal, Departments of Cottage and Small-Scale Industries and Panchayats, I remain grateful for the opportunity, he had kindly afforded me to associate myself with the work.

Sri A. Chandra Sekhar, I.A.S., Additional Registrar General, India, encouraged me at every stage to work with the spirit of a 'voyaging explorer'. To him I remain especially indebted for many kind words and suggestions, which never allowed my spirit to flag.

Dr. B. K. Roy Burman, Officer on Special Duty, in the Office of the Registrar General, India, New Delhi, kindly assisted me in every possible way not as a critic but as a helpful guide, and impelled me not to allow any realm untrod. I am also thankful to him for his kind permission to print a synopsis of his talk entitled, "Land and Tribals" in Appendix III.

Sri Gour Chandra Bagchi, M.A., Investigator, had visited the village twice, once in March-April, 1962 and once more in June, 1964. With no shop, no market, no school, no temple, and in a word with no institution of importance, Bhumij Dhan Sol is a village of people, simple in their ways of life and simpler in their thoughts. Yet, the task was not simple to enquire into this village of tribals. A cautious approach and discreet investigation were necessitated by a desire to delve into the fast-changing organisations and institutions of the people there. Without being a student of Anthropology, Sri Bagchi worked in the village with tact and intelligence. His close association with the people and his sincere work to know them and their village enabled me to give shape to the Monograph in its present form.

I also remain thankful to Sri Arunabha Dutta, Artist-*cum*-Photographer, for the photography and art-work to vivify the village. The lay-out contains touch of his artistic hand in many places.

Statistical diagrams drawn by Sarvasree Jaladhi Bhusan Dasgupta and Bimalesh Das, Draughtsmen, deserve appreciation. Sri Satyendra Nath Ganguly, Cartographer, earns my praise for the Maps. Sri R. C. Bhar, Printing Inspector, assisted by Sarvasree Amiya Ranjan Kar and Sitangshu Bhattacharya, enabled the present publication to be free from as many blemishes as possible.

My colleagues Sri J. Datta Gupta, W.B.C.S., and Sri B. Roy, W.B.C.S.,

offered me their friendly counsels and valuable suggestions. To all other colleagues in this organisation I remain thankful for their helpful co-operation and ungrudging services all the time. I wish to record in particular the commendable assistance rendered to me by Sarvasree Afzaluddin Ahmed, Ajit Kumar Ganguly, Sm. Anjali Moitra, Arun Kumar Roy, Bechuram Dutta, Bimal Kanti Bose, Dulal Kumar Dutta, Gouri Sankar Chatterjee, Kalyan Kumar Datta, Manindra Nath Sarkar, Nalini Kanta De, Sm. Namita Bose, Nirmal Kumar Mitra, Nirmal Kumar Sarkar, Ranjit Kumar Chakraborty, Sahidul Huq, Some Nath Roy, Sunil Kanti Majumdar and Sm. Swapna Roy (Chakravarty).

Besides, I owe a sense of gratitude to a number of persons and institutions. They are Sarvasree Ashutosh Mahato, Beni Madav Bhattacharya, Charan Singh, Ganesh Singh, Gobinda Mahato, Ranjan Bhattacharya, Trailokya Savar, of Bhumij Dhan Sol ; Sri Alok Banerjee of Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organisation, Calcutta ; Dr. Amiya Kumar Bagchi now in Cambridge ; Sri Ananda Lal Bose of Martin Burn Ltd., Calcutta ; Sri Ananta Kumar Chakraborty, Librarian, West Bengal Secretariat Library, Writers' Buildings, Calcutta and members of the staff of the same Library ; Sri Durga Prasad Bhattacharya of Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta ; Forest Range Officer, Lalgarh ; Sri Jatindra Mohan Datta of Calcutta ; Sri Nalinaksha Nanda, Deputy Secretary, Home Department, Govt. of West Bengal ; Sri Nitya Priya Ghosh of Now, Calcutta ; Officer in Charge, Binpur Police Station ; Professor of Zoology, Presidency College, Calcutta ; Dr. Netai Bagchi, M.B.B.S., Junior Research Officer, All India Institute of Medical Science, New Delhi ; Sri Pranesh Chandra Bagchi, M.A., B.T., Headmaster, Santipur Oriental Academy, Santipur ; B. Ghosh, M. R. Saha and S. B. Sinha of Rup-Lekha, Calcutta ; Sri Saroj Kumar Mukherjee of Oriental Fire and General Insurance, Calcutta ; Sri Satya Bhattacharya of Calcutta ; and Dr. Sukumar Ganguly of Calcutta.

Dr. P. K. Bhowmick, Lecturer, University of Calcutta, is well known for his Doctoral Thesis on the Lodhas of West Bengal. Besides, he is the man behind the Samaj Sevak Sangha, which has been working for the rehabilitation of the Lodhas in different parts of Midnapore district. Dr. Bhowmick was kind enough to contribute a paper entitled, "Dhansola Rehabilitation Scheme", included in Appendix II. I recall his contribution with a sense of gratitude.

Dr. Pradip Kumar Ganguly of Presidency College, Calcutta, was not disinterested in this village ; rather his direct help many a time by way of original suggestions stimulated me to make the Monograph as much comprehensive as possible. His friendly association and scholarly interest have bound me in deep gratitude.

Prof. Satyesh Chakravorty of Presidency College, Calcutta, kindly helped me in preparing the Map of West Bengal, locating the villages selected for survey and also in suggesting certain new methods of approach to this study. I am indebted to him for his scholarly assistance.

Prof. Nirmal Kumar Bose, the celebrated Anthropologist, now the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, has been a source of great inspiration to me throughout. I remain grateful to him for the helpful guidance and invaluable suggestions given to me many a time.

Lastly, I cannot but remember my dearest father Sri Shyama Pada Sinha, who responded to the affectionate call of his son in improving upon the Monograph, wherever he felt it necessary.

Calcutta,
The 4th September, 1966,
The 13th Bhadra, 1888 Sakabda.

Sukumar Sinha

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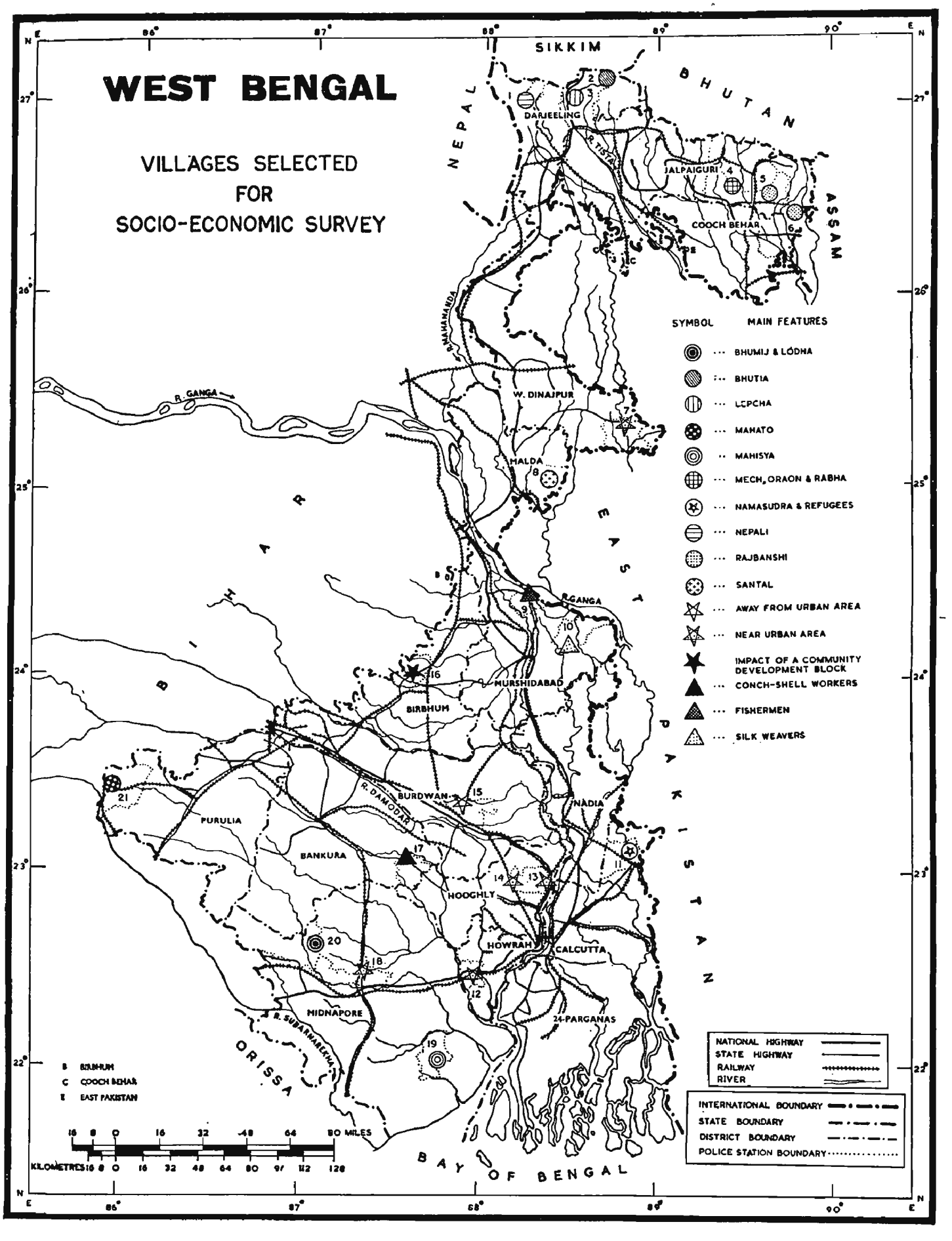
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VILLAGES OF WEST BENGAL SELECTED FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC SURVEY

Sl. 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)	Kotulpur	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
R. TISTA
JALPAIGURI
COOCH BEHAR
R. MAHANANDA
R. GANGA
W. DINAJPUR
HALDA
MURSHIDABAD
BIRBHUM
BURDWAN
R. DAMODAR
PURULIA
BANKURA
HOOGHLY
NADIA
HOWRAH
CALCUTTA
24-PARGANAS
MIDNAPORE
R. SUBARNAREKHA
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
NATIONAL HIGHWAY
STATE HIGHWAY
RAILWAY
RIVER
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY
STATE BOUNDARY
DISTRICT BOUNDARY
POLICE STATION BOUNDARY
KILOMETRES
MILES

CHAPTER I

THE VILLAGE

Introducing the village in its most significant characteristic

Location with reference to the district

Reasons for selection

Location of the village and its neighbourhood

Location with reference to important centres of administration

Location of the neighbourhood

Transport and communication

Physical aspects

Boundary

Latitude and longitude

Geology

Soil

Flora

Fauna

Size

Number of households

Residential pattern

Important public places

Places of worship

Crematorium

Hats or markets

Shops

Educational institutions

Sources of water

Etymology of the name and history of the village

Legends

Early history

Growth of settlement in the village

Reasons of immigration to the present village

Some important landmarks in the history of the village

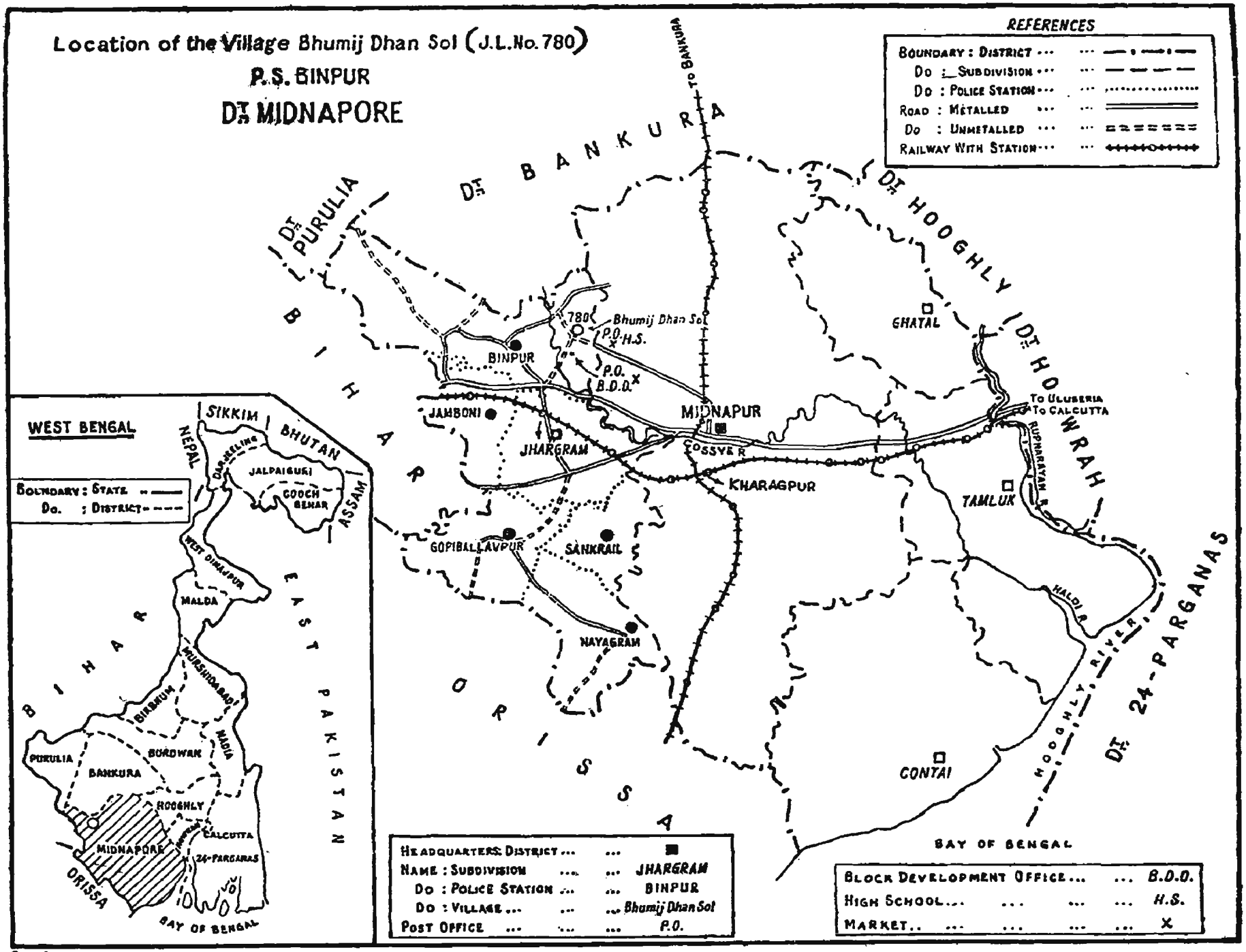
(a) *Epidemic*

(b) *Midnapore Cyclone of 1942*

(c) *The Great Famine of 1943 and its impact on the village*

(d) *The Tragedy of 1961*

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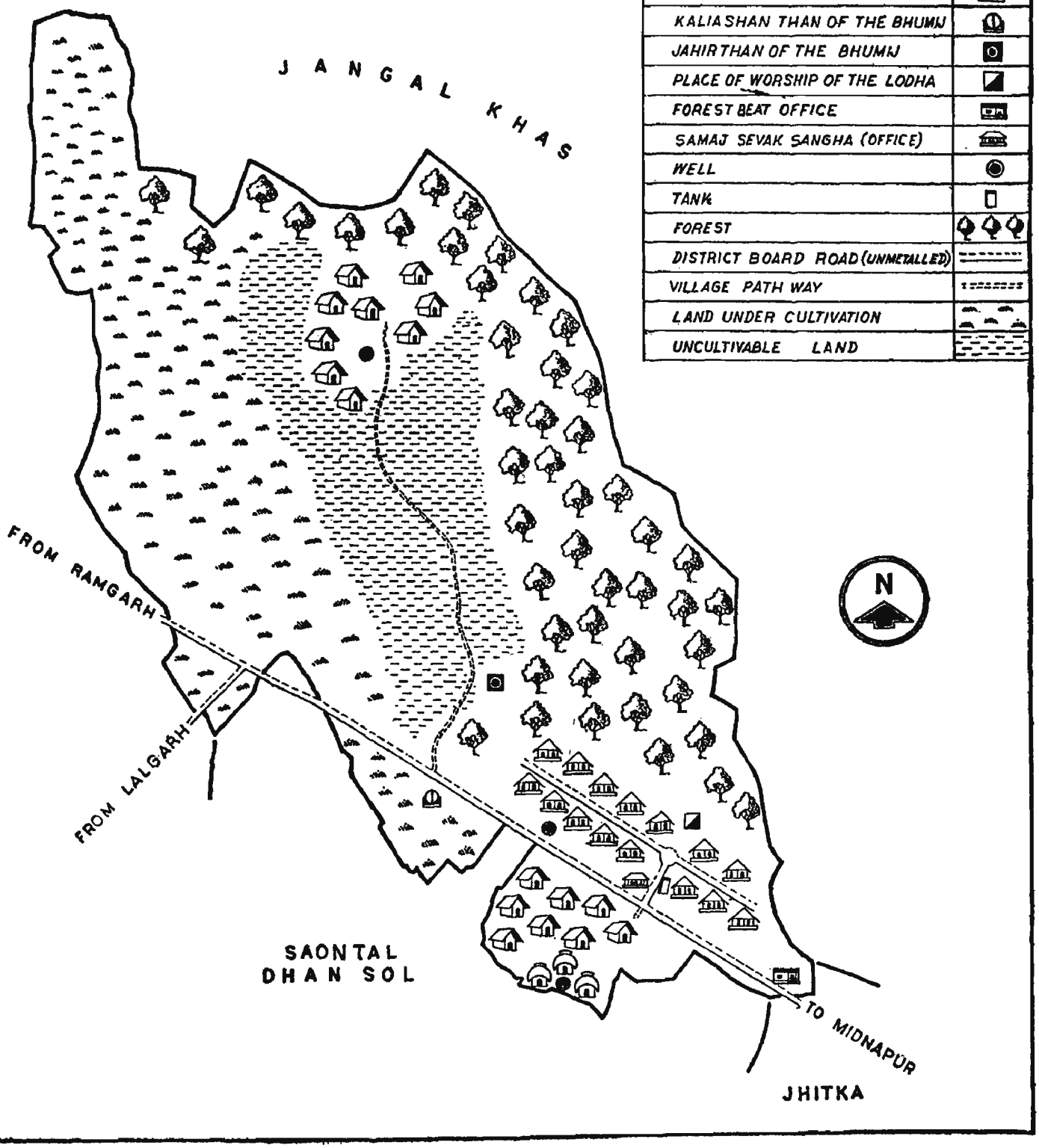


S. N. Sanguli

BHUMIJ DHAN SOL (J. L. NO. 780)

P. S. BINPUR

DISTRICT MIDNAPORE



CHAPTER I

THE VILLAGE

"Looke back, who list, unto the former ages ;
And call to count, what is, of them become."

—*Spencer*—
The Ruines of Time

Introducing the village in its most significant characteristic

Surrounded by dense forests of *Sal, Segun* and *Mahua* and inhabited predominantly by aboriginal people, the village Bhumij Dhan Sol in the district of Midnapore is still in such a primitive stage that the villagers, at least some of them, light their hand-made *chuttis* (a kind of *bidi*) by rubbing two pieces of wood which they carry with them.

Location with reference to the district

In appearance, the district looks like a large and open plain, but towards the western tracts, there are some undulations with ridges covered by a thick growth of dwarf *Sal* trees and other scrub jungles. Consequently, the western tracts of Midnapore, which embrace a portion of the eastern fringe of the Chota Nagpur plateau, assume the character of forests. The soil of this region may not be as fertile as that of well-cultivated land of the plains but it produces crops of no mean variety. In the neighbourhood of these forests, innumerable villages have come into being, nurtured by the produce of the forest and its fauna and inhabited mostly by aboriginal people migrating from Mayurbhanj district of Orissa and Singhbhum, Dhalbhum and Manbhum districts of Bihar. Closely girdled by forests on all fronts, Bhumij Dhan Sol is exactly a village with all the above features.

Reasons for selection

This is quite evident that such a sylvan retreat is apt to exert very great impact on the life of the villagers. Needless to say, the day to day life of the villagers is so closely intermingled with the forests that the economy of the village is dependent, to a very great extent, on the forests. Hence, the primary reason in making selection of the village for socio-economic survey is to make an honest effort in assessing the impact of forests on the life of the villagers in many of its facets. But, there is also another reason for selecting the village. West Bengal is a land of multitude of races and communities. The tribals occupy not an insignificant proportion to the total population of the State. As in all other States, so also here, the tribals play a pivotal role, though silently, in different spheres of the socio-economic, cultural and political life of West Bengal and specially so in her rural life. Midnapore occupies a pre-eminent position of all the districts of West Bengal, in so far as tribals are numerically concerned. So, the second reason behind the selection of the village is to give a true picture of the life of the tribals.

Location of the village and its neighbourhood

The landscape of the region, in which the village is situated, is reminiscent, though in part, of the true features of the Chota Nagpur

plateau. There are traces of red brittle soil. An endless series of tall *Sal*, *Sagun* and *Siris* trees, sprung out to kiss the blue firmament, in company with evergreen herbs and shrubs of innumerable variety, girdle the village. On the one hand, there is the intoxicating perfume of the *Mahua* and on the other there is the enchanting odour of a host of other wild plants and flowers. In the midst of such picturesque landscape and surroundings, the aboriginals have made a tempting and inviting abode of their own with their usual tribal sobriety and geniality.

Location with reference to important centres of administration

The village is just 36 kilometers to the north-west of Midnapur town, the district head quarter and 20 kilometers to the north of Jhargram, the subdivisional head quarter. Kharagpur, the important railway junction of the South Eastern Railways, is situated about 50 kilometers to the south-east of the village. Binpur, the police station of the village, is situated at a distance of 28 kilometers to the south-west. The Office of the National Extension Service Block, of which the present village forms a unit, is situated at Lalgarh six kilometers to the south-west. The river Kangsabati touches Lalgarh on the south. To the north-west of the village is the district Bankura, only a few miles away.

Location of the neighbourhood

As already said, the nearest town Midnapur being situated at a distance of 36 kilometers, the village Bhumij Dhan Sol has no frequent contact with any urban centre. The areas, surrounding the village, consist of stray forests and jungles. It is not very uncommon to come across a village, adjacent to the forests. The average distance from one village to another is mostly three to five kilometers or still more, if the two villages lie on two opposite sides of the forests. There are cases, of course, when two or three villages are situated very closely. Coming to Bhumij Dhan Sol, one will find two other villages, situated very close to it. One of the two is Jhitka, inhabited by 8 to 10 households and the other one is Saontal Dhan Sol, a village inhabited exclusively by the Santals. Barring these two villages, one has to cover a distance of at least two and half to three kilometers to reach the next village, Bhimpur, inhabited predominantly by the Santals and other aboriginal people, mostly Christian converts. Some missionaries and preachers still reside in that village. These missionaries were very much active prior to Independence, so much so, that they had converted a large section of the people in the surrounding areas into Christianity. The two developed villages of Lalgarh and Ramgarh, the seats of the two erstwhile zemindary estates, under the ownership of which almost all the neighbouring forests and lands were held, are situated not very far from this village. Lalgarh is six kilometers to the south-west and Ramgarh six and a half kilometers to the west.

Transport and communication

The means of communication of the village with the outer world are very meagre. A muddy road connecting the village with the district head quarter passes through the village. A little further away from the village, the road bifurcates, one leading to Lalgarh and the other to Ramgarh. Leaving aside one or two village paths and lanes here and there, there is no other road worth the name. Consequently, the road serves as the only link of the village with the outside world.

Three small sized buses ply along the road. Two buses from Lalgarh and one from Ramgarh start in the morning, escort the

passengers to Midnapur Court and come back in the evening. Consequently, if one happens to miss the bus in the morning, one's journey for the day is bound to be postponed. The buses are very often overcrowded. The single decker buses convert to double deckers, as passengers are compelled to take their seat on the roofs. Packed like sardines, passengers very often brave their bus-journey with their simple humour and lively conversation. Buses do carry goods, flour-sacks and rice-bags ; and people, left with no better choice, welcome the goods with a smile.

Next to buses, bicycles are the only modern means of transport. Of course, the number of cycles, plying along the road, is very small. But, as in most other remote rural areas of West Bengal, the bulk of the trade and commerce of this locality and movement of the womenfolk of the well-to-do households and the passage of the bridal party are carried on here by carts, drawn both by bullocks and buffaloes. Last, but not the least, mention ought to be made of the trucks and lorries, that move along this road carrying timbers and fuel to distant parts of West Bengal and even to Calcutta, specially during the winter, when the trees are cut down in the forests. The condition of the road is far from satisfactory. The road is mostly uneven with undulations here and there, aggravated by the passage of the carts. Fortunately, a scheme is under way for the macadamization of this long neglected road, and the inhabitants heave a sigh of relief now, at the sight of the heaped-up gravels lying on both sides of the road. Notwithstanding all these, one is apt to be charmed by the beauty, as one passes along the road with the long and never-ending series of sublime *Sal* trees on both sides, tinged with the rays of the setting sun.

Physical aspects

The physical features of the village is largely shaped by the forests. Though there are forest son all sides, general scenery is, however, by no means monotonous. The surrounding areas are mostly a beautiful green with long stretches of paddy fields, flanked and embowered by never-ending series of forests. All these, taken together, present a pleasant and picturesque panorama with plethora of plants and plantation in riot of colour.

There is neither any hill nor any river in the immediate neighbourhood of the village. The nearest river Kangsabati is at a distance of six kilometers from the village under survey.

Boundary

The village has a rather irregular boundary and its shape resembles that of a tortoise. To the north of the village are Jangalkhas and Ramgarh, to the north is Saontal Dhan Sol, to the east the village almost touches the western fringe of the police station of Salbani, keeping, of course, the adjoining *mouza* Jhitka to the north east, while to the west is Kantapahari on the far (other) side of the forests.

Latitude and longitude

The village is situated at 22°38′ North and 87°50′ East.

Geology

The surface of the region, in which the village is situated, is laterite in character. This is the characteristic formation of this region. Beds of gravel and pisolites are also visible. The gravels are widely used as material for the construction of the roads. Trucks, groaning under the weight of gravel, pass through the

village, often to carry the material for road-building elsewhere.

Soil

The soil in the adjoining areas of the village is of red britle type. After rainfall, the water, that passes down the roads and fields, becomes reddish. The clothes and dresses of the inhabitants of the locality get slightly reddened. The soil of this region is popularly classified into two broad categories. The soil of the correspondingly higher surface, which does not accommodate any rain-water, is known as *dahi* type of land. It is generally unsuitable for the purpose of cultivation. The comparatively lower land is known as *sol* type of land. It is most suitable for cultivation ; as a portion of the rain-water usually accumulates in such land.

Flora

The village is surrounded by forests and jungles. So, there are many and varied types of plants and trees ; of these *sal* and *piasal* are fairly abundant.

There is a reserved forest passing through the middle of the village. A list of the principal types of flora, as found in these forests, is given below :

Local Name	English Name	Scientific Name
Doga gachh	Not available	Not available
Tala gachh	Palmyra tree	Borassus flabelliper Limn
Tentul gachh	Tamarind tree	Tamarindus indica Limn
Dha-a gachh	Not available	Not available
Dhuntra gachh	The thorn-apple tree (Stramonium)	Datura Stramonium Limn
Neem gachh	Nim tree (Melia)	Azadirachta indica Fuss
Piasal	Not available	Pterooarpew onarsuprim
Piyal gachh	Not available	Buchania Latifolia
Palash gachh	Palash tree (Petal)	Butea frondosa Roxb
Peyara gachh	Guava tree	Psidum guava Limn
Pakur gachh	Not available	Ficus infectoria Roxb
Bat gachh	Banyan tree	Ficus bengalensis Limn
Baharha gachh	Not available	Terminalia betterica Limn
Babla gachh	Not available	Acacia Arabica
Bans gachh	Bamboo tree	Arundinaria SP
Bel gachh	Wood-apple tree	Aegle marmelos lor
Bangra gachh	Not available	Not available
Bhalukshakti gachh	Not available	Not available
Bhadru gachh	Not available	Not available
Mahua gachh	The Mahua tree	Madhuka indica
Leda gachh	Not available	Not available
Sal gachh	The Sal tree	Shorea robusta Roxb
Shaorha gachh	Not available	Streblus asper Lour

Local Name	English Name	Scientific Name
Shirish gachh	The Shirisa tree (Glue)	Albizzia lebbek Benth
Sidha gachh	Not available	Not available
Segun gachh	Teak tree	Tectona grandis Limn
Sajina gachh	The morunga tree	Moringa pterigospermagertu
Haritaki gachh	Myrobalan	Terminalia chebula Retz
Ashwatha	The peepul tree	Ficus religiosa Limn
Asharhi	Not available	Not available
Amchur	Not available	Not available
Amgachh	Mango tree	Mangifera indica Limn
Asari gachh	Not available	Terminalia tomentosa
Akasmuni	Australian acacia	Acacia moniliformia
Asta	Not available	Not available
Amloki	Emblic myrabalan tree	Phyllanthus embelica Limn
Etong	Not available	Not available
Kend gachh	Not available	Diospyros tomentosa
Kusum gachh	Not available	Diospyros tomentesa
Kanthal gachh	Jack fruit tree (Jackal tree)	Artocarpus integrifolia Limn
Kanta gachh	Thorny plant	Not available
Krishna churah	Not available	Caesalpinia-Pulcherrima
Kul gachh	Juyube tree	Fyziphus juguba Jus
Kala gachh	Banana tree, Plantain tree	Musa Paradisiaca Limn
Kurhchee	Not available	Holarrhena antidysentericawal
Kat badam	Not available	Terminalia catappa Limn
Kaju badam	Cashew nut	Anacardicum occidentale Limn
Karamcha	Not available	Carissa Carandus Limn
Kadamba gachh	Kadamba tree	Anthocephalus Cadamba Miq
Khejur gachh	Date tree	Phoenix sylvestris Roxb
Gurhi gachh	Not available	Not available
Gurhman gachh	Not available	Not available
Gamar gachh	Not available	Gmelina arborea Limn
Champati gachh	Not available	Not available
Chalita gachh	Not available	Dillenia indica
Chanli gachh	Not available	Dillenia indica
Cwatni or Chhatan gachh	Not available	Alstonia Scholaris
Jam gachh	Jamboline tree	Engenia jambolana
Dumur gachh	Fig tree	Ficus oppositefolia

FAUNA

According to the reports of the elderly people in the village, the surrounding forests were infested with wolves, wild pigs and wild elephants as far back as thirty or forty years. But now a days, these wild animals are almost rare. Of course, wild elephants sometimes appear and cause widespread damage to the houses and to the standing crops. Three years ago, a wild elephant appeared in the village and damaged the huts of the Bhumijes. Hare, the favourite chase of the Lodhas, Bhumijes and the Santals (belonging to neighbouring villages) can also be found in large numbers. Some of the game-birds, like jungle-fowl, pea-fowl, are occasionally found. There are also many venomous and non-venomous species of snakes. The following list will give some idea about the fauna.

A—ANIMALS

Local Name	English Name	Scientific Name
Kath Birali	Squirrel	Sciurus tristriatus (Darker, three narrow white subequal stripes on back side)
		Sciurus layardi (Brown; three longitudinal place band)
		Sciurus palmarum (tail equal to body, smaller variety)
Khatash	Indian palm civet (also called toddy cat)	Paradoxurus hermaphroditus
	Bengal-civet	Viverra melaccensis
	Small Indian civet	Viverricula indica
Khargosh	Rabbit	Oryctolagus cuniculus
	Hare	Lepus cuniculus
Nekre Bagh	Wolf (Indian variety)	Canis pallipes
Neul (Beji)	Mongoose	Herpestes auropunctatus (no neck stripe, nor black tail tip)
	Ruddy mongoose	Herpestes smithi (no neck stripe, black tail tip)
		Herpestes vilticellis (black neck stripe, black tail tip)
	Crab eating mongoose	Herpestes urva (white neck stripe, no black tail tip)
Bon Biral	Jungle cat	Felis chaus
Buno suor (Ban Baraha)	Indian crested wild bear	Sus cristatus

Local Name	English Name	Scienttfic Name
Mahula	Not available	Not available
Sial	Indian jackal	Canis aureus
Khenk Sial	Fox	Vulpes bengalensis
Shushura	Not available	Not available
Sajaru	Indian crested porcupine	Hystrix indica bengalenisis
Hunral or Hyaena	Striped hyaena	Hyaena hyalna

B—Birds

Akopako	Not available	Not available
Kak	House crow	Corvus splendens
Kokil	Indian cuckoo	Cuculus mycropterus
Kali Doel	Magpie robin	Copsychus saularis
Kath Thokra	Woodpecker	Dinopium bengalensis
	Indian spotted wood-pecker	Picusmacei
Khayer	Not available	Not available
Gurur	Adjutant stork	Leptoptilus dubius
Gobar Chunra	Not available	Not available
Ghughu	Spotted dove	Streptopelea chinensis
	Ring dove	Streptopelea decaocto
Chanchar	Not available	Not available
Chil	Pariah kite	Miluns migrans gocinda
Tia	Indian parakeet	Psittacula krameri
Chandana	Large Indian parakeet	Psittacula euputria
Timtimi	Not available	Not available
Titir	Grey patrige	Francolinus pondiceriamus
Tuntuni (Dorji)	Tailor bird	Orthotomus Sutorius
Lakshmi Pencha	Barn owl	Tytoalba
Hutum Pencha	Brown fish owl	Ketupa ceylonosis
Papia	Not available	Not available
Poyra	Pigeon	Columba livia domestica
Penga	Not available	Not available
Pukpuki	Not available	Not available
Piun	Not available	Not available
Finga	Not available	Not availabie
Bak	Crane	Babulcus ibis
Bulbuli	Bulbul	Pycnonothns cafer
Bunri Makal	Not available	Not available
Baj pakhi	Falcon	Accipiter badins
Bon Murgi	Jungle fowl	Gallus gallus
Maachranga	King fisher	Alcedo bengalensis

Local Name	English Name	Scientific Name
Lipi	Not available	Not available
Shalik	Shalik	Acridotheres truistis
Hantial Ghughu	Common	Not available

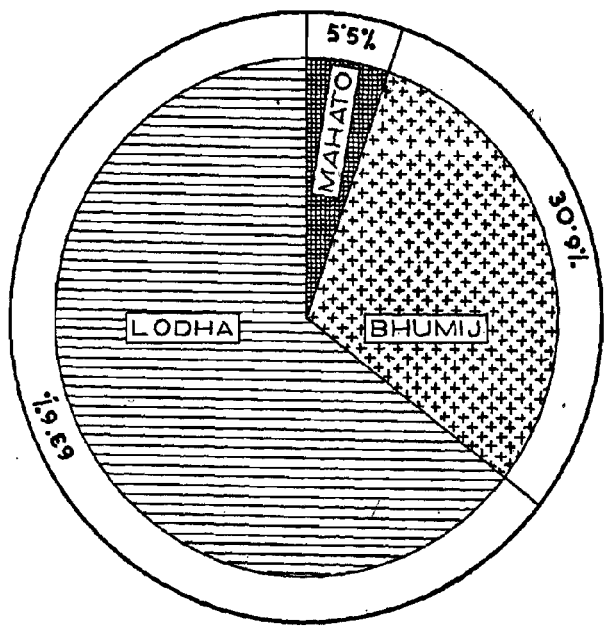
C—REPTILES

Keute	Cobra	Naia naia
Go-sap	Yellow monitor	Varanus bengalensis
Gokhura	Indian cobra	Naia tripudians
Borah	Pitless viper	Echis carinate
Chandraborah	Russel's viper	Vipera russelli
Kharish	Not available	Not available
Gomunra	Not available	Not available
Chiti	Not available	Not available
Sialchandi	Not available	Not available
Heliasap	Not available	Not available
Danras	Common rat snake	Zamenis mucosus

SIZE

The size of the village is 275.04 acres. Considering the meagre population of the village, which is only 281, it may safely be said that the villagers have a lot of breathing space.

NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS



PROPORTION OF HOUSEHOLDS COMMUNITYWISE

The number of households, residing in the village at the time of the survey, is only 55. They are distributed as follows :

Name of Caste/Tribe	No. of households
Lodha	35
Bhumij	17
Mahato/Kurmi	3
Total	**55**

RESIDENTIAL PATTERN

The arrangement of the residences in the village follows a definite pattern. The consideration of caste is the motive force in shaping the distribution of the residential huts.

The Lodhas reside in a compact enclave, at an elbow's distance from the residences of the other castes. As one enters the village from the east (*i.e.* from the direction of Midnapur town), one finds to his right the settlement of the Lodhas. A little further on to the left is a small enclave of the Bhumijes, who reside in two separate enclaves. The intention of the early Bhumij settlers in setting up a locality of their own has been defeated. Originally, all the Bhumijes settled in a compact area in the extreme north-west of the village, very close to the forests. But, lured by the proximity to the source of water and to the road, some of the Bhumij families left their ancestral homestead land and settled in a small enclave, to the left of the road about two decades ago. Of course, the bulk of the Bhumij households are still residing in their original place of residence, almost to the extreme end of the village, a furlong away from the other Bhumij enclave. Next to the Lodhas and the Bhumijes, the Mahatos live in a place to the south of the road, a little away from the nearby Bhumij enclave.

Looking at the residential pattern of the village as a whole, the feature, that comes to one's notice, is that all the castes and tribes still maintain some amount of integrity among themselves and aloofness from others, so far as the residential pattern is concerned. There is no Lodha hut in the neighbourhood of the Bhumij enclave ; nor is there any Bhumij hut in the immediate vicinity of the Lodha huts. Same is the case with the Mahatos.

IMPORTANT PUBLIC PLACES

Except two or three places of worship here and there, there is nothing of much significance or of importance in the placid life of the village. There is no educational institution in the village nor is there any charitable dispensary or anything of its kind. There is neither any *hat* nor any *bazar* (market-place). Even a shop is not located in the village proper.

At the approach to the village from the east *i.e.*, from the direction of Midnapur, there is a Forest Beat Office to look after the forests, specially the protected ones. A little further on to the right, is situated the Office of the Samaj Sevak Sangha, a voluntary welfare institution for the uplift of the Lodhas. Just opposite to this, on the other side of the road, there is a pound (খোঁয়াড়), where livestocks, trespassing into cornfields, are interned under the provisions of the Cattle Trespass Act.

PLACES OF WORSHIP

There are three places of public worship, one belonging to the Lodhas and the two others belonging to the Bhumijes and the Mahatos. The place of worship of the Lodhas is situated in the heart of the Lodha settlement, while the *Jahir Than* and *Kali Asan Than*, belonging jointly to the Bhumijes and the Mahatos are situated in the open fields in between the Lodha and the Bhumij enclaves. The Office of the *Gram Panchayat* is situated

in this village. Though there is no Office in the true sense of the term, the formal Office is situated in the house of the *Adhyaksha* of the *Gram Panchayat,* who happens to be a resident of the village.

Crematorium

The crematorium of the village is situated in the heart of the jungle, known as *Kashi Sol.*

Hats or markets

There are two weekly *hats* in the vicinity of the village. The one at Lalgarh sits every Wednesday and the other at Bhimpur sits every Saturday. The *hat* at Lalgarh with a congregration of at least 5,000 is much bigger than that at Bhimpur. The villagers, comprising both men and womenfolk, frequently visit these two *hats.* For the purpose of buying and selling cattle the villagers frequently visit the cattle *hat* at Binpur, which sits every Monday.

Shops

There is one grocer's shop, run by a gentleman belonging to the Saha community in the adjoining village Jhitka. It may be pointed out here that the village Jhitka with only 8 to 10 households does not have any separate entity, distinct from the village of Bhumij Dhan Sol. Most of the villagers of Bhumij Dhan Sol avail themselves of this shop. There is also a *handia* (country liquor) shop at Jhitka, run by the same Saha gentleman. The villagers, including both men and women, rush to this shop in the afternoon under the spell of liquor.

Educational institutions

The nearest Higher Secondary School is at Bhimpur, run by the Christian missionaries. The students, desirous of higher education, read in this school. The nearest Primary School is at Saontal Dhan Sol. There was once a Primary School in the village ; but dilapidated as the straw-roofed house was, it gave way to a violent storm two years ago. Consequently, the School has been shifted to the adjacent village Saontal Dhan Sol, at a distance of about one kilometer. The Post Office of the village is also situated at Bhimpur.

The nearest Telegraph Office as also the nearest Railway Station are at Jhargram, the subdivisional headquarter, at a distance of 20 kilometers. As for medical facilities, there is a Health Centre at Lalgarh, of which the people of this village and of the adjoining ones avail themselves.

Sources of water

The source of water in the village and in the region is very meagre. There is only one tank in the adjoining *mouza,* Saontal Dhan Sol, which is the main source of water for the people of the three adjoining villages including Bhumij Dhan Sol. This tank was excavated by the Zemindar of Lalgarh.

A population of nearly 700 has to depend on this tank for taking their bath, washing their clothes and also for collecting water for domestic consumption including cooking. In addition to the tank, there are four village-wells, one of which is *pucca* and the rest *kutcha,* from which the villagers collect their drinking water. One of these wells is situated in the Forest Office, the second one in the Lodha enclave was constructed by the Tribal Welfare Department of the Government of West Bengal, the third one in the Bhumij

enclave was also constructed by the Tribal Welfare Department, Government of West Bengal, two years ago and the fourth one, which is privately owned, is situated in one of the Mahato houses. As already said, the soil of this region is such, that most of the wells have to be sunk at least 100 feet deep. The excavation of a well is, therefore, very costly. A well was excavated two years ago in the Bhumij enclave. The involved cost was Rs. 1,200/-, yet the water is not very clean.

Etymology of the name and history of the village

A look into the past history of the village reveals that the origin of the village dates back to approximately 125 years. Prior to this, the village and its adjoining regions were devoid of any human habitation. The area formed part of the forests, where even in broad day-light people did not dare to come. The Bhumijes were the early settlers of the village. They migrated from Sikharbhum, in the Manbhum district of Bihar (at present forming a part of the district of Purulia) in the border region of Bihar and West Bengal. They came to this area, cleared the jungles and brought about the settlement of the village. To commemorate their settlement they named the village after the name of their tribe.

Legends

Two legends are associated with the migration of the Bhumijes from their ancestral homes. According to the first legend, the people led a very happy and peaceful life at Sikharbhum. But still, they were forced to leave their hearth and home under the influence of a superstition. At that time some successive deaths had taken place in some of the Bhumij families. They had a strong belief that people die in large number, only when God was offended. So, they attributed their mishap to the wrath of God and decided to leave their ancestral home for good. According to the second legend, about 125 years ago, one Sri Udhhab Bhumij was the headman of the Bhumij enclave at Sikharbhum. He was a well-to-do peasant, possessing some sixty *bighas* of cultivable land. One fine morning, he went to the field for ploughing his land as usual. But he found to his horror seven golden ploughs lying in the farthest corner of the field. He associated some supernatural elements with those golden ploughs. He then returned home and narrated the whole story to his tribesmen. They concluded that either God, displeased as He was, tried to frighten them or it was the work of some evil spirits, trying to intimidate them. They realised that they must leave their home, lest some impending disaster should befall them. So, they left their ancestral homes together in pursuance of their common decision. They set out for the east and came to the present village, then surrounded by forests.

Early history

The early history of the village is the history of the Bhumijes. The Bhumijes say that the migration to this area did not bring in its train any misery and suffering. Rather, they adjusted themselves to the changed environment very quickly. They were welcomed in this part of the sylvan retreat as agricultural labourers. About 125 years back, the density of population, here in this region, was very low, so much so, that some of the cultivable lands remained virgin for want of agricultural labourers. The Bhumijes easily overcame the initial hurdles, associated with migration. They began to cultivate the land (belonging to the Estates of the Zemindars of Lalgarh and Ramgarh), mostly on *Sanja rent*

(a special contract by which rent is fixed in perpetuity). In course of two to three decades most of the Bhumij households became owners of some amount of land.

For sixty to seventy years, since their migration to the village, the Bhumijes constituted the only ethnic group here. But, they were followed by the Lodhas, who migrated to this village mostly from the Jhargram subdivision. It is said that a timber merchant of Calcutta took lease of the adjoining forests. His main avocation was to manufacture charcoal by burning wood in the large underground pits, relics of which can be found even now. The local labourers, were found unsuitable for this type of work, and his manager, one Fakir Babu, engaged some Lodha labourers of Jhargram and of its adjoining vicinity. It is reported that some seven or eight Lodha families, from among the engaged labourers, stayed on permanently in the village. Barring some 14 Lodha families, the remaining 21 Lodha families are the direct descendants of the original Lodha settlers. The Lodhas were followed by the Mahatos, who first came to this village about 20 years ago. Two of the three Mahato families came from Babudanga in the police station of Salbani (two kilometers from here) and the third one from Amla, (about three kilometers from the village) in the police station of Binpur. The following table shows the places, from where the people migrated to this village :

TABLE 1

THE PLACES WHEREFROM THE PEOPLE MIGRATED TO THIS VILLAGE

Caste/Tribe	Total no. of households	No. of households who migrated from the same police station of Binpur	No. of households who migrated from outside the police station but from the same district (Midnapore)			No. of households who migrated from outside the district of Midnapore	
			Jhargram police station	Salbani police station	Jamboni police station	Chakulia police station in Dhalbhum dt. Bihar	Sikharbhum, Manbhum (now in Purulia)
Lodha	35	2	27	1	3	2	..
Bhumij	17	1	..	..	1	..	15
Mahato	3	1	..	2	..	..	..
Total	**55**	**4**	**27**	**3**	**4**	**2**	**15**

GROWTH OF SETTLEMENT IN THE VILLAGE

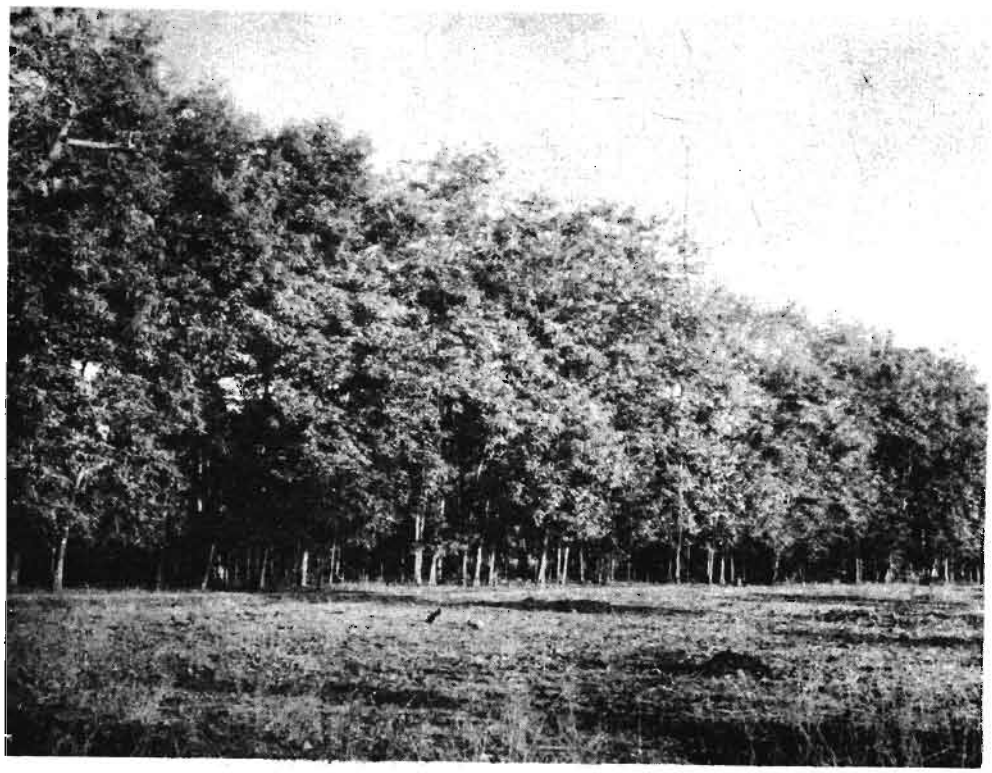
It would now be discussed how different families settled in the village in course of the last 125 years or so. As pointed out earlier, the Bhumijes were the earliest settlers in the village, followed by the Lodhas and by the Mahatos. The following table will give some idea about the growth of settlement in the village in course of time.

TABLE 2

GROWTH OF SETTLEMENT OVER TIME

Caste/ Tribe	Total number of households	Number of households that settled in the village								
		0-5 years ago	6-10 years ago	11-20 years ago	21-30 years ago	31-40 years ago	41-50 years ago	51-60 years ago	61-120 years ago	121-130 years ago
Lodha	35	3	1	7	3	..	..	21	..	..
Bhumij	17	..	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	15
Mahato	3	..	1	2	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total	**55**	**3**	**2**	**10**	**4**	..	..	**21**	..	**15**

SYLVAN RETREAT OF THE AUTOCHTHONS



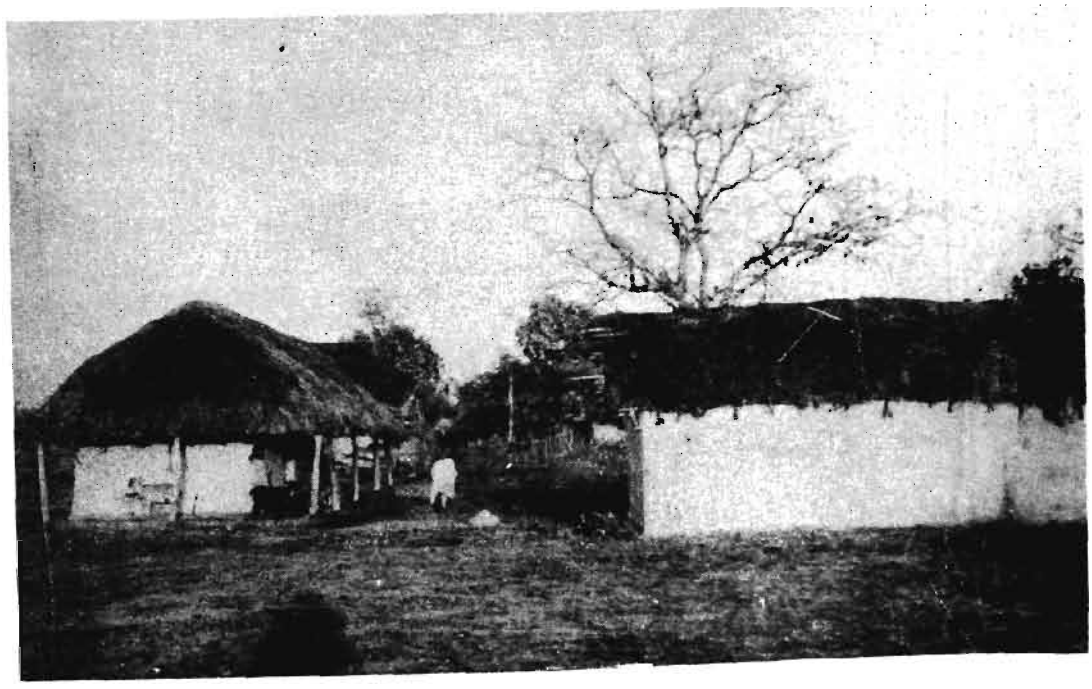
Forests, girdling the village Bhumij Dhan-Sol, provide some of the village-folk a source of livelihood when normal avocations fail to give them any earning—thus at noon the children and the women collect twigs and dry leaves for use as fuel at home, dig roots and tubers for the meals—the same forests also provide a source of recreation and leisurely activities in hunting animals and snakes

ROAD THAT LEADS TO TOWN OUTSIDE



The much used old bus, stuffed with passengers and cargo, rattles along the road approaching the village from the town of Midnapur, the District Headquarter

HERE LIVE THE PEOPLE AFTER WHOM THE VILLAGE WAS NAMED



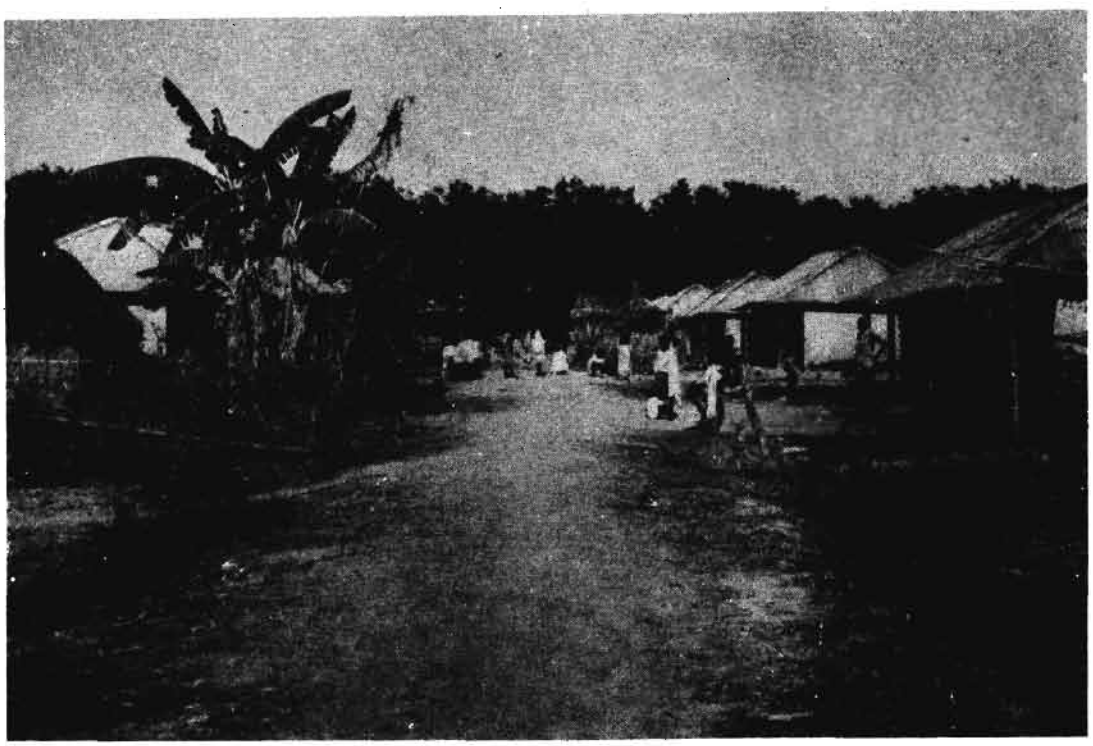
The enclave of the Bhumij has sprung up recently, some distance away from another cluster of the original Bhumij settlers

MEMORABLE VICISSITUDE—ONLY THE MEMORY REMAINS

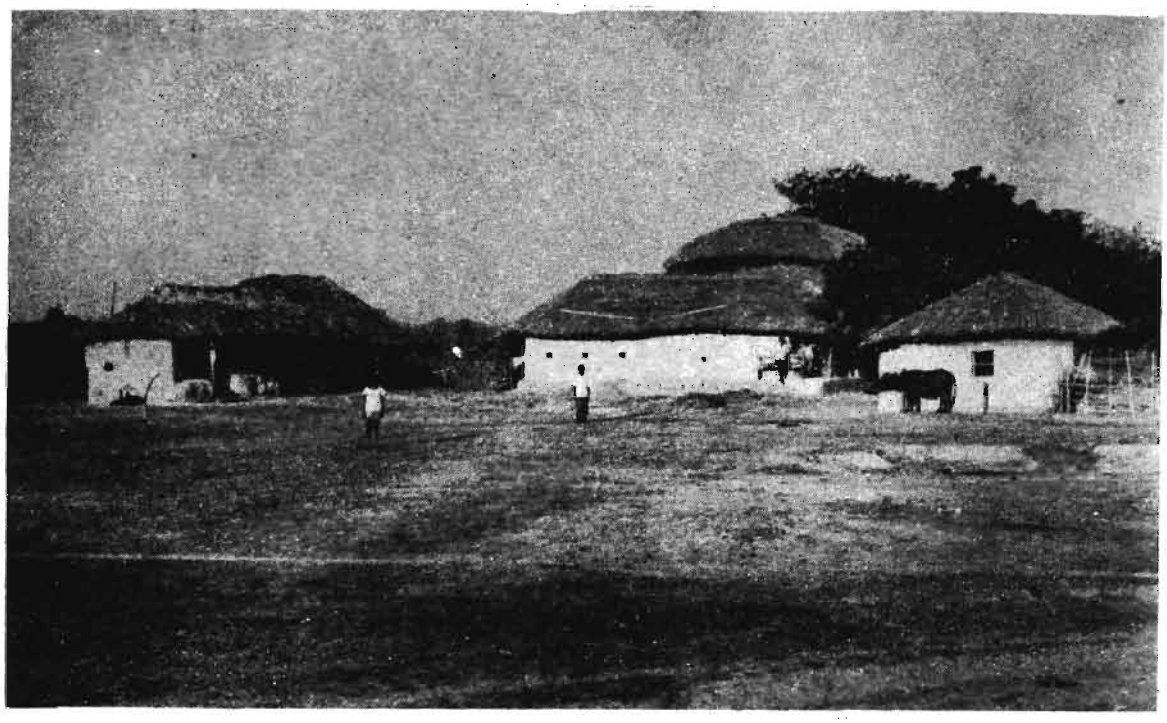


Formerly the Lodhas lived in the huts above—in 1961 communal passion got the better of neighbourly fellow-feeling—the Mahatos of the locality and the villagers around made an organised attack on the Lodhas and their huts were razed to the ground—now there remains a plain field where cattle graze and old Lodhas ruminate

OUT OF ASHES OF OLD ARE BORN THE NEW

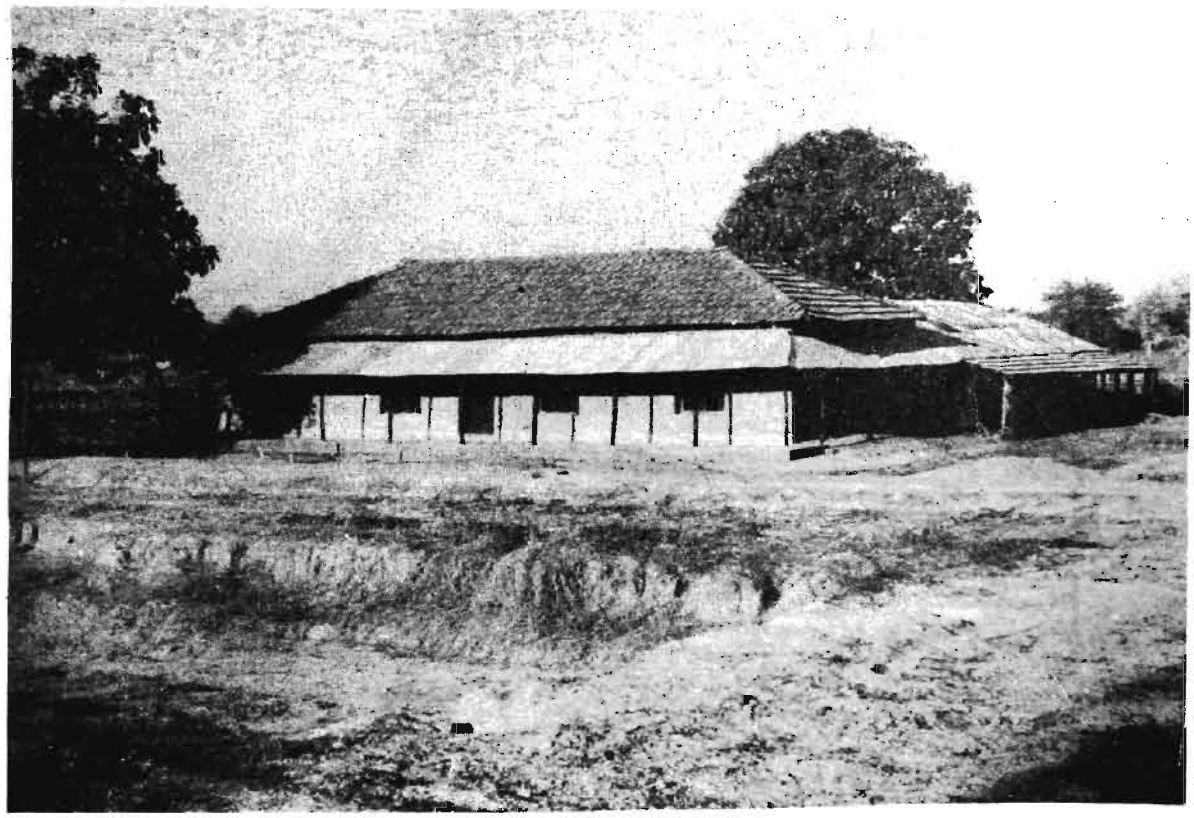


RESIDENTIAL QUARTER OF THE MAHATOS, A SEGMENT OF THE VILLAGE-COMMUNITY



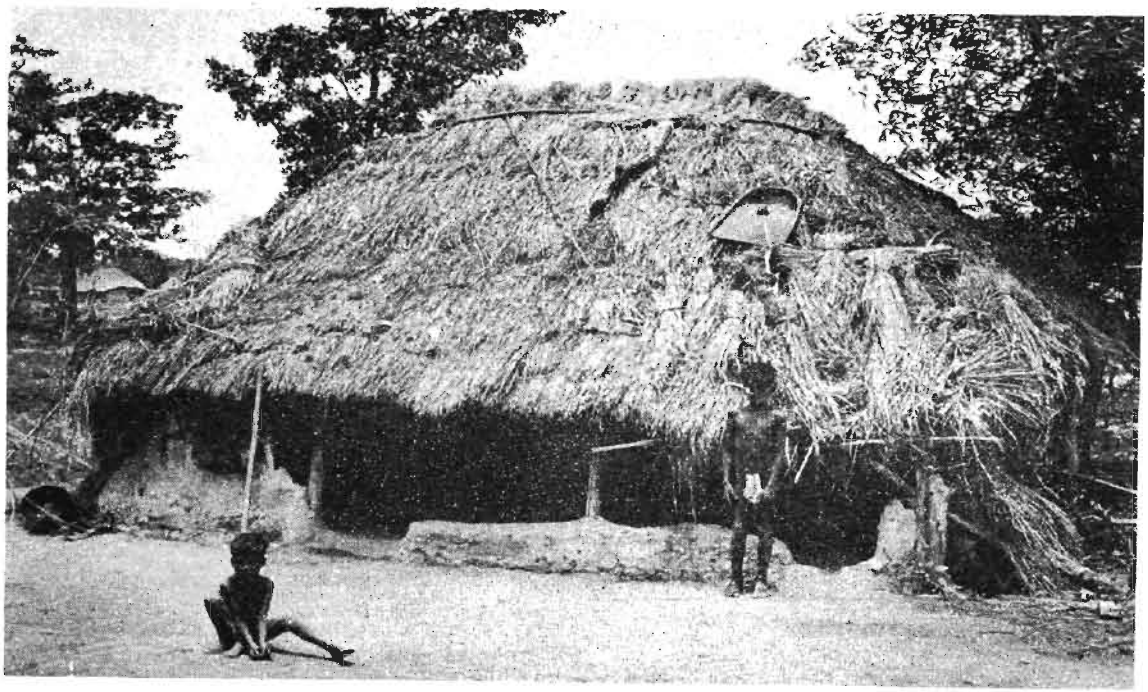
The three Mahato families of the village live in a cluster here

SOCIAL WORK WITHOUT A PRETENSION



Camp-*cum*-Office of the Samaj Sevak Sangha, a voluntary welfare institution for the uplift of the Lodhas

MARKS OF TIME'S TYRANNY AND NATURE'S FURY



A hut of the past in which the Lodha owner lived for many years prior to the Tragedy of 1961

A NEW CHAPTER IN THE VILLAGE-LIFE



In the two-roomed hut with roof of corrugated iron-sheet and walls of mud are sheltered two Lodha families, each in possession of one living room—the construction reflects one aspect of the Lodha Rehabilitation Scheme, sponsored by the Government of West Bengal and executed by the Samaj Sevak Sangha

A SOLITARY EXCEPTION



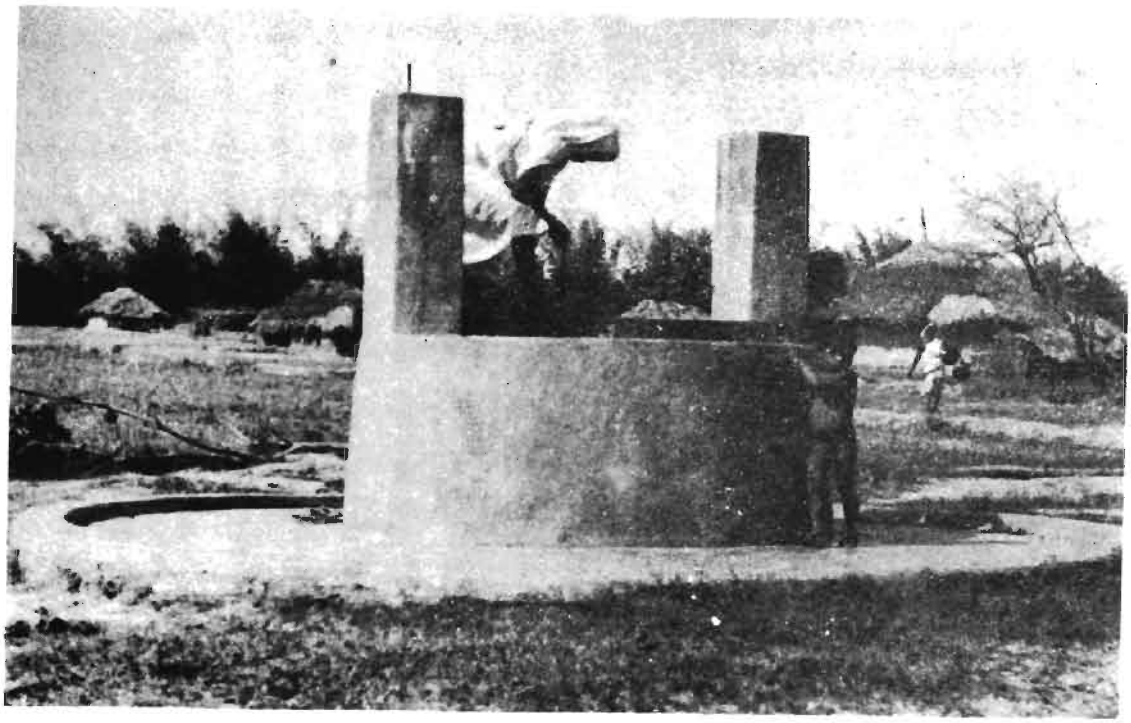
A close view of the hut of a Mahato with roof of straw and walls of mud —exception here is made by the two-storeyed thatch of straw—the earthen bowl does not comprise any magico-religious contrivance ; it is a receptacle of foodgrains for the domesticated pigeons

EQUALITE ?



Not a cattleshed nor a pound but the dwelling of a Bhumij, where the owner lives within and his livestock stay outside

PSEUDO-APPEARANCE OF WATER-SUPPLY



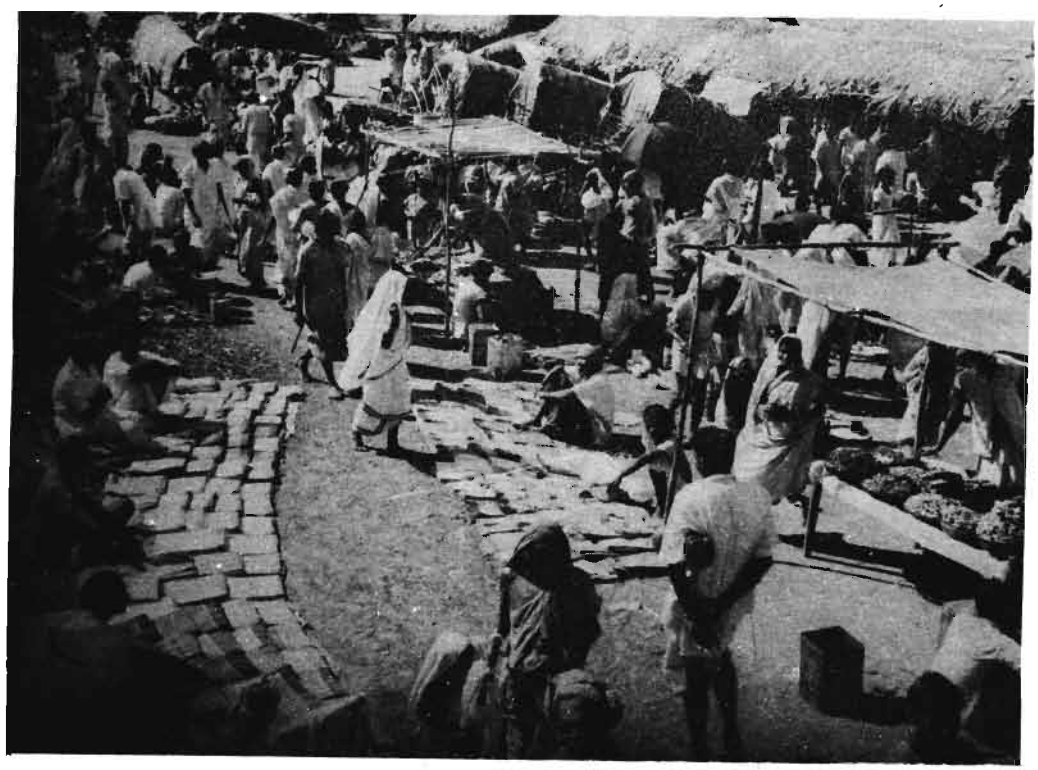
Not a drop now available to drink—the masonry-well above was the only source of drinking water for the thirsty village in season and out of season a few years ago—it has now gone dry, when other wells sprang up

KUTCHA WELL IN THE ENCLAVE OF THE LODHAS



The well above is one of the four, providing drinking water for all, though the Lodhas use it more frequently because of its location near their residential area

A CONCOURSE OF BUYERS, SELLERS AND ONLOOKERS



Lalgarh at a distance of six kilometers occasions the visit of the villagers all around (people of Bhumij Dhan Sol not excepted) every Wednesday—the *Hat* or country-market in the open with a congregration of 5,000 people or more at Lalgarh is hardly missed by the people

It may be seen from the table that 15 Bhumij families and 21 Lodha families are the old settlers of the village ; whereas, the remaining 19 families settled in the village in the course of the last 30 years.

Reasons of immigration to the present village

Whenever a group of people immigrates to a new region leaving behind their ancestral hearth and home, they seldom do so out of sheer adventure. In most cases some causes, social, economic or other, usually prompt the households, to choose a new homeland. As the present village is not a very old one, it may be interesting to examine why the villagers left their original hearth and home and settled in the present village.

As many as 28 Lodha families, including the 21 families, who had come here quite earlier, immigrated to this village for better opportunities of employment in the surrounding jungles. Four other Lodha families, who were dubbed as criminals, left their original homes for fear of police-oppression. In the case of two other families, the death of the heads of the families compelled them to leave their ancestral homes and to come to the present village, where their near relatives resided. The head of another Lodha household left his ancestral village in the wake of the Great Bengal Famine of 1943 and settled in the present village.

As regards the migration of the Bhumij families, as many as 17 of them migrated from Manbhum due to superstition, as described earlier. The head of another Bhumij family migrated from his ancestral village, as he had lost all his share-cropping land there. He came to the present village to live with his relatives. Another head of a Bhumij family left his ancestral village and came to the present one for better opportunities of employment.

Two of the three Mahato families migrated to this village, as they received some 40 *bighas* of land in this *mouza* as share-croppers. In the case of another Mahato family, the reason for migration was the consideration of greater convenience. The head of this family, who lived in a village nearby, has all his cultivable lands in this village. So, he has migrated to this village to have more direct supervision over his land. Of course, he has not yet cut off connections with his parental home. His parents and the other members of the family still reside there.

Some important landmarks in the history of the village

(a) *Epidemic*

About 35 to 40 years ago there was an outbreak of cholera in an epidemic form in the village and in the surrounding regions. Prior to the epidemic, the Bhumijes were the most numerous community, as there were then about 40 Bhumij families in the village. But, due to the ravages of the epidemic, about 20 to 25 Bhumij families were completely exterminated, while a few other families fled away from the village. As a result of the epidemic, the Bhumijes have become the second numerous group after the Lodhas. Fortunately, the Lodhas were not affected by the epidemic.

(b) *Midnapore Cyclone of 1942*

The middle-aged and the elderly villagers still remember the great Cyclone of 1941, which had hit the district very severely. Accompanied by heavy showers, a severe cyclonic storm blew over wide areas. Some houses of the village

gave way to the violent storm. As the village is situated in the fringe of the jungles, the extent of damage was not severe, though, of course, most of the livestocks of the village were killed. For its severity, the cyclone has left its stamp on the mind of the people.

(c) *The Great Famine of 1943 and its impact on the village*

Hardly had the bitter memories of the cyclone died out in the hearts of men, when the shadow of the Great Bengal Famine crept in. Sorrows and sufferings of the people of this region knew no bounds. Most of the poor people of the surrounding areas had migrated to Midnapur, Jhargram and other urban areas. But fortunately, the people of this village were not the worst victims of the Famine. In the worst phase of the Famine, the people fell back upon the roots, tubers fruits and chases, thanks to the abundance of jungles in the vicinity of the village. The Lodhas, who mainly live on the wild chases of the forests and even on some kinds of snakes, were not hard hit. Still, the Famine has left alarming accounts of the untold miseries and sufferings deep into the memories of the people. The people keep account of the ages of their children as also of the important events with reference to the Famine. Not only that, there are three girls in the village, who have been named *Akali i.e.*, Famine, to commemorate the fact that they were born in that hard year.

(d) *The tragedy of 1961*

About three years ago, a grim tragedy engulfed a section of people in the village. The Mahatos of the neighbouring villages raided the Lodha huts and smashed them. It is alleged that they took away all their cattle and smashed their utensils. All the Lodhas fled away *en masse* from the village and took shelter in the local Office of the Block Development Officer. The conflict arose after the alleged criminal assault by a Lodha on a minor girl belonging to the Mahato community.

CHAPTER II

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CHAPTER II

PEOPLE AND THEIR MATERIAL CULTURE

A. Brief ethnic composition of the village

The village, as already said, is composed of three distinct ethnic groups; of these, the Lodhas and the Bhumijes are Scheduled Tribes and the Mahatos are Caste Hindus.

In the following the population of the village is shown caste-wise :

TABLE 3

Caste/Tribe	No. of households	Persons	Males	Females
Lodha	35	174	90	84
Bhumij	17	88	45	43
Mahato or Kurmi	3	19	12	7
Total	55	281	147	134

The early history of these people has not yet been fully known. A misty veil still hangs over their real origin, primitive abode and original occupation. Yet, these are the people who were once the masters of the soil. The early history of these people with all their joys and sorrows, hopes and fears have not been recorded in the annals of history. It is bound to be a tough job for any one to trace them out. But the antiquarian interest of the anthropologists has not allowed their antecedents to pass into oblivion. From their folk-tales and folk-lores, legends and myths, some of their past accounts, however meagre they may be, have been rescued.

Lodha

The Lodhas are an *ex*-criminal Tribe of West Bengal. A tribe, which regards the Brahmans as its sons-in-law and hesitates to take water from them, a tribe, which does not accept the spiritual superiority of the Brahmans, the Lodhas are an object of careful study for the anthropologists, the psychologists, the criminologists and the administrators. The study of a tribe, which claims to be the descendants of *Jara Savara* who had shot Lord *Srikrishna* in the remote *Dwapara* era, a tribe which claims Lord *Jagannath* of Puri to be their original godhead, is bound to be an object of antiquarian interest.

[1]"The tract along the western border now known as the Jungle Mahals, which is still covered with the remains of forest, was the home of nomadic tribes who lived on jungle prdoucts and the spoils of the chase. Among them were the Savaras, a powerful race that can be traced as far back as the *Aitareya-Brahmana* and other aboriginal tribes who spread over the country from the Ganges to the Godavari. Their descendants may be identified with the nomadic Sahars of the present day and the Lodhas, as a tribe of hunters, as their name (a corruption of the Sanskrit *lubdhaka*, *i.e.*, hunters) implies."

Grierson in his Linguistic Survey of India mentions Luda Savaras as one of the sub-tribes of Savaras. Most probably, the Luda Savaras, referred to above, are akin to the Lodhas of

1 A. Mitra—District Handbook of Midnapore, 1951, p. xv.

the present discussion. In some parts of West Bengal and specially in Midnapore, the Lodhas are so much intermingled with the Savaras, that it is almost impossible to distinguish the Lodhas from the Savaras. The Lodhas claim themselves to be Savaras and even take their surnames as Savaras. It is pointed out that sometimes the local officials are confused about the identity of the Lodhas and the Savaras. Here, mention ought to be made of an important agricultural caste, Lodha, residing in the Central Province. There, it is said that the Lodhas are immigrants from the United Provinces, that they originally migrated from the Ludhiana district and took their name from it. [2]"Mr. Nesfield derives the name from *Lod*, a clod, according to which Lodha would mean clod-hopper. Another suggestion is that the name is derived from the bark of the [3]*Lodh* tree, which is collected by the Lodhas in Northern India and sold for use as a dyeing agent." But, the absence of any similarity between the history of origin, successive migrations, customs and traditions, religion and dialect between the Lodhas of Central Province and those of West Bengal casts serious doubts about the existence of causal link, if any, between the two, while according to many writers including Dr. P. K. Bhowmick, there seems good reason to believe that the Lodhas of Midnapore are identical with Savaras and Sahars ; indeed they feel proud in declaring themselves as Savaras. Not only that, the Lodhas of some regions get offended, when they are called Lodhas. At the time of field survey some elderly Lodhas told the Investigator that they were Savaras ; but as their ancestors came down to the east, they were termed as Lodhas out of sheer contempt by the then Hindus, and since that time, they are known as Lodhas.

2 Tribes & Castes of Central Provinces, Russel & Hiralal., Vol. IV, p. 113

3 Symplocos racemosa.

[4] "Lodh, Lodha or Nodh is the name of an aboriginal tribe of Angul and the Orissa Tributary States. The terms Sabar and Sahar are said to be synonyms of this tribe in Midnapore.

"The Magistrate of that district thinks they may be allied to the Savars described by Mr. Risley...

"In Midnapore the origin of the tribe is attributed to the five *Pandavas* by whom they were employed to hunt animals, while in Mayurbhanj they trace their descent from *Bali Raja*. Their traditional occupation is the collection of jungle produce, such as cocoons, lac, resin, honey, wax etc...."

Legends of Origin

The Lodhas claim that *Jara Savara* of the *Mahabharata*, who is said to have shot Lord *Srikrishna*, was their ancestor. The legend narrated to the Investigator by one Keshab Savar of the village is that in the *Treta* era of the *Ramayana Bali* was the king of Varanasi and *Sugriva* was his younger brother. After *Ravana* had kidnapped *Sita, Rama* tried to enlist the support of *Sugriva* in his venture to rescue *Sita Devi*. But in so doing, he had to kill king *Bali* ; he did so in a rather unscrupulous and shameless way. Any way, it is said that *Angada* the son of *Bali*, helped *Rama Chandra* a great deal in rescuing *Sita Devi*. For this act *Rama* was pleased with *Angada* and wanted to bestow a boon on him. *Angada* got the boon from *Rama* that he would be able to avenge his father's death.

It is said that in the next era *i.e.*, in the *Dwapara* era of the *Mahabharata*, *Rama* was incarnated as Lord *Krishna* and was killed by *Angada*, who was reborn as *Jara Savara*. It so happened that *Jara Savara* took Lord *Srikrishna*,

4 Census of India 1901, VI (1)—Reports, p. 422.

who was sitting on a tree, for a deer and killed him with his telescopic spear.

The Lodhas claim themselves to be Savaras and descendants of *Jara Savara*. The Lodhas also claim to have descended from Biswavasu, the Savara chieftain of Orissa. According this version, Lord *Jagannath* originally belonged to the Savars. The Brahmans made various plans and machinated to steal the image of their Godhead. But, they could not get any trace of the image, as Biswavasu had hidden the image of *Jagannath* in the hills of Nilachal. At long last, one Brahman made a heinous conspiracy for stealing Lord *Jagannath*. Biswavasu had a very charming and handsome daughter, named Lalita. The Brahman constantly paid court to Lalita and within a short time Lalita fell in love with this Brahman and married him at last. After some time, the Brahman implored Lalita to give him some clue as to the place, where Lord *Jagannath* had been hidden. At first Lalita, did not agree. But, induced by constant wooings from the Brahman, Lalita at last consented to take him blind-fold to that place. But the Brahman was much too clever for Lalita. He tied some mustard seeds in the corner of his cloth without the knowledge of Lalita. As Lalita led the Brahman through the forests to Nilachala, he dropped some mustard seeds all the way to the place, where Lord *Jagannath* had been concealed. After showing Lord *Jagannath*, to her husband, Lalita took the Brahman blind-fold back home. After some time, the mustard seeds sprouted and served to guide the Brahman to the place, once visited. Thus, the Brahman stole away the image of *Jagannath* to Puri. Since that time, Lord *Jagannath* is in the possession of the Brahmans.

This legend is universally known to all the Lodhas. To them it is just yesterday's happening. They also say that those mustard plants can be found in the forests even today. Since this episode, the Lodhas regard all Brahmans as their sons-in-law and inferior to them. So, they do not accept any cooked food or water from the Brahmans.

The legendary story has become mythical in their lives and has immense influence in shaping their attitude to the Brahmans. They also take a personal pride in regarding themselves superior to the Brahmans.

Bhumij

The Bhumijes are one of the non-Aryan Hinduised tribes of Manbhum, Singhbhum and western Bengal. They are the original inhabitants of Dhalbhum, Barabhum and the surrounding areas. According to Grierson, they appear to be the original inhabitants of the Singbhum areas of Chota Nagpur. Long ago, the Bhumijes were settled to the north of the Kasai river, where they were dislodged by the Aryans. On linguistic grounds Dalton ranks them as Kolarians, while according to Risley they are closely allied to, if not identical with, the Mundas. [5]"The Bhumij are nothing more than a branch of the Mundas, who have spread to the eastward, mingled with the Hindus, and thus for the most part severed their connexion with the parent tribe.....The Bhumij of western Manbhum are beyond doubt pure Mundas". Whatever might have been their original language, they now speak a corrupt form of Bengali with regional accents.

EARLY HISTORY

[6] "The Bhumij of the Jungle Mahals were

5 Risley—Tribes and Castes of Bengal, Vol. I, p. 117.
6 Ethnology of Bengal, by Dalton Indian Studies: (Past and Present.) Vol. I, No. 3, p 412.

once, under the nick-name *Chuar,* the terror of the surrounding districts and their various outbreaks were called *Chuaris.* Dalton holds that in most of these uprisings, the Bhumij had very little personal interest and were mostly instigated by some ambitious chiefs.

Traditions

Dalton could not discover that the Bhumijes possess any independent traditions of migrations. [7]"Those who live in proximity to Chutia Nagpur recognise no distinction between themselves and the Mundas. They intermarry and associate and coalesce in all matters indicating identity of race, for, though it may be said that they are not much troubled with caste prejudices, there is no portion of the old Indian population which is quite free from it. The Bhumij further east have become too Hinduised to acknowledge the relationship".

Etymologically, the word *Bhumija* means one, born of the soil. The name Bhumija (autocthons) might have been given to them by the immigrant Hindus, who found them already in possession of the land.

Legend of origin

As already said, the term Bhumij means one born of the soil. Risley thinks that possibly the immigrants termed them as Bhumij, as they found them already in possession of the land.

Curiously enough, a miracle has been associated with the origin of the Bhumij, so far as the Bhumij of this particular village are concerned. The legend, narrated by one leading Bhumij named Charan Singh, is as follows :

In the *Mahabharata* there is a reference to the *Kapila* cow. She was under the possession of the great saint *Vasistha.* This cow was said to be endowed with miraculous power of supplying any article or commodity, as and when desired. It is said that once King *Viswamitra,* in order to embarrass the great saint, accepted his hospitality in company with ten thousand soldiers. But, aided by *Kapila* the saint entertained the king and his accompanying soldiers to their utmost satisfaction. Anyway, the king came to know of *Kapila* and of her divine power and demanded her from the saint at any price. On the saint's refusal to part with the divine cow, the king asked his soldiers to take possession of her forcibly. But, scarcely had the royal soldiers touched the body of the cow, when she began to protest with her tailraised upwards and with legs scratching the earth. Instantly, innumerable soldiers began to come out of the different parts of the bovine body and also from the earth. The Bhumij claim that they are the descendants of the soldiers which had origina ted from the earth.

It is interesting that in this legend the Bhumij have brought out an independent legend of origin, distinct from that of the Mundas. If one dives deep, one can find that this legend is intended to serve at least two purposes. First, with this legend the Bhumij try to cover the fact that they are connected with the Mundas. Secondly, by inventing a mythical ancestor, they try somehow to link themselves up with the great Hindu mythology.

Mahato

The Mahatos of Midnapore are Hinduised Kurmis. They are probably the descendants of some of the earliest Aryan colonists of Bengal.

7 Ibid. Page 413.

[8] "Tradition, at all events, assigns to them a very ancient place in the country, and many antiquities, now concealed in dense jungle or rising as monuments of the civilization of bygone days amidst the huts of half-savage races now occupying the sites, are ascribed to them and at least the advance they had made in civilization at a very early period".

The Kurmis are well known as an industrious class of cultivators. They are chiefly found in Upper India, Bihar, Chota Nagpur, Orissa and West Bengal [9]"Their origin is obscure, and their meagre traditions throw no light upon the subject, being for the most part mythological tales of a trivial character, or legends relating to recent migrations of comparatively small sections of the caste".

The Kurmis of Bihar are fairly good looking and Dalton considers them Aryan in look. In Chota Nagpur, Orissa and Manbhum, the Kurmis can hardly be distinguished from a Santal, whereas the Santals regard them "as half-brethren of their own, sprung from the same father, who begot the Kurmis on the elder and the Santals on the younger of two sisters". This observation is based on enquiry among the Kurmis of this village and the surrounding area. The name, Kurmi is supposed to be derived from the Sanskrit word *Krishi* (Cultivation) or from *Kurma*, the tortoise incarnation of *Vishnu*, and some of the Kurmis claim, that they belong to *Kashyapa gotra*, which is also supposed to be derived from tortoise.

Here, in the neighbouring regions the Kurmis have been Hinduised to a very great extent. They take their surname as Mahato and also return the name of their caste as Mahato. But, when pressed to give their original name, they say that they belong to the Kurmi caste. In this connection it may be pointed out that the word *Mahato* means a chief or a village headman. So, it may be presumed that some of the headmen belonging to the Kurmi community, who might have been called Mahatos, continued to be so called and with the gradual passage of time their title *Mahato* has been returned as the name of their caste. It may be pointed out here that *Mahato* is one of the sub-castes of the *Khairwar*. Sri A. Mitra, I.C.S., has also remarked in his "Tribes & Castes of West Bengal," that the "Mahatos of Midnapur are probably Hinduised Kurmis of Chota Nagpur origin". In the Census Report of Bihar, 1931 the Mahatos have also been shown as identical with the Kurmis. Whatever may be the origin, it must be admitted that the Mahatos of Midnapore have gone a long way in getting Hinduised in different facets of life. Unlike the Kurmis, they do not take either beef or pork.

Language

Whatever might have been the original dialect of the Lodhas, there is an unmistakable influence of Oriya on their dialect. In course of the interview with some elderly Lodha persons, some of them claimed that their parents spoke a dialect, almost akin to Oriya. Even, the elderly Bhumij of this village as also the elderly persons of the surrounding areas stated that the dialect, used by the Lodhas at the time of their migration to this village about 55 years ago, was just like Oriya. The following popular folklore of the Lodhas may reveal the influence of Oriya on their dialect. The folklore consists of a popular episode of the great epic *Ramayana*. It narrates the scene of the kidnapping of *Sita* by *Ravana*, the king of the Demons. The following verse may not be an exact transcription of the folklore.

"Ravana anshuchi, Lakshmana jauchi

8 Dalton—Descriptive Ethnology, as published in Indian Studies: Past and Present, Vol. 1, No. 3 (April, 1960) page 545.

9 Tribes and Castes of Bengal—H. H. Risley Vol. 1, page 528.

Bhiskhaya maojiare payei
Pateri Kuriei, ki bhiskhya dimu mui
Daleri Kuriei, ki bhiskhya dimu mui
Murcho mudi, timuro niho
Age jogi achara
Murcho mudi loye, hara thara, hoye
Sitako basalo rathe
Ratha je jauchi uri
Ratha je jauchi Sarga Marta uri
Ek je chilo Jatayu pakhi
Jatayu Ravane bandha je diuhu
Jatayur dui pankha gelo chiri
Jatayu bhume parliloi,
Rama bhajilo"

RUNNING TRANSLATION

After the departure of *Lakshmana* comes *Ravana* begging for alms from *Sita.*

"Is it possible for me to give you alms ? You know that we live in huts made of leaves of trees", so laments *Sita.*

"Please shut your eyes and treat me as a monk", says *Ravana.*

But as soon as *Sita* approaches to give him alms, she is overpowered by the King of the Demons and is forcibly seated on a fast-moving chariot and within a moment, the chariot disappears into the air.

Just at this time, *Jatayu* the mythical bird, comes to the rescue of *Sita* by obstructing the chariot, but instantly *Jatayu* is overpowered by *Ravana.* The bird falls on the ground muttering the name of *Rama.*

A conversation among the Lodhas may be of further interest to the readers. A young Lodha comes across another in the morning and converses with him in an informal manner. A specimen of the conversation is given below :

Q. *Kahi janthale* (Where are you going) ?
Ans. *Mui chashir kaje janthalu botte* (I am going to work in a certain farmer's house).

In the evening when they happen to meet again :

Q. *Ke toke dakthalek kaje* (Who called you for work) ?
Ans. *Mui Santal rakar kaje jathalek* (I went to work to the house of a Santal).
Q. *Tui ki kam kolli* (What work did you do there) ?
Ans. *Mui dhodhya bandhalu* (I made ridges (al) round a field).
Q. *Turakhe poysa dillek na dhan dillek* (How did he pay you, in cash or in paddy) ?
Ans. *Mokke dhan dillek* (He paid me in paddy)

Here in the following lines, a Lodha hunter narrates his whole day's experience to his fellow man.

Mui aj ban janthalu (To day I went to the forest). *Beja thallek, Ruttu thallek, mui thallu* (I accompanied Rutu and Beja). *Mui aj ekta satna dharulu, ar ekta dhyemna sap dharulu* (To-day we caught one common rat-snake and one yellow monitor).

Beddi sasalek, sasate bahir palanu (Then I felt very thirsty and instantly I came out). *Bahir ashi pani khalu* (I came out and drank water). *Pani khaye gachhtala bashlu* (After drinking water, I sat under the tree). *Bindi khallu, bone ar dhuklu nahi* (Then I smoked a *bidi* and I did not further enter in the forest). *Banshorer dhodday pani thalek* (There was some water in the field round the ridges). *Seitay ga dhulu* (I bathed in that water). *Terpar batte batte, ghar palay ashlu* (Then I came home along the way).

Ghare ashi satnake chhulnu, nun diye rakhi dilu (I came home, stripped off the skin of the rat-snakes and preserved them in some salt).

Ghare ashi dekhlu, ghare kicchu nahi (I came home and found that there was nothing). *Tabe dekhlu, mahajan ashe batte, ashte biki dilu ukay* (Then I found the trader coming. On his arrival, I sold the skins of the snake to him). *Sapta der take hollek, ar dutu satanai char take char ana hollek* (We got one and half rupees for the common rat-snake and rupees four and four annas from the yellow.monitor). *Tin loke eksange thalo, tai mor bhage, ek taka ponaro ana hollek* (As we were three, so my share was one rupee and fifteen annas). *Mui mayatake dokkane pathai dilu* (I sent my daughter to the shop). *O ek pai chal kinlek ar chhar anar sayda korllek* (She bought one *pai* of rice and other articles worth six annas).

Til kodray kodray, ga hatpa beddi byath-allek (As I had to dig the earth at the time of catching the snakes, I felt great muscular pain all over my body). *Beddi bhukha thalek* (I also felt very hungry). *Teba mui haddier dokane gelu* (So I went to the shop of indigenous liquor). *Jaye mui dash anar haddia khaya ashlu* (Having gone there, I took country liquor of ten annas).

It has been observed that when a Lodha speaks to persons not belonging to his community, he usually speaks a corrupt form of Bengali with slight Oriya accents. But it is very interesting that when they talk among themselves, an outsider will hardly understand a word from their conversation, except some stray Bengali and Oriya words.

The elderly Bhumij of this village or of the immediate vicinity do not admit or are not aware of the fact that they had ever any dialect of their own, other than Bengali. Rather, they claim that they heard from their parents and grandparents that Bengali was their dialect, even when they had lived at Sikhar-bhum.

What is true of a Bhumij about his language is also applicable to the three Mahato households in the village. Both the Bhumij and the Mahato residents return Bengali as their mother-tongue. But, the dialect of each varies slightly from that of others. The variation may be evident from the conversation given below among the Bhumijes and the Mahatos.

Conversation of the Bhumijes :

Q. *Kuthaya gachhlu.* (Where had you gone) ?
Ans. *Ami chashir kaj gachhili* (I went to work for a farmer).
Q. *Tui ker kaje gachhils* (For whom you worked today) ?
Ans. *Ami Santal lake kaje gachhli* (I went to work for a Santal).
Q. *Tui oder oikhini ki kaj karlis* (What work did you do there) ?
Ans. *Ami hir bandhlee* (I made ridges).
Q. *Toke paisa na dhan dila* (Were you paid in cash or in paddy) ?
Ans. *Amke dhan dila* (He paid me in paddy).
Q. *Ka pai kare dhan dila* (How much paddy did he pay you) ?
Ans. *Tin pai kare dhan dila* (He gave me three *Pais* of paddy).

Conversation of the Mahatos :

Q. *Kuthaya gachhli* (Where had you gone) ?
Ans. *Ami chashir kaje gechhlee* (I went to work for a farmer).
Q. *Tuin ker kaje gechhilis* (For whom you worked today) ?
Ans. *Ami Santal laker kaje gachhli* (I went to work for a Santal).
Q. *Tuin oder oikhine ki kaj karlu* (What work did you do there) ?
Ans. *Ami hir bandhlee* (I made ridges).
Q. *Toke paisa na dhan dila* (Were you paid in cash or in paddy) ?
Ans. *Amke dhan dila* (He paid me in paddy).
Q. *Ka pai koire dhan dila* (How much paddy did he give you) ?

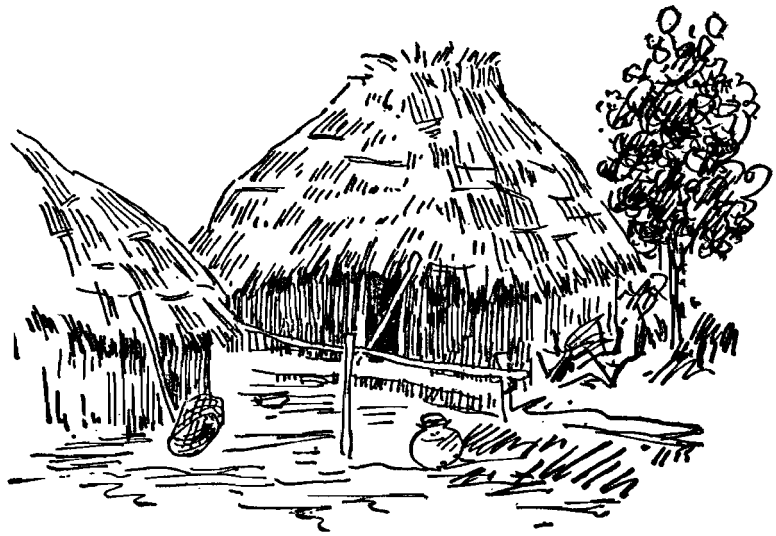
Ans. *Tin pai koire dhan dila* (He gave me three *Pais* of paddy).

HOUSE AND HOUSE-TYPES

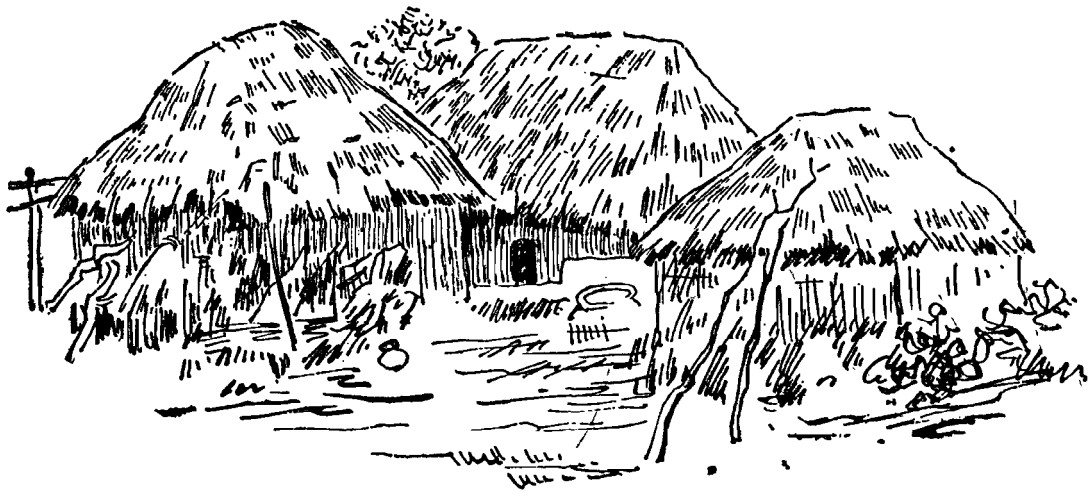
1. Residential pattern

As regards the residential pattern, previous observation may be recalled that the village, inhabited by two tribes and one caste, has four separate enclaves. The Bhumij live in two separate enclaves. The enclave, inhabited by the majority of the Bhumijes is an old one and another enclave is of very recent origin.

One striking feature about the Lodha enclave is that it is almost a newly constructed settlement, in as much as 30 families, out of the 35 households, live in newly constructed rooms. This has been effected under the Lodha



ATCHALA TYPE OF HUT OF A MAHATO

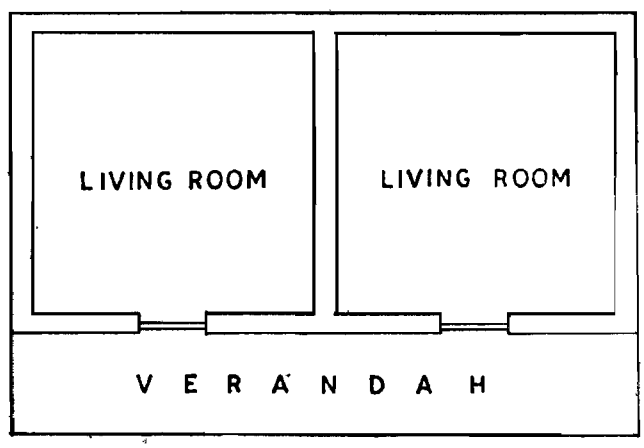


AN OLD BHUMIJ HOUSE

Rehabilitation Scheme, sponsored by the Tribal Welfare Department, Government of West Bengal. This Scheme was undertaken, after the Mahatos of the adjoining areas had raided and raged to the ground the original Lodha huts about three years ago. It may not be a digression, if the discussion goes back to the old Lodha settlement, as it existed three years ago. All the former Lodha huts were dispersed and isolated here and there, having considerable space between one house and the other. Most of the Lodha families lived in circular or squarish cottages with roofs, mostly made of hay and some roofs having two slopes. The walls in majority of the houses were made of twigs, while the thatching was of hay. Most of the huts were one-roomed, having no windows or verandahs. The cooking was made in the courtyard. The Lodha hut was of abnormally low height, in some cases five to six feet, so that one had to enter the room stooping. The natural corollary was that the average Lodha hut was always full of darkness, sunlight and air being not permitted to enter. The Lodhas once being the members of a criminal tribe, the rooms were said to have been made deliberately dark, so as to "cover and conceal their crimes." But, now, the Lodha hut has been newly constructed. The houses have been built in a planned way. So, the whole Lodha settlement has been arranged in a linear order with a regular straight pavement between parallel rows of houses. The settlement touching the fringe of the reserved forests and built in a planned way, looks indeed very picturesque.

Next to the Lodha huts, comes the residential pattern of the Bhumijes. The Bhumijes, as already said, live in two separate enclaves. The original Bhumij enclave is situated almost in the heart of the forests. This is said to have been deliberately done, so that the surrounding forests could serve as a protective barrier against violent storms. This enclave is arranged in a shapeless cluster of huts. But, in contrast to this, the second Bhumij enclave is of a dispersed type. As this enclave is of recent origin, the houses were constructed with some space between one house and the other. The houses of the Mahatos are also

NOTIONAL PLAN OF A NEWLY CONSTRUCTED LODHA HOUSE

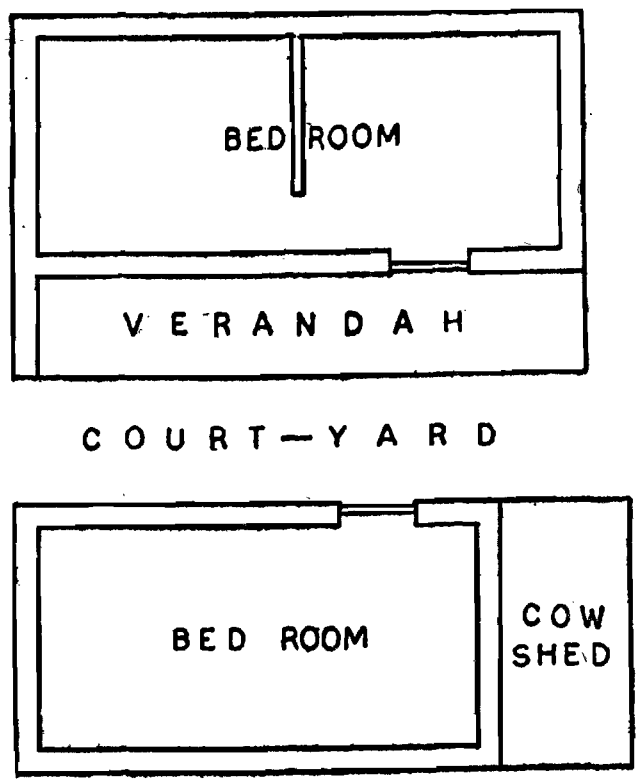


arranged in the same order, leaving ample space in between the houses.

2. House-type

The plan of an average Lodha house is very simple. The houses are single-storeyed with roofs of corrugated iron sheet. The walls as also the floorings of these houses are of mud. The plinth is less than one foot from the ground level. Each house is divided into two bedrooms with attached verandah on one side. Of the two bedrooms, only one bedroom has been apportioned to each Lodha family. So, an average Lodha house consists of a single bedroom (12′×9′) with an enclosed verandah, generally ten feet long. There is no window ; consequently one or two holes on the walls serve as ventilators. Each house is provided with a wooden door. It should be borne in mind that out of the 35 Lodha families in the village, as many as 30 families have been accommodated under this new housing

NOTIONAL PLAN OF A BHUMIJ HOUSE

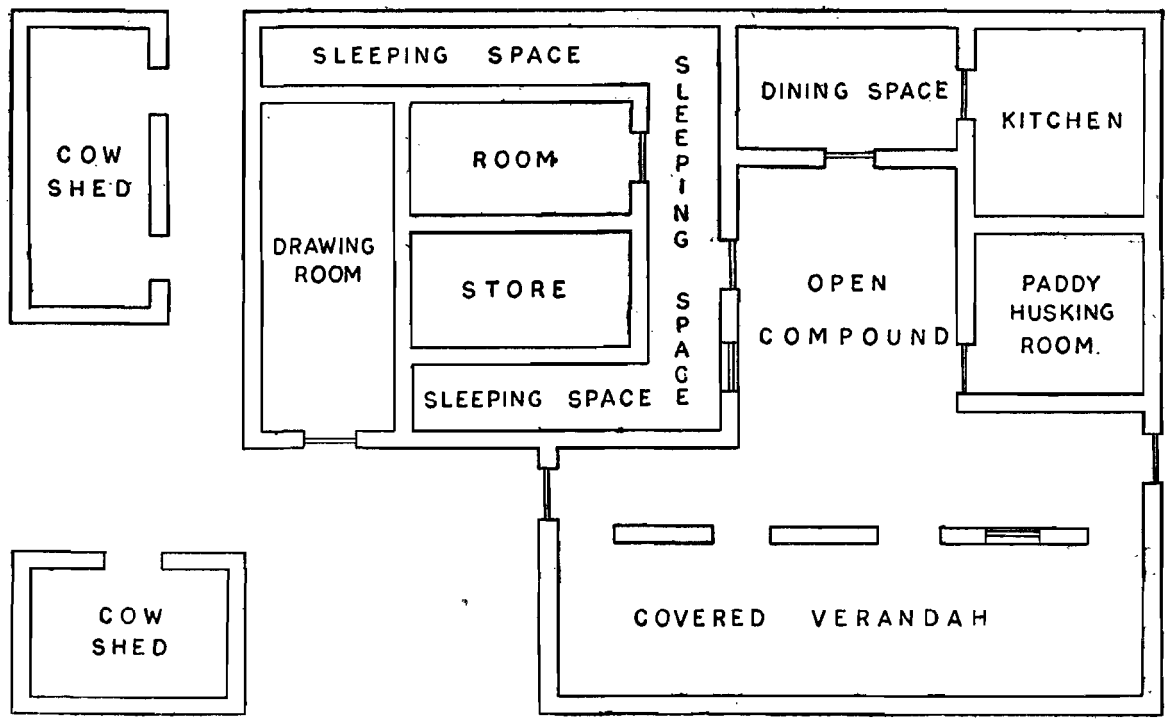


scheme ; the remaining five families still reside in their old huts with roofs of hay.

The houses of the Bhumijes and of the Mahatos are built without any definite plan and are, therefore, arranged in a haphazard fashion. The houses, in most cases, have plinths ranging

from 1 foot to 1½ feet, mud being the usual material used. The roofs are universally made of straw and the floors are of mud. But, the walls are of two types, some of pure mud, while others are of twigs plastered with mud. In most cases, there is no window ; but, some square space is left on the wall for ventilation. Most of the roofs are of four slopes. With the exception of one two-storeyed straw-roofed house, belonging to a Mahato household, all the houses are single-storeyed. Though some of the houses have separate kitchens, in many houses cooking is done in the enclosed verandahs. However, an open courtyard is the integral part of the lay-out of the average Bhumij and Mahato house. Some of the households have kitchen-gardens. Excepting a few, most of the Bhumij and Mahato households have cow-

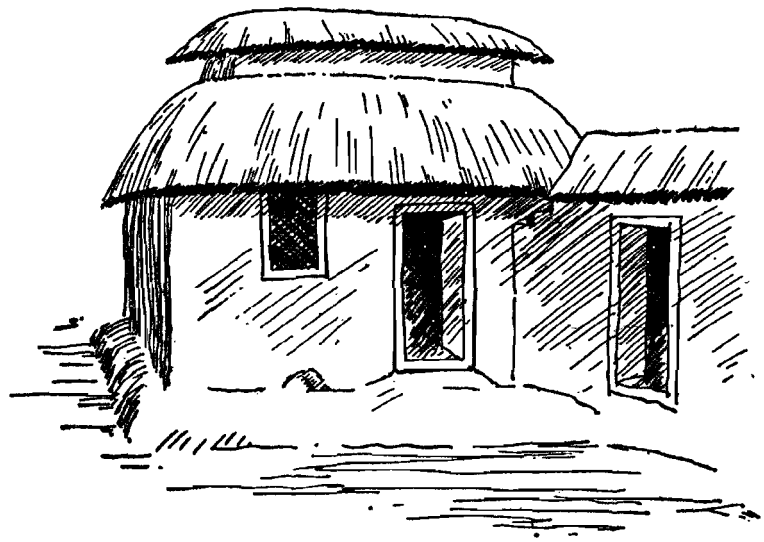
NOTIONAL GROUND PLAN OF A MAHATO HOUSE



sheds and poultry-sheds. The cowsheds are usually built in the remote corner of the house.

The foregoing discusssion completes the discussion on house-types. It is almost a contradiction that in a village, where there is no dearth of homestead lands, as many as 52 out of the 55 households have to be content with a single living room. Only three households, two Mahato and one Bhumij, fortunately possess more than one bedroom. 52 households have

to accommodate themselves in single-roomed houses. The problem of space may not be so very acutely felt by those families, which are relatively small in size, but, in the case of bigger families, composed of five members and above, it is indeed trying on the members to jostle for



AN OLD LODHA HOUSE

space, days in and days out in a room, the average size of which stands at something like 108 sq.ft. The picture can be all the more clear, if one takes a glance at the following table :

TABLE 4

No. of households where a single room is occupied by :

1 member	2 members	3 members	4 members	5 members	6 members	7 members	8 members	9 members	10 members
3	3	7	8	7	12	5	5	1	1

The preceding table gives an alarming picture about the scarcity of breathing space in living rooms.

It is found that of the 52 households possessing single bedrooms, the family is composed of five or more members in 31 households. These 31 families, composed of five or more members, have to fight for space to turn their bodies while asleep in an average room of 108 square feet. Though it does not require any further elaboration on this point, the table overleaf may help the readers to see the same problem from a slightly different angle. Table on the average sleeping space (in sq. ft.) per person is given on next page.

TABLE 5

Caste/Tribe	No. of house-holds	No. of households by average sleeping space per person per household ranging between 0-10 sq. ft.	11-20 sq. ft.	21-30 sq. ft.	31-40 sq. ft.	41-50 sq. ft.	51-60 sq. ft.	61-70 sq. ft.
Lodha	35	..	18	9	4	..	2	2
Bhumij	17	.	5	5	3	3	1	..
Mahato/Kurmi	3	.	..	1	1	1	..	..
Total	**55**	..	**23**	**15**	**8**	**4**	**3**	**2**

From this table one may see that in the case of 38 households, the average living space allotted per member is limited to 30 sq.ft. It may now be tried to correlate the above two tables.

TABLE 6

No. of households, where a single bedroom is occupied by five or more members	No. of households, the average space per member of which is limited to 25 sq. ft.*
31	30

*It has been calculated by further breaking the range of col. 5 into 21 to 25 sq. ft.

The problem of living space is more serious in the cold and the rainy seasons, when all the members of the household have no option but to pack up in the same room. In summer and spring some members of the family sleep either in the verandah or in the open courtyard.

The discussion relating to the acute scarcity of living space may naturally lead one to the delicate question of the level of conjugal secrecy among the married couples. Of the villagers, who have to huddle somehow together, conjugal secrecy is too much to be expected. So, one is left with a number of cases, where the parents have to share the same bed with their adult children. Cases are not rare among the Lodhas and the Bhumijes among whom the married couples have to sleep in the same room with their parents. There is also an instance in a Lodha household, where the married head of the family has to share the same bedroom with his adult brother.

To maintain privacy in conjugal life is a problem of the couples. It is needless to point out that the absence of the minimum secrecy sometimes makes them embarrassed. Had the unsophisticated tribals been so much particular about secrecy in conjugal life, it would never have been possible for many of them to have married at all.

To digress for a moment, there are some social complications, which may emanate from absence of secrecy in the conjugal life. It is quite natural that with some amount of secrecy, conjugal life would have been all the more sweeter among these people.

Now comes the description of the house, so as to show how many households possess storerooms, kitchens, cowsheds etc. The table over leaf can serve the purpose better.

TABLE 7

Caste/Tribe	Total no. of households	No. of households that possess						
		Drawing room	Store room	Kitchen	Room for worship of deity	Granary	Cowshed	Latrine
Lodha	35	..	..	3	..	..	5	..
Bhumij	17	1	1	5	..	..	6	..
Mahato/Kurmi	3	1	1	3	..	1	3	..
Total	**55**	**2**	**2**	**11**	..	**1**	**14**	..

In a village, where the average house consists of single room, one should not normally expect a drawing room or a store room. Again, in a village, where not a single household owns more than 15 *bighas* of cultivable land, granary is superfluous. Instead, very few cultivating households keep their crops stacked in the corner of the room or hung from the ceilings. None of the households possesses any deity, keeping out, of course, some framed photographs of Hindu gods and goddesses ; that is why, the question of apportioning any room for deity does not arise. As many as 44 households are without separate kitchen. Consequently, much of the cooking has to be done in the bedroom, specially so in the rainy season, though the adjoining verandahs or the courtyards are also used for this purpose. It is also worth noting that, out of 25 Lodha and Bhumij households possessing cattle, as many as 14 households have no cowsheds. But, there are also some more households, which possess goats and fowls but cannot afford to make any shed for them. Therefore, the households have sometimes to accommodate themselves in company with the cattle and the poultry birds. Thus, the same bedroom also serves the purposes of a storage, a kitchen, a cowshed and of a poultry-shed. The villagers are not aware of the use of latrines. There is not a single latrine or anything of its kind in the village. Generally, the villagers ease themselves in the jungles or on the open tracts of land.

HOUSE-BUILDING

The elements of the house as also the different processes associated with house-making may now be described.

The first step for building a house is the selection of a suitable site. The Lodhas, the Bhumijes and also the Mahatos admit that it was the general custom amongst them, as far back as thirty years, to consult a *Gunin* (magicman) prior to selecting a site for a house. It was the general belief among them that some of the sites were haunted by evil spirits and ghosts. So, a site could be finally selected, only after it was approved by the *Gunin*. But now-a-days, a *Gunin* is rarely consulted. After the selection of the site is over, chunks of hard mud are required to raise the plinths. For construction of walls fine clay is kneaded by feet in the fields. Lumps are moulded into mud bricks with a spade and the unfired clay-bricks are laid one over the other. In some cases, lumps of clay are laid one upon another. After one layer has been laid, it is allowed to dry up for some time and then, another layer is added to it. The walls consequently appear more like stratifications, as in most cases, the walls are not smoothened and plastered over.

In this regard, the houses of this particular village are in sharp contrast to those of the neighbouring ones. One special feature of the walls of the neighbouring villages, predomi-

nantly inhabited by the Santals, is that they are smoothened with plaster, decorated with plain colours like red, black etc, and finally ornamented with drawings of animals, birds and the like. But, the people of this village have not found it worthwhile to imitate the wall-decorations of the neighbours. Next to mud, another constituent of walls in the present village is twigs. First, the enclosing walls are made of twigs and then, the twigs are plastered with mud. The walls of four Lodha and eight Bhumij houses are made of twigs. The abundance of forests in the surrounding regions makes the use of the twigs more economical.

The erection of walls, either of mud or of twigs, does not call for any skilled labour. Usually, the members of the households themselves supply the bulk of the labour; though occasionally, they have to employ local labourers at the daily rate of Re. 1·00 per head. After the erection of the walls, the next step is to construct the frame-work, under the thatch. The forests supply the wood, the usual element for the frame-work of the roof. A frame-work of bamboo is very rare in this region. The frame-work is usually made of two or four inclined planes, which meet at a ridge. The construction of this frame as also of the doors and other fittings are made by carpenters. There are three Bhumij carpenters here. The work of construction is done by them as also by the Santal carpenters, residing in another village. They are paid a daily wage of Rs. 2·00. The frame-work being made, joists are laid across, with a king-post in the middle, to support the ridge. The frame-work is suitably fitted soon after.

Till very recent times, straw was the usual thatching material for its ready availability. But at present, corrugated iron sheets are the usual roofing material in the newly constructed Lodha houses. The roofs of all the Bhumij and Mahato houses are, however, made of straw. Thatching with straw calls for some specialised labour, locally called thatcher (घरामी), who usually charges Rs. 1·50 per day. According to an estimate made by a villager, the average cost of constructing a one-roomed house of the above type comes to about Rs. 150/-.

Prior to the remodelling of the Lodha huts. it is found that most of the Lodhas were not able to defray the expenses for repairing the houses. Roofs with straw necessitate their rethatching every three or four years, costing Rs. 25/- to Rs. 30/-. Considering that such recurring expenditure may not always be within the easy means of the people, the sponsors of the Lodha Rehabilitation Scheme used corrugated iron sheets as the roofing material, instead of straw. In the case of the remaining houses of the village, it is found that some of the houses call for urgent repair. There are also instances, where rainwater trickles down into the bedroom. In a characteristically poor village like Bhumij Dhan Sol, though a *pucca* building will be a far cry, there are some households who can afford their floors to be cemented and their roofs fitted with corrugated iron sheets. To the query on this point, the reply of a Mahato villager may be quoted, "Sir, any possible betterment of the house is bound to allure the thieves".

The villagers do not bother about the privacy of the house. Excepting a single Mahato house, no other house in the village is encircled by any enclosure or by any boundary wall. The result is that the casual passers-by can stealthily peep inside the room.

Compared to the houses in the neighbouring Santal and Mahato villages, the houses of this village are not artistically designed.

DRESS

The dress of the Lodhas differs from that of the Bhumijes and the Mahatos. So, it would be better to describe them separately.

The Lodha boys and girls use an unsewn piece of garment, known as *Langoti*, till they are aged ten or twelve years. This small strip of cloth simply covers the perineal part. One end of the cloth is passed between the thighs and tucked at the back in the waist-string ; the other end is wrapped round the loin in such a fashion that the back portion and sides of the leg remain totally uncovered. Sometimes, it also consists of a narrow cloth with ends tucked in front and back in the string round the waist. The *langoti*, so used, is not made of a new piece of cloth, but usually made of rags or the rejected tatters. Some of the infants below five years of age remain naked altogether. In all probability, *langoti* seems to be the traditional attire of the Lodhas. Some of the older Lodha people still remember their grand parents with only *langotis* on. To the query as to why they cannot procure some better garments for their children instead of crude *langoti*, when they spend so much on indigenous country liquor (*handia*), they point their fingers to their forehead. A typical reply to it is as follows.

"What can we do, Sir ? It is *Jara Savar* who is to blame for this. When he shot Lord *Srikrishna* with the spear, the Lord cursed him thus, 'From this day onwards, your descendants will be destined to use the *Kaupin* (loincloth) out of the tattered clothes of your wives'. Since then, our forefathers have been compelled to use this *langoti*". Some Lodhas point out that even trees have barks, but they have none.

But, once the boys and girls reach their teens, they begin to feel ashamed of their simple *langotis*. So, the boys cover themselves with old tattered clothes, usually three to four cubits in length. The girls gradually change over to *saris* (simple piece of unsewn cloth). The girls, who cannot afford to have *saris*, use two small pieces of cloth, one for covering the lower and the other for covering the upper part of the body. Both the parts of the body are wrapped with the two unsewn pieces of cloth.

If one observes the dressing pattern of boys and girls, one significant feature comes to one's notice. The use of shorts and frocks are still conspicuous by their absence. This is due partly to poverty and partly to their reluctance to use new attire.

The dress of the adults among the Lodhas consists of the minimum clothing. It is far more simple than one can possibly imagine. Here, for the purpose of dressing, anyone above 19 years has been considered an adult. It has been found that there are 44 Lodha adult males, of whom five persons have only a piece of country napkin, three to four cubits, to cover them. 29 persons have only a single piece of cloth, mostly seven to eight cubits in length. Nine persons are fortunate to possess two pieces of cloth and only one person is proud of his three pieces. Out of these 44 persons, three persons have shirts and only one person uses shoes.

It has been found that out of 35 adult females, as many as 22 possess only a single piece of cloth, 10 possess two pieces of cloth and one female three pieces. But, the remaining two women, who are concubines, are much well off in this regard. One of them possesses six pieces and another five pieces of cloth. In the case of 33 women, the dress is restricted to one or two pieces of cloth. They do not use any blouse or petti-

coat. But, the two concubines use all these items of dress. Not a single woman in the Lodha community uses slippers or shoes.

In sharp contrast to the Lodha, the children of the Bhumijes and the Mahatos do not use any *langoti*. Most of them use shorts and shirts, while some others, who cannot afford to have these dresses, use napkins and vests. In this connection one feature ought to be mentioned that even though a Bhumij is less affluent than a Lodha, he finds it necessary to provide his son with shorts and shirts. But, a Lodha does not feel the necessity. So far as this village is concerned, a Bhumij or a Mahato will better keep his children in rags or even naked rather than allow them to be clad in *langotis*. Their approach in this regard is that a *langoti* is a thing of the past, belonging mostly to the uncivilised non-Hindus.

The dress of the adult Bhumij and the Mahatos does not show any variation from their counterparts in the Lodha community. The slight variation lies only in the number of clothes in possession of a person. Whereas in the Lodha community, most of the adult males and females possess no more than a single piece of cloth, those in the Bhumij and Mahato community, at least the majority of them, possess more than one piece. Thus, out of 21 adult Bhumij males, nine persons use only a single piece of cloth, another nine use two pieces and three males use three pieces each. Five women have only one piece, 13 have two pieces, three women have three pieces and one woman has four pieces of cloth. Most of the Bhumij and Mahato male-folk are in possession of a single shirt each. In the village they move about bare-bodied. Only when they go outside the village boundary, say to the *hat, bazar*, dispensary or to the Block Office or to the house of the relatives, they put on *dhotis* and shirts. The use of shoes is restricted to only six persons.

Among the women in the Bhumij and Mahato households the use of a petticoat is not yet in fashion ; while many of them have learnt the use of blouses from the neighbouring Hindu communities. But, its use is still strictly limited to the young women. Of course, only on rare occasions one may see a woman wearing a blouse. It is only on festive occasions or during her visit to some relatives that she puts on a blouse. The use of slippers is also not current among these women.

The *dhoti* that is used by men is mostly seven to eight cubits in length and 30 inches in breadth. It is also very coarse in quality, costing on an average five to six rupees per piece. While the villagers work in the fields, or stay at home, they do hardly feel it necessary to cover the legs. But, when going out, they would lower it below the knee and would use *kuccha*, as is the custom with the neighbouring Hindus.

The *saris* used by women vary in length between eight to nine cubits and 35 to 40 inches in breadth. The manner of wearing a *sari* is also different from that of the Caste Hindus. On festive occasions *i. e.*, at the time of some community worship or marriage ceremony, the dress of the Lodhas does not reveal any change, as very few of them can afford to have new clothes. On the point of dress festivity can be read only from the cleanliness of the clothes, put on by most of them. But, most of the people of the Bhumij and Mahato communities wear new garments during festivals.

The foregoing discussion relates mostly to the dress in general throughout the year. In this village, the onset of the cold season does not bring any change in the materials of the dress. In winter the villagers cannot afford to have any wrapper to protect them from biting cold. Only a few Bhumij and all the Mahato households possess wrappers. To the simple villagers

fire provides natural warmth. The villagers make fire in the morning and in the evening, when the members sit round the fire to make themselves warm. As most of the villagers possess a single piece of cloth, only few are fortunate to have two at best ; it is natural that they feel great difficulty at the time of taking their bath. Some of them are compelled to dry up their wet clothes right on their bodies. Some of the menfolk put *langotis* on at the time of bath and then put on their usual garments. The womenfolk put on some tattered pieces at the time of taking their bath, wash their clothes, place them under the sun and wait till they are dry.

Widows of all the three communities wear *than* (white cloth without coloured borders) and *dhoti*.

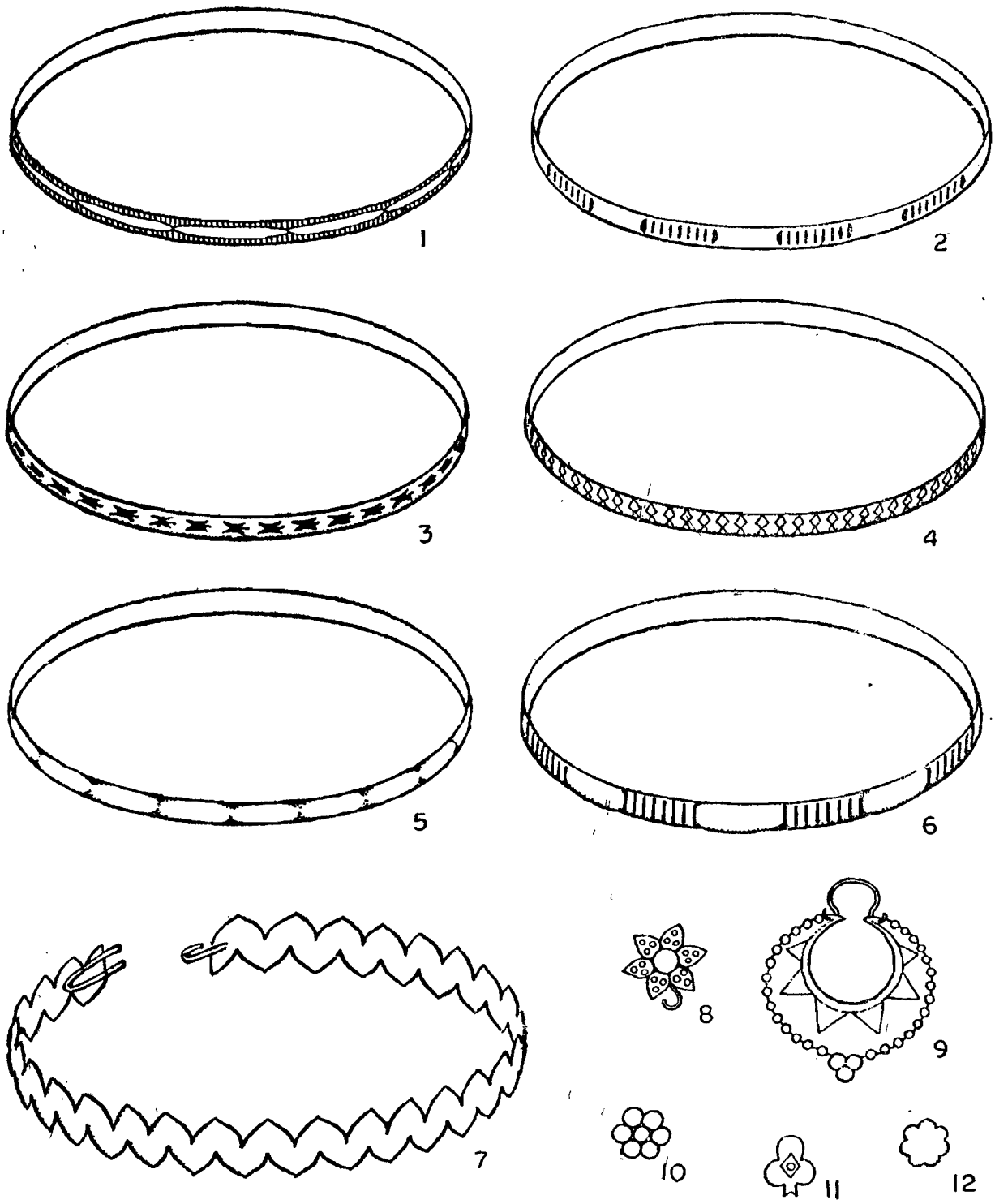
Cleanliness of dresses comes next to dress. The dresses of the people are dirty to the maximum degree. Indeed, within a few days of their purchase, the clothes lose their new look. A villager puts on a single piece of cloth for 15 consecutive days on an average, after which he washes it. Soap or soda is rarely used in the periodic wash. Almost all the villagers use wood (charcoal) for washing their clothes. The clothes are boiled with the burnt wood for about an hour and then washed. They appear stained and soiled as a consequence. Clothes are purchased mostly from the weekly *hats* of Bhimpur and Lalgarh. Shirts are prepared in the tailoring shops at those two places. An average piece of cloth, used by the villagers, costs rupees six and above. As pointed out earlier, most of the villagers are extremely poor and have no cash money or surplus earnings. So, whenever they are in urgent need of clothings, they sell their goats or fowls in the markets to buy their clothings. It is an occasion for jubilation specially to a woman, when she receives a new cloth. At the time of investigation a sight came to the notice of the Investigator. A young Lodha wife put on a new *sari*, purchased by her husband on the occasion of *Rathajatra* festival. The woman beamed in smile in her new attire and as a token of her joy and gratitude she performed obeisance to all superior relatives and even to the Investigator.

In concluding the observations on dress a few more words ought to be said. It is found that the womenfolk of this village do not like white or light coloured *saris*. The favourite colours of the women appear to be the deeper shades of blue, red and green. The minor girls are very much fond of deep colour. They prefer a *sari* to a pantie.

Ornaments

In a village, where majority of the people cannot make adequate provision for the minimum necessities of food and clothes, ornaments of the womenfolk with any costly material like gold are more a dream than a reality. Still, like the Hindu women, the womenfolk of this village go crazy for ornaments, even of inferior metals like zinc. Almost all the women feel the desire of decorating themselves, at least with a pair of bangles made of crude zinc. Thus, in the Lodha community, in as many as 21 households the womenfolk use bangles made of zinc, in 10 households the women feel proud in plugging their noses with *nakchabis* or nose-studs, in seven households the womenfolk have silver bangles. Besides, in a few households bangles made of rubber, glass and brass are also found.

In the Bhumij community the womenfolk in 10 households use *nakchabi* made of gold, those in nine households use bangles made of silver. In three houses the womenfolk use



1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6—Bangles. 7—Bracelet. 8—Ear-pin. 9—Ear-ring. 10, 11 and 12—Nose-stud.

bangles made of brass, in five houses they use bangles and earrings made of glass.

Only in two Mahato houses the women use golden earrings, bangles and *nakchabis* in addition to other ornaments made of silver. In another Mahato house golden *nakchabi*, in combination with bangles, made of brass and zinc, is also used.

The menfolk do not generally use any ornament, not even a simple ring. Among the womenfolk, specially among the married ones, the use of iron bangle, popularly known as *noa*, is almost universal. It is widely believed that no ghost or evil spirit can cause them any harm, if they have iron bangles. The use of conch shell bangle, which is extensively used by the married women in the neighbouring Hindu village, is not observed in this village. Of course, in imitation of these bangles, the tribal house-wives have started wearing white plastic bangles to keep pace with the fashion.

The villagers purchase, whatever ornaments they have, from the neighbouring *hats*. Sometimes, the hawker of bangles comes to the village and sells the wares to the womenfolk.

A table below will be explanatory in giving the local names, materials, types, price and source of the ornaments used in the village.

TABLE 8

ORNAMENTS USED IN THE VILLAGE

Local name	Description	Materials	Price	Source
Churi	Round shaped bangle	Zinc	25 paise per pair	Local market
,,	,,	Rubber	6 paise per pair	,,
,,	,,	Glass	6 paise per pair	,,
,,	,,	Brass	37 to 50 paise per pair	,,
,,	,,	Plastic	25 paise per pair	,,
Noa	Round shaped bangle with small gap between the two ends	Iron	12 paise per pair	,,
Har (Necklace)	Round shaped ornament worn round the neck	Brass	Re. 1. 00	,,
Nakchabi (Nose-stud)	A small nail-like ornament studded with a cheap stone or glass	,,	25 paise per piece	,,
Dul (Earring)	A ring worn round the ear	,,	25 paise per pair	,,

HAIR-DRESSING

The male villagers do not pay much attention to dressing their hair. A man in the Lodha community is rarely found to comb his hair. The elderly Bhumij and the Mahatos also do not arrange their hair. Only the younger people in those communities part their hair.

In sharp contrast to the males, the womenfolk are found to be conscious of the necessity of combing and dressing their hair. In the evening it is almost a common sight to find several women sitting together, one combing and arranging the hair of another. But, in the matter of hair-dressing too, the womenfolk seem to be discontented. Most of them cannot afford to have combs and oil to use on their hair. The villagers smear their hair with oil once or at best twice a week. Their hair is mostly matted and clotted together. That is why, the womenfolk do not make any coiffure but just tie them up in loose knots. Ribbon or hairpin is also not much used.

FURNITURE

The use of furniture is closely linked with the economic conditions of the people and is correlated to urban contacts and influence. In a village, inhabited predominantly by the tribal people, a good number of whom, specially the Lodhas, were once used to a nomadic way of life, roaming about from forest to forest, village to village, and are now slowly learning to get themselves used to a settled pattern of life, it is in keeping with the general expectation that the people have not yet learnt the use of such items of furniture as almirahs, chairs, tables, benches, stools and wall-shelves etc. To their own sense of value the possession of furniture is of very little consequence. Moreover, to the people who cannot have adequate space for sleeping and also for keeping their trifling possessions, the acquisition of an item like a crude *charpoy* (a country-made simple bedstead) poses a problem of apportioning some space for it. Here, in this region, the preparation of *khatia* or *charpoy* costs little, because of easy availability of the materials like wood and ropes in the adjacent forests. But, only 28 households, out of 55 families, possess it. The remaining 27 families do not think it worthwhile to devote their time in making a *charpoy*. In fact, they do not feel the need to sleep on a bedstead or on a *taktaposh*. Most of them remain content to sleep on the earthen floor. The following table will reveal the exact position :

TABLE 9

Caste/Tribe	Total no. of Households	No. of households possessing		
		Bedstead	*Taktaposh*	*Khatia/Charpoy*
Lodha	35	..	..	11
Bhumij	17	..	2	14
Mahato/Kurmi	3	..	1	3
Total	**55**	..	**3**	**28**

Even though some 28 families possess *khatia* (5½ ft. × 3 ft.), all the members cannot sleep on such a small *khatia*. Consequently, most of the people have to lie on the ground on a mat, made of date-palm leaves or at best on a quilt, made of *patchings* of clothes. Not a single household in the village has a mattress. It may not be out of place to point out that even in cold season the villagers do not have any winter beddings like quilts, made of cotton. Quilts made of torn clothes and gunny bags serve the purpose. When the beds fail to warm the villagers in shivering cold, they make fire to save them.

On enquiry it has been ascertained that

none in the village possesses any item of furniture, as chair, table, bench, stool, *jalchowki* or wall-shelf. 11 families do not find it necessary even to have a mirror of the cheaper variety. Only 44, out of the 55 families, possess it. In a village, where better variety of wood is so easily available, the absence of the common item of furniture may logically lead one to surmise that the villagers have not yet learnt the utility of possessing such items of furniture partly due to poverty and partly due to want of space. When an outsider happens to visit a house, the households express their hospitality by offering a *khatia* to him, while others would offer the visitor a patched cloth or a mat, made of palm leaves.

Consumer goods

The following table will give a clear picture of the extent of use of consumer goods per family.

TABLE 10

CONSUMER GOODS IN THE HOUSEHOLDS

Caste/ Tribe	Total No. of House-holds	No. of households in possession of							
		Hurri-cane lantern	Crude Kerosene lamp	Petromax or hasag	Torch-light	Kero-sene stove	Bicycle	Gramo-phone	Radio-set
Lodha	35	1	30	..	..	..	..	..	..
Bhumij	17	5	11	..	1	..	1	..	..
Mahato/ Kurmi	3	2	1	..	1	..	..	..	..
Total	**55**	**8**	**42**	..	**2**	..	**1**	..	..

Only eight households claim to burn lanterns, each costing approximately Rs. 4/- to Rs. 5/-. The remaining households are too poor to have even this essential item. An uncovered kerosene lamp (costing 12 paise) is used to dispel the darkness in these houses. It is a paradox that five households do not feel the necessity of having even this cheap but indispensable item. In respect of other households, it has been observed that most of them cannot afford to buy kerosene oil. They go to bed just on the onset of evening to avoid expenses. No comment is perhaps necessary on the absence of such items as hasag or petromax, gramophone and radio-set. It may suffice to point out that there are some villagers, who have not yet seen any petromax or gramophone. In respect of the valuable consumer goods, one Bhumij, who happens to be the *Adhyaskha* of the statutory *Gram Panchayat*, has, however, taken the lead in purchasing a bicycle for his son to enable him to go to school.

The use of the umbrella is practically nil in this village. Only a few Bhumij and Mahato households possess them. The bulk of the villagers protect themselves from the sun and the rain with the help of *varsati* (hand-made umbrellas), made of palm leaves.

The villagers have yet to learn the use of fashionable consumer goods like cosmetics, toilet soaps etc. Some of the young Lodha

girls admit their ignorance of what cosmetics really mean. The use of a toilet soap is also equally unknown. But instead, the villagers use a particular yellowish mud as detergent. Only during marriage ceremony or festival, some of them use toilet soaps. Vermilion (*sindur*) and lac-dye (*alta*) are, however, much popular among the village-women.

Fire and fuel

Some of the elderly villagers still remember that in their early years the use of matches was almost unknown to them. They used to preserve fire and occasionally made it by rubbing two pieces of wood. Even now, though almost all the adult males are chain-smokers, very few of them carry matches. Even at the time of lighting their ovens the women bring burning cinders from some other houses.

During field-work the villagers carry burning straw-rope. At home they preserve it by making the cinders burn in the oven. Some of them still keep two pieces of wood for making fire, when it is not readily available. To produce fire by rubbing a piece of wood is rotated on another, fixed to the ground.

Forests provide free fuel to the village. All the households use dry twigs and branches as fuel. Some of them, who grow jute, also use jute sticks. Due to the abundant supply of wood, use of coal is not necessary at all. The fuel is collected by the villagers from the forest.

Ovens are of the pit-type with three conical mounts to support the cooking utensil.

Food and diet

Rice is the staple food of the people in general. The people are not habitual wheat-eaters. They say that they cannot imagine bread to be ever substituted for rice. They further point out that they cannot digest bread easily. But, most of them take maize or millet, which they grow themselves for one or two months of the year.

Frequency of meals

It has been found that out of 55 households, only six households are fortunate enough in having three meals a day althrough the year. Of these, five are cultivating families and one is the village *chowkidar* (watchman), who has some subsidiary source of income. The remaining 49 households have to be satisfied with only two meals a day. The following table will clarify the position.

TABLE 11

FREQUENCY OF MEALS

Caste/Tribe	Total no. of households	No. of households taking	
		Two meals a day	Three meals a day
Lodha	35	35	..
Bhumij	17	13	4
Mahato/Kurmi	3	1	2
Total	**55**	**49**	**6**

The Lodhas can never afford to have more than two meals a day. All of them being predominantly labourers, they have sometimes to cover a distance of three to four miles to their place of work. Quite naturally, their occupation has dictated the timing of their meals. By 6 A.M. they finish taking their principal meal of the day. They finish taking their second and final meal just before the onset of darkness, as this practice saves their expenses on kerosene lamps. Consequently, the children become the worst sufferers and cry of hunger throughout the day, as there is a wide gap between the time of the first meal (6 A.M.) and that of the last (6 P.M.). It is indeed a heart-rending sight even to a man of "sterner stuff" to watch the Lodha children at noon crying for food and tormented by hunger. Some of the very young ones can be found lying asleep on the ground sucking their thumbs. Some others can be found to make vain efforts to ease their hunger by eating wild fruits.

But, no less touching is the scene of the adults, who come back in the fag end of the day after a whole day's toil and have to prepare their meal. At this time, they look visibly fatigued and it is indeed very risky for anyone to try to have a chat with them. Most of the Lodhas cannot afford to have any tiffin, except these two meals. Occasionally, of course, they have some fried rice or something of the kind from their employers. But, these chance-tiffins are offered once in a blue moon.

But, even hunger nas not killed their sense of humour. They jokingly point out that in the morning they boil water and put rice there in the evening, the whole day being spent in its collection.

Among the Bhumijes and the Mahatos, six households regularly take three meals a day. But, in the case of the remaining Bhumij and Mahato households, some of them replied that in some months of the year they also take three meals a day. The households, which can manage to have three meals a day, usually break their fast with *pantabhat* (stale rice). They take their midday meals between 2 P.M. to 3 P.M. and the final meals at night.

Dietary composition

On examining the dietary composition of the households it is found that the surrounding forests exert a very great influence on the nature of the food taken. It is found that various roots, tubers and leaves figure prominently in the vegetarian items of the diet taken by the villagers. Thus, for the major part of the year, the villagers do not have to purchase any vegetables and they depend solely on the produce of the forests.

All the villagers are non-vegetarians. To all of them, a dish of fish, meat or egg is a thing of great relish. In a region, where tanks or ponds are very few in number, fish is not regularly available. As for eggs, though a good many villagers possess fowls, most of them use the eggs for hatching purposes. Some others sell them in the market for ready money. So, in general, egg also does not supplement their diet. Meat, specially of the better variety such as, that of goats or fowls, forms a part of their dishes only during some festive occasions. Their limited financial capacity does not permit them to add meat in their menu. But, for the abundant supply of meat of other inferior animals, the Lodhas owe a great deal to forests. In fact, some members of the Lodha family go to the forests almost daily either for collecting roots and tubers or for catching wild animals. A common-place adage among the

Lodhas suggest that they kill life (animal) to save life (human). The catches, forming almost a regular item of their diet, are listed below.

Bengali Name	English Name	Scientific Name
1 *Gosap*	Iguana or Yellow monitor	Varanus bengalensis
2 *Danras sap*	Common rat snake	Zamenis mucosus
3 *Beji* or *Neul*	Mongoose	Herpestes auropunctatus (No neck stripe nor black tail tip)
	Ruddy mongoose	Herpestes smithi (No neck stripe, black tail tip)
	Strip-necked mongoose	Herpestes vitticellis (black nect strip, black tail tip)
4 *Khargos*	Rabbit	Pallipes
	Hare	Lepus ruficandatus
5 *Sajaru*	Indian crested porcupine	Hystrix indica bengalensis
6 *Payra*	Pigeon	Culumbea livia domestica

7. Different types of toads and frogs

To these may be added different types of birds, that the Lodhas sometimes add to their dishes.

Food vis-a-vis social position

Some of the above items, except, of course, the iguana and the common rat snakes, are also believed to be taken by the Bhumijes. Now, one of the factors why the Lodhas are given an inferior social status and regarded with contempt by the Bhumijes and other castes including the Mahatos is that they have formed a habit of eating the two types of snakes, namely the iguana and the common rat snake.

Anyway, it appears that these roots and tubers together with the meat of the hunted animals are the traditional food of the Lodhas and of the Bhumijes. But, the Bhumijes have been very quick in abstaining themselves from taking those animals, which are regarded contemptuously by the Caste Hindus. In their zeal to get an entry into the society of the Caste Hindus, this is indeed a big leap forward. But, the Lodhas have not found it worthwhile to stop taking the chases of the forests, which, they say, are their traditional food. In this respect, the Lodhas do not meet the same treatment as the Bhumijes from the Caste Hindus.

Meals, menu and timing

Of the two principal meals taken by the Lodhas, the first meal, which is generally taken between 6 A.M. to 7 A.M., consists of freshly cooked rice and is generally taken with chilli or onion and some salt. Sometime, if there

remains any surplus curry or meat, cooked the previous day, it also forms an item of their morning meal. The last meal of the Lodhas, taken between 5 P.M. to 6 P.M., includes freshly cooked rice, pulses and/or roots and tubers and/or meat of the chases, specially of iguana or of common rat snake.

Those of the Bhumij and Mahato households, which go to work at a distance of four or five miles as agricultural labourers, follow the same timing as the Lodhas in taking their meals. But, in general, most of them, however poor they may be, try to keep a small portion of the cooked rice of the previous day. The breakfast starts with this *pantabhat* (cooked rice soaked in water and left overnight) with chilli, onion and salt. With their limited earnings as labourers, they remain satisfied with two meals a day for the major part of the year. The midday meal is taken between 2 P.M. to 3 P.M., when cooked rice is taken with pulses and roots and tubers and/or a curry. In sharp contrast to the Lodhas, meat rarely forms a part of their dishes. Their final meal is composed of the same menu. The Bhumijes and the Mahatos say that only during one or two months after harvest it is within their means to have nutritious diets ; as, at that time, they have some ready money and can afford to have vegetables or eggs or fowl more often.

Feasts on festive occasions

Various festive and ceremonial occasions, however, bring about a change in the dietary compositions and the villagers call a halt to the roots and tubers in the diet and switch over to meat of fowl or goat, even for a day. They take cooked rice with curry of potato or gourd and meat.

On different ceremonial occasions the villagers prepare various types of cakes or *pitha*, much liked by them. These are prepared with a mixture of pulverized rice or wheat with crude molasses. Those, who are well off, fry them in oil and drop them in syrup of sugar. This is specially done by the Mahatos. The villagers are also very much fond of a delicious dish, called *khitchuri*, a spicy boil of rice and pulses.

The Lodhas and the Bhumijes still respect the taboos of their respective totems. They will never touch or eat any bird or animal or fish, which is tabooed. Unlike the widows of most of the Caste Hindus, among whom any non-vegetarian dish is strictly prohibited, the widows of the Lodhas, the Bhumijes and of the Mahatos have no similar restrictions. They can take any dish, they like. But, the pregnant women are saddled with some restrictions, discussed earlier.

Method of cooking

The method of cooking of the Lodhas and the Bhumijes is slightly different from what is done by members of the neighbouring Hindu communities. The stark poverty of the people plays a significant role in shaping the method of their cooking. In cooking rice they never pour out the gruel *i.e.*, the liquid portions of the boiled rice. Rice, when cooked, has no excess water. In preparing curry of vegetables or meat, they first boil it in some water ; then they drop chilli, turmeric paste and salt and occasionally some drops of oil. The use of spices and oil is cut down to a minimum. This is partly due to poverty and partly due to their ignorance of the use of spices. Among the Lodhas, the practice of eating roasted meat is still prevalent. Even now, the hungry boys and girls may be found cutting the tails of the iguana or rat snake, scorching these in

the fire and finally eating the roasted meat with avidness.

Drink

The villagers appear to be the followers of *Bacchus*, in as much as each of them is addicted to drink. Working for wages all through the day, they eagerly await the dusk, the hour to start boozing. All the members of the family, irrespective of sex or age, take their drinks together, except the children, who are not permitted to join. But, even so, many of them are not unaware of the taste of drinks. As they observe their elders in drinking bouts, an inquisitiveness and then a desire for the drinks grows in their hearts too. They are prone to take drinks, as and when they get an opportunity. Whenever they happen to have some money, they secretly slip out to the liquor-shop and spend the money there.

It is rather surprising that these villagers, too poor to afford even two square meals a day, cannot have a dry day. It may very often be seen that a Lodha couple, with the daily wage of Rs. 2/- after laborious work from morning to dusk, spend one third of the income on drinks, while their children cry in hunger. What an irony indeed !

They say that drinks are part of their life. The intoxicant rejuvenates their fatigued bodies. Wine provides them fresh energy for the morrow. Drink, as they fancy, is also an excellent means to appease their appetite at least for certain hour. In fact, it kills their monotony of life, as they urge.

Apart from being an item of their everyday life, wine has been a part of their ceremonies and festivals. Be it a religious festival, marriage or a funeral, drink is always there and drink is the prime attraction. A friend or a guest is to be offered drink first, drink being considered to be the best means of entertainment on earth.

The drinks, they take, are generally a kind of indigenous liquor, locally called *handia*, a product of fermented rice. But, when the season for ripe *mahua* fruits comes, the villagers collect the fruits and prepare liquor out of them. It is said that the liquor, made from *mahua* fruits, is highly intoxicating and a stimulant too. Such a stuff is often stored for future use.

Cooking utensils

The utensils, used for cooking here, are very crude and simple. The Lodhas use earthenware extensively and exclusively. All the 35 Lodha households possess only earthen pots for cooking rice. A cheap item, like iron pan or *karai*, costing only Rs. 1·50 to Rs. 2·00, is not within their means even. Instead, they use earthen pots, locally known as *khola*, for cooking curry and other food. Besides, most of them use wooden ladles or *khontas*. It is pointed out that some two or three decades ago, food was served on *Sal* leaves. But, now most of them are in possession of one or two dishes of inferior metals like enamel or aluminium. The use of utensils, made of brass and bell-metal, is limited only to a very few households. All of them use earthen pitchers for storing water.

Two of the three Mahato families and three of the seventeen Bhumij families possess cooking pots (*handi*), made of aluminum. All the remaining households have only earthen cooking pots. Practically all the Bhumij and Mahato families possess iron pans and vessels, made of bell-metal, brass and aluminium. Vessels or dishes, made of bell-metal, are owned

by a few households. Iron ladles are commonly used and water is stored in earthen pitchers. Empty oil containers of tin are used by some households for storing water.

From the following account, one will have the description of the cooking utensils used.

Local name of the utensil	Description	Technique of use
1	2	3
Karai (Pan)	A concave vessel made of iron with two handles on opposite ends	Used for cooking soup and curry
Khola (Vessel)	An earthen vessel	Used for preserving the cooked rice or curry
Khonta (Ladle)	A flat and squarish wooden ladle with a handle	For stirring food, while cooking it
Kalsi (Pitcher)	An earthen pitcher	For storing water
Thala (Dish)	An earthen flattened dish or a flattened circular plate of metal	Used for serving food
Handi (Vessel)	An earthen vessel with raised ends	Used for cooking rice

C. Beliefs and practices connected with birth, marriage and death

Birth

First menstruation

To the Lodhas first menstruation is believed to be very dangerous. It is held that serious danger, even death, may befall either the husband or the wife, if they happen to cohabit within seven days after the first menstruation. If the first menstruation takes place, when the wife is in her husband's house, she is hidden in some other house or is brought back to her father's house. Anyway, the custom is that the husband is not allowed to see the wife for four days of the menstrual period, after which the woman is to take her bath and smear her hair with oil. If possible, she is to wear a new cloth. During all these days, she is unclean for all ceremonial purposes. She is not allowed to touch any one, fetch water or to do the cooking. In case of unmarried girls the rules are more rigid. She is kept totally secluded and is prohibited from performing any domestic or ceremonial duties during the period of uncleanness.

The beliefs and practices among the Bhumijes and the Mahatos do not differ much as regards the first menstruation of a girl, whether married or unmarried. The girl is considered thoroughly unclean for the first three days. She is not allowed to touch any person or to cook or serve food during this period. On the fourth day she is purified after taking her bath.

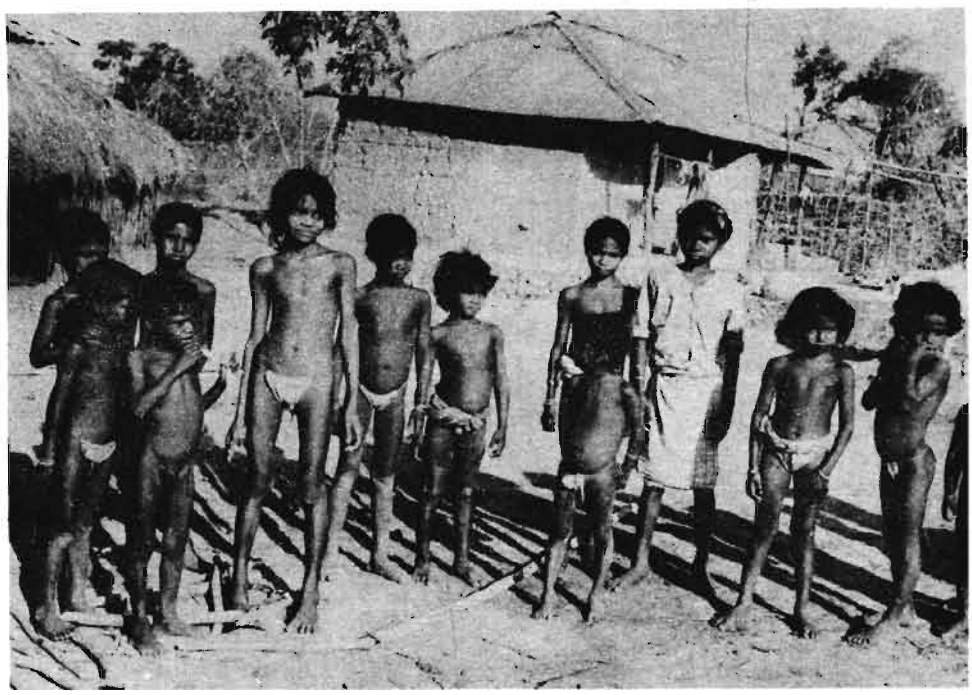
Determination of pregnancy

Stoppage of menstruation is taken as the general symptom of pregnancy. The other symptoms of pregnancy, such as loss of appetite, nausea and salivation appear later and confirm the fact of conception.

Special care for the pregnant woman

During pregnancy, the need of the pregnant woman for taking nourishing food for the growth

JUST A COVER—INNOCENCE NOT COVERED



Langoti or a small strip of unsewn cloth, covering the perineal part of the Lodha children upto ten or twelve years, is provided by rags or rejected tatters—nudity in some cases is not hidden, for the parents do not feel any need—this is said also to be the traditional dress of the Lodha males—the intruder in full attire presents a sharp contrast and she is a Bhumij



Girls approaching adolescence wear short *Sari*—here all the girls are Lodhas though, the dress does not vary with the Bhumij and the Mahatos

THE OLD AND THE NEW



The full-sleeved shirt and trousers of the young son of the Bhumij *Adhyaksha* of the *Gram Panchayat* does not represent the dress of the village-youth—an exception, rather than a rule, the dress of the young student above is partly an index of prosperity and social prestige and partly a product of acculturation in the material sphere—the *Dhoti*, as used by the old Lodha (*Atgharia* or bailiff), is universal in use

BURNING EMBERS KEEP OFF THE WINTRY CHILL



Warmth of a fire-place in the open in winter is not a luxury—a thin cotton wrapper is not enough

WOMANLY PRIDE !



Trite, simple and cheap ornaments, used by the Lodha woman, is representative of the ornaments of the Bhumij and the Mahatos—the close-up view above of a married Lodha girl with nose-ring, earring, neckchain and bangles of zinc

SELF-CONTENT



A small girl contented with the zinc bangles on her hand

AN AFTERNOON CARE



A familiar sight of hair-doing in a Lodha household where the hairdresser is the mother

PARTNERS IN LIFE'S STRUGGLE



Children are not always a drag on their parents—clothes washed in the tank by the two brothers are carried home—the empty bucket contains cowdung, picked up on their way, for use as fuel

THEY MAKE THE BEST OF WHAT LITTLE THEY HAVE —AN ENDOWMENT INDEED



Earthen pitchers to store water for drinking

A BUSY YOUNG HOUSE-WIFE



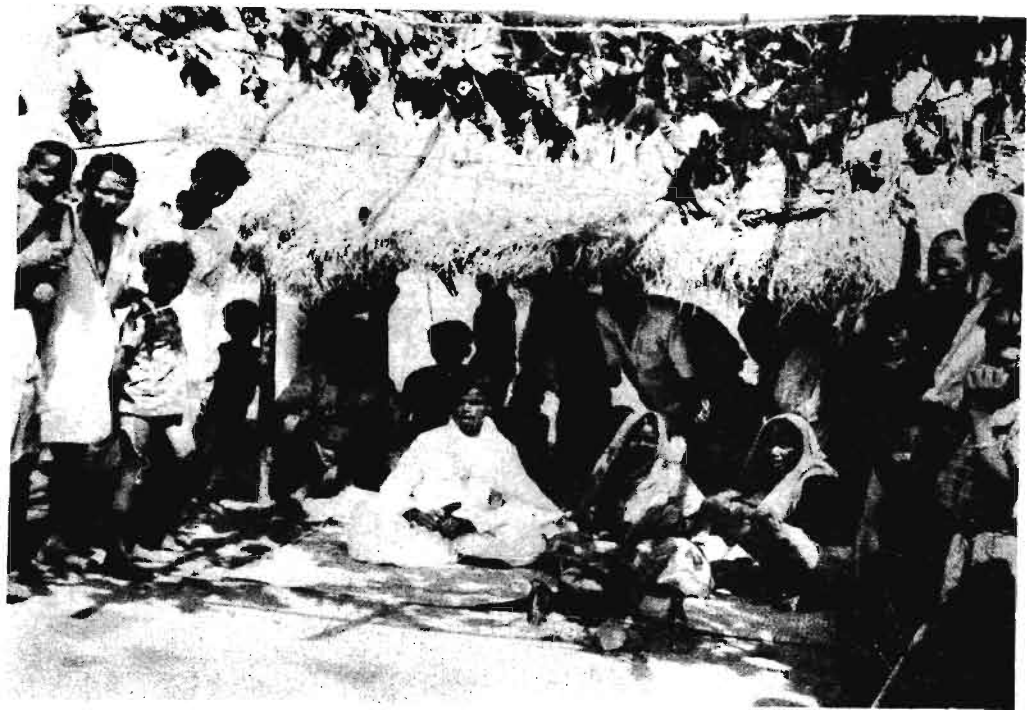
Hand-pounding rice for household use



MARRIAGE IS A CONTRACT

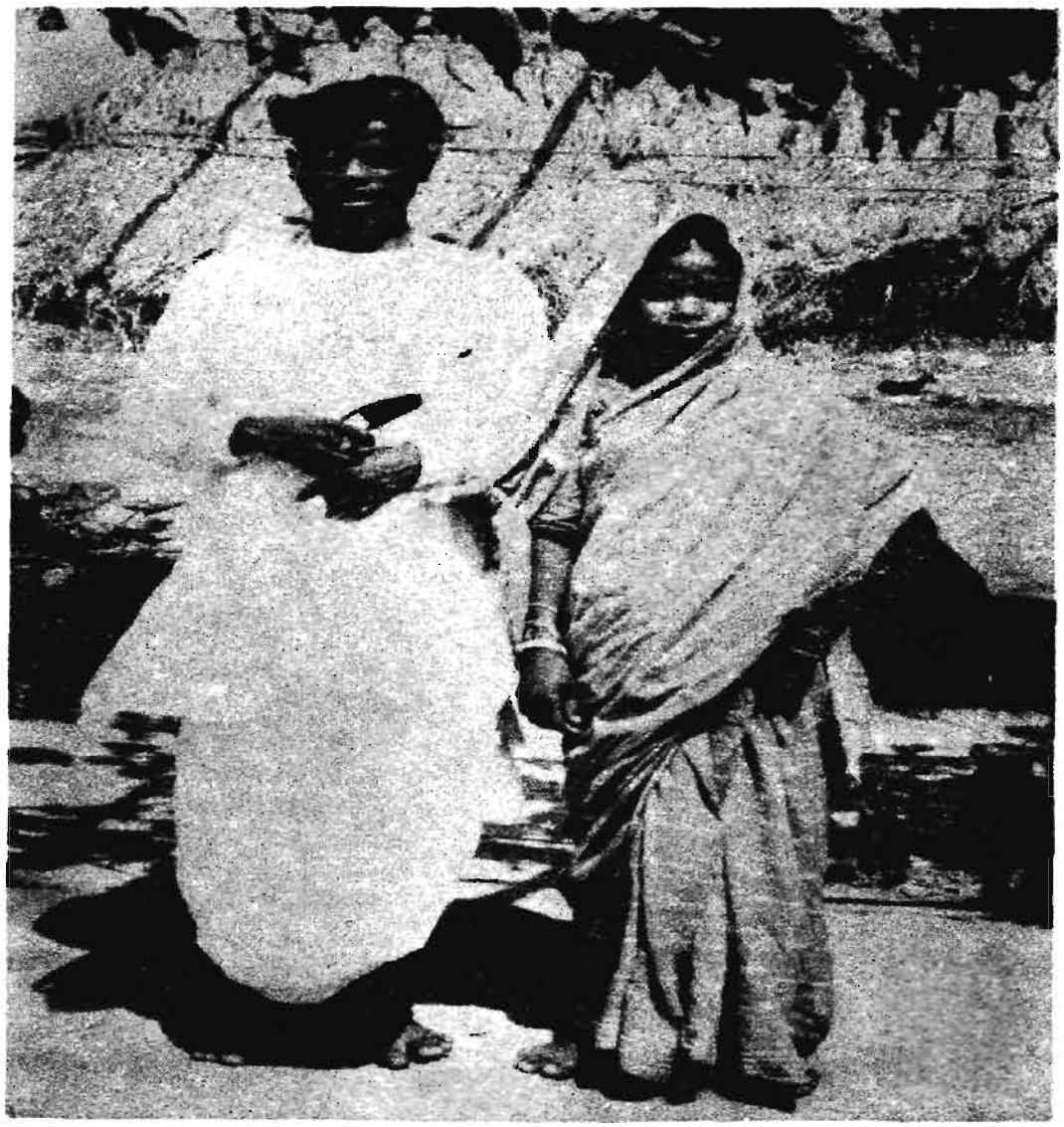
A gathering of Lodhas to transact the payment of bride-price

AN ACT IN THE LIFE'S DRAMA



The Lodha bridegroom and the bride in wedlock at the *Chamratola* (marriage-booth)

BIRTH OF A NUCLEATED FAMILY



A just married young Lodha couple

NOT A BANQUET, BUT A HEARTY FEAST



A nuptial feast of the Lodhas—not a sumptuous one but undoubtedly hearty to ensure a good fill

of the foetus in the womb is generally appreciated. During later stages of pregnancy, it is not desired that the pregnant woman should do any heavy work, like digging of earth, labour in the fields etc. But in practice, the restrictions cannot be always followed. On enquiry, it is learnt that many Lodha women have to perform all kinds of heavy work even upto the tenth month of their pregnancy ; as otherwise, it would be very difficult for them to earn their livelihood. A witty reply of a Lodha woman is *"A Lodha woman feels the pain either in the jungle or in the fields, comes back home for delivery and rests for 21 days upto the Ekusha Ceremony"*.

Restrictions and prohibitions during pregnancy

Very stringent restrictions and regulations are imposed on the day-to-day life of the expectant mother. During pregnancy, she is prohibited from taking food many times and from doing certain acts. Some of the restrictions imposed are as follows :

(i) The pregnant woman is restrained from killing any animal or creature. In the case of the Lodhas, the pregnant woman cannot participate in any hunting expedition. It is generally believed that if the mother kills any beast or animal or any other creature, while the child is in her womb, the child may die.

(ii) An expectant mother should not pass any thread through the eye of the needle, as it is believed that in doing so the needle may pass through the eye of the child.

(iii) A pregnant woman is prohibited from crossing the river.

(iv) To a pregnant woman the eating of fish, caught in a basket-trap or in an angle, is tabooed. They believe that if the pregnant woman ever eats such a fish, the child in the womb will feel the same amount of pain, as suffered by the fish caught in a basket-trap or in an angle.

(v) A pregnant woman is prohibited from eating stale rice (পান্তা ভাত) and jack fruit.

(vi) The pregnant woman must not attend any funeral ceremony or the purification ceremony (*Natta*) of any other household. The members of a house, where a woman has conceived, must not take part in carrying any dead body to the crematorium.

(vii) The pregnant woman must avoid, as far as possible, going to the forests or any other place, which is believed to be haunted by evil spirits, as it is believed that during pregnancy a pregnant woman is especially susceptible to the evil spirits.

(viii) A pregnant woman must see that the loose end of her *sari* does not touch the ground, while she walks. If she fails to take caution, evil spirit may cause harm to her and to the child.

(ix) She must not visit any place alone, lest some evil spirit should cause harm to her by miscarriage.

(x) During the lunar or solar eclipses, a pregnant woman must not take any food. as this might affect the growth of the child in the womb.

(xi) The father of the child should not kill any animal or beast, till the baby is born.

Determination of sex of the unborn

When a woman is in the advanced stages of pregnancy, her friends and relatives, specially the women, make various guesses and, anticipations about the probable sex of the baby in the womb.

(i) If during pregnancy the pregnant woman appears to be very bulky, it is believed that the child in the womb is a female ; if the woman appears to be lean and lanky, the child is believed to be a male one.

(ii) A woman with swollen abdomen is believed to bear a female child, while a woman with flat belly is believed to bear a male child.

(iii) If during pregnancy the right breast of the expectant mother becomes more prominent and pronounced than the left one, she is believed to carry a female child, while if the left breast becomes more prominent than the right one, she is believed to carry a male child.

(iv) Similarly, if the right eye of the child-bearing woman appears to be bigger than the left eye, she is believed to be giving birth to a female child ; and if the left eye appears to be bigger, it augurs the birth of a male child.

The ceremonial feast for the prospective mother

The ceremonial feast for the pregnant woman is locally known as *Sadh Bhakshan*. When a woman conceives for the first time, a hearty dinner is arranged in her honour, usually in the seventh month of her pregnancy, on an auspicious day, fixed by the head of the household after consulting the almanac.

It is generally believed that if during pregnancy a woman has her desire for palatable dishes unfulfilled, the child in the womb will never be satisfied in its life-time. They also believe that if ever a pregnant woman dies with an unsatisfied desire, her soul remains unsatisfied even after her death. So, the ceremonial feast is arranged to enable the prospective mother to relish some specially prepared delicious dishes of her choice. The feast is arranged in the house of her husband. But, the parents of the pregnant woman usually carry thickened milk (*khir*), cakes, sweetmeats, oil, flour, a new *sari*, vermilion etc. to the son-in-law's house. To the above items may be added other delicious dishes, prepared in her husband's house. If possible, some friends and relatives are invited. The woman is then clad in a new *sari*. Some foods are offered to the Goddess *Sitala* with the prayer of invoking Her blessing on the woman. Then, the guests are entertained and the pregnant woman is served with all delicious and palatable dishes.

Lying-in-room

When the pregnant woman feels the labour pain, a lying-in-room for the expectant mother is prepared. Most of the Lodhas and the Bhumijes live in single roomed houses ; so, the formality of a lying-in-room is observed by partitioning the main room with a cloth or at least a corner of the verandah is screened off by a partition. Among the Mahatos and some of the well-to-do Bhumijes, the lying-in-room is often a separate shed near the main hut.

Difficult labour

Among the Lodhas and the Bhumijes, an elderly woman belonging to the respective tribes, acts as a nurse, while an untrained midwife, locally known as *Dai*, belonging to the Hanri caste, is called in to assist the nurse and also for cutting the umbilical cord.

At the time of birth conchshell is blown to announce the birth of a child among the Bhumijes. After the birth of the child, the umbilical cord is cut off with a bamboo splinter. After some time, the placenta is kept aside and collected by the midwife in an earthen ware covered by a lid. If the placenta does not come out easily, the nurse and the midwife make some special efforts. If they fail, the magic-man (*Gunin*) is called in. The *Gunin* utters some incantation or puts some herbal medicine in the hair of the mother. Sometimes, the mother is sent to the nearby hospital at Lalgarh.

The earthen pot, containing the placenta, is then taken by the *Dai* and buried under ground in one corner of the house. The stump of the umbilical cord, when it dries out and drops off, is also buried. It is generally believed that evil-minded people (witch) or spirits may cause serious harm to the mother and the baby, if ever the placenta and the stump of the umbilical cord are exposed to public view.

Among the Lodhas it is found that just on the birth of the child, the mother offers the first drop of milk of her breast on the mother-earth and then gives milk to her baby.

Cleaning

The baby is then bathed in water ; the mid-wife warms her own palms over fire and applies them on the limbs of the baby. The same day the mother is not allowed to take solid food. On the contrary, she is sometimes given a soup of *Kurthi* (Dolichos biflorus) pulse. Among the Bhumijes and the Mahatos, the mother is given parched rice *(chinra)*, fried in *ghee* (clarified butter).

Period of defilement

There is no fixed period of defilement. It varies from one caste or tribe to another, as also within the same caste or tribe.

Thus, among the Lodhas the socially sanctioned period of uncleanness is upto the 21st day, when *Ekusha* is performed.

But, the currently accepted and practised period of defilement is upto the day of the first ceremonial purification, called *Natta*, which is held on the ninth day. Sometimes, among the Lodhas, it is also held on the seventh day. There is also another practice among the Bhumij community, when the period of pollution is cut down to three or five days. This happens, when the child is born at the end of the month. In that case, the ceremonial purification, known as *Saj Natta* is held on the third or fifth day, so that it may be completed within the same month.

Restrictions during inter-purification period

During this period the mother and the baby are regarded as ceremonially unclean by all the people of the village. The mother must not leave the hut and none is allowed to enter into the lying-in-room, the exceptions being the female relatives and the children of the confined mother. When the neighbouring women come to enquire of the health of the baby and mother, they talk from a safe distance, to avoid contact. If anyone accidentally comes in touch with the mother or the baby, he or she becomes unclean and has to take a bath for purification. Along with the mother and the baby, the ceremonial impurity of the whole family and their kindred (*Bhayad-bansha*) on the paternal side upto three generations in the village continues. They are prohibited from shaving as also from paring their nails. Till the day of ceremonial purification, the whole family is prohibited from performing any socio-religious ceremony. As a general practice, any ceremony or worship, likely to be held within the unclean period, has to be deferred, till the period of purification ends.

As to the diet of the mother it is found that among the Lodhas the mother is permitted to take boiled rice from the second day, while among the Bhumijes and the Mahatos it is permitted on the third or the fifth day after delivery. During this period, some of the households do not take any non-vegetarian dishes.

Ceremonial purification

The first ceremonial purification of the Lodhas takes place on the ninth day. But, in the case of the Bhumij, their final purification takes place on the seventh or the ninth day. In perfect unison with the Hindus, they have also termed this ceremony as *Natta* (নত্ত). On this day, the services of the barber, the female barber, both being Napits by caste, as also of the washerman belonging to the Rajak community are summoned. The washerman takes at least one piece of cloth from each of the houses of the kindred and washes it,

The male barber shaves at least one person in every house belonging to the kindred. The female barber pares off the nails and smears the feet of the mother and of as many women as possible, of the same kindred with lac-dye. In the case of the Lodhas, the barber also shaves the hair (গাবচুল) of the new born baby. On the same day, the midwife again comes and washes all the clothes, used in the lying-in-room. For their services, the washerman, the male barber and the midwife each gets one kilogram of rice and rupees two, while the female barber gets half the amount. All of them are given a hearty meal. Sometimes, they are also given some vegetables.

On this day, all the rags and clothes, used in the lying-in-room, are either thrown away or washed up. All the families, belonging to same kindred, have to throw away all their earthen wares and to cleanse all their utensils. From this day on, they are to cook in new earthen pots. This is known as ধুল বাড়ানো *(Dhool Barano)*.

The mother of the baby accompanies the midwife and her relatives to the nearest *bund* or pond or tank. They take bath in the tanks and get themselves purified. On this day, the Lodhas are very cautious. They never leave the new-born baby alone. Someone is to guard it all the time in the lying-in-room.

Going to the tank, the Bhumijes perform the rite of worshipping the mother Ganges like the Hindus. The mother of the baby, after taking her bath, places one myrobalan *(haritoki)*, an egg and some milk on the sand, the myrobalan being smeared with vermilion. They wash these in water as an offer to the Goddess *Ganga*. This is the prevalent practice among the neighbouring Hindus, but, some of the elderly people say that the practice was not current in their young age.

After bath they become purified. Now, they come back to their house and start cooking in new earthen wares.

On this occasion, the custom is to invite the relatives and friends to a hearty dinner, in which the washerman, the barber and the midwife also take part. Indigenous liquor *i. e.*, *handia*, is served to all the guests. After dinner, the baby is brought before the invitees and is allowed to sit facing the east on a place, covered with paddy grains and *durba* grass (cynodon dactylon) ; the invitees see the baby and offer presents, mostly in cash, on the plate.

As said earlier, the custom among the Lodhas is to perform the second and final purification ceremony on the 21st day. With the performance of *Natta*, all the families, belonging to the same kindred except the mother and the new-born baby, become ceremonially purified for all religious purposes. The mother is fully purified only after the performance of the *Ekusha* ceremony, held on the 21st day. But, in extreme cases of poverty, as some of the families cannot perform the *Ekusha*, they complete all the formalities with the *Natta*. In that case, the name-giving ceremony also coincides with the *Natta*.

In the case of the Bhumij, the purification ceremony is over with the performance of the *Natta*.

Ekusha

This is the name of the final purification ceremony, held on the 21st day among the Lodhas. After the performance of the *Ekusha*, the family becomes fully purified.

On this day, all the remaining rags and tattered pieces of clothes are thrown away from the lying-in-room. The room is

thoroughly smeared with water mixed with cowdung.

The washerman once more visits and takes at least one piece of cloth from each of the houses belonging to the same kindred. The male barber also pays a visit to the households and shaves at least one member in each house. The female barber pares off the nails of the female members of as many houses as possible and smears their feet with lac-dye.

A dinner is arranged by the family, and the relatives are invited. The washerman, the barbers and the midwife are also a party to it. For their services, they are again paid Rs.2/- each, as remuneration. The invitees are served with rice, curry and if possible, with meat or fowl or goat and with *handia* as well.

Name-giving ceremony

Among the Bhumijes and the Mahatos, a separate name-giving ceremony is performed on the 21st day after the birth of the child. But, among the Lodhas no separate name-giving ceremony, as such, is held. It is held either on the day of the *Natta* ceremony or on the day of the *Ekusha* ceremony when the relatives and friends are invited. Among the Bhumijes and the Mahato's it is usually held in an open space, but among the Lodhas in a room. The ceremony is usually held in the courtyard, which is cleaned with water and cowdung-paste. The place is then decorated with marks of *alpana* (decorative designs) done with pulverised rice.

Generally, the grand mother of the baby comes out with the infant on her lap in front of the invited guests and takes her seat on a piece of wooden stool, decorated with *alpana*. A small pot (*ghati*), filled with water, and a plate are placed in front of the stool. Paste of sandal wood, paddy, *durba* grass, turmeric, oil, a piece of silver and two balls, one made of sunned rice and another made of cowdung, are placed on the plate. The invited relatives and guests suggest different names for the baby, of which one name is accepted. Then, the parents and the grand-parents smear the child's head with oil and put a *Tilak* (mark) with paste of sandal wood on the forehead. The invitees offer presents to the child and bless it saying, "Oh sweet child! May thou live long. May thou be blessed with wealth."

At the time of naming the child, the villagers are very cautious. If anyone happens to sneeze at the time, the name is regarded ominous for the child and is usually cancelled. They look for another name. The ceremony concludes after serving the guests with boiled rice, curry and if possible, with meat. *Handia* is a compulsory item.

The first rice-feeding ceremony of the child

Locally known as *Mukh-Jutna*, the ceremony is held in the seventh or the ninth month, after the birth of the child. Among the Bhumij, this ceremony is restricted to only those families, which have followed it perpetually. The ceremony is held on an auspicious day, fixed by the priest of the particular community. The following articles are usually required :

(a) A new earthen cooking pot
(b) A new dish of brass or bell-metal
(c) A new glass of brass or bell-metal
(d) Milk
(e) *Atap* rice
(f) Molasses
(g) Red tape or *ghunsi*

A special preparation of rice, known as *Payas*, is made by boiling *atap* rice with

milk and molasses. The actual rice feeding ceremony is preceded by a special test for determining the fortune of the child. A new dish, containing a handful of rice, a ball of cowdung, a silver coin, and a piece of paper, is placed before the child to see which of these four things it touches first. If the child touches rice first of all, it is held that in its lifetime it will have no want of food. If the child touches the ball of cowdung, it is believed that the child will be an owner of cattle in future. If the child touches the silver coin, they believe that the child will earn immense money in future. If the child touches the piece of paper, it is held that it will be educated in future. If on the other hand, the child does not touch anything, they believe that the lot of the child will not be good and it will have to drag a miserable existence in the long run.

The test being concluded, the father-in-law or mother-in-law or sister's husband of the father of the child feeds him the specially prepared rice. Those, who are well off, usually arrange a dinner in honour of the guests.

Beliefs connected with the birth of a child

As already said, the villagers believe that during pregnancy, a woman falls an easy prey to evil spirits, witches and sorcerers. If ever she is influenced by evil spirits, she is sure to face dire consequences, such as, abortion or difficult labour causing death.

As a safeguard against all these evils pirits, they take certain precautions. As soon as a woman conceives, she invokes the favour of the Goddess *Sitala* after bath on any day at any time in a room of the household saying, "O Goddess ! Please protect me from all evil spirits. Please bestow on me the favour of smooth and safe delivery. I will make a sacrifice of a goat (or fowl) to you and offer you sweetmeats."

During pregnancy, the woman is always very cautious. With the slightest symptom of abortion, it is taken for granted that the woman is obsessed by evil spirits or cursed by witches. The magic-man (*Gunin*) of the community is called in without delay. The magic-man first ascertains by a process, known as *Telpara* (which has been described in details in the Chapter IV on magico-religious beliefs and practices), as to what type of evil spirit or witch has haunted the woman.

Then, the magic-man utters various incantations and ties a knot in the hair of the pregnant, which serves as a safeguard. This is locally known as *Dhanni bandha*. It is believed that with such a knot a pregnant woman is always safe from the evil spirits. At the time of actual delivery, the magic-man is again called in to untie the knot. It is believed that only after the knot is untied, the delivery takes place smoothly. If by chance and mistake, the magical tie is not untied, the delivery will be protracted and delayed.

Again, in case of difficult labour and protracted pain in the advanced stages of pregnancy, it is believed that the pregnant woman is under the influence of evil spirits. The magic-man is called in. He first utters some incantations towards the woman. This is known as *Jharphook*. Next, he utters some incantation over some water. This process is known as *Jalpara*. The pregnant woman is asked to drink that magical water which, it is believed, has the power of counteracting any mischievous influence of the evil spirits.

Barrenness

A barren woman occupies an inferior social position in the society. Such a woman is believed to wield ominous influence and is avoided on all occasions. The villagers attribute the causes of barrenness to the

influence of evil spirits. A Lodha medicine-man of the village is called in to drive out the evil spirits. He claims that he can cure the barrenness of any woman by applying some herbal roots. He does not charge any fixed remuneration and accepts whatever amount is given to him by the party concerned, after the woman conceives. On investigation, it was pointed out by one Mahato resident of the village that his wife did not conceive even after seven or eight years of marriage. When he was thinking of remarriage, his wife took some medicine from the said Lodha medicine-man and conceived very soon. It could not be gathered how and where the medicine-man learnt the use of this medicine.

Abortion

The villagers regard abortion as a sin. So, no one in the village favours abortion. But, it is reported that a Lodha woman knows the use of some herbal roots, which, if swallowed, can cause abortion without much pain. It is also reported by the villagers that a few women of doubtful character sometimes take the help of these roots for causing abortion.

Contraceptive

Birth of a child is looked upon as a blessing, conferred on the parents by the Almighty. Nevertheless, the villagers know the physiological causes of the birth of a child. But majority of them do not know how the pregnancy of a woman can be avoided. They look upon such an effort to be a deliberate act to frustrate the design of God. Only a handful few among the Lodhas have a vague idea that a couple of aged Lodha women know the use of some indigenous plants, which prevent conception. But, it is not known if the knowledge is ever utilised by any villager.

Marriage

Remuneration of the priests

The same priests do not serve the Bhumijes, the Lodhas and the Mahatos during the marriage-ceremonies. As such, the remuneration of the priests varies. Even in the case of the same community, a priest gets remuneration, which varies from household to household according to the latter's means.

In the case of the Lodhas, the Vaishnava, who is their priest, usually gets Rs.2/- to Rs.3/- and some rice and sometime a cloth.

In the case of the marriage of the Bhumijes, the priest is a Brahman by caste with the title of Chakravarty. He gets Rs.3/- to Rs. 5/-, four or five *seers* of rice, one or two clothes and a napkin.

In the case of the marriage of the Mahatos, the priest is a Brahman with the title of Pandey. He gets Rs. 5/-, four or five *seers* of rice and one or two clothes and some napkins.

Marriage of a Bhumij

The proposal for marriage among the Bhumij comes through friends or relatives. There is no *Ghatki* or match-maker. At times, the *Mukhia* or the traditional headman of the tribal *Panchayat* of the Bhumij gives the necessary information, as he is in contact with other *Mukhias*. First of all, the relatives of the bridegroom visit the house of the bride. Preliminary negotiations are carried on, if the bride is selected.

This is followed by astrological calculation. For this purpose, the Bhumij of this village visit a nearby village, Pirakata, about Twelve Kilometers away in the Police Station of Salboni, where there is an Acharya Brahman (a Brahman, who makes astrological calculations). This Brahman makes calculations with the help of the names of the bridegroom and the bride. He gets 50 paise to Re. 1/- as remuneration.

If the result of the calculations is favourable, the relatives of the bride visit the house of the bridegroom and sees him. If they agree, mutual negotiations about dowry and other particulars are afoot and a convenient and auspicious day for the betrothal of the bridegroom is fixed by the parents of both the parties after consulting the almanac.

(a) Bar-baran (Betrothal of the bridegroom)

The next preliminary ceremony for the marriage of a Bhumij is betrothal. On the appointed day, the bride's guardian with a number of relatives comes to the house of the bridegroom bringing with them (i) new cloth, (ii) garland, (iii) *ghunsi* or a kind of red tape, (iv) paste of sandalwood.

On their arrival, they are accorded a hearty welcome. The feet of the guests are washed by the young members of the house hold.

Then, the bridegroom-elect wears the articles, brought by the party of the bride-elect. Next, the bridegroom's sister's husband comes in with the bridegroom on his lap. He also brings a pot, full of water, with a mango-twig in it and makes the bridegroom-elect stand facing east on a wooden platform with some decorations made by a paste of pulverised rice. He then moves round the bridegroom thrice and while then doing so, he drops water from the pot. All this is done in presence of the party of the bride, other relatives and the headman of the village.

(b) Testing the knowledge of the bridegroom-elect

Several questions are put to the bridegroom to test his practical knowledge. These questions are usually put by some seniormost member of the party of the bride. Some of the typical questions are as follows :

Q. On which do you stand up ?
Ans. On the *Bashumati i.e.*, mother-earth.
Q. What is above your head ?
Ans. Religion.
Q. What is in front of you ?
Ans. East.
Q. What is just behind you ?
Ans. West.
Q. What is to your left ?
Ans. North.
Q. What is to your right ?
Ans. South.

The bridegroom sprinkles some water on the men present there and he is carried back by his sister's husband on his lap. All the guests have a hearty meal of boiled rice, pulse and fowl-curry. This is followed by a drink of *handia* or rice-beer.

(c) Kone-baran (Betrothal of the bride)

In the like manner, betrothal takes place in the house of the bride-elect. On the date fixed by the guardian of the bridegroom, the bridegroom and other members come to the house of the bride-elect. They carry the following articles with them :

(i) *Sari*,
(ii) blouse,
(iii) *patkharu* or a kind of bangle made of brass,
(iv) garland,
(v) bead-necklace,
(vi) *ghunsi* or red tape and
(vii) bride-price.

The grand mother carries the bride on her lap and repeats the process, as was done in the house of the bridegroom. The ceremony being completed, the father of the bridegroom places the amount of bride-price on a plate and hands over the money to the bride's guardian.

Just on the eve of their departure, they select a suitable date for *lagan bandha.*

(d) *Lagan bandha* (Selection of a suitable date for marriage.)

This ceremony usually takes place on the third day preceding marriage ceremony. It may take place on the fifth or the seventh day before marriage. The only is restriction that *lagan bandha* cannot take place on an even number of days before marriage. The auspicious day of *lagan bandha* is fixed by the parties themselves after consulting the almanac. If the marriage ceremony takes place in a hurry or if there is no auspicious date, *lagan bandha* can take place even on the day of marriage, although the possibility is very rare.

On the day of *lagan bandha* two members from the bridegroom's house come to the house of the bride-elect. On their arrival, a dish, containing *durba* grass, a few grains of paddy, paste of turmeric, cowdung, ropes of hemp and pulverised sunned rice is placed in front of them. An empty bowl with a *Sal* leaf is placed in a corner of the dish. Then, in the presence of the members of the bride's house one member of the bridegroom's house picks up the rope of hemp.

The actual process of *lagan bandha* consists of tying a knot with the rope of hemp, so that the knot contains a *durba* grass (cynodon dactylon) and a grain of paddy. Now, the number of knots in the rope varies directly with the number of days left for the marriage ceremony. For instance, if there are three days left for the marriage, the rope of hemp will contain three knots, each knot tied by respective members of the bridegroom's house and of the bride's house. The process is repeated with the other rope of hemp. The ropes are then smeared with the paste of turmeric. The ropes, so made, are known as *lagans.* The *lagan*, earmarked for the bride is put in the bowl with the remaining amount of dowry and covered with *Sal* leaf. The other *lagan* for the bridegroom is carried by the members of the bridegroom's house. The *lagan* of the bridegroom is prepared in the bride's house by the bride's mother's brother and by the bride's sister's husband and by the members of the bridegroom's household.

After tying this sacred *lagan*, the bride and the bridegroom will have to be very cautious. From this day they will not be permitted to go far beyond their respective houses. Moreover, from this time the bridegroom is to carry with him a nut-cracker (*Janti*), made of iron. The bride also carries a spoon-like iron vessel for preparing stibium for the eyes (*Kajal-lata*). It is held that *Janti* and the *Kajal-lata* each acts as a protection of the bridegroom and the bride from any danger.

As will be seen later, with the completion of each day's formality, each knot of the *lagan* will be untied, and the last knot is be untied on the actual day of the marriage. To the query about the significance of this *lagan bandha* ceremony, some senior members of the tribe said that in the past people were absolutely ignorant of the date-calendar and it was very difficult for them to remember correctly the date of the marriage. Thus, *lagan bandha*, apart from symbolising the tying of the hearts of the husband and wife, acted as a pointer to the date of marriage.

(e) Ga-halud (Anointment with turmeric paste)

Right from the day of *lagan bandha*, the bodies of the bridegroom-elect and the bride-elect are anointed with turmeric-paste every evening in their respective houses. At first, the father's brother's wife or the mother's brother's wife anoints the bridegroom's and the bride's bodies with turmeric-paste. Then, the

women mostly of the same community anoint their bodies with turmeric-paste. The conch-shell is blown during the ceremony. After the anointment is complete, the bridegroom and the bride take bath and the knot of the *lagan* is untied in the respective houses of the bridegroom and the bride by the female members, who anoint the turmeric-paste. From this time, they remain very careful. Formerly, this ceremony was accompanied by song and music by the womenfolk. But, now this practice is discontinued once for all in compliance with a decision arrived at by a convention, details of which will be discussed later.

In the morning of the day of marriage the washerman comes and takes at least one piece of cloth from each house (*Bhayadbansha* or the kindred group). The barber comes and shaves the bridegroom and as many other members as possible.

(f) Chhamra bandha (Erection of the Chhamra)

In the morning of the marriage ceremony, a rectangular mud-platform, known as *Chhamra*, is raised in the courtyard of the house of the bridegroom as well as in that of the bride. This *Chhamra* is erected usually by the sister's husband of the bridegroom and of the bride. In the four corners of the *Chhamra*, a thin *Sal* sapling is planted together with a plantain leaf. The twigs of mango along with the leaves of plantain are raised over-head, so as to serve as a canopy. In the centre of the *Chhamra* in a small pit the branches of mango, *Mahua* and of *Sidha* trees are planted along with a piece of silver, pieces of turmeric, one betel nut and some *durba* grass. Next to this, a small bund or miniature reservoir is dug on one side of the *Chhamra*. Three pitchers are placed on some paddy in the northern, eastern and southern sides of the *Chhamra* and a small earthern pot (*handi*) is kept on the western side. The *handi* is covered with a concave lid, on which a small lamp burns. All the four sides are connected by a red cotton-thread, which marks the boundary of the *Chhamra*.

(g) Abra-bhat (Ceremonial feast of the bridegroom-elect)

On the day of the marriage the bridegroom-elect visits all the houses of his tribe and some other houses of his friends. There, he salutes all his respected relatives. In every house, the womenfolk anoint the bridegroom with turmeric-paste and mustard oil and put marks of vermilion on his forehead and ears. Then, the bridegroom is entertained with *payas* and/or sweetmeats. In every house, presents of some cash-money, clothes or garlands of flowers are made to the bridegroom. The same day, rice for the bridegroom is cooked in a new earthen ware and the bridegroom is served in his house rice and thickened milk.

(h) Rites in the marriage-booth or Chhamra

Some rites are performed in the *Chhamra* (marriage-booth) in the afternoon of the day of marriage in thehouses of the bride-groom and of the bride. Near the *Chhamra* the sister's husband digs a pit with the help of a hoe. Some water is poured into the pit, which is called *bundh* or tank. Here, the brothers and sisters of the bridegroom crack jokes with the sister's husband by sprinkling water on him from this tank. A yoke with marks of vermilion is placed near the *bundh*. The bridegroom is to sit on the yoke. Then, all the womenfolk, with whom the bride-groom is in joking relationship, stand round the bridegroom with their face turned back and with their hair spread over the head of the bridegroom. Someone pours water on the hair of the women, so that the washed water bathes the bridegroom. After this rite is over, the bridegroom is married to a plantain

tree. He puts three marks of vermilion on the tree and embraces it thrice. The same procedure is followed in the house of the bride.

Several maidens carry three pitchers, full of water, to the weddingbooth. The bridegroom places some *durba* grass and paddy on the pitchers and paints some marks of vermilion on them. Then, he kisses the pitchers.

The Brahman (the priest, who conducts the marriage ceremony) with the title of Chakravorty prepares two *Kankans* (bangles) of thread, to which are tied betel nuts, paddy, *durba* grass and leaves of mango, one bangle is for the bridegroom and the other for the bride; he ties one bangle round the right wrist of the bridegroom.

The bridegroom now leaves the booth and puts on *dhoti*, *punjabi* and a *chadar*. Again, on the eve of the departure of the bridegroom, he is brought to the marriage-booth once more. He winds three rounds of thread on four sides of the wedding-booth, while the Brahman utters incantations. The bridegroom closes his eyes and moves round the booth twice; then he lights the sacred earthen lamps. This concludes the rites at the marriage-booth and the bridegroom starts for the bride's house.

(i) The bridegroom's marriage with a mango tree

On the eve of the departure of the marriage-procession, the bridegroom goes to the nearest mango tree of the village and puts marks of vermilion on the trunk and drapes a red cotton-thread round the trunk of same tree. Then the sister's husband of the bridegroom ties the hand of the bridegroom with a twig. The bridegroom embraces the tree three times. The marriage with the tree is then complete.

The sister's husband plucks several mango-leaves and gives them to the bridegroom, who puts them into his mouth and chews them. As the procession is about to pass out of the village, the mother of the bridegroom asks her son, "My son! Where are you going?" The son replies, "I am going to bring someone to work for you".

The bridegroom puts some mango stalks into his mouth and chews them. He gives the chewed leaves to his mother. The mother gulps the chewed mass and blesses her son.

The procession including one Brahman and the members of the bridegroom's party starts for the bride's house in carts drawn by bullocks or buffaloes.

As the procession enters the village of the bride, the members are given a warm welcome and taken to the house of the bride.

The bridegroom is carried to the *Chhamra* by his sister's husband on his lap. The bride is taken blindfold out of her room to the *Chhamra* by her mother's brother and taken round the *Chhamra* thrice. The bride then goes back to her room and is dressed in clothes and ornaments, brought by the bridegroom. Dressed anew, the bride is again carried to the *Chhamra* by her mother's brother on his lap. The bridegroom and the bride take their seats, the bridegroom on the lap of his father's brother and the bride on the lap of her mother's brother under the *Chhamra* with their faces turned to the east. The priest, a Brahman with the title of Chakravorty, utters various incantations.

(i) Sindurdan (Exchange of vermilion)

At first, the priest utters some incantations on the vermilion. Then, the bridegroom takes

the vermilion with the help of a nut-cracker (*Janti*) and puts it on the forehead of the bride. The bride in her turn puts marks of vermilion on the forehead of the bridegroom. The ceremony of *Sindurdan* is observed on the night of the marriage.

(k) Konedan (Making over the bride)

The same night the father or the father's brother or the mother's brother makes over the daughter to the bridegroom. The man, who makes over the bride, has to undergo a fasting all through the day. The priest utters some incantation in Sanskrit and the bride's father or the bride's father's brother repeats the *Mantras*, as the incantations are called. The bride's hand is then placed on the palms of the bridegroom and thus concludes the ceremony.

(l) Introducing the bride to the bridegroom

The bridegroom and the bride are to stand facing each other. A piece of cloth is hung on their heads, so that outsiders do not see them. Water is sprinkled on the bridegroom and the bride with the help of a mango twig by the attending priest. The couple are introduced to each other by the members of each party.

(m) Exchange of garlands and betels

The bridegroom and the bride exchange garlands and betels between them three times. Next, the little finger of the bridegroom and that of the bride are tied together with the stem of a *Kusha* grass and the corners of the clothes of the bridegroom and the bride are knotted together. This completes the marriage-ceremony proper.

The bridegroom and the bride are led into the room of the bride. Before they get admittance into the room, the bridegroom has to pay a small ransom of Rs. 2/- and above to the female relatives of the bride, who by way of cutting jokes block the door. The bridegroom and the bride then take their seat on a mat. They are served a dish of fried rice, molasses and sweetmeats. The bridegroom first refuses to touch anything, but after the father of the bride yields to the demands of the bridegroom, say a cycle, ring, etc., the bridegroom relishes the dish.

(n) The bridal feast

On the marriage-day the members of the bridegroom's party are served with rice-beer *(Handia)* and some sweetmeats. The bridal feast is arranged after the marriage-ceremony.

The members of the bridegroom's party are served cooked rice, curry and meat ; rice-beer or *Handia* is served after the feast. The bridegroom dines with them. The womenfolk take their dinner, after the men have finished their feasting.

(o) Chuman (Kissing)

On the eve of the departure of the bridegroom and the bride, a benedictory ceremony, known as *Chuman* or kissing of the bridegroom and the bride, is performed. The bridegroom and the bride are asked to sit side by side.

A plate, containing a rolled ball of cow-dung, sunned rice, grass and an earthen lamp is arranged. All the respectable female relatives of the bride take the plate one after another and touch the feet, the breast and the cheeks of the bridegroom and of the bride thrice. After touching the cheeks of the bridegroom and the bride, each woman kisses her own hand. The bridegroom and the bride bow down their head and salute them. Some of the women crack jokes with the bridegroom and the bride by pressing a betel and a stone-slab against their cheeks. The female relatives offer some present in cash, amount of which varies from Rs. 2/- to Rs. 5/-, to the couple and feed

them with molasses. The nearest relatives, however, present either clothes or ornaments to the couple. As the bridegroom and the bride are about to start for the former's house, the friends of the bride catch hold of her neck and do not allow her to go, until her husband offers them some cash-money. The bridegroom has also to make some cash-payment to the officials of the tribal *Panchayat,* the village *Chowkidar* and to funds of the Local School (if there be any), amount ranging mostly from Rs. 0·50 paise to Rs. 1·50 paise. The bride's mother proceeds to her daughter and asks her, "Where are you going, my sweet child ?" "I am going to serve in some other house," replies the bride. The mother feeds the couple with water and molasses and kisses them again.

(p) Return home

The bridal party returns by cart. As soon as the party reaches the village, it is received warmly by the members of the tribe. But, immediately as the bridegroom and the bride reach very near their houses, the sisters of the bridegroom and other young maidens block the way of the bride and do not allow her to pass, until she offers them some small presents in cash, amount of which varies from Rs. 1/- to Rs. 2/-.

The bridegroom and the bride are led to the *Chhamra.* There, the bridegroom and the bride move round the *Chhamra* three times. This is followed by a ceremony, known as *Kharu Parano* or wearing of the iron bangle. The bridegroom is given an iron bangle and some vermilion. First, he smears the forehead of the bride with the vermilion and then slips the iron bangle into her left wrist. This is followed by the ceremony, known as *Konebaran* or accepting the bride. All the friends and relatives, mostly womenfolk, are present at this time. Each of them raises a small dish, containing rice, flour, a ball of cowdung, *durba* grass and a lamp, upto the breast of the bride, when the bridegroom and the bride are to perform obeisance to the elderly members, who in their turn offer various gifts to the couple.

This virtually brings all the ceremonies and formalities associated with marriage to an end. The bridegroom and the bride are taken to their rooms. All the maidens encircle them and the first phase of formal introduction concludes. A feast then follows. All the friends and relatives take part in the ceremonial feast, in which cooked rice is served with one or two dishes of curry, cooked pulse and meat.

The same afternoon the *Chhamra* is dismantled. The bridegroom and the bride carries the *Chhamra* to the nearest *bund* or tank for immersion. The bridegroom is also to carry a bow, some arrows and the nut-cracker. The bride is to carry an earthen water-vessel and the *kajal-lata* or the receptacle for collyrium. They are followed by the young maidens and all the young friends of the bridegroom. The maidens blow the conch shell. In the past they used to sing all the way. But now-a-days, nuptial songs are almost rare. On reaching the tank, the bridegroom immerses the *Chhamra* in the water. Then, the bridegroom and the bride take their bath.

(q) Lukochuri (Playing hide and seek)

The day after marriage, the bridegroom and the bride play hide and seek in water during their bath. At first, the bridegroom hides his nut-cracker (*Janti*) in the water and the bride finds it out. The bride in her turn hides her *Kajal-lata* which the bridegroom is to search out.

The bride then fills the earthen water-pot to carry home. The bridegroom helps the bride in lifting her out of water. The bride too in her turn helps the bridegroom in lifting

him out of water. The bride holds the pitcher, full of water, on her waist and follows her husband home. They are followed by a jubilant procession, cutting various jokes with the couple. On the way, the bridegroom shoots an arrow from some distance. The bride picks it up and hands it over to her husband, who again shoots an arrow. The accompanying maidens and male members enjoy the sport, which continues till they reach home.

At home, the bride washes the feet of all the elderly members, including her husband, with the water, she has carried home. While washing the feet of her husband, she holds them, till the bridegroom promises to pay her something.

This is followed by the nuptial feast. The next day, the bride and the bridegroom start for the bride's village. The bridegroom comes back to his village after one or two days ; but the bride stays on at her father's house.

After some time, the bride is brought to her husband's house on an auspicious day fixed by the head of the bridegroom's household after consulting the almanac. But, the bride must return to her father's house within a year. There is no ceremonial observance connected with this *Dwira gaman* as the return-home of the bride is called.

A case study of the marriage of a Mahato

This particular case deals with the marriage of Sri Asutosh Mahato, aged 22 years, son of Sri Gobinda Mahato, aged 70 years, of the village under study. The *Gotra* of this particular family is *Punoria.*

The parents of Ashu told their son one day that as they were getting old, it was their earnest desire to marry their son earlier. Ashu first opposed the idea of marriage at such an early age, but had to give in, at last to the persistent pressures and entreaties of his parents. His parents intimated all their friends and relatives to be on the look-out for a suitable bride for their son. Later, it so happened that Ashu came to learn from one Sri Bhim Bagal, one of his friends and cousins residing in the adjoining *mouza* Jhitka, of a handsome girl living in the same village, where Sri Bagal was married. Accordingly, Ashu expressed to his parents his fascination for the girl residing at Keshia, 32 kilometers from his village. Sri Bagal fixed a date for a preliminary negotiation with the relatives of the girl. On the appointed day Sri Bagal accompanied Ashu's elder brother and Ashu's sister's husband's maternal uncle to the girl's house. They were cordially received there and were offered water by the mother of the girl for washing their feet. After Sri Bagal had introduced them to the mother of the girl, they had some light refreshments. They saw the girl, talked with her and her relatives. They expressed their primary approval to the girl's relatives, noted the name of the girl (Malati) for astrological calculations and took leave.

They informed Ashu's parents of all particulars about the girl. Ashu's elder brother went to their family priest, a Brahman with the title of Pande, and told him the names of Ashu and the girl. The priest was asked to calculate if matrimonial union between the two would be happy and peaceful. The Brahman brought a small pot (*ghati*), full of water, and two grains of paddy. He dropped the grains into the water in the name of Ashu and Malati. It was observed that the two grains of paddy slowly sank down into the bottom of the pot, whereupon Ashu's elder brother was told that matrimonial union between the two would be peaceful and desirable. The priest did not take any remuneration. Ashu's elder-brother came home and told his father about the priest's prediction.

After a few days, the girl's mother's brother wrote a letter to Ashu's father expressing his desire to see the bridegroom on a specified date. On the scheduled date the said person, accompanied by his wife's sister's husband, visited the house of Ashu. They were cordially received. Ashu performed obeisance to them. They were offered water to wash their hands and feet and were entertained to a light refreshment. The party wanted from Ashu's father and his elder brother the following :

(a) Particulars about the family of the boy's father.
(b) Particulars about the family of the boy's mother.
(c) Details about their landed property and livestocks.
(d) The education of the boy.
(e) The result of astrological calculation about the boy and the girl.

After all these queries were answered, they expressed their approval of the bridegroom. They were then entertained to a feast on the eve of their departure.

In course of a few days Ashu expressed his desire to visit the girl's house and to see the girl himself. Ashu's parents consented. The girl's relatives were informed that Ashu would visit their house on a specified date.

(Formerly, the practice of visiting the bride on the part of the bridegroom was neither desirable nor an accepted custom among the Mahatos. Then, the boy had to accept the girl of his father's choice without any hesitation. But, now-a-days the boys see the girls themselves, before expressing their final approval). Ashu went to the girl's house with his cousin brother, Sri Bagal and one of his Bhumij friend's of the same village. They were warmly received. Sri Bagal introduced the members of the party to the mother of the girl. Instantly, Ashu bowed down to her, touching her feet. The visitors were given water for washing their hands and feet. They took their seats in a room. After a while, the girl was brought into the room by her mother. The girl performed obeisance to all the members, except the Bhumij, who was younger than Ashu. The interviewers asked the girl the following questions :

(1) What is your name ?
(2) How far have you read ?
(3) Where is the house of your mother's brother ?
(4) Have you learned the art of cooking ?

They next examined the girl's handwriting and watched how she walked. The girl left the room after salutation. The visitors were entertained to a small feast.

A few days later, the bride's maternal uncle came to Ashu's house, where he discussed with Ashu's relatives the details of the marriage ceremony and from the almanac had a date fixed for the ceremonial blessing of the bridegroom.

(a) Bar-ashirbad (Ceremonial blessing of the bridegroom)

On the day mutually agreed after consulting the almanac, the bride's paternal uncle accompanied by his two friends of the Bagal community, came to the bridegroom's house in the morning with the following :

(a) A *dhoti* for the bridegroom.
(b) A vest or *genji*
(c) Garland of the Arabian jasmine
(d) Sandal wood paste
(e) Some unboiled rice (*atap*)
(f) *Durba* grass
(g) Red cotton-thread (*ghunsi*)

The party was cordially received in the customary manner, *viz.*, washing the feet in

water mixed with turmeric-paste. It was then offered refreshment consisting of curd, molasses and flattened rice. The visitors were also offered cigarettes.

It was then decided that ceremonial blessing would take place in the twilight. Three relatives, six Bhumij co-villagers and three Bagals of the adjoining village Jhitka were invited and treated to a hearty supper at noon. Ashu was dressed in a new *dhoti* and a vest, brought by the bride's uncle. At twilight, Ashu's elder brother's wife carried Ashu in her lap and brought him before the invited guests. She had in her hand a brass pot, full of water, with a mango-twig on it. She moved three times round a wooden plank *(Pinra)*. As she moved, she dropped water from the pot in her hand. Ashu was asked to stand on the *pinra*, when the bride's father put a garland round his neck and a red cotton-thread round his left wrist. He also picked up some unboiled rice, grains of paddy and *durba* grass to place them on the head of Ashu and blessed him saying, 'May your matrimonial union with my daughter be happy and peaceful. May you live long.'

He then kissed Ashu, touching his cheeks, and Ashu bowed down to him in respect, touching his feet. Carried back by his elder's brother's wife on her lap, Ashu was taken out of the room. A date was fixed for the ceremonial blessing of the bride by Ashu's father after consulting the almanac.

(b) Kone-ashirbad (Ceremonial blessing of the bride)

On the day of the ceremonial blessing of the bride, two brothers of Ashu's father went to the house of the girl, with Sri Bagal. They carried the following articles :

(i) A new cloth *(Sari)* for the bride,
(ii) blouse,
(iii) chemise,
(iv) powder,
(v) lac-dye *(alta)*,
(vi) ribbon,
(vii) nail-polish,
(viii) looking glass,
(ix) comb,

besides *durba* grass, garland, paste of sandal wood, grain of paddy and red cotton-thread.

The bride, dressed in the garments brought from the bridegroom's house, was carried by her father's brother's wife on her lap. Then, the same rites were performed as in the ceremonial blessing of the bridegroom.

After the ceremony, the date for the actual marriage was reconfirmed. As there was no time in hand, it was decided that *lagan bandha* would also be held on the day of marriage.

(c) Lagan bandha

On the day of marriage, the barber came to shave Ashu and his relatives. This was followed by the *lagan bandha* ceremony, which was the same as in the Bhumji marriage. Then, Ashu's father's brother and one Bhumij elder went to the house of the bride with the *lagan* earmarked for the bride.

(d) Chhamra bandha

A marriage-booth *(Chhamra)* was erected in the courtyard of Ashu's house. A similar booth was erected in the bride's house also. After the *lagan* had been carried to the bride's house, she was anointed with turmeric-paste and was bathed. Ashu was also anointed with turmeric-paste in his house by his elder brother's wife and by his mother's brother's wife.

(e) Abra-bhat

The same day, rice cooked in a new earthen pot with milk and molasses in both the houses of the bridegroom and the bride, was served to the bride and the bridegroom.

(f) Marriage with a tree

Just before the start of the bridal proce-

ssion Ashu was taken to the nearest mango tree by his sister's husband, who took a red cotton-thread, wound it round the left ear of Ashu and through the left toe wrapped it round the tree. Ashu put some marks of vermilion on the trunks of the tree. Then, he put some mango-leaves into his mouth and chewed them, when Ashu's mother asked her son, "Where are you going my son ?" "I am going to bring a maid for you," replied Ashu. He took some chewed matter out of his mouth and gave it to his mother, who swallowed it. Then, she kissed her son and blessed him. Ashu instantly saluted his mother. The same rite was repeated by all the elderly female relatives of Ashu. During this ceremony the womenfolk started singing and asked Ashu :

> Tumije jabe babu sasurali ghar go sasurali ghar, diye rakho dudhe keri dhar go, dudhe keri dhar (My son ! Now that you going to your father-in-law's house, will you not pay for the milk we fed you on ?)
>
> At once, the sisters of Ashu replied singing,
>
> Dudhe reri dhar mago, dudhe reri dhar,
> Gaya Ganga giye dibo, dudhe keri dhar mago,
> dudhe keri dhar.
>
> (True, my mother, I am immensely indebted to you, for I sucked you. But, never mind, I shall repay your debt by offering oblation in Gaya or the Ganges for your soul after your death).

Ashu performed obeisance to all the elderly Mahato and Bhumij members. Just before getting into the cart, he saluted all the village-deities in folded hands. The party carried some articles with them in a suitcase such as :

(i) One cloth for the mother of the bride (*Ma sari*).
(ii) A pair of clothes for the bride (*Kone sari*), blouse and chemise.
(iii) One cloth for the father's mother of the bride (*Aya sari*).
(iv) One cloth for the brother of the bride (*Sala dhoti*).
(v) One cloth for the priest.
(vi) An iron bangle (*Noakharu*).
(vii) One golden neckchain, a golden earring and four silver bangles for the bride.
(viii) Five earthen pots of sweetmeats.

They reached the village of the bride in the afternoon and were accorded a very warm reception. First, the father's brother of the bride came out and put some marks of sandal-woodpaste on the forehead of Ashu. The party made over the suitcase, containing the articles, to Malati's father's brother. Ashu's sister's husband carried Ashu to the marriage-booth and the bride to the same place on her elder sister's lap. She was made to stand on the left side of Ashu. The barber's wife came and dyed the feet of both Ashu and Malati with lac-dye (*alta*). The priest slipped a golden ring given by Malati's mother's brother into the ring-finger of Ashu and uttered various incantations, mostly in Sanskrit.

(g) Konedan

Then followed the ceremony of formally making over the bride to Ashu. Malati's father's brother had to make over the bride, as Malati's father was dead. Malati's father's brother uttered the following words, as prompted by the priest :

"I, son of Sri Jogesh Mahato of *Dumuria Gotra*, formally make over my brother's daughter to Sri Ashutosh Mahato, son of Sri Gobinda Mahato on the eighth day of the bright fort-

night of the month of *Agrahayana*". Having uttered these words, he placed the hand of Malati on that of Ashu. Ashu also recited the following, as directed by the priest :

"I, Sri Ashutosh Mahato, son of Sri Gobinda Mahato of *Punoria Gotra*, hereby solemnly accept Malati Mahato, daughter of late Chandra Mahato as my wife on the eighth day of the bright fortnight of the month of *Agrahayana* and from this day onwards, I promise to accept all responsibility for her."

The nuptial gifts, consisting of various utensils of brass and bellmetal, were brought and the priest sprinkled water on these gifts with the help of *kusha* grass. Ashu was asked to touch each item of the gifts. Ashu and Malati then stood facing each other and the priest gave them two garlands of Arabian jasmine (*Belphul*), which were exchanged between them thrice. Then, a curtain was hung over their heads and the priest showed a betel-leaf to them. They were asked to look at each other.

This was followed by a ceremony, known as *Chokh-punra*, (covering the eyes). Ashu was required to stand behind Malati and the palms of Malati were placed on those of Ashu in a concave way, so as to leave a gap between the two palms. Ashu and Malati closed their eyes and some rice, poured on the hollow of their palms, trickled down to a pot, made of *Sal* leaf. The rite was repeated thrice. The priest uttered incantations on some vermilion and gave it Ashu, who put its marks on partings of the hair of the bride with the help of a nut-cracker (*Janti*). The priest then directed Ashu to let down a veil over the head of Malati. Ashu did the same and the priest knotted the corner of the scarf of Ashu with that of the *sari* of Malati. This concluded the marriage-ceremony proper, after which Malati's father's mother introduced Malati's brother to Ashu. A mock-fight took place between Ashu and Malati's brother. As they embraced each other, Ashu gave him the *dhoti*, earmarked for him. Ashu and Malati were carried into a room, Ashu on the lap of Malati's sister's husband and Malati on the lap of her elder sister. Then, the couple were served some light refreshments. In feign displeasure Ashu did not first touch the food, when Malati's mother came and soothed his wounded vanity by promising him a watch.

After sometime, Ashu insisted on untying the knot from Malati's, but he was no tpermitted to do so. At last, Ashu had to pay one rupee to Malati's elder sister, who untied the knot. After some rest, Ashu went out of the house to roam about in the village in the company of Malati and her friends. They went to the temple of *Hari* in the same village (Keshia) and paid respect to the deity, to which Ashu offered Rs. 1·25 paise as offering. They next went to the house of the Teli village-headman. They saluted the headman and offered him a pot of sweetmeats in his honour. Then they came back home.

Next day, at noon Ashu took his bath in the nearby pond and came back home, where Malati's younger brother washed his feet. But, in doing so, he seized Ashu's left toe like a scorpion. This is known as *Kankri dhara*. Ashu had to pay one rupee to get rid of him. In a hearty feast later all the members of the bridegroom's house and some villagers took part.

Bandha-panchuman (formal kissing of the couples) followed the feast, when the elderly female relatives kissed and blessed the couple. This was the same, as in the case of the marriage of the Bhumijes. One speciality of this ceremony was the formal fomentation of the bridegroom. Malati's mother warmed a betel-leaf

on the flames of the lamp and fomented it jeeringly on the cheeks of Ashu, as if in mimic fomentation of a newborn baby. The party of the bridegroom spent the day at Malati's house.

Next day, at dawn the party of the bridegroom arranged for their departure, when all the relatives of Malati burst into tears. The couple were taken under a *Mahua* tree (Basia latifolia), where incense was burnt. Ashu and Malati perfumed themselves with the burnt incense and performed obeisance to all the elderly relatives. They left in a cart. Malati's father's mother accompanied her as her *login* (accompanying maiden). On reaching his village, Ashu and Malati went to the *Jahir Than* (seat of the village-deity). There, they bowed down to the deity and paid their respect. The couple went to the house of the *Adhyaksa* (Bhumij) of the *Gram Panchayat* and saluted him as well as other elderly members. Then, they went to the house of the *Mukhia* or the traditional headman of the Bhumij and paid respects to him. In both the places, they offered some sweetmeats.

After they had reached home, they were given a hearty reception and were carried to the courtyard of the house, Ashu on the lap of his father's brother and Malati on the lap of Ashu's father's brother's wife. Ashu's younger sister washed the couple's feet. She seized the right toe of Malati, until she had paid her one rupee. This was followed by the ceremony, known as wearing the iron bangle (*Kharu parano*). Ashu's father's brother's wife gave an iron bangle, which Ashu touched first on his own forehead and then on Malati's. This was done three times. Ashu then slipped the bangle into Malati's left wrist. Ashu and Malati were taken to a room. But, no sooner had they entered the room, than the door was blocked by Ashu's sisters and Ashu had to pay one rupee for gaining admittance into the room.

One significant feature was that Ashu's father and mother did not come out during this ceremony. It is believed by them that Sunday being a barren day, one should not see the face of one's son's wife for the first time on a Sunday. She would be barren, if she is seen. As the day, on which Ashu came back, was a Sunday, Ashu's parents kept themselves confined till evening.

After some rest, Ashu and his wife went to the tank in the company of Ashu's mother, father's brother's wife, elder brother's wife, mother's sister etc. Ashu smeared her body with oil and his wife also smeared his body with oil. After bath, the wife had to carry a pitcherful of water to prove her strength. With this water she washed the feet of Ashu's elderly relatives.

The same evening during the feast, the nuptial gifts were displayed publicly. The invitees including some Bhumij and Bagals gave present mostly in cash, to the couple. The menu of the feast consisted of rice, pulse, two items of curry and meat.

With the nuptial feast the marriage-ceremony came to an end.

Marriage of the Lodhas

Marriage among the Lodhas is carried on by mutual negotiation and no match-maker is generally engaged. When a boy or a girl attains marriageable age, his or her relatives inform all their relations, friends and kinsmen to look for a suitable bride or bridegroom, as the case may be. Sometimes, the *Mukhia* or the headman of the tribe takes a prominent part in match-making, as he has greater contacts with other villages.

After suitable information about a bridegroom or a bride is received, the relatives visit the village concerned and carry on negotiations. As a rule, the relatives of the bridegroom are the more interested party and it is they, who usually take the initiative in the preliminary negotiations of match-making.

In making preliminary enquiries, the party of the bridegroom is usually guided by the following considerations :

(1) The antecedents of the family.
(2) The nature and character of the bride's mother (in the belief that like mother like daughter).
(3) The age of the girl.
(4) The bride-price.
(5) The clan and totem of the bride.

A girl, whose mother has had several divorces, is generally avoided. A girl, who has attained puberty, is in greater demand. For a girl, who has not yet attained puberty, a second marriage or *Punarbibaha* is necessary, after she attains puberty. This calls for additional expenditure on the part of the bridegroom. Secondly, a girl, who has reached her teens, has almost reached the working age and can, right after her marriage, join the economic pursuits of her husband. But, no less important is the bride-price, which has increased manifold over the last decade.

After the parties arrive at agreeable terms relating to marriage, a date for the formal betrothal-ceremony is fixed. This is known as *Pan-basano* or paying the bride-price. On this day, some members of the bridegroom's house including the father of the bridegroom visit the house of the bride with the bride-price. A dish containing cowdung, grains of paddy, *durba* grass and an earthen lamp, placed in a corner of the dish, is required for the ceremony in the bride's house, where the father of the bridegroom pays the money to the bride's mother. Counted by some other members, the price is finally received by the mother of the bride. As an acknowledgement of the finalisation of the marriage-contract, the cowdung, grains of paddy and *durba* grass are taken by the bridegroom's party. This is followed by the formal blessing of the bridegroom or *Bar-baran*, for which the following articles are carried by the father of the bride to the bridegroom's house :

(1) Five betel nuts,
(2) Nine pieces of turmeric,
(3) Garland of Arabian jasmine,
(4) A piece of red thread or *ghunsi*,
(5) A piece of *dhoti* and a vest for the bridegroom,
(6) A silver ring.

The bridegroom is brought before the bride's father, who blesses him by raising the dish, containing grains of paddy, *durba* grass and and some cowdung, three times, to touch first his breast and finally his forehead. He then slips the ring into the bridegroom's right finger.

This ceremony is followed by the formal blessing of the bride or *Konebaran*, when the bridegroom's father goes to the bride's house with five betel nuts, nine pieces of turmeric, garlands of the Arabian jasmine, red thread, a looking glass, a comb, a case containing vermilion, a bangle made of brass, a *sari* and a blouse. These ceremonies are closely akin to those performed by the Bhumijes. The girl is dressed in the garments, presented by the father of the bridegroom, and is blessed in almost the same manner as the bridegroom.

Both the bridegroom's and the bride's fathers go to the house of some Caste Hindus, namely the Mahatos of this village to consult

the almanac and with the latter's help the actual date of marriage is fixed. The date for the *lagan bandha* ceremony is also settled there.

As in the case of the Bhumijes, the *lagan bandha* for the Lodhas also takes place on the third or the fifth day, preceding the actual marriage-ceremony. One or two members of the bridegroom's family come to the house of the bride with betel nuts, turmeric and spoonful of oil in a new pot, the number of each item depending upon the number of days left for the final marriage. One of the knotted hemp-ropes or *lagans* is left for the bride and the other is carried by the bridegroom's party. The ceremony of *lagan bandha* takes place on Saturday, Sunday and on the birthdays of either the bridegroom or the bride.

(a) Anointment with turmeric-paste

Simultaneously with the *lagan bandha* ceremony, arrangement for anointment with turmeric-paste goes on. For this purpose, a paste of nine pieces of turmeric is made in the house of the bridegroom. A portion of the paste is sent to the house of the bride. From the day of the *lagan* onward, the foreheads of the bridegroom and the bride are anointed every evening with the prepared paste by the young maidens and other female members.

(b) The worship of Dharamdevata

Every marriage-ceremony of the Lodhas must be preceded by the worship of the God of Righteousness or *Dharamdevata* by the bridegroom. Sun is regarded as the God of Righteousness. No Lodha young man can get married, unless he has performed the worship, through which the Lodha young man is said to get the divine sanction for his marriage. The Lodhas point out that, as in the case of the Brahmans sacred-thread-ceremony precedes the marriage-ceremony, the worship of the *Dharamdevata* precedes the marriage-ceremony of the *Lodhas* and forms an integral part of it.

As a rule, the worship takes place sometime before the actual marriage-ceremony. But sometimes, if it so happens that for poverty or for some other reasons the worship does not take place before marriage, it has to be done at dawn on the day of marriage. The bridegroom must take his bath, lie prostrate on the ground with his head towards the rising sun, praying all the time for his future well-being. The mode of worship of *Dharamdevata* will be described more fully in Chapter IV.

(c) Chhamra bandha (Erection of the marriage-booth)

On the day of marriage, a marriage-booth or *Chhamra* is erected in the courtyards of both the bridegroom and the bride. Four posts of *Sal* are erected in four coners. The thatch is made of twigs of *Sal* or *Mahua* and sometimes with plantain leaves. At the centre of the *Chhamra* an earthen altar or *Debisar* is raised with the earth, dug out from the root of the *Sidha* tree (Lagerstroemia parviflora). The *Debisar* is bounded on four sides by four twigs of bamboo, which are again surrounded by red threads. An earthen pitcherful of water is placed on the *Debisar*. An arrow is placed on the pitcher.

The washerman and the barber with his wife come to the house of the bridegroom and the bride in the morning of the day of marriage. The washerman takes one piece of cloth from each household for washing. The barber cuts the hair and shaves as many members of the household as possible. The wife of the barber colours the feet of the women with lac-dye. This is followed by the final anointment of the bridegroom and the bride with turmeric-paste, after which they take their bath.

The maidens in both the houses place either a new earthenware or a winnowing fan (*Kulo*). They raise the winnowing fan seven times up and down. This is known as *Hanri palan*, the earthenware being known as *Mangal hanri*. Rice, cooked in this new earthenware with molasses, is served to the bridegroom and the bride in their respective houses. This premarital feast is known as *Abra-bhat*.

On completion of the formalities, the bridegroom and the bride are taken to the *Chhamra-tala* in their respective houses, when the yellow dyed thread and mango leaf are put round the right wrist of the bridegroom and a similar thread is put round the left wrist of the bride by the *Vaishnava* priest or the *Bostom*, as the priest is called.

The party of the bridegroom, consisting of bridegroom's sister's husband, maternal uncle, paternal uncle, brothers and some other relatives, start for the bride's house with the following articles :

(1) A piece of cloth for the bride known as *Kone sari*,
(2) A piece of cloth for the mother of the bride or *Ma sari*,
(3) A piece of cloth for the bride's mother's brother or *Mama dhoti*,
(4) A piece of cloth for the brother of the bride or *Sala dhoti*,
(5) Some cash money.

(d) Marriage with tree

The bridegroom is led to the nearest mango tree by his sister's husband for wedding with the tree. A yellow thread is tied round the ear down to the toes of the bridegroom with the twig of mango tree by the sister's husband. The bridegroom is to move thrice round the mango tree and to put marks of vermilion on the trunk of the tree. Lastly, he is to pay his respect to the tree. From that day onwards the particular mango tree becomes a taboo to the bridegroom. He is prohibited from eating its fruit and even from plucking its leaves.

The bride is married to a *Mahua* tree (Basia latifolia) on the same day by her sister's husband similarly. The *Mahua* tree becomes a taboo to her and she too is prohibited from eating its fruits.

(e) The marriage-ceremony

The bridegroom's party leaves the village for the bride's house, where it is received cordially. The feet of all are washed by the brothers of the bride and the guests are offered seats on palm mats. The party then hand over the articles to the mother of the bride. The bridegroom and the bride are carried to the marriage-booth, where they sit opposite each other, the bridegroom facing the east and the bride facing the west. The bridegroom is brought by the sister's husband and the bride by her mother or by her father's brother's wife. A piece of cloth is held between the two as a screen. The bridegroom is taken by the sister's husband on his lap three times and the bridegroom is carried round the bride seven times. The *Bostom* (the priest, who conducts the marriage) places the bride's right palm over that of the bridegroom. They are then back to their previous places. The *Bostom* utters some incantations invoking the aid of God for the happy union of the couple. The bride stands to the left of the bridegroom and the *Bostom* ties the turban of the bridegroom with the corner of the bride's *sari*. The screen between the two is taken away to allow them to see each other. The *Bostom* gives a *Kajal-lata* (receptacle for stibium) to the bride and a *Janti* (nut-cracker) to the bridegroom, who then puts marks of vermilion on the bride's forehead and also on the parting of her hair with the help of the nut-cracker thrice. The bride reciprocates the

act and the wedding ceremony comes to an end. The bridegroom and the bride are taken to a room by the bride's parents, the father carrying the bridegroom and the mother the bride. The bridegroom is now offered some light refreshments, which he first refuses to touch. This is known as *Man-kara* (feigned anger). Then the parents of the bride promise him certain presents. The bridegroom, pleased as he is, accepts the food. The guests and relatives are also entertained.

The party is given a hearty send-off by the bride's household the day after marriage. The bride and the bridegroom are warmly received in their village. Just as the bridegroom and the bride try to enter the room, the bridegroom's sisters and some other maidens obstruct their way and ask for some payments. They are allowed entry, only after the necessary payments are made. The pair are then entertained.

The couple take their baths and play hide and seek. The bridegroom first places the nut-cracker into the mud and the bride is to find it out ; the bridegroom too is to search out the *Kajal-lata* of the bride. The mango leaves, tied to the wrist of the couple, are then removed.

The invitees offer presents to the couple and are entertained.

The bride is to stay in her husband's house for seven days. On the eighth day, called *Atmangala*, she is taken back to her father's house.

Sanga (Remarriage)

Any one of the following three types of marital unions is known as *Sanga*.

(a) Bachelor with a widow or a divorced woman.

(b) Widower or divorced person with a widow or a divorced woman.

(c) Widower or a divorced man with a maid.

Sanga type of marriage is pervalent among all the three communities in the village. The ebullience, normally associated with the usual marriage-ceremony, is conspicuous by its absence in the case of *Sanga* marriage. The expenses in *Sanga* marriage are also much less. While the expenses associated with a normal marriage are Rs. 120/- to Rs. 125/-, those of *Sanga* will be Rs. 80/-. As no rite or ritual is associated with *Sanga* marriage, it is more or less uniform among all the communities. The service of a priest or a *Vaishnava* is not required in such a ceremony. In the case of *Sanga* marriage the entire expenses are incurred by the bachelor, widower or divorced husband, as the case may be.

In case a *Sanga* marriage takes place between a bachelor and a widow or a divorced wife or between a widower or divorced husband and a maid, the bachelor or the maid is first married with a plantain tree. For this, his or her body is anointed with turmeric-paste and mustard oil. Then, he or she is taken to a plantain tree and his or her wrist is tied with the leaf of the tree. It is said that only after a bachelor or a maid is married to a plantain tree, he or she is entitled to marrying a widowed or divorced husband or wife.

In order to getting the *Sanga* marriage socially sanctioned, the widowed or divorced husband or the bachelor has to visit the *Mukhia* or the traditional headman of the caste or tribe and to pay him a token fee of Rs. 1·25p.

The *Sanga* marriage concludes with a feast

in honour of the friends and relatives. The entire cost is borne by the husband.

Divorce

Separation between the husband and the wife may be caused by the initiative of either of the two on account of long tension, quarrel, misbehaviour or perfidy. Sometimes, it so happens that the wife goes to her father's house and does not come back again. The husband might visit the house of his father-in-law and persuade her to come back. If the wife is still bent on separation, she turns down the offer and humiliates her husband. The separation is then effected.

Again, the husband, bored by his wife, may want to get rid of her. In such circumstance he subjects her to repeated ill treatment. The girl then has no alternative other than going to her father's house.

Generally cases of separation are not dealt with by the Tribal *Panchayat*. But, if complications arise, it might be referred to the Tribal *Panchayat*. In effecting separation there is no difference between the Lodhas and the Bhumij in procedures. Among the Mahatos, separation is never resorted to in this village, whatever be the depth of conjugal misunderstanding.

Death

Rituals associated with death (Bhumij, Lodha and Mahato)

The rites and rituals, that start with birth and continue till marriage, do not end even in death. The villagers observe a number of customary rituals after the death of a member in their household.

According to the Lodhas and the Bhumij, burial and cremation are their traditional and socially sanctioned modes of disposal of the dead bodies. "But, cremation", the Mahatoes say, "is the only method of disposal of the dead body". Due to easy availability of wood from the forests, cremation is preferred to burial.

(a) Death due to contagious diseases

In case some one dies of contagious diseases like tuberculosis, cholera or small-pox, the dead body is generally thrown in the jungles. Most of the rites, observed in natural deaths, are performed, but not very thoroughly. In the *Sradh* ceremony no feast is given.

(b) Death due to drowning or hanging

In suicidal deaths the dead body is cremated. In case of death from accident like drowning similar procedure is followed.

(c) Death of a prgenant woman

In case of death of a pregnant woman, her hair, smeared with oil, is thoroughly combed. Vermilion is put on the parting of her hair. Her feet are coloured with lac-dye (*alta*). She is draped in a new cloth. In the crematorium the child is taken out of her womb after incision with the help of a knife, before cremation. The child is buried in a separate place. It is believed that a pregnant woman will become a *Chirkuni* or *Pretni*, unless the child is taken out of her womb before her cremation.

(d) Death of a child

In case of death of a child, it is carried to the crematorium on the lap of its father or by the father's brother. The child is buried with the head directed towards the north. On the death of a child the period of mourning for the family is usually three or five days.

Rites associated with the death of the Bhumij

If death occurs at night, the members of the bereaved family shall keep awake till morning. In such a case, someone must sit near the

dead body, touching it all the time, lest the dead body should be possessed by some spirits. In all cases of death, a piece of iron is kept on the bed of the dead man to ward off the evil spirits.

Before the funeral procession starts, the dead body, placed on a mat by the women, is bathed in water. The womenfolk then prepare some paste of turmeric, which is smeared on the body with mustard oil. All ornaments are taken off the body.

A bier ($5\frac{1}{2}$ ft. × 2 ft.) is made of bamboo poles and the dead body is placed on the bier with a piece of cloth spread over it. The body is laid with the head towards the north. The bier is carried on the shoulder by the sons, brothers or other relatives of the deceased. They move three rounds in the courtyard with the dead body on their shoulders. The funeral procession, consisting of the relatives and friends of the deceased, starts its journey. The name of *Hari* is shouted all the way.

(a) The funeral procession and the rites

The funeral procession is followed by an old woman for some distance. She carries broomsticks and an earthen pot, containing cowdung-paste. She sprinkles the cowdung-paste all along the road and throws away the broomsticks along with the earthen pitcher. The wife of the deceased takes off all her ornaments, including the nuptial iron-bangle (*Kharu*). The members of the family and of all other households belonging to the same clan (*Bhayadbansha*) throw away their earthen vessels, earthen cooking pots and tattered clothes.

The funeral procession stops at the first junction of two roads and rests there for some time. Some parched rice are scattered here and there. The funeral procession then resumes its journey after this rite.

(b) Rites performed at the place of disposal

(i) Cremation

Both cremation and burial are practised by the Bhumij. Households of some means, however, prefer the former method. In both the cases a few copper coins are placed on the earth to purchase a part of it. For the purpose of cremation, a funeral-pyre is prepared in the north-south direction and the dead body is placed on the pyre. The eldest or the youngest son then performs the rite of *mukhe-agun* or touching fire to the mouth of the deceased with cotton, wrapped round the branch of a wood-apple tree (Hegle Marmelos Corica) and soaked in *ghee*. Holding the lighted stick in his left hand, he moves thrice round the pyre and finally touches fire to the mouth of the dead man. The name of *Hari* is uttered on this occasion.

(ii) Burial

The grave too is dug in the north-south direction. The grave is generally eight feet in length, three feet in breadth and three feet in depth. A piece of mat is placed on the grave. Then, the dead body is laid on the mat with its head to the north and legs to the south. Fire is touched to the mouth of the deceased with the branch of a wood-apple tree. A roof-like structure is made, little above the dead body with twigs and wood. Clods of earth are put on the grave, first by the eldest or the youngest son and then by other members.

(c) Purificatory rites

After burial or cremation, the participants go to the nearest tank to take bath. Some thorns are then placed on the road. All the mourners are to cross the thorns. The significance of crossing the thorns is that thenceforth the road is closed to the deceased for ever.

All the implements like hoe and scythe,

taken to the crematorium or burial ground, are assembled together, the wooden handles of the implements are taken off and fitted in the reverse direction. This rite is believed to be an indication to the dead man that from now on his way is exactly opposite to that of the living men. After the ceremony, all the cremationists assemble under a peepul tree and embrace each other.

(d) Rites in the house of the deceased

On return to the house of the deceased the cremationists find fire, prepared a little away from the house ; the participants come to the fire, put some cotton there and spread their palms over the smoke emitting from it and rub their cheeks. A drop of hot water is put into the ears. Other members of the household, specially the womenfolk, now come home after their bath. Everyone comes to the site, where the deceased has died, and wrings his or her wet cloth over the site.

After the purificatory rites, all the assembled members, specially the participants in the funeral procession, are served fried rice and rice-beer (*handia*).

Next day, some male members of the household visit the crematorium with the following articles :

(i) An earthen pitcher, full of water,
(ii) an earthen pot (*Malsha*),
(iii) an earthen lid (*Sarai*),
(iv) a hoe, and
(v) some turmeric-paste.

At the crematorium the members pour water over the pyre. The skull or the bone of the dead and the unburnt navel are collected and smeared with turmeric-paste. These are then put into the earthen pot (*Malsha*) and covered with the lid. The earthen pot, containing the skull and the navel, is buried under any tree.

(e) Rites during the mourning period

The period of mourning among the Bhumij is usually ten days. The mourning period comes to an end with the performance of the *Sradh* ceremony on the 11th day.

(f) Prohibitions during mourning period

During the mourning period the Bhumijes observe a number of prohibitions. The bereaved members are prohibited from taking fish, meat, egg, *Musuri dal* (a kind of pulse) and leaves of *Sajina* tree. For the first three days after death all the relatives and members of the *Bhayadbansha* are prohibited from using mustard oil, salt, turmeric and other spices in their dishes. They must not use oil on their hair. They are also prohibited from cutting their hair, shaving their beard and moustache and also from paring their nails. They must not cleanse their clothes with soda or soap. During these days of mourning the members are also prohibited from observing or attending any socio-religious ceremony and function, as the mourners are considered unclean for these purposes. Further, they must not use any earthen cooking pot during these days. They are prohibited from sleeping on bed and from taking a seat except on the ground. Consequently, they are to sit or sleep on earth. Moreover, no fire shall burn in the house of the dead man during the first three days of mourning. The immediate relatives of the deceased, such as wife, sons, brothers, etc., are to take only boiled pulse (other than *musuri* pulse) during the first three days. The sons of the deceased, specially the person who has touched fire to the mouth of the dead man, are prohibited from visiting a place far from his house, lest he should be possessed by the spirit of the deceased.

(g) Offering favourite intoxicants to the departed soul

Any spot near the rout of the funeral

procession passes, is selected and thoroughly cleansed. Every evening some members from the house of the deceased visit the spot to offer the favourite intoxicants of the dead man, *viz.* indigenous cigar (*bidi* or *chuta*) and fire, opium, hemp etc.

(h) Chaturtha (Ceremonial fourth day)

On the fourth day of bereavement, rice and pulse are cooked in a new earthen pot. A portion of the cooked rice and pulse is stored aside in a separate earthen pot.

All the members of the *Bhayadbansha* with whom the deceased has consanguineous relationship are served cooked rice and pulse with fried leaves of the *Neem* tree. From this day salt and spices are permitted.

(i) Hanri-barano (Offering cooked rice contained in the earthen pot to the dead man)

In the evening of the fourth day, four or five members including the person, who has touched fire to the mouth of the deceased, start from the house of the dead man with an earthen pot (*handi*) containing cooked rice and pulse. They place the earthen pot on three pieces of wood of the *Ked* tree at place, far from the house. The man, who touches fire to the mouth of the dead man, shouts the name of the deceased, till he gets some response. If human voice responds to the call, it is believed that the deceased has been reborn as a man. In case a bird or a beast responds to the call, it is believed that the deceased has taken birth as the responding bird or beast.

(j) Habisya

From the fourth to the last day of the period of pollution, the sons of the deceased are to take sunned rice cooked in an earthen pot in the evening. This boiled sunned rice is known as *Habisya.* The mourners are prohibited from taking cooked food at daytime, when they take only fruits and sweets. After nightfall, they are to take *Habisya.* But, if they happen to hear any sound or chew any stone while eating, they stop taking food at once and float the boiled rice in water. From the fourth day the sons of the deceased are to wear a piece of cloth round their neck passing below their armpit. A piece of iron and a piece of turmeric are tied in one corner of the cloth.

(k) Ghat

On the tenth day the wasnerman comes and takes at least one cloth from all the Bhumij houses of the village. Several rites are performed on the tenth day of death beside a tank or a pool of water. On this occasion the relatives of the deceased assemble at the *Ghat* or side of a tank. A Brahman priest with the title of Chakravorty, who is a resident of Dhangoria at a distance of six to seven miles, several *Vaishnava* musicians residing at Lalgarh and a barber are called in. All these people come on receipt of information from the bereaved family. The *Vaishnavas* chant the name of *Hari* to the beating of musical drums. The nearest relatives, who can attend the *Ghat* ceremony, are known as *Ghat Kutumbu* (relatives, who can attend the rites of *ghat*) and include relations on the father's side like the father of the deceased, father's brother, brother's cousins and sons and nephews and married daughters, nieces etc.

The barber shaves hair, beard and moustache at the Ghat and pares the nails of the sons, brothers and other relatives of the dead man. All the relatives of the deceased, including the female members, take their bath and put on new clothes, usually supplied by the mother's sister's husband and by the members of the deceased's father-in-law's house. This observance is followed by *Pindadan* or oblation to

the soul. For this purpose, the person who has touched fire to the mouth of the dead man, puts (i) milk, (ii) honey, (iii) clarified butter (*ghee*), (iv) a kind of raw pulse (*birikalai*), (v) ripe plantains and (vi) molasses in an earthen pot and warms them on fire. The prepared food is collected in plantain leaves and divided into nine parts. The Brahman priest utters incantations and the son offers oblation to the souls of the deceased and of other dead relatives with the prepared food. The devotional song in the name of *Hari* is sung in chorus by the *Vaishnavas*. After the oblation ceremony is over, the son is lifted by his sister's husband on his shoulder and carried home.

In case the deceased leaves any widow, the latter waits alone near a pond, even after all other members have left. It is generally believed that the man, whom the dead man's wife happens to see after taking a dip in the water, is sure to die. So, the general practice is that after the barber pares her nails, the widow and the barber take bath in the pond together. The widow, according to the direction of the barber, looks at a tree or any other object in front. She also wears new clothes after her bath.

All the participants in the above rites take boiled pulse (except *musuri*) at night.

(l) Sradh ceremony

Sradh ceremony is performed on the eleventh day. The particular spot anywhere in the courtyard, where the rites are to be performed, is thoroughly cleansed with cow-dung-paste. Then, an earthen pitcher, full of water, with a twig of mango on it, is placed there along with a silver coin. The Brahman and the *Vaishnavas* are again called in.

Flowers and leaves of *Tulsi* (*Basil*) plant are necessary on the occasion. The canoe-shaped barks of plantain tree are cut in small pieces and on each such bark a betel leaf, a copper coin, an areca nut and a piece of *Haritaki* are placed. All the relatives of the deceased sit before the Brahman on their knees, each holding a bundle of straw in his hand.

The *Vaishnavas* sing the devotional songs and the Brahman starts uttering incantations. After sometime, he offers oblation to the soul of the dead as also to other dead relatives by offering them the articles, already mentioned. The Brahman sprinkles holy water on the persons, who pay him obeisance and offer him some money.

The Brahman now asks all the participants to eat a mixture of the following :

(i) Urine of a cow,
(ii) dung of a bull,
(iii) *ghee*
(iv) honey,
(v) milk, and
(vi) molasses.

This is followed by another rite. An earthen pot of curd is brought to the courtyard. Some paste of turmeric is mixed with the curd and is spilt all over the courtyard. All the participants in the *Sradh* ceremony lie down on the ground and roll there over the curd, while at the same time the womenfolk scatter parched rice and copper coins in the courtyard. The *Vaishnavas* continue the religious songs and collect the copper coins.

On conclusion of the *Sradh* ceremony, the head of the household offers the following articles to the Brahman :

(i) New clothes,
(ii) new utensils,
(iii) rice,
(iv) cash money (Rs. 10/- to Rs. 15/-).

The barber and the washerman each gets Rs. 2/- in cash, one *dhoti* and some rice. The *Vaishnava* singers usually get Rs. 5/-.

The relatives are entertained to a feast.

(m) Rites and rituals after the death of a Lodha

Just at the time of or immediately after death, some one pours water into the mouth of the dying man. All the relatives in the nearby villages are informed. If death occurs at night, a piece of iron is kept under the bed and some one touches the bed all the time, lest some spirit should possess the dead body.

Some members of the household prepare a special bier with poles of bamboo for carrying the dead body to the crematorium. The dead body is brought to the courtyard and the women wash the body with water and anoint it with paste of turmeric and mustard oil. If the deceased happens to be a married woman and dies before her husband, vermilion is smeared on her forehead and on the parting of her hair. Her feet are coloured with lac-dye *(alta)*. The dead body, placed on the bier, is carried on the shoulders by his or her sons or other near relatives, who utter the name of *Hari* loudly all the way. An earthen pitcher and a hoe are carried by the members of the funeral procession. Other members of the household cleanse the room of the deceased, the courtyard and the passages with paste of cowdung and throw away the earthen utensils.

In the matter of disposal of the dead body, the Lodhas too, like the Bhumijes, practise both cremation and burial, the method of disposal being similar.

A copper coin is placed near the place, selected for funeral or burial. The coin is offered to purchase the land, required for the funeral, as the deceased has otherwise no right to that land. The thread *(ghunshi)* round the waist of the dead body is taken off, before it is placed on the pyre or interned in the grave. The head is directed towards the north, feet to the south and face upwards. Usually, the eldest or the youngest son touches fire to the mouth of the dead body with a bundle of burning straw and in doing so he looks to his left, after moving thrice round the dead body. At this hour the participants frequently utter the name of Lord *Hari*. An earthen pot, containing some cooked rice, is placed to the left of the pyre or the grave.

It may be mentioned here that even in burial fire is touched to the face of the deceased by his eldest or youngest son. After cremation or burial is over, the participants go to the nearest tank, but before doing so, they too, like the Bhumijes, cross the thorns on taking their bath. They throw away the wooden bundles and start homewards. They first assemble under a *peepul* tree and embrace one another. On their return home, they warm their bodies with burning incense and touch fire. By this time, the womenfolk too complete their bath and serve the members of the funeral procession fried rice.

On the day of funeral, no cooking is done. The members of the house eat fruits, sweets or flattened rice, soaked in water.

The Lodhas, like the Bhumijes, have to abide by the same series of prohibitions. From the second day, the members of the dead man's household are permitted to take only boiled rice and boiled pulse *(except musuri)*. Every day the sons of the deceased offer a portion of the food to the spirit of the deceased. For this purpose, a portion of the cooked rice is kept on *Sal* leaves and placed on a raised earthen mound in one corner of the kitchen.

(i) Rites on the tenth day

On this occasion all the ceremonial rites take place by the side of the nearest pond. The services of the barber and the washerman are required on this day. The washerman comes in the morning and takes a piece of cloth from all the Lodha households residing in the village.

The barber shaves the heads and beards of all the male members and pares the nails of the female members of the bereaved family. The man, who has touched fire to the mouth of the dead man, cooks rice and fish by the side of the tank and offers them to the departed soul. The barber and the washerman are each paid Rs. 2/- for their services.

(ii) Sradh ceremony

Sradh ceremony takes place on the 11th day, when the *Vaishnava* priest (the spiritual head of the Lodhas), residing at Lalgarh, officiates at the ceremony. The members, of in the funeral procession and the relatives are invited. In the presence of all, the *Vaishnava* priest burns clarified butter with twigs of mango tree in memory of the departed soul. With this, the ceremony concludes. Then the invitees are entertained to a feast.

(n) Rites and rituals after the death of a Mahato

The practices connected with death among the Mahatos are almost similar to those of the Bhumijes in this village. At the time of death water is poured into the mouth of the deceased and the name of *Hari* is uttered.

(i) Rites performed just after death

With the dead body some earth is also taken out from the place, where the man dies. It is believed that in doing so the spirit of the dead leaves the house. The body of the dead man is then smeared with paste of turmeric and mustard oil. A bunch of straw is taken out from the thatched roof.

(ii) Funeral procession

The dead body, placed on a bamboo-bier, is brought by the sons of the deceased to the nearest *Tulsi Mancha* or altar of the basil. There the mourners, who join in the funeral procession, sing devotional songs.

The funeral procession starts for the crematorium and the following articles are carried by the relatives :

(i) A short branch of *Bel* tree
(ii) Some unhusked paddy
(iii) Branches of *Neem* tree

In the crematorium the people, carrying the dead body, move thrice round the site of the pyre, before placing the bier on the ground.

(iii) Preparation of the funeral pyre

A rectangular hole is dug in the earth. The branches of *Bel* and *Neem* trees are placed on the pyre of wood. The old clothes of the dead body are changed and it is dressed in new cloth. The corpse is then placed on the pyre with the head towards the north.

(iv) Touching fire to the mouth of the dead body

A piece of new cloth is dipped in *ghee*. The eldest son of the deceased and in his absence the youngest one, holds the cloth soaked in *ghee*, lights it in fire and touches it to the mouth of the deceased. This is followed by setting fire to the funeral pyre with the burning straw, carried from the thatched roof.

(v) Rites performed after cremation

After the dead body is completely burnt, the persons, who have touched fire to the mouth of the deceased, stand in the centre of the place, where the body has been cremated. Another person pours water from a pitcher on four corners of the pyre. A small bone of the body of the deceased is collected by the

eldest son or the youngest son. The bone is immersed later in the Ganges. Instead of visiting the Ganges, which is far off from this village, the Mahatos generally throw it in the river Kasai.

After the bone is taken out from the pyre, the person, who has touched fire to the corpse's mouth, prepares parched rice on a heated spade and scatters them on the pyre.

(vi) Purificatory rites

The processionists go to a tank, where the barber pares the nails of only those persons, who have joined the funeral party but have no consanguineous relationship with the deceased. All the persons then take bath. The eldest son or the youngest son is to wear a narrow piece of new cloth, called *Uttariya*, across the shoulder. Some purificatory rites follow the same manner, as the Bhumijes observe them. These rites include crossing the thorns, taking off the wooden handles from the hoe and scythe and refitting them in the opposite direction. Like the Bhumijes and the Lodhas, the Mahatos also assemble round a *peepul* tree to embrace one another.

(vii) Rites in the deceased's house

The rites performed in the house of the deceased on the day of death are similar to those of the Bhumijes. All the earthen utensils are thrown away. The person, who has touched fire to the mouth of the deceased, goes to the side of the tank under a wood-apple tree and pours water there thrice in memory of the deceased, performs obeisance and then offers the favourite intoxicants of the dead man, like indigenous cigar, opium etc., to the soul of the deceased.

(viii) Rites and prohibitions during the mourning period

Most of the prohibitions, performed by the Mahatos, are similar to those performed by the Bhumijes. Non-vegetarian dish, mustard oil, salt, turmeric and other spices are prohibited. The Mahatos are also prohibited from lighting their ovens within the compound of the house. Whatever they eat has to be cooked in the house of a person, unrelated by blood.

During the period of mourning, which lasts for 10 to 12 days, all the members of the bereaved family after bath wring their wet cloth on the place, where the deceased breathes his last. The son, who has performed the last rites, have to observe *Habisya* in the same manner as the Bhumijes.

(ix) Chaturtha (Ceremonial fourth day)

On this day all the persons, except the eldest son, smear their hair and bodies with oil, before they take their bath. Food is cooked in new earthen pots.

(x) Ghat ceremony

The *Ghat* ceremony of the Mahatos takes place either on the 9th or on the 11th day, the day of ceremonial purification. The rites performed are similar to those of the Bhumijes. All the members assemble near the side of the village-tank. There washerman comes and washes the unclean clothes. The barber comes and pares the nails of all the relatives of the deceased. The Brahman with the title of Pandey officiates at the ceremony at the *Ghat*. The barber, washerman and the Brahman also serve the Bhumijes. The remuneration paid to them are the same as in the case of the Bhumijes.

The *Vaishnava* musicians sing devotional songs during the ceremony. The sons of the deceased shave their hair and take their bath. Clad in new clothes, they sit in front of the Brahman, who prepares oblation of rice and bananas for the deceased.

The bereaved widow takes her bath, after the ceremony is over. She does not look at the face of any person, till next morning. She sleeps alone in a separate room. Early next morning, she gets up from bed and sees a cow first. Now, she resumes her normal life.

(xi) Sradh ceremony

The *Sradh* ceremony takes place on the 10th or the 12th day after death of a Mahato. The Brahman, who observes the *Ghat* ceremony, is present in the *Sradh* observance, when he utters incantations to propitiate the departed soul. The *Vaishnava* musicians are also present on this occasion.

The rites and rituals performed on the *Ghat* day and on the occasion of the *Sradh* ceremony are not different from those of the Bhumijes and no detailed discussion is necessary.

TRENDS OF CHANGE IN THE BIRTH, MARRIAGE AND DEATH RITUALS

Thus, the life cycle of the people in Bhumij Dhan Sol centres round many varied rites and rituals. It appears that in recent years there is a trend towards simplification of the traditional rites and rituals. Elaborate practices are not as rigorously followed now as before. First, the acute economic hardship of the present has influence the people in simplifying the different observances. A tendency of the people is to cut the rites and rituals shorter and shorter is apparent. Secondly, and this is by far the most important trend, there is a tendency among the different communities to break away from some of the old practices. For example, in the case of observances of birth practices of the different communities, the customary rule is that the final purification can take place only after the performance of the *Ekusha*. But, at present the people discontinue the *Ekusha* ceremony and consequently, some birth observances come to an end after performance of the *Natta* (ceremonial purification on the ninth day).

As pointed out earlier, there is also a tendency to do away with some other observances. It is reported by the Bhumij of this village that 15 or 20 years ago, one peculiar observance was associated with the marriage-ceremony of the Lodhas. Then, during the marriage-ceremony the bridegroom used to climb up a tree and the bride used to stand under it, The bride would say, "Get down, my dear." In feigned anger the bridegroom would reply "No, I would not".

Bride—"Get down my dear."

Bridegroom—"What would you feed me with if I get down ?"

Bride—"I would feed you with the fruits and chases of the forest."

After these conversations the bridegroom would get down from the tree.

For the last fifteen or twenty years the Lodhas did not continue this practice in their marriage-ceremony. Of course, the Lodhas do not admit, perhaps out of shame, that such an observance was ever associated with their marriages.

As for the Bhumijes, they have also been discontinuing for some time some of the observances connected with their marriage-ceremony. Even some five or seven years ago, singing of songs specially by the womenfolk, drinking of wine and sprinkling of colour formed an essential part of the observances. It is reported that about five years ago, a convention of the leading Bhumijes of the locality, held at Jhargram, decided to discontinue all the three observances during their marriage-ceremony. The Bhumijes of the village, point out that these are not performed by the Caste Hindus and secondly that some of the rites are performed by the Santals, to whom they assign an inferior social position.

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CHAPTER III

ECONOMY

Introduction

The economic structure of Bhumij Dhan Sol is crude and simple. In the main it is agriculture-oriented. The surrounding jungles and forests exert a formidable influence on the village-economy. Most of the people are not self-contented landowning cultivators with a pair of bullocks. Instead, they are a landless mass, honestly toiling in the fields for days together.

Various currents and cross-currents operate to shape the economy of the village. It would be interesting to see how even the poor economy of a predominantly tribal village can get further impoverished through the ruthless exploitation of one or two persons here and there.

The occupational table of the heads of the households would enable the readers to form some idea about the nature of economic pursuits of the households.

TABLE 12

Caste/Tribe	Total no. of households	No. of households with the heads engaged in: Cultivation	Agricultural labour	Livestock	Forestry and hunting	Manufacturing	Other services
Lodha	35	..	20	..	13	1	1
Bhumij	17	4	8	2	..	2	1
Mahato	3	2	1	..	..	..	..
Total	**55**	**6**	**29**	**2**	**13**	**3**	**2**

It appears from the above table that 35 households, out of 55 (63.6 per cent), are directly or indirectly dependent on agriculture, while 13 families (23.6 per cent) are dependent exclusively on forestry and hunting. In the face of it, the figures over-estimate the importance of agriculture and undervalue the importance of forestry and hunting. Instead of exerting a negligible influence, forestry and hunting still act as the main pivot round which the whole economic structure of the village revolves. Psychologically the people are still dependent on the good old jungles in different stages of their economic life.

A. Land

(i) Area

Land by itself provides an important source of livelihood of an agricultural village.

The following table will show the land-utilisation pattern of the village :

TABLE 13

Utilisation of land	Acres	Percentage to the total land of the village
Cultivable land	119·91	43·6
Uncultivable land	57·45	20·8
Forest area	93·50	33·9
Village roads	4·61	1·7
Total area	**275·47**	**100·00**

The significant feature of the table is that one-fifth of the total area of the village consists of uncultivable land, most of which is on a correspondingly higher plane, where rainwater hardly accumulates. Locally known as *Dahi* land, it is unsuitable for cultivation. The vast stretch of *Dahi* land is a unique feature not only of this village but also of the surrounding region. There is no facility for irrigation in this village or in the immediate neighbourhood. A part of the uncultivable land again consists of sandy soil. In course of the interview a number of cultivators said that reclamation of a sizable portion of the fallow land would have been possible, if proper facilities for irrigation were available.

Another notable feature of land-utilisation pattern of this village is that 33·9 per cent of the total area consist of forests. The reserved forest extending through the village forms a part of it.

(*ii*) *Land at the disposal of the villagers*

The major portion of the landed area of the village is not in the possession of the villagers. If the land under roads and that under forests in the ownership of the Government are excluded, the total area of cultivable and uncultivable land comes to 177·35 acres, out of which only 46 acres are in the possession of the villagers. To this may be added eight acres of land, purchased for the Lodhas of this village by Samaj Sevak Sangha. The total area under effective control of the villagers then comes to 54 acres or 30·5 per cent. The important feature of the land resources of the village is that approximately 70 per cent of the total cultivable and uncultivable land of the village is in the ownership of persons, not residing in the village, part of the land being, of course, owned by the Government of West Bengal.

(*iii*) *Size and ownership of landholdings*

As regards the total area of land of the individual households with reference to the actual size of the land, the following table shows the size of the landholdings in their ownership :

TABLE 14

Caste/Tribe	Total no. of house-holds	No. of house-holds owning land	No. of households owning land								
			Less than *1 bigha*	1—3 *bighas*	4—6 *bighas*	7—10 *bighas*	11—15 *bighas*	16—20 *bighas*	21—25 *bighas*	26—30 *bighas*	No. of households having no land
Lodha	35	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	35
Bhumij	17	15	..	4	5	2	3	..	1	..	2
Mahato	3	3	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	1	..
Total	**55**	**18**	..	**6**	**5**	**2**	**3**	..	**1**	**1**	**37**

It appears from the table that only 32·7 per cent of the people have land. But, more striking is the fact that their position is not uniform. The position of the Lodhas is highly disquieting. Not a single Lodha household has any land. It is worth mentioning that out of 18 landowner households 13 families each owns land upto 10 *bighas* and only five households have more than 10 *bighas* of land.

(iv) Apportionment of land

The apportionment of land in the ownership of the villagers according to varying utilisation may be understood from the following table :

TABLE 15

Area of total land owned by the villagers	Area of homestead land	Area of cultivable land	Area of cultivable land lying fallow	Area of uncultivable fallow
147 *bighas* 12 *cottahs*	18 *bighas* 12 *cottahs*	96 *bighas*	18 *bighas* 5 *cottahs*	14 *bighas* 15 *cottahs*
100 per cent	12·3 per cent	65·0 per cent	12·4 per cent	10 per cent

(v) Manner of acquisition of land owned by the villagers

Of the total land under 18 landowner families of the village, that in the ownership of 14 families consists entirely of ancestral bequest. Only three Bhumij households have purchased some land, in addition to that received from their ancestors. One household has purchased one *bigha* and a half of land, another household two *bighas* and the third one three *bighas*. In all the three cases, land has been purchased from their Bhumij brethren. The head of a Bhumij household in one case acquired the whole of the ancestral land of his brother, who died without leaving any issue.

(vi) Loss of land

Only 18 households are landed proprietors. The average holding of land per family stands at a little more than eight *bighas*. The villagers remark that acute economic hardships make it increasingly difficult to keep their meagre holdings intact. Some of the villagers have been forced to mortgage their land. Thus, out of 15 Bhumij households, four households have sold 21 *bighas* of cultivable land during the last seven or eight years. Further, eight families out of these 15 households have mortgaged part of their cultivable land, with the result that nearly 15 per cent of the cultivable land of the village are not cultivated by their owners.

It is also revealing that out of 21 *bighas* of land sold by four Bhumij households, eight *bighas* have been purchased by a person of the Sunri caste, a resident of the neighbouring village Jhitka. Further, out of the total area of 12·5 *bighas* of mortgaged land, as much as 10·5 *bighas* have been received by the same person. Most of the Bhumijes are aware that a non-tribal is prohibited by law from purchasing the land from a tribal without sanction of the authorities. But, it is pointed out that the buyer or the mortgagee somehow dodges the provisions of the law.

(vii) Extent of subdivision of holdings

The table overleaf will throw some light on the subdivision of holdings and reveal how the size of the holdings gradually shrink, as land passes from father to son.

TABLE 16

Serial no. of house-hold	Size of holding during the life-time of father	Size of present holding	Remarks
1	2 *bighas*	1 *bigha*	Land subdivided
2	2 *bigh*[a]*s*	1 *bigha*	Ditto
3	2 *bighas*	2 *bighas*	No change
4	5 *bighas*	2 *bighas* 10 *cottahs*	2 *bighas* 10 *cottahs* sold
5	1 *bigha*	2 *bighas* 10 *cottahs*	1 *bigha* 10 *cottahs* purchased
6	3 *bighas* 10 *cottahs*	3 *bighas* 10 *cottahs*	No change
7	8 *bighas*	4 *bighas*	Land subdivided
8	25 *bighas*	5 *bighas*	Ditto
9	25 *bighas*	5 *bighas*	Ditto
10	20 *bighas*	5 *bighas* 5 *cottahs*	Ditto
11	25 *bighas*	5 *bighas* 12 *cottahs*	Ditto
12	9 *bighas*	9 *bighas*	No change
13	12 *bighas* 10 *cottahs*	10 *bighas*	2 *bighas* 10 *cottahs* sold
14	11 *bighas*	11 *bighas*	No change
15	10 *bighas*	13 *bighas*	3 *bighas* durchased
16	12 *bighas* 5 *cottahs*	14 *bighas* 5 *cottahs*	2 *bighas* purchased
17	25 *bighas*	25 *bighas*	No change. His holding was 12·5 *bighas* but he got the share of his deceased brother
18	28 *bighas*	28 *bighas*	No change
Total	**226** *bighas* **5** *cottahs*	**147** *bighas* **12** *cottahs*	

In seven out of 18 cases land has been subdivided. In this village subdivision of holding has not been carried to its logical extreme. The reasons, why in 11 cases land has not been subdivided, are given below :

(a) Five families are living jointly.
(b) In three families other claimants are already dead.
(c) In two families the heads are the only issues of their fathers.
(d) In another family the brother of the head has migrated from this village permanently.

(*viii*) *Fragmentation of holdings*

With the gradual subdivision of holdings, land gets continuously fragmented. The produce of the land and the convenience of the cultivator vary directly with the size of individual plot of land. As a rule, a cultivator prefers a compact plot of land. An area of land, divided into many small-sized plots, does not command the same price as a compact area of land. For the purpose of the table on the fragmentation of holdings the total cultivated land, whether owned or received from others or given out to others, has been taken into account.

TABLE 17

Serial no.	Nature of interest in land	Size of cultivated land	No. of plots
1	Owned	1 *bigha* 10 *cottahs*	2
2	,,	2 *bighas*	1
3	,,	2 *bighas* 10 *cottahs*	2
4	,,	3 *bighas*	5
5	,,	3 *bighas*	12
6	,,	3 *bighas*	5
7	,,	4 *bighas*	3
8	,,	5 *bighas* 10 *cottahs*	7
9	,,	7 *bighas*	2
10	,,	8 *bighas*	1
11	,,	9 *bighas*	3
12	,,	9 *bighas* 10 *cottahs*	12
13	,,	12 *bighas*	14
14	,,	26 *bighas*	10
15	Received as share cropper	3 *bighas* 10 *cottahs*	2
16	,,	3 *bighas*	2
17	,,	40 *bighas*	8
	Total	**142** *bighas* **10** *cottahs*	**91**

The average size of a plot of land thus stands at something like 1 *bigha* and 11·33 *cottahs.*

(*ix*) *Types of cultivators*

Three classes of cultivators are found in the village. In the first category is the owner and proprietor of the land. In the second type is included the owner of the land, who has given out his land to others for cultivation on crop-sharing basis. The third type includes the cultivator, who, though not the owner of the land, has received it from the owner on crop-sharing basis. The following table shows the types of land-tenure found in the village. There are some cultivators who own their own land and others who are only share-croppers, cultivating lands of others.

TABLE 18

	Type of tenure	Total number of households	Total cultivated land	Remarks
1	Owner cultivator	9	68 *bighas*	The total area excludes the land mortgaged to others
2	Owner but not cultivator	4	15 *bighas* 10 *cottahs*	Ditto
3	*Borgadar* or *Share-cropper	2	43 *bighas*	Land received from owners

*One who cultivates other's land on crop-share basis—Editor.

(*x*) *Share-cropping*

It may be noted that in Bhumij Dhan Sol, where only 14 households own some small fragments of cultivable land and where a plot of cultivable land is valued more than gold, four households have given their land to others for cultivation on crop-share basis. The tabular account overleaf relates to the four households.

TABLE 19

Serial no.	Caste or Tribe of the owner	Total area of cultivated land owned	Area of cultivated land given out to others on crop-share basis	Caste or Tribe of the receiver of the land	Remarks
1	Bhumij	5 *bighas* 10 *cottahs*	3 *bighas* 10 *cottahs*	A person of the neighbouring village belonging to Sunri caste	Remaining 2 *bighas* mortgaged with the same person
2	,,	7 *bighas*	5 *bighas*	Ditto	
3	,,	3 *bighas*	3 *bighas*	Bhumij	
4	,,	4 *bighas*	4 *bighas*	Santal	
	Total	**19** *bighas* **10** *cottahs*	**15** *bighas* **10** *cottahs*		

The case studies of the four households explain the apparent paradox how the poor peasants, inspite of their ownership of land, are being reduced to agricultural labourers. In all cases the owners cannot cultivate the land themselves, because they possess neither agricultural implements nor a pair of bullocks. The households observe that due to extreme poverty it is not always possible for them to purchase the necessary seeds. It is also significant that in giving land to others the households have not been guided solely by considerations of caste. In three cases out of four, the land has been given to a different caste. This is not because considerations of caste or tribe do not come, but because the households have rather been forced to give out their land to the local influential persons, on whom they are dependent in more ways than one.

Four households of this village have received land from others on crop-share basis. The following table explains the position :

TABLE 20

Serial no. of household	Caste or Tribe of the receiver of the land	Area of cultivable land received as share-croppers	Caste or Tribe of the owner	Distance of the residence of the owner from the present village	Whether recorded as share-cropper
1	Mahato	3 *bighas*	Muslim	9 kilometres	Yes
2	Bhumij	3 *bighas* 10 *cottahs*	Modak	6½ ,,	No
3	Bhumij	3 *bighas*	Bhumij	Same village	No
4	Mahato	40 *bighas*	Muslim	9 kilometres	Yes
	Total area	**49** *bighas* **10** *cottahs*			

It is worth noting that in all the four cases the receivers of land possess at least a pair of bullocks each. It is the owner of the land, who has to pay the tax of the land as per local custom. Though the receiver of the land incurs all the expenses of cultivation, the owner dictates the crop-pattern. The produce of the land is halved ; one portion is given to the owner and the other portion is retained by the share-cropper.

It has been observed that out of 17 Bhumij families living in the village nine households used to receive in the past some land for share-cropping from the Mahatos and the Santals of the neighbouring villages. But,

at the time of survey only two Bhumij families were found to have received any land on crop-sharing. A tendency has developed recently among the land-owner class to withhold the land, given out to others in the past, and to cultivate it themselves. The non-availability of land for share-cropping is attributed to the following reasons :

(i) First, the owners do not find it profitable to get their land cultivated by others on crop-share basis.

(ii) Secondly, with the increase in the price of foodgrains, the owners find it more lucrative to cultivate the land themselves and thus to get higher prices for the total produce rather than for a fraction.

(iii) Thirdly, the stringent provision of the West Bengal Land Reforms Act makes it obligatory for the owner of a land to record the name of the share-cropper but the owners do not like that the share-croppers do have a permanent claim on their land.

For all these reasons, most of the owners, who had formerly let out their land to others on crop-share basis, now cultivate their land themselves or get it cultivated by hired labourers under personal supervision.

(*xi*) *Appreciation of the value of land*

One remarkable feature relating to land, that ought to be mentioned here, is the villagers' gradual appreciation of its value. The recurrent food shortage and higher prices of foodgrains have greatly enhanced the value of land. According to an estimate (made by the elderly people of this village as also of the neighbouring villages) the price of one *bigha* of cultivable land varied from Rs. 150/- to Rs. 200/- during 1949-50. It shot up to approximately Rs. 300/- during 1955-56. At present the price of the same land has jumped up to approximately Rs. 800/-. In course of less than 15 years, the price of land has increased more than six times. Even at this price cultivable land is not readily available, as the owners do not want to part with their land. That is why, the sponsors of the Lodha Rehabilitation Scheme are facing great difficulty in purchasing land for the Lodhas.

B. Livestock

Livestock plays a very important part in the economic life of a village. But, in Bhumij Dhan Sol only a small section of the households owns livestock.

(*i*) *Milch cattle*

There are 27 milch cattle including buffaloes, owned by 15 families. Six families possess one milch cattle each and each of the nine other families possesses two or more milch cattle. The details are shown in the following table :

TABLE 21

Caste/Tribe	Total no. of households owning milch cattle	Number of households possessing				Total no. of milch cattle
		One milch cow	Two milch cattle	Three milch cattle	Four milch cattle	
Lodha	7	5	2	..	..	9
Bhumij	6	1	4	1	..	12
Mahato	2	..	1	..	1	6
Total	**15**	**6**	**7**	**1**	**1**	**27**

Though 15 families possess milch cattle, only three families are able to sell their milk. The remaining families cannot find any buyer of milk. The families, not possessing any *milch cattle, are too poor to buy any milk.* Again, the families, which are not able to sell their milk, do not usually drink the milk themselves, but allow the calves to suck the milk ; they think that only on proper feeding the calves can grow up quickly and that a grown-up bullock commands higher price. All the three milk-buyers are the employees of Samaj Sevak Sangha of the village and of the Forest Beat Office. Milk is generally sold at 50 paise per *seer.*

(*ii*) *Draught cattle*

There are 37 draught cattle, owned by 14 families. Out of the 37 draught cattle, 13 are owned by three Mahato families, the details being shown in the table below :

TABLE 22

Caste/Tribe	Total no. of households owning draught cattle	Number of households possessing							Remarks
		One draught cattle	Two draught cattle	Three draught cattle	Four draught cattle	Five draught cattle	Six draught cattle	Total no. of draught cattle	
Lodha	6	..	6	..	..	..	..	12	Of these, four have been given by Samaj Sevak Sangha and one has been borrowed on share
Bhumij	5	..	4	..	1	..	..	12	
Mahato	3	..	..	1	1	..	1	13	
Total	**14**	..	**10**	**1**	**2**	..	**1**	**37**	

In this connection it should be pointed out that out of the 14 households, which cultivate their land themselves, nine possess a pair of bullocks each. Of these households, six return cultivation as their major occupation.

(*iii*) *Calves*

The details about the number of calves in different households have been shown in the following table :

TABLE 23

Caste/Tribe	No. of households owning calves	Number of households possessing					Total no. of calves
		One calf	Two calves	Three calves	Four calves	Sixteen calves	
Lodha	10	8	1	..	1	..	14
Bhumij	9	4	3	1	1	..	17
Mahato	2	..	1	..	..	1	18
Total	**21**	**12**	**5**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**49**

(iv) Goats

There are 65 goats in the village owned by 26 families. Of the 65 goats, 45 are in the possession of 18 Lodha families. The details of the number of goats are shown below :

TABLE 24

Caste/Tribe	Total no. of households owning goats	Number of households possessing						Total no. of goats	Remarks
		One goat	Two goats	Three goats	Four goats	Five goats	Nine goats		
Lodha	18	9	3	1	2	2	1	45	Of these, four have been received on share
Bhumij	7	1	2	2	2	..	..	19	Ditto
Mahato	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	
Total	**26**	**11**	**5**	**3**	**4**	**2**	**1**	**65**	

(v) Fowls

Out of a total of 100 fowls in the village, 58 are in the possession of 18 Lodha families, the remaining 42 being in the possession of 10 Bhumij families. The details are given in the following table :

TABLE 25

Caste/Tribe	Total no. of households possessing fowls	Number of household possessing								Total no. of fowls
		One fowl	Two fowls	Three fowls	Four fowls	Five fowls	Six fowls	Seven fowls	Eight fowls	
Lodha	18	2	6	1	5	3	1	..	..	58
Bhumij	10	1	1	2	2	1	2	..	1	42
Mahato	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total	**28**	**3**	**7**	**3**	**7**	**4**	**3**	..	**1**	**100**

(vi) Rearing of livestock in share

The system of rearing livestock in share is in practice in this village. The heads of two Bhumij households, who are widows, have given their draught cattle to others (living in a neighbouring village) and the head of one Lodha household has received a draught cattle in share. In return, the owner of the draught cattle receives one *maund* and a half of paddy per head every year. As for goats and fowls, the owner receives half the number of the newborn chickens.

(vii) Cattle-market

For the purpose of buying and selling cattle, the villagers visit the *hat* at Binpur (28 kilometres), held every Sunday. But, for the purchase and sale of goats and fowls, the villagers visit the bi-weekly markets at Bhimpur (2½ kilometres) and Lalgarh (6 kilometres.).

(viii) Cattle-disease

For treatment of the diseases of cattle, herbal medicines are generally resorted to. It is reported that there are some experts on cattle-disease in the neighbouring villages. The diseased cattle are treated with herbal juice, said to have the property of curing some diseases. The villagers do not avail themselves of the expert guidance of the Veterinary Doctor in the Block Development Office at Lalgarh.

(ix) Importance of livestock in the economic life of the villagers

In a predominantly agricultural village livestocks, specially the draught bullocks, are a valuable asset. But, in the present village, where cultivation is the primary occupation of only six households, livestocks play a different role.

Here in Bhumij Dhan Sol, the people spend their savings on buying cheaper stocks like calves, goats and fowls. In times of serious illness at home, they sell a goat or some fowls and manage to meet the expenses. Some households, having marriageable children, rear young cattle or goats and partially meet the expenses of marriage by selling them. The same method is adopted to defray the expenses of rituals on birth and death. It is pointed out by some households that they even purchase their dress by selling goats or fowls. The people do not have any liquid cash, but they convert the very little, they have, into livestocks to meet contingent expenses after sale of the same.

C. LABOUR-FORCE AND WORKING-FORCE

Labour-force is defined to include all persons in the working age-group of 15 to 59 ; the working-force, on the other hand, comprises all persons, who are actually engaged in some economic activity.

Distribution of population according to working force and labour force may be glanced from the table below :

TABLE 26

	Number of persons					
	Males		Females		Total	
Category	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Labour-force	71	53·8	61	46·2	132	100·00
Working-force	84	56·0	66	44·0	150	100·00
Working-force as percentage of labour-force		118·3	..	108·0	..	113·6

The ratio that the working force bears to the labour force exceeds unity. This apparent contradiction is not an unusual feature of a tribal village, where even the children and the old folk, who do not come in the working age-group of 15 to 59, are to contribute their labours for their livelihood. The table also shows that womenfolk participate in the economic activity almost to the same degree as the menfolk.

Classification of workers and non-workers

According to the Industrial Classification of 1961 Census, the total population of the village has been classified into workers and

non-workers. A worker is defined as a person, engaged in some economic activity and with an occupation. A non-worker, on the other hand, is a person, who is not engaged in any productive economic activity. The details of the population according to age, sex and economic status are shown in the following table :

TABLE 27

DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION ACCORDING TO AGE, SEX AND ECONOMIC STATUS

Age-group	Workers				Non-workers				Total population			
	Male	Female	Total	Percentage	Male	Female	Total	Percentage	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
0— 4	..	..	..	..	24	25	49	37·4	24	25	49	17.4
5— 9	..	..	..	..	24	21	45	34·4	24	21	45	16·1
10—14	8	5	13	8·7	10	14	24	18·3	18	19	37	13·2
Sub-total of												
0—14	*8*	*5*	*13*	*8·7*	*58*	*60*	*11·8*	*90·1*	*66*	*65*	*131*	*46·7*
15—19	6	7	13	8·7	4	1	5	3·8	10	8	18	6·4
20—24	14	13	27	18·0	..	2	2	1·5	14	15	29	10·3
25—29	7	8	15	10·0	1	1	2	1·5	8	9	17	6·0
30—34	15	11	26	17·3	..	..	..	..	15	11	26	9·3
Sub-total of												
15—34	*2*	*39*	*81*	*54·0*	*5*	*4*	*9*	*6·8*	*47*	*43*	*90*	*32·0*
35—39	5	5	10	6·7	..	..	..	..	5	5	10	3·6
40—44	7	5	12	8·0	..	2	2	1·5	7	7	14	5·0
45—49	6	2	8	5·3	..	..	..	..	6	2	8	2·8
50—54	6	2	8	5·3	..	..	..	..	6	2	8	2·8
55—59	..	1	1	0·6	..	1	1	0·8	..	2	2	0·7
Sub-total of												
35—59	*24*	*15*	*39*	*25·9*	..	*3*	*3*	*2·3*	*24*	*18*	*42*	*14·9*
60—64	3	1	4	2·7	..	..	..	..	3	1	4	1·4
65—69	2	4	6	4·0	..	..	..	..	2	4	6	2·2
70+	5	2	7	4·7	..	1	1	0·8	5	3	8	2·8
Sub-total of												
60+	*10*	*7*	*17*	*11·4*	..	*1*	*1*	*0·8*	*10*	*8*	*18*	*6·4*
Grand Total	**84**	**66**	**150**	**100·0**	**63**	**68**	**131**	**100·0**	**147**	**134**	**281**	**100·0**

The table shows that more than half of the working force of the village belongs to the age-group of 15 to 34 and four-fifths belong to the age-group of 15 to 59. But, the most significant feature of this table is that the two age-groups of 0-14 (infants and children) and 60 and above (aged persons), which do not ordinarily comprise the labour force, contribute to one-fifth of the total number of workers in the village. Land and livestock play a rather subservient role in the village. Human labour is the primary resource of the village, so much so that even the children and the old men are called upon to

contribute their resources till the last days of their lives. It is also striking that out of 18 persons belonging to the age-group of 60 and above, 17 are workers and one disabled person is a non-worker. Of the total population, 53·4 per cent are workers and the remaining 46·6 per cent are non-workers.

As regards the non-workers, it is found that more than 90 per cent of them belong to age-group of 0-14. So far as the participation of womenfolk in the working force is concerned, 49 per cent of the total females are workers. It is also significant that 88 per cent of all the womenfolk above 14 years of age are workers.

So far the workers and non-workers of the village as a whole have been discussed. But, the same population may be grouped into (i) Lodhas on the one hand and (ii) Bhumijes and Mahatos together on the other.

TABLE 28

LODHAS ACCORDING TO AGE, SEX AND ECONOMIC STATUS

Age-group	Total			Males			Females		
	Total	Workers	Non-workers	Total	Workers	Non-workers	Total	Workers	Non-workers
0—14	89	12	77	44	7	37	45	5	40
15—34	48	48	..	23	23	..	25	25	..
35—59	26	26	..	16	16	..	10	10	..
60 and above	11	10	*1	7	7	..	4	3	*1
Total	**174**	**96**	**78**	**90**	**53**	**37**	**84**	**43**	**41**
Percentage	*100·0*	*55·2*	*44·8*	*100·0*	*59·9*	*40·1*	*100·0*	*51·2*	*48·8*

*Disabled

TABLE 29

BHUMIJ AND MAHATOS ACCORDING TO AGE, SEX AND ECONOMIC STATUS

Age-group	Total			Males			Females		
	Total	Workers	Non-workers	Total	Workers	Non-workers	Total	Workers	Non-workers
0—14	42	1	41	22	1	21	20	..	20
15—34	42	33	9	24	19	5	18	14	4
35—59	16	13	3	8	8	..	8	5	3
60 and above	7	7	..	3	3	..	4	4	..
Total	**107**	**54**	**53**	**57**	**31**	**26**	**50**	**23**	**27**
Percentage	*100·0*	*50·5*	*49·5*	*100·0*	*54·4*	*45·6*	*100·0*	*46·00*	*54·00*

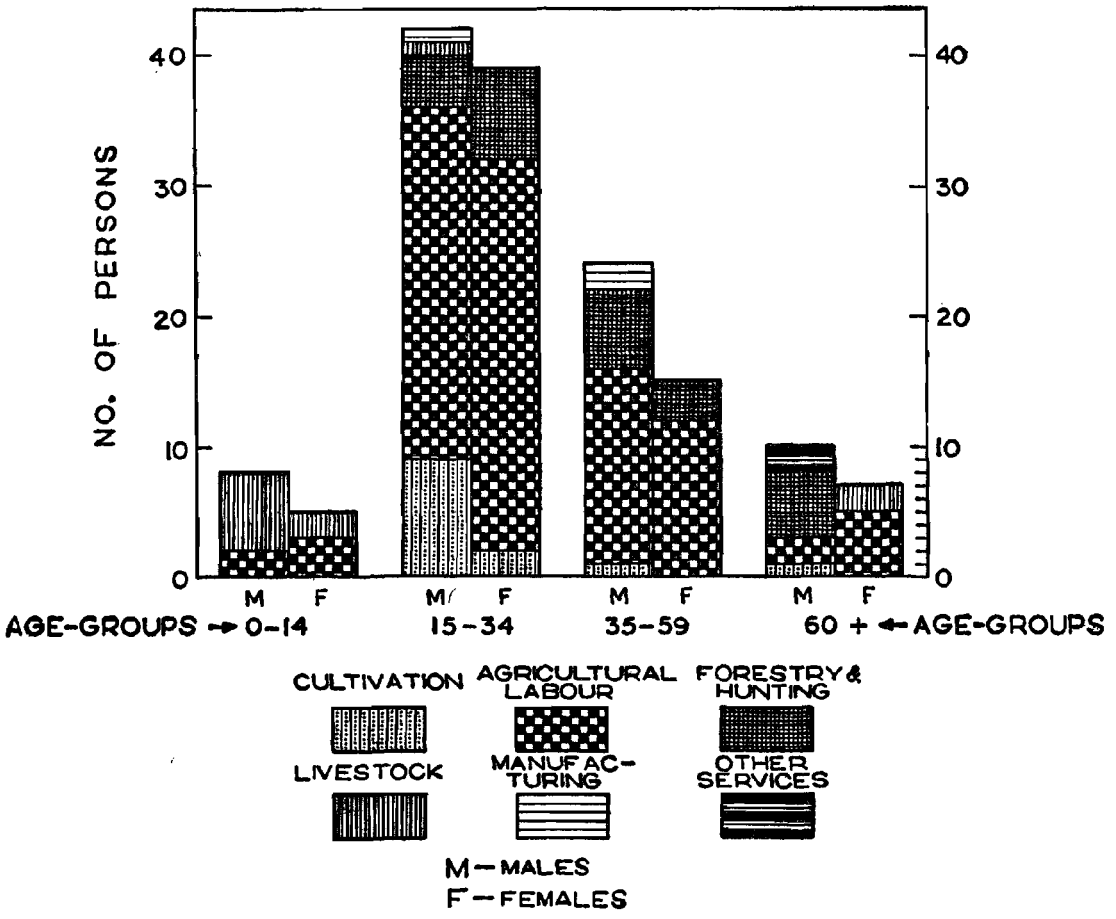
Several interesting features are noticed from the two tables.

(1) Whereas among the Bhumijes and the Mahatos the workers and the non-workers are nearly equal in number, among the Lodhas the workers far outnumber the non-workers.

(2) Among the Lodhas, 60 per cent of the male population are workers, while among the Bhumij and the Mahatos, a little over 54 per cent are workers.

(3) 51.2 per cent of the female population among the Lodhas are workers, the corresponding figure for the Bhumijes and Mahatos being 46 per cent.

WORKERS BY AGE, SEX AND INDUSTRIAL CATEGORY



(4) Among the Bhumij and the Mahatos there is only one worker in the age-group 0-14, while the corresponding figure for the Lodhas is 12.

Further, while among the Lodhas there is no non-worker, except a disabled person above 14 years of age. there are 12 non-workers among the Bhumijes and the Mahatos of the same age-group.

This shows that the Bhumijes and the Mahatos are economically better placed than the Lodhas. Moreover, most of the Bhumijes and the Mahatos possess some cultivable land, either as owners or as share-croppers. As such, they depend partially on the economic resources of land. The Lodhas, a totally landless community, in the absence of any such resources have to depend on labour alone for living.

D. Occupational structure

Occupation of a person indicates the specific work or a particular type of economic activity, in which he is engaged for most part of the year. But, it should be pointed out in the beginning that in classifying the 150 workers of the village according to specific occupations, great difficulties were encountered, beacause majority of the workers of the village were engaged in several economic activities. For example, the Lodhas were engaged in the following economic activities :

(a) Agricultural labour,
(b) Day-labour,
(c) Wood-cutting or labour in the forests on daily wage basis,
(d) Hunting,
(e) Raising silk cocoons (*Tassar*),
(f) Collecting faggots.

Evidently no single occupational pattern can serve the purpose of specifying their main or primary occupation. Faced with such complication, the task of singling out the main occupation has been left to the discretion of the respective workers. In most cases, it is found that for about six months in a year they are engaged in cultivation as agricultural labourers and for the remaining half they are engaged in forestry and hunting as woodcutters and hunters.

The 150 workers of the village have been distributed according to age, sex and occupations in the following table :

TABLE 30

DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL WORKERS ACCORDING TO AGE, SEX AND OCCUPATION

Category/ Occupation	Males					Females					Total					Percentage of the total
	0-14	15-34	35-59	60 & above	Total	0-14	15-34	35-59	60 & above	Total	0-14	15-34	35-59	60 & above	Total	
Cultivation																
Owner-cultivator	..	5	1	..	6	..	2	..	..	2	..	7	1	..	8	5·3
Share-croppers	..	4	..	1	5	..	..	..	..	..	..	4	..	1	5	3·3
Agricultural labourer																
Agricultural labourer	2	27	15	2	46	3	30	12	5	50	5	57	27	7	96	64·0
Sub-total of Agricultural sector	2	36	16	3	57	3	32	12	5	52	5	68	28	8	109	72·6
Forestry & hunting																
Log feller-*cum*-trapper	..	4	6	5	15	..	7	3	..	10	..	11	9	5	25	16·7

TABLE 30—*contd.*

Category Occupation	Males					Females					Total					Percentage of the total
	0-14	15-34	35-59	60 & above	Total	0-14	15-34	35-59	60 & above	Total	0-14	15-34	35-59	60 & above	Total	
Livestock																
Milk-maid	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	2	..	..	..	..	2	1·3
Cow-herds	6	1	..	..	7	2	..	..	..	2	8	1	..	..	9	6·0
Manufacturing																
Carpenter	..	1	1	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	..	2	1·3
Worker in indigenous liquor *(Pachai-mad)* production	..	..	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	1	0·7
Other Services																
Village-watchman																
Worker in the Samaj Sevak Sangha	..	..	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	0·7
Sub-total of Non-agricultural sector	6	6	8	7	27	2	7	3	2	14	8	13	11	7	41	27·4
Grand Total	**8**	**42**	**24**	**10**	**84**	**5**	**39**	**15**	**7**	**66**	**13**	**81**	**39**	**15**	**150**	**100·00**

The table shows that 109 workers, out of 150, or 72.6 per cent of the total working force are engaged in agricultural occupations and the remaining 27·4 per cent in non-agricultural occupations. The table also shows that agricultural labourers constitute the largest single group of workers, followed by the workers engaged in forestry and hunting, which account for one-sixth of the total working force. But, this table of occupational structure has the obvious limitation, in as much as the occupations of the 96 agricultural labourers and 25 log-fellers and hunters have a composite occupational structure consisting of agricultural labourers, wood-cutters, hunters, raisers of silk cocoons etc.

According to 1961 Census, occupations of 122 workers of the population of 245 of the village are as follows :

TABLE 31

Cultivators	Males	31
	Females	17
Agricultural labourers	Males	4
	Females	10
Day-labourers	Males	38
	Females	22
Total		**122**

According to the present survey there are 13 cultivators, the corresponding figure according to 1961 Census being 48. This anomaly can be explained by the fact that there are several families, which own small fragments of cultivable land, mostly three to four *bighas* in area. Probably, in the 1961 Census they have been enumerated as cultivators. But, during the present survey the members of these households have returned themselves as agricultural labourers, cultivation being their secondary occupation.

It also appears that most of the workers, who have returned themselves either as agricultural labourers or as log-cutter-*cum*-hunters in course of the present survey, were deemed as day-labourers in 1961 Census and have been shown as engaged in Other Services. It is gathered that at the time of Census enumeration in 1961, most of these workers had been working in a Test Relief Scheme and they were justifiably classified as day-labourers.

It may be of some interest to examine the occupational structure of the people with reference to the different communities in the village.

CORRELATION BETWEEN PRIMARY OCCUPATION. AND SUBSIDIARY OCCUPATION

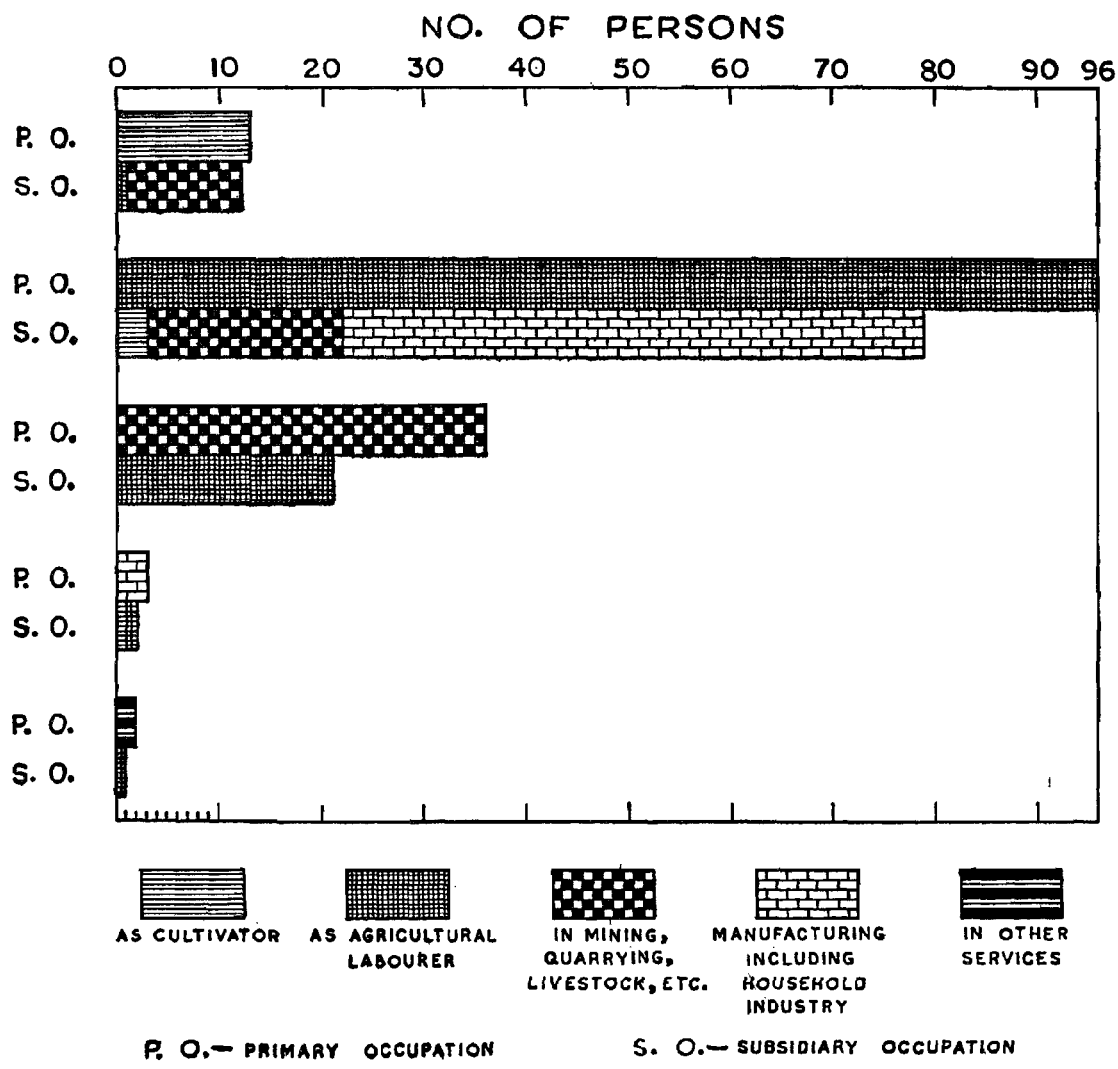


TABLE 32

DISTRIBUTION OF WORKERS ACCORDING TO OCCUPATION

Caste/Tribe	Total no. of workers	Owner cultivator	Share-cropper	Agricultural labourer	Log-feller-*cum*-trapper	Milkmaid	Cowherd	Carpenter	Worker engaged in indigenous liquor production	Village watchman	Worker engaged in Office of the Samaj Sevak Sangha
Lodha	96	..	..	61	25	..	8	..	1	..	1
Bhumij	46	7	..	33	..	2	1	2	..	1	..
Mahato	8	1	5	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total	**150**	**8**	**5**	**96**	**25**	**2**	**9**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**1**

(i) Secondary occupation

As pointed out earlier, most workers of this village are engaged in a number of economic activities. Hence, the foregoing discussion about the occupational structure of the workers can throw little light on the composite nature of their occupations, unless their subsidiary occupations are examined.

In a village, where only six families depend on cultivation as their major source of income, where most of the families have not adequate cultivable land, where manufacturing household industry is marked by its absence, most workers cannot depend on any single occupation, if they are to keep their bodies and souls together. Most of the primary occupations, in which the villagers are engaged, cannot keep them busy for more than six months. Secondary occupations are, therefore, as important as the primary ones. The following table shows the secondary occupations pursued by the workers and their primary occupations :

TABLE 33

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY OCCUPATIONS

Nature of primary occupation	Total no. of workers	No. of workers having secondary occupation	No. of workers whose secondary occupations are: Agricultural labour	Exclusively log-cutting	Trading in *tassar* and *Sal* leaves	Carpentry	Owner cultivator	Log cutting-*cum*-hunting
Owner-cultivator	8	7	1	6	..	..	..	..
Share-cropper	5	5	..	..	5	..	..	..
Agricultural labour	96	79	..	19	..	1	3	56
Log-cutter and hunter	25	21	21	..	..	..	..	..
Milkmaid	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Cow-herd	9	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Carpenter	2	2	1	..	..	..	1	..
Worker in indigenous liquor shop	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Village watchman	1	1	1	..	..	..	..	..
Worker in Samaj Sevak Sangha	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total	**150**	**115**	**24**	**25**	**5**	**1**	**4**	**56**

From the table it is seen that 86 workers or 75 per cent of all the 115 workers, who have secondary occupations, are directly or indirectly dependent on the forests as wood-cutters on daily wage basis, or as hunters or as traders in silk-cocoons and *Sal* leaves. It also appears that 115 persons or 76·7 per cent of the workers of the village have some subsidiary occupations. Of the remaining 35 workers having no subsidiary occupation, 17 are engaged in the houses of cultivators as agricultural labourers on contract and have no scope of pursuing a secondary occupation ; the two milkmaids are too old to pursue a secondary occupation ; the cow-herds are children, one worker employed in the Office of the Samaj Sevak Sangha does not have a secondary occupation and four others are old enough. The remaining two workers (the two concubines) do not feel the necessity of pursuing a secondary occupation.

The table also serves to focus one's attention on another important feature that of the 96 agricultural labourers, 75 persons work in the forests as secondary workers. Twenty one, out of 25 log-feller-*cum*-hunters, work as agricultural labourers after their primary work. Evidently, majority of the labourers are dependent partially on agriculture and partially on forestry for their livelihood. Agriculture and forests are the twin sources of livelihood of the majority. In fact, one supplements the other ; when agricultural season is over, people rush to the forests and when seasons of wood-cutting and hunting are over, people go back to the fields. Neither of the two activities by itself can feed the entire village.

(*ii*) *Occupational mobility*

The mobility of occupation has been studied in the village with reference to the traditional occupation, the occupation of the father and the occupation followed by the existing workers.

In a village, where economic resources are very meagre and scanty, most of the workers have to struggle for existence as labourers either in the jungles or in the fields. There is hardly any opening anywhere that enables the worker to switch over from the existing occupation to another.

(*iii*) *Mobility with reference to the traditional occupation*

The traditional occupation of the Lodhas is food-gathering, hunting and collection of forest produce. Even now, most of the Lodhas are engaged in their traditional economic pursuits. They gather food and collect the produce of the forest ; they are even engaged in catching snakes and other chases of the forests. It will not be hasty to conclude that the Lodhas have not yet shifted much from their traditional occupation.

Cultivation, on the other hand, is claimed to be the traditional occupation of the Bhumij and of the Mahatos. Excepting the two milk-maids, who are too old to do any other work, all other members of the Bhumij and Mahato communities are still pursuing their traditional occupations, in the sense that all of them are engaged in agricultural activities. Even the two carpenters and the village watchman take to agricultural activities on some occasions.

(*iv*) *Mobility with reference to the occupation of the father*

For the purpose of determining the mobility of occupation with reference to that of the father, the occupations of all the heads of households have been compared with those of their fathers.

(a) Mobility of occupations of the Lodhas

TABLE 34

NATURE OF CHANGE FROM FATHER'S GENERATION TO PRESENT GENERATION

Occupation	No. of heads of households in the occupation	No. of heads of households whose fathers' were		
		Agricultural labourer	Log-cutter-*cum*-hunter	Share-cropper
Agricultural labourer	20	11	9	..
Log-cutter-*cum*-hunter	13	..	12	1
Worker in indigenous liquor production	1	1	..	..
Worker in the Office of Samaj Sevak Sangha	1	1	..	..

As read from the table that mobility in the true sense of the term has taken place in respect of the heads of three households. The head of the household, father of which was a share-cropper, is now dependent on forestry and hunting, because no share-cropping land is now available. The son of another agricultural labour is now a worker in a liquor-shop. Greater security has urged him to take up the present occupation. The son of another agricultural labourer now works in the Office of the Samaj Sevak Sangha. He says that he is fortunate for his present assignment.

In respect of the remaining nine heads of households, whose fathers were log-fellers-*cum*-hunters, it may be said that though they have taken to agricultural labour, they still follow their fathers' occupations as their secondary sources of livelihood.

(b) OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY OF THE BHUMIJ AND THE MAHATOS

TABLE 35

NATURE OF CHANGE FROM FATHER'S GENERATION TO PRESENT GENERATION

Occupation	No. of heads of households in the occupation	No. of heads of households whose fathers' occupations were			
		Owner cultivator	Share-cropper	Agricultural labourer	Carpenter
Owner cultivator	5	5	..	..	..
Share-cropper	1	..	1	..	..
Agricultural labourer	9	2	7	..	..
Milk-maids	2	..	1	1	..
Carpenters	2	..	1	..	1
Village-watchman	1	1	..	..	..

All the five owner-cultivators and one share-cropper are pursuing the occupations of their fathers. But, the sons of two owner-cultivators and seven share-croppers have now

been reduced to the positions of agricultural labourers. This should not be treated as mobility in occupation, for they are still engaged in agricultural activity. The transition of the share-croppers to labourers is thus brought into focus sharply.

The two widowed heads of households have taken to selling milk due to their advanced age. The son of another share-cropper is now a carpenter, though at times he also works as a day-labourer in the fields. He has chosen the profession of a carpenter due to greater security. The son of another cultivator is now the village-watchman. He has let out his cultivable land (three *bighas*) to a person on crop-share basis. His meagre earnings as the village watchman sometimes force him to work as an agricultural labourer also.

(*v*) *Mobility of occupation with reference to the present head*

In a remote village like Bhumij Dhan Sol, most of the workers have not had any chance to make any change in their occupations in course of the present generation. Still, four Lodha workers have settled in their present occupation after pursuing some other vocations previously. In the wake of the Great Bengal Famine of 1946, these adventurous youngmen set out from their distant homes for unknown places in search of new callings. They say that they had gone as far as Jessore (East Pakistan), where they had settled after having acquired some land on crop-share basis. But, after some time, they did not find any interest in that work. For some time they worked as coolies here and there, till at last they came to the present village, where they are now working as agricultural labourers. There is also another Bhumij who had served under the Zemindar of Lalgarh for a pretty long time as *Paik* (sentry), but after the abolition of Zemindary he has come here to plough his own land.

E. NON-WORKERS

As pointed out earlier there are 150 workers and 131 non-workers in the village. The following table gives the distribution of the non-workers according to age, sex and nature of their activity.

44·6 per cent of the total population of the village are non-workers, of which 48 per cent are males and 52 per cent are females.

Among the male population there is no non-worker above 14 years of age excepting, of course, a disabled person and four students.

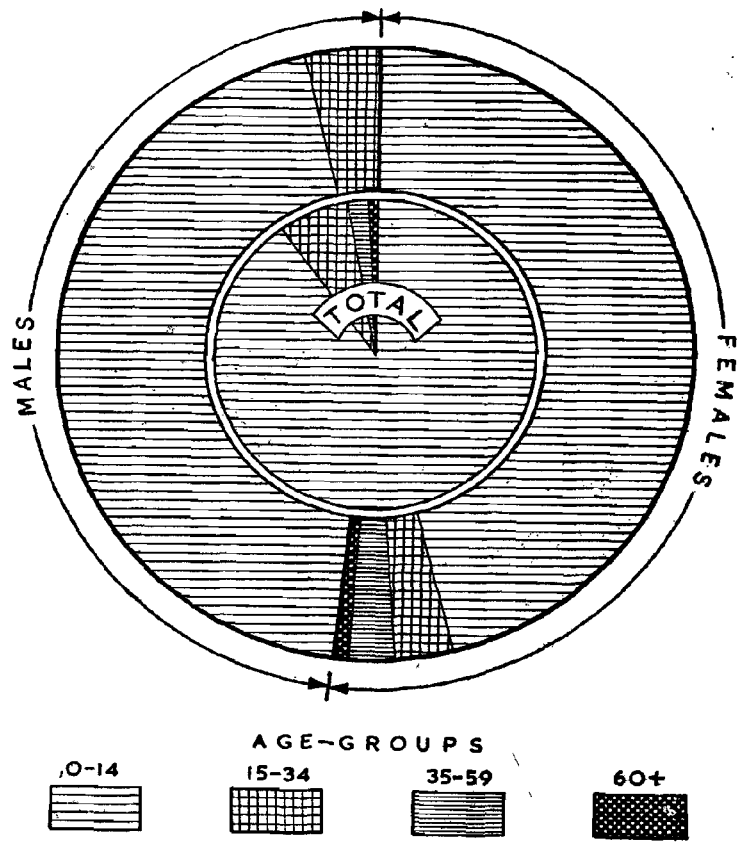
Out of 69 females above 14 years of age, 61 women have to go out for work. Naturally, some of them have to leave behind their young children at home. Most of the children are entrusted with the task of looking after the babies. Even children have to perform some useful work, like gathering edible roots and tubers and collecting faggots from the jungles or washing the clothes during the absence of their parents.

TABLE 36

NON-WORKERS ACCORDING TO AGE, SEX AND NATURE OF ACTIVITY

Nature of activity	Males					Females					Total					Percentage
	0-14	15-34	35-59	60 & above	Total	0-14	15-34	35-59	60 & above	Total	0-14	15-34	35-59	60 & above	Total	
Infants & children looking after younger brothers and sisters during absence of parents	44	..	..	..	44	36	..	..	..	36	80	..	..	..	80	61·1
Domestic work	7	..	..	..	7	14	..	..	..	14	21	..	..	..	21	16·0
Unemployed	5	..	..	..	5	10	4	2	..	16	15	4	2	..	21	16·0
Infant & disabled	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Student	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	1	1	2	..	1	1	1	3	2·3
Total	2	4	..	..	6	..	..	..	..	..	2	4	..	..	6	4·6
	58	**5**	..	..	**63**	**60**	**4**	**3**	**1**	**68**	**118**	**9**	**3**	**1**	**131**	**100·0**

NON-WORKERS BY AGE & SEX



F. Factors affecting the economic development of the village

(i) *Impact of the West Bengal Land Reforms Act*

The West Bengal, Land Reforms Act, envisages that the actual tillers of the land have some *locus standi* and that they are not evicted from the land unnecessarily and arbitrarily.

To assess the impact of Land Reforms Act and the Estates Acquisition Act several questions were put to the heads of all the households. It has been found that no household in the village has either lost or gained any land. The heads of only two Mahato households, which have been cultivating the land of others for a pretty long time, have been able to record themselves as share-croppers and have benefited to that extent.

But, in one respect the Land Reforms Act along with the abolition of Zemindary have, it is frequently pointed out by the villagers, affected rather adversely the economy of the village. It concerns the availability of cultivable land on crop-share basis. It is pointed out that 11 families of this village (nine Bhumij and two Mahato families) were dependent exclusively on cultivation as share-croppers formerly. Most of the share-cropping land was available from the Mahatos, Santals and some Caste Hindus of the neighbouring villages like Lalgarh. According to 1951 Census, a little over 43 per cent of the population of this *mouza* were dependent on cultivation of land, received from others on crop-share basis. But, the present survey reveals that though four families have received land from others on crop-share basis, only a single Mahato family is dependent exclusively on share-cropping.

(ii) *Impact of the abolition of the Zemindary*

The abolition of the Zemindary has also its impact on the economy of the village. Prior to the abolition of Zemindary, the surrounding jungles and forests were in the ownership of the Zemindars of Ramgarh and Lalgarh. It is pointed out by the Lodhas that during the rule of the Zemindars, the Lodhas had unrestricted rights in the forests in matters of utilisation of forest-produce. And for this act of benevolence every Lodha had to pay them one man-day's labour every year during the *Rathajatra* festival. The Lodhas were able to collect head-loads of woods and faggots from the jungles throughout the year and each family could earn eight to twelve annas daily (50 to 75 paise). This ensured them a steady income round the year. So, some of the Lodhas, who were averse to hard labour, preferred collection and sale of faggots to work in the fields as agricultural labourers.

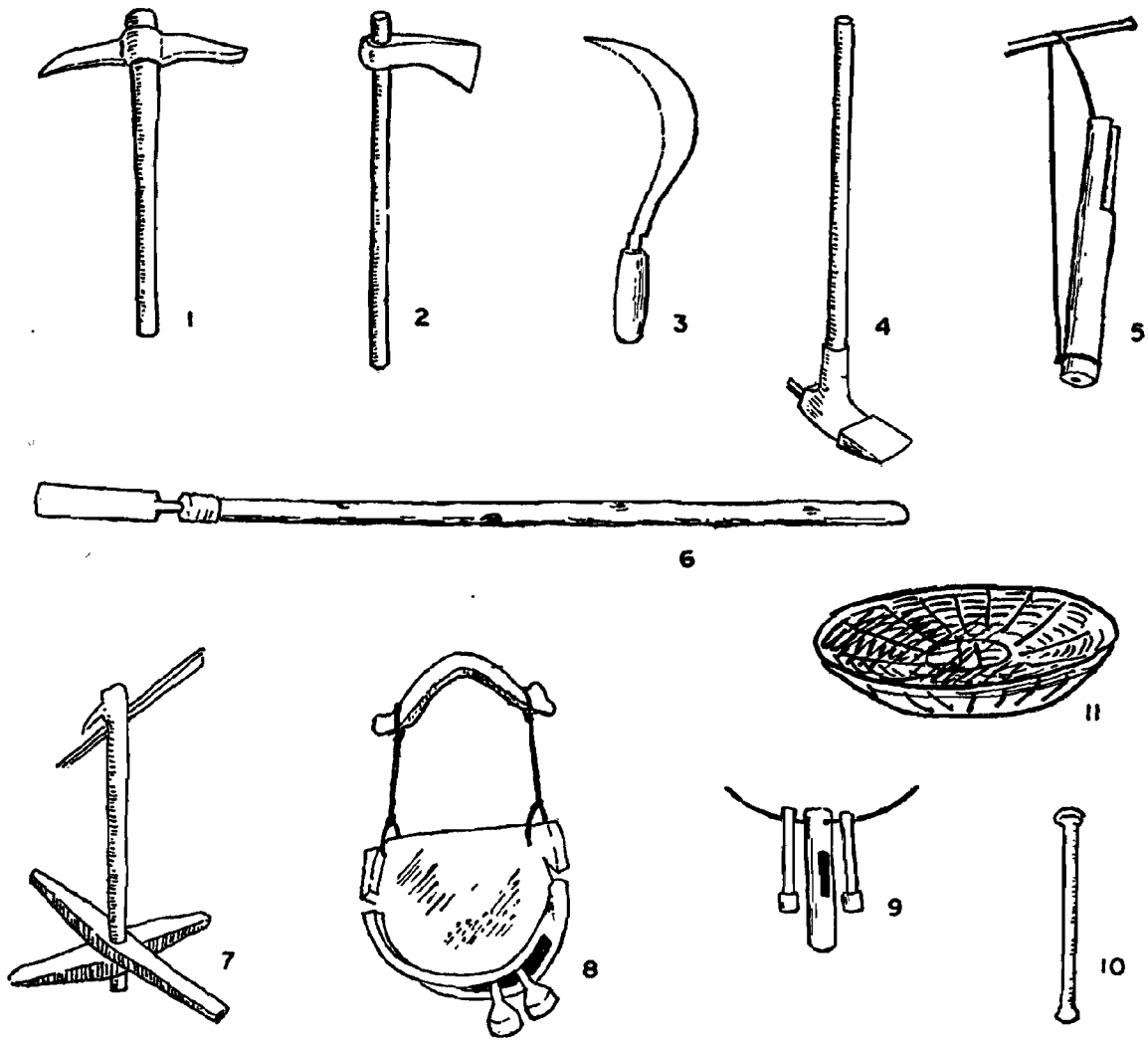
But, with the legislation of the Estates Acquisition Act, some changes have taken place in the occupational pattern of the people. After the private forests of the Zemindars have vested with Government, the Lodhas have been subjected to more rigid and stringent restrictions on the utilisation of forest-produce, and this has partially interfered with the sources of their livelihood. The Lodhas make frequent complaints against alleged high-handedness of the local forest-guards.

G. Cultivation

(i) *Irrigation*

Agriculture of this village is controlled by the vagaries of the monsoons. There is no available facility for irrigation from a canal, a tank or from a pond near the agricultural fields.

TOOLS AND IMPLEMENTS THAT SPEAK OF OCCUPATIONS, AGRICULTURAL AND NON-AGRICULTURAL



1. Pick mattock is used in earth-cutting and digging by day-labourer. 2. Axe is useful in the cutting. 3. *Kaste* (sickle) is a must for harvesting crops. 4. *Bais*, a type of axe in the tool-box of a cartwright in making the wheel is indispensable. 5. *Kerhya* a hollow bamboo-tube to preserve and store seeds. 6. *Kanta* or spud, to dig holes to unearth edible tubers and roots, can be found in some of the Lodha families. 7. *Dhara* or a bobbin to wind ropes of hemp is found in the house of the Lodhas. 8. *Tharka*, or cowbell. 9. *Tipa* or cowbell. 10. *Kund Katanil*, an implement for making a *Tharka*. 11. *Basket*.

(ii) Crop-pattern

Cultivable land here is mainly utilised in three ways. *Sol* land, the best available land, is meant for the cultivation of paddy. The second grade land situated on a higher level is utilised for the cultivation of jute and maize. Part of the homestead land is kept for kitchen-gardening, where brinzals, onions, gourds etc., are grown on a small scale. Other land in the village is utilised for the cultivation of *Kharif* crops.

(iii) Agricultural operations

The Bhumij and the Mahatos generally cultivate *Aman* paddy ; also *Aus* paddy is occasionally cultivated. For the cultivation of paddy, land is tilled with ploughs four or five times in the months of *Falgun* (February-March) and sometimes earlier. Simultaneously with ploughing, each plot of land is ridged upto a height of one foot to two feet to hold rain-water. Levelling and clod-crushing operations proceed along with ploughing. Manure of cowdung is later scattered on the soil after the first one or two showers of rain. Nursery beds are prepared in separate plots of land with great care. As soon as the seedlings sprout upto a height of one foot, these are transplanted in the months of June-July and August in regular rows in the fields. From time to time, the unwanted grass and shrubs in the paddy-fields are weeded. For proper growth of *Aman* paddy some water is stored in the fields. Ridges are, therefore, raised round the fields. Paddy ripens in November-December and is harvested till January.

(iv) Manure

The cultivating households of this village have not yet learnt the use of chemical fertilisers. Cowdung still continues to be the main item of their manure.

(v) Implements

Only traditional agricultural implements are used by the cultivating households. They have not yet seen or used any improved agricultural implement. The traditional implements, used in the village, are :

(i) Plough and yoke
(ii) Harrow
(iii) Spade
(iv) Weeding implement, known as *Nireni.*

The table below will give in detail the descriptions, functions, sources and price of the main agricultural implements.

TABLE 37

TOOLS AND IMPLEMENTS OF AGRICULTURE

Name of implements	Description and manipulation	Function	Source	Price
Langal (Plough)	A wooden plank with two narrow ends placed at obtuse angle, one end being fitted with sharpened narrow steel blade. At the time of ploughing the person puts his weight on the wooden end ; while it is driven by either bullocks or buffaloes.	A deep furrow is made on the earth and the soil is turned down.	Wooden plough is made to order by the carpenters, of the Bhumij and Santal communities residing in the neighbouring area. The steel blade is purchased from the local market at Lalgarh.	Wooden plough costs Rs. 3/- inclusive of labour charges for carpentry. The steel blade costs Rs. 2/-.

TABLE 37—*contd.*

Name of implements	Description and manipulation	Function	Source	Price
Joal (Yoke)	A wooden bar of a size of 4′ x 4″ with a thickness of 3″ with two holes at two ends, through which two wooden pegs are insert'd. The frame of wood is harnessed on a pair of draught cattle and the yoke is thus attached to the narrow end of the plough.	The yoke is attached to the plough for drawing it with the help of animal power.	Made by the same carpenters, who manufacture the plough.	Rs. 2/-
Mai (Harrow)	It is a ladder-like implement, made of two bamboo poles fitted with wooden rungs. It is drawn by the draught cattle and the farmer stands on it, while being drawn.	To break large clods of ploughed land.	—do—	Rs. 2/-
Kodal (Spade)	It is a flattened iron blade with a ring like hole at the centre of one of its ends, through which a wooden handle is inserted. It is used in a transverse way slightly slanted to the surface of the ground.	Used for digging purpose or for removing chunks of earth as also for levelling purpose.	Local markets	Rs. 4/- to Rs. 5/-
Kaste (Sickle)	A semi-circular reaping hook, it is used manually	For cutting stalks of paddy, jute etc.	—do—	Rs. 2·50 paise to Rs. 3/-
Nireni (Weeding implement)	A straight iron implement about one foot in length, at the end of which a sharp iron blade about 2″ to 3″ is fixed.	It is used for weeding unwanted grasses from the fields.	—do—	Rs. 1·50 paise to Rs. 2/-

(*vi*) *Agricultural developments*

No developed agricultural method, practice or operation has been observed. The cultivators have not yet heard about the Japanese method of cultivation or about co-operative farming.

But, in recent years with gradual rise in the price of food-grains, there is a tendency among the landowner households to convert the cultivable fallows into cultivable land. For this purpose, the *Dahi* type of land situated on a higher plane is brought under cultivation. By considerable mud-cutting operations, such land is made suitable for holding a part of the rain-water. 10 per cent of the total area of land in the ownership of the villagers consist of uncultivable fallow.

(*vii*) *Produce*

Paddy is cultivated in 117 *bighas* of land. A part of the land is cultivated by the owners and the rest by the share-croppers. 708 *maunds* of paddy have been grown in 117 *bighas* of land. Per *bigha* productivity of paddy here is six *maunds*. Out of 708 *maunds* of paddy produced by the villagers, 525 *maunds* have been retained by them and the rest is received by the actual owners.

If it is assumed that on an average an adult takes eight *chhataks* of rice daily and a minor six *chhataks*, 2 *maunds* and 26 *seers* of rice in the minimum are consumed in the village in every meal. Approximately four *maunds* of paddy are required for daily consumption in the village.

Quantity of paddy consumed annually in the village	1460	*maunds*
Quantity of paddy received annually by the villagers	525	,,
Deficit	935	,,

It appears that 36 per cent of the annual quantity of required food is grown by the villagers, while the deficit of 64 per cent of food are purchased from outside the village.

Jute is cultivated in 18 *bighas* of land. The total yield of jute is 58 *maunds*. So, the per *bigha* productivity of jute is a little more than three *maunds*. Besides paddy and jute, maize is also cultivated in some plots of land but on a very small scale. Yield of maize per *bigha* is 2000 stalks.

(viii) Disposal of surplus produce

Of the six households, which have returned cultivation as their principal occupation, five households, having some surplus produce of paddy, have sold 115 *maunds* of paddy 58 *maunds* of jute produced in the village are sold.

The producers dispose of their surplus quantities of paddy and jute in the neighbouring *Hats* of Lalgarh (6 kms) and Bhimpur (2 kms) and also to a Sunri trader at Jhitka.

(ix) Agricultural costing

Data collected on average cost of cultivation of paddy show that it is very low in this region. This is due to the fact that except cowdung no manure or chemical fertiliser is used. Moreover, labour here is comparatively cheap. For the cultivation of paddy the cost per *bigha* may be perused from the following table :

TABLE 38

COST OF PADDY-CULTIVATION

A—Charges of labour

Operation	Units of labour	Total man-days	Charges
Ploughing	1 labourer and 2 bullocks for 3 days	3	Rs. 1·75 x 3 = Rs. 5·25
Transplanting	4 labourers for 1 day	4	Re. 1·00 x 4 = Rs. 4·00
Weeding	1 labourer for 3 days	3	Re. 1·00 x 3 = Rs. 3·00
Harvesting	2 labourers for 1 day	2	Re. 1·00 x 2 = Rs. 2·00
Binding	1 labourer for 1 day	1	Re. 1·00 x 1 = Re. 1·00
Carrying	1 labourer for 1 day	1	Re. 1·00 x 1 = Re. 1·00
Threshing	2 labourers for 1 day	2	Re. 1·00 x 2 = Rs. 2·00
	Total	**16**	**Rs. 18·25**

B—Cost of seed

Cost of 7 *seers* of paddy seeds	Rs. 2·50
C—Revenue	Rs. 1·25
D—Manure	Nil
Total cost of cultivation of paddy per *bigha* of land	**Rs. 22·00**

E—Normal produce per *bigha* of land

Paddy 6 *maunds* @ Rs. 15/- per *maund*	Rs. 90·00
Straw 1½ *kahans* @ Rs. 3/- per *kahan*	Rs. 4·50
Total outturn of paddy per *bigha* of land	**Rs. 94·50**

F—Normal return per *bigha* of land

Total outturn of paddy per *bigha* of land	Rs. 94·50
Cost of cultivation of paddy per *bigha* of land	Rs. 22·00
Normal return per *bigha* of land	Rs. 72·50

Favoured by good weather, a cultivator can get a net return of Rs. 72.50 from a *bigha* of cultivable land. The table prepage has been prepared in consultation with the cultivators of this village and it may not be applicable to the cultivators of other regions.

(*x*) *Importance of cultivation*

The Lodhas are landless and they do not draw any benefit from cultivation. Even though cultivation does not concern majority of the people in the village, the importance of cultivation cannot be under-estimated as such. In fact, 23·2 per cent of the total annual income of the village is earned from cultivation. Twelve Bhumij households and all the three Mahato households earn some income from cultivation. Six cultivator households get bulk of their income from cultivation.

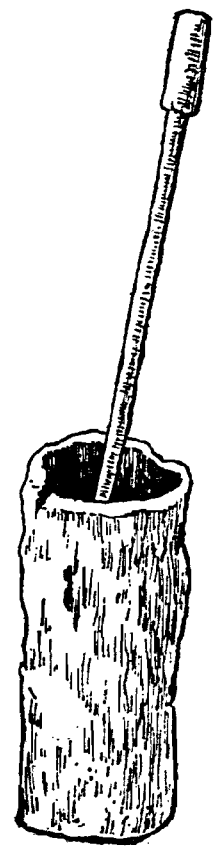
(*xi*) *Agricultural calendar*

Paddy constitutes the main crop of this village. So, agricultural labourers are mostly engaged in activities connected with cultivation of paddy. From the month of *Falgun* (February-March), the ploughing operations start and the labourers set to work. Side by side with ploughing, the work of mud-cutting is carried on. Reclamation of *Dahi* land for the purpose of cultivation requires labourers and the villagers are employed in various work connected with it.

In the months of *Baisakh* (April-May) and *Jyaistha* (May-June), the labourers are engaged in levelling, harrowing and clod-crushing operations. In the months of *Jyaistha* and *Ashar* (June-July) with the first showers the labourers get engaged in the preparation of seed-beds. In the months of *Ashar-Sravana* (June-August) there is a great demand for agricultural labourers for employment in the work of transplantation.

Just after the season of transplantation a temporary slack season sets in, though occasionally the labourers get engaged in weeding operations during this time. The slack season continues till the month of *Kartik* (October-November). After the ears of paddy ripen in the month of *Agrahayana* (November-December), harvesting is done by the labourers. Crops, carried to the farmyard in bundles, are threshed on wooden planks. Husking of paddy is done mannually by women at home with *Ukhul* and *Chheyan* (hand pounder). This work lasts till the end of *Paus* (December-January). This completes the agricultural cycle.

INDIGENOUS PADDY-HUSKING IMPLEMENT



Ukhul and *Chheyan* are the local hand-pounders used in husking paddy. A piece of hollow trunk of any tree serves as the *Ukhul*, wherein paddy is kept, whereas a wooden handle with piston-like end makes the *Chheyan*.

H. AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS

Of the 150 workers, 96 are engaged as agricultural labourers for major part of the year and they constitute 64 per cent of the total workers of the village. Of the remaining 54 workers, agricultural labour is the subsidiary occupation of 24 workers. 120 workers thus work as agricultural labourers either primarily or secondarily.

The income derived from this source alone is responsible for 41·6 per cent of the total income of the village :

There are three types of agricultural labourers in the village :

(i) *Nagda*
(ii) *Munish*
(iii) *Dadni*

(i) Nagda labourers

Nagda labourer is engaged for a particular day and on completion of the work he is paid his wage the same day. The *Nagda* labourer is paid both in cash and in kind. In cash, he is paid one rupee a day. In kind he is supplied a little over three *seers* of paddy a day. The labourers here prefer payment in paddy to that in cash.

The hours of work of the *Nagda* labourer are generally from 7 A.M. to 3-30 P.M. with a recess for one hour, when he is served some tiffin of parched rice.

(ii) Munish

A *Munish,* generally engaged for the whole agricultural season by the well-to-do households, lives in the house of the cultivator for the whole period. He is, however, allowed to make occasional visit to his home. The nature and the hours of work of a *Munish* are not fixed. Engaged in agricultural work, he may be utilised in domestic work also. He is to work from morning till night, as and when necessary.

There is no fixed rate of wage for the *Munish,* payment being generally made in kind. After working for the whole season, an adult worker gets 10 to 14 *maunds* of paddy as his remuneration, while the minors get four to six *maunds* of paddy. Everyday the *Munish* is provided with two full meals and a tiffin. He is given a cloth and a napkin for his work during the whole season.

To avoid seasonal unemployment, most of the labourers opt for this type of work. But, there is also another reason, which prompts most young men to work as *Munish* for some time. Many young men are found to serve as *Munish* for two to three years at a stretch and to accept their payments at a time. They do so to collect the bride-price and save the required money for expenses of the marriage.

17 persons including 12 Bhumij and five Lodhas were engaged as *Munish.* The relation between the *Munish* and his employer can be understood from the overleaf table.

TABLE 39

OWNER AND SHARE-CROPPER RELATION

Community	No. of *Munish*	Community of the employer	Place of work
Bhumij	4	Kshatriya	Ramgarh (6½ kms)
,,	1	Mahato	Bhimpur (2¾ kms)
,,	1	Bhumij	Bhumij Dhan Sol
,,	1	Mahato	Kashidanga (9 kms)
,,	1	Sunri	Jhitka (adjoining village)
,,	4	Gaura	Lalgarh (6 kms)
Lodha	2	Sunri	Jhitka (adjoining village)
,,	1	Mahato	Bhumij Dhan Sol
,,	1	Bhumij	—do—
,,	1	Mahato	Kurkutsol
Total	**17**		

(*iii*) *Dadni*

Sometimes a labourer is found to borrow paddy from the cultivating households on condition that he would repay the paddy by working as agricultural labour. Such a labourer is known as *Dadni* labourer and this system is locally known as *Ber-hone*. The *Dadni* labourer is paid wage at a rate lower than that of the *Nagda* labourer, the wage of a *Dadni* labourer being 0·75. paise per day.

(*iv*) *Sphere of work of the agricultural labourers*

The agricultural labourers of this village go to work in all the neighbouring villages within a radius of eight kilometers. They always welcome employment in a village near home. The cultivating households engage the labourers the day before his appointment for a certain period. It is a common sight to find members of all the three communities of the village going together to a particular destination. Sometimes, they work together under the same employer. The agricultural labourers of this village generally work in the houses of the members of the following communities :

(1) Kumar (pot-maker)
(2) Tanti (weaver)
(3) Karmakar (blacksmith)
(4) Teli (manufacturer of oil)
(5) Tamli (betel-leaf-grower) or Tambuli
(6) Mahato
(7) Santal
(8) Bhumij
(9) Kaivarta
(10) Sadgope
(11) Bagal (cowherd)
(12) Gope (milk-seller)
(13) Sunri (wine-seller)

It is claimed by members of all the communities of the village that they never work as labourers in the houses of the following communities :

(1) Hanri
(2) Dom
(3) Muchi (cobbler)
(4) Methar (sweeper)
(5) Mahali

It is claimed by the Lodhas that a few years back a Lodha would not normally work in the house of a Santal. But, poverty has forced them to change their prejudices. The Santals being the predominant community in

the neighbouring villages, the Lodhas would starve, if out of prejudice against the Santals they do not work in the latter's house.

(v) *Seasonal migration of agricultural labourers*

The Lodha and Bhumij labourers of this village migrate to the eastern tracts of Midnapore in the agricultural season twice a year.

Some of the eastern tracts of Midnapore are more fertile than the western tracts. In some of these regions there is a great demand for agricultural labourers, specially in times of transplantation and harvesting. So, almost every year a section of the labourers migrates temporarily to those areas.

Most of the Lodha and some of the Bhumij labourers of this village migrate to the following areas of the district of Midnapore.

(i) Shiromoni (ii) Banpura	Midnapore Police Station
(iii) Bali Chak (iv) Shyam Chak	Debra Police Station
(v) Panskura—	Panskura Police Station
(vi) Kharagpur—	Kharagpur Police Station

Normally the labourers migrate to these areas twice a year, first in the months of July and August for transplantation and again, in December-January for the purpose of cutting and thrashing operations. They stay there for a period of two to four weeks according to the local demand. First, the concerned employers send some persons to this village and recruit the labourers. In some cases, the whole family migrates to places, mentioned above. Some of the labourers cover the distance on foot and some others by the local transport. The labourers generally work in the houses of the following castes :

(1) Mahisya
(2) Karmakar
(3) Teli
(4) Mahato

Each migratory labourer is served two square meals and one tiffin a day, in addition to a daily wage of rupee one. It affords the labourers a good opportunity to save the entire wage. During migration it sometimes happens that the Lodhas, the Bhumij and the Mahatos are engaged by the same employer. On such occasion, they stay together in the same place on a messing arrangement.

The main reason for the seasonal migration is that the labourers can make some saving from their wage, as food is free. According to an estimate, a labourer on an average makes a saving of approximately Rs. 20/- during each term of migration. If a family is in urgent need of money, for marriage or for repaying old debt, its members usually migrate to earn the required money. Some other households have been found to have purchased assets, such as livestocks, with earning from seasonal migration.

I. Forestry

As already described, Reserved Forest and the unreserved jungles account for about 93·50 acres of the village land.

The Lodhas, constituting the largest group of this village, find some means of pursuing their traditional occupations in the forests of the area. The importance of forests is greater to them than to the Bhumij or the Mahatos.

While the latter are mainly engaged in wood-cutting in the forests for one or two months in the year in March-April, the Lodhas earn some income by catching snakes (for selling their skins) and other animals of the forests, in addition to log-cutting. The principal economic activities connected with forestry are the following :

(a) Log-cutting
(b) Catching snakes and other chases of the forests
(c) Raising of *Tassar* cocoons
(d) Food-gathering

Small concessions like collecting dried leaves or small faggots for use as domestic fuel are granted by the authorities. But, one requires permission for large scale activities and has to act according to rules. For a cart-load of faggots, one has to pay Rs. 2/-.

(i) Log-cutting

Out of 150 workers, 25 have returned log-cutting (along with hunting) as their principal occupations. 75 workers are also engaged in log-cutting which is their secondary occupation. Thus it is found that two-thirds of the total workers of the village are engaged in wood-cutting.

In winter from the month of December, the big trees in the forests are leased out on auction by the Forest Department. The *Mahajans* and merchants from Midnapur, Jhargram and sometime even from Calcutta take a lease of the forests. They engage the local labourers for felling the trees and cutting the logs into pieces of desired size. Most of the labourers work on contract basis (*Phuron*). A labourer is said to earn two to three rupees a day on an average. Trucks carry the timbers and fuels to distant places. The work of log-cutting continues till March and sometimes till April. During Zemindary the work of log-cutting continued for four or five months at a stretch and the labourers earned more than what they do now. But, now the work continues for two to three months at best.

(ii) Catching snakes and hunting

Hunting is a very favourite pastime of the Lodhas. As they do not find any interest in agricultural activities, hunting provides them joy as also a means of livelihood.

Almost all the Lodha households are hunters and possess the following implements :

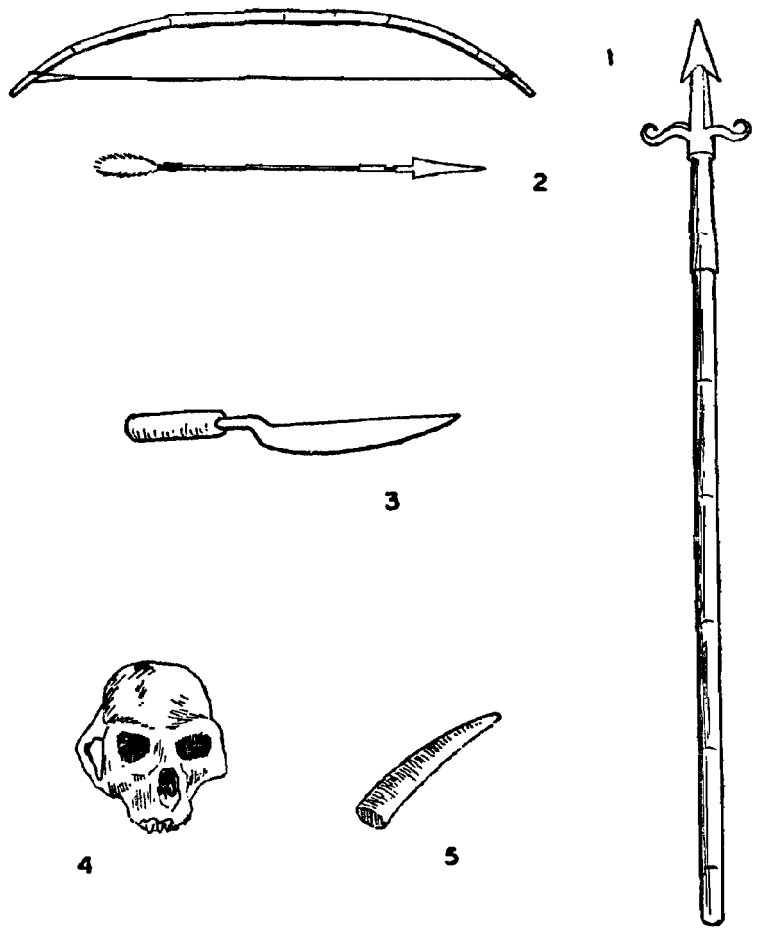
(i) Bows and arrows
(ii) Different varieties of *Khontas* or spuds for digging purposes
(iii) *Tangi* or axe
(iv) *Kencha*, a pointed blade fitted to a bamboo pole, three to four cubits in length

TABLE 40

TOOLS AND IMPLEMENTS FOR HUNTING

Local name	Description and manipulations	Function	Source	Price
Dhanuk (bow)	Bow is shaped like the arc of a circle The length of a bow varies from 2-3 feet to 5-6 feet. It is prepared by tying a thin splinter of bamboo (bow-string) to the two ends of an arc-shaped piece of bamboo.	A hunting implement, it is used for aiming at the targets, like varieties of birds, hare and other chases.	It is made by the villagers themselves.	..
Tir (arrow)	An arrow is one foot or more in length. It is prepared by fitting small rings of iron to a stick of bamboo. The arrow is fitted to the bow and aimed at the target by pulling the arrow.			
Khonta (digging implement)	It is a digging implement. A steel blade varying from 6″ to 10″ in length and about 2″ in breadth it is fitted to a hollow bamboo about 4′ in length.	It is a digging implement, used for digging holes as also roots and tubers.	The steel blade of *Khonta* is available from the local market or from the blacksmith of Pinrepata.	Rs. 2·00 to Rs. 3·00
Tangi (axe)	A *Tangi* is an arc-shaped steel about 6″ to 8″ in length, having two blades. It is fitted to a hollow piece of wood about 2½′ to 3′ in length.	It is an axe, used for cutting wood.	The steel blade of the axe is available from the local market.	Rs. 1·50 to Rs. 2·00
Kencha (a javelin for hunting)	It is a javelin fitted to a hollow bamboo about 5′ in length.	It is a hunting implement, used for piercing through the beasts of prey.	The javelin is available in the local market.	Re. 1·00 to Rs. 1·50

NOT FOUND IN MUSEUM—EARLY MAN'S WEAPONS FOR HUNTS STILL NOT ANTIQUATED IN BHUMIJ DHAN SOL



1. *Kencha* (Javelin), once thrown at a beast of prey is sure to pierce through—a Lodha hunter rarely misses his mark, once he sights it. 2. *Dhanuk* (Bow) and *Tir* (Arrow) are still used in shooting birds, hares and other small animals. 3. A knife is used in flaying a hunted snake, dead or alive. 4. (Animal) head-hunting is not unknown. The skull of a gibbon above marks the trophy of the Lodha hunter. 5. Households hunt, eat the flesh but preserve the bones or horns as happy mementos—here it is the horn of a stag.

The implements are purchased from the blacksmith of Pinrepata, a nearby village.

From childhood the Lodhas practise archery. Wherever they go, they carry the bows and arrows fitted with iron-heads. In their hunting pursuits the Lodhas spare no animal of the forests that comes in their way ; they catch snakes for getting the skin and meat ; they also hunt tortoise, hare, mongoose

and wild birds for meat. But, snakes pay them more on sale of the skin than any other chase. The season for catching snakes lasts from April to November, the availability of snakes being dependent on favourable weather. Intermittent showers are said to be most favourable for catching snakes. The elderly Lodhas claim that they sense by intuition, when snakes will come out of their holes. Early in the morning, a party of three to four persons sets out for the forests with bows and arrows, spades, axes and scythes. Such a party must include an elderly or experienced person, who can easily distinguish between the poisonous and non-poisonous varieties. The Lodhas avoid venomous snakes. Females are permitted to participate in the hunting expeditions.

In the jungles the party looks for the holes, which they go on digging till the snakes come out of the pits. Just then, the members of the party catch hold of the tail of the snake, while some others hit it. Some herbal roots are taken with them as a precautionary antidote. The following three types of snakes are usually caught :

Bengali name	English name	Scientific name
(i) *Gosap*	Iguana	*Varanas bengalensis*
(ii) *Dhemna Sap*	Common rat snake	*Zamenis mucosus*
(iii) *Chandrabora*		

Of the three varieties of snakes, iguanas are available in large numbers in the surrounding jungles. The skin of the snake is flayed with the help of knives and some common salt is then rubbed on the skin as a preserving agent.

The avocation of hunting is a very paying enterprise and sometimes a good catcher can earn Rupees 5/- a day. But, it is pointed out that this is a very insecure profession, as on some days there may not be any catch at all. In favourable weather some members of the parties stay away from the village in the jungles for two or three days at a stretch and carry some food with them. They sometimes cover a distance of 30 to 60 kilometers for catching the snakes.

A Muslim trader, residing in the nearby village of Pinrepata, visits this village in the afternoon to buy the skin, which is measured with a scale. A square inch of skin of iguana fetches 0·25 paise and the skin of any other snake is sold for Rupee 1/- to Rupees 3/-.

The Muslim trader, who purchases skins from the Lodhas, sells them in Calcutta to the hide-merchants and earns a good profit which, being a trade secret, is not disclosed. Fancy shoes and small bags are said to be manufactured from the leather of snakes.

(*iii*) *Collection of Tassar cocoons*

The collection of *Tassar* cocoons is another occupation of the Lodhas. In the months of August-September the Lodhas climb up the *Sal* and *Asan* trees to collect the silk-cocoons, that abound on the leaves. They boil the cocoons in water and kill the moths inside. They sell the cocoons to the traders, who visit the village. The traders purchase these cocoons from the Lodhas and sell them to the weavers. A Lodha worker can earn on an average Rs. 30/- to Rs. 45/- by collecting these cocoons in August-September. Besides these major occupations in the forests, there are several other minor economic pursuits, such as sale of *Sal* leaves, cocoons etc. In slack days, when the labourers do not get any employment anywhere in the lean months from February to May, they enter the forests for these pursuits.

NOT ALL REST IN RETIREMENT



Knitting palm-leaf mats, some for domestic use and some for sale—a preoccupation of the old women of the village in their long hours of retired life to keep up the family



LABOUR FOR LIVELIHOOD

A tank being excavated by day labourers recruited from the village during Test Relief Work by Government of West Bengal—an avenue of employment to mitigate distress among the agriculturists and non-agriculturists during heights of rural un-employment

SWEET IS THE BREAD, EARNED BY THE SWEAT OF ONE'S BROW



A *kutcha* well being dug by the day labourers of the village in the house of a villager

FUEL FOR FIRE



Faggots and twigs from the woods around provide fuel for home, prevent an expenditure and at times even earn some extra money



Log-cutting in the forests is very much helpful in providing employment to the cheap, superfluous labour of the village



Cart-loads of wood squeaking on long impassable journeys, for being carried by lorries to towns

(*iv*) *Sale of Sal leaves*

The younger people are generally entrusted with the task of collecting *Sal* leaves. The leaves are sold to the neighbouring shops. A *Khali* is a disc-like article made from five or six *Sal* leaves, by pinning them together with small wooden sticks. The price of 1,000 *Khalis* is Re. 1/-. Sometimes, some traders purchase these leaves from the villagers and sell them in Midnapur town or send them to Calcutta. The income from this source is most uncertain and does not stretch over a continuous period of time. The daily income on an average does not exceed Rs. 1·25 paise per family.

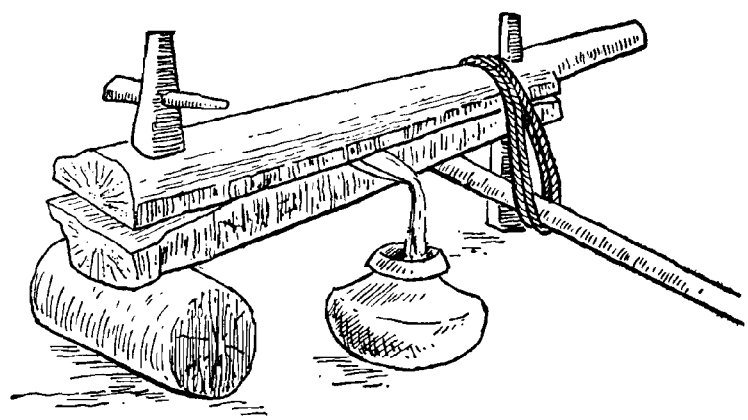
(*v*) *Sale of resin*

The people collect resins from the bark of the trees in the jungles and sell them to the traders in the market. The resinous incrustation on the bark of *Sal* or *Asan* trees provides the material. The income from the sale of resin is not at all steady. Daily income from a lump of resin weighing 250 grammes does not exceed 50 paise.

(*vi*) *Sale of the fruits of Mahua (Basia latifolia)*

The fruits of *Mahua* are locally called *Cochra*. A kind of edible oil is manufactured from these fruits. The Lodhas collect these fruits for sale to the traders. 12 to 15 kilograms of such fruits are sold for a rupee. Average annual income per family from this source amounts to Rs. 15/-.

OIL-GRINDER



Fruits of *Mahua*, locally known as *Cochra*, are used to prepare an edible oil by extraction. In between the two planks the fruits are placed and a wooden pole inserted through the noose of a rope is pressed by the weight of the body, when a person stands on it.

The fruits are sandwitched between the wooden planks and the extracted oil is stored in an earthen pitcher.

All the benefits, derived by the villagers from the forests, cannot be expressed in terms of money. Food-gathering and collection of fuel for domestic consumption are activities vitally important to the Lodhas ; but it is difficult to compute them in terms of money.

In the matter of food-gathering the villagers owe a great deal to the forests. It has been calculated that on an average each family spends a sum of Rs. 1·30 paise for all items of food daily. The major portion of this amount is spent to purchase rice and the

remaining portion is spent on the purchase of spices, salt and oil. Thus most of the people cannot afford to spend any amount on the purchase of vegetable or fish. The forests supply the villagers in abundant quantity the fruits and vegetables as follows :

Vegetables—

* *Kundri*
* *Karala*
  Pindra
  Rohini

Fruits—

* *Kend*
* *Bench*
* *Pial*
  Bhar-ru
* *Kachra*
  Pithali
  Kusum
* *Amrul*
* *Amlaki*
* *Haritaki*

Roots and tubers—

* *Chun Alu*
* *Kanta Alu*
* *Churki Alu*
* *Tunga*
  Roots of *Kundri*

Fungi—

* *Kali Chhatu*
  Tila Chhatu
  Pial Chhatu
  Mudal Chhatu
  Pathra Chhatu
  Tasharia Karani
  Bara Karani

* Sold in the local markets—Editor.

Every day the young members of Lodha households enter into the jungles and collect various edible fruits, roots and tubers. They also catch various animals to provide the protein items in their dishes. When some of the families go without work for days together, they bank on the forests to tide over the crises. In fact, it is the good old jungles that save them from sure starvation. The housewives make excellent palatable dishes from some of the common wild roots and tubers, such as wild potato, wild balsam roots and *Chhatu* (fungi). Sometimes the villagers supplement their income by selling some of the fruits and roots, as described before. Thus the produce of the forest, the real value of which cannot be calculated in terms of money, provide a constant supply of foodstuff to the villagers. Besides food-gathering, another tangible benefit derived from the forests is the collection of fuel and faggots for domestic consumption. As a result, not a single family of the village spends any money on fuel.

(*vii*) *Role of forestry in the economy of the village*

Thus, in their day to day life the villagers are dependent on the bounties of the forest in endless ways. They are conscious of the role of the surrounding jungles in their lives. A very popular adage of the village runs, "We are living under the shadow of the forests". As pointed out earlier, the rich foliage all around attracted the earlier Bhumij settlers and the same factor was also the motive force in attracting the Lodhas.

It will be found later that the income from forestry constitues the second major source of income of the village. 27 per cent of the total annual income of the village comes from forestry. The Lodhas derive 42·7 per cent of their total annual income from the forests. But, this is the money-value of the actual earnings from the forests. In real terms, the

forests play a far more important role than what is reflected in money value.

J. Livestocks

There are two Bhumij milk-maids in the village. An old widowed woman of 70 years of age, one of them possesses two milch cows. She earns an annual income of Rs. 130/- on an average from her trade by selling milk. The other milk-maid is also a widow of 70. She possesses two buffaloes and one cow. She gets an annual income of Rs. 250/- by the sale of milk daily to the neighbouring villagers.

At the time of survey, nine children of the village were engaged as cowherds. All but one are below 15 years of age. Eight of these cowherds belong to the Lodha community and one to the Bhumij community. These cowboys are locally known as *Bagals*. Four of these nine *Bagals* are engaged in the houses of their employers in the adjoining villages of Kurkotsol, Bhanadali and Jhitka. There they are provided with the daily meals, one tiffin a day and three to four *maunds* of paddy annually. The remaining five *Bagals* are not employed in any house. They are paid 50 paise per cow per month. Early in the morning, they go to the houses of their employers, take out the cattle and take them to the jungles and fields for grazing. They have an hour's recess, when they go home and have their meals. They again go to the fields and tend the cows till late afternoon.

These *Bagals* spend the whole day in the jungles and fields, where they play various games and sing various songs to relax. During the survey, one of the *Bagals* belonging to the Lodha community was found missing. It was suspected that he was mauled by the wild animals.

K. Manufacturing

The head of one household of this village is engaged in preparing country liquor. He is a Lodha and is employed on a monthly remuneration of Rs. 30/- in a *Pachai* (indigenous liquor) shop, where liquor is manufactured and sold in the nearby village of Chaukisal in the Police Station of Binpur, at a distance of 19 kilometers.

The heads of two Bhumij households are engaged in carpentry, which is their primary occupation. Of these two carpenters, one has followed the profession of his father, while the other is the son of a share-cropper. The latter has chosen this profession for greater security. He has learnt the art of carpentry from a Bhumij carpenter of the village and from a Santal carpenter residing in the adjoining *mouza* Santal Dhan Sol. The total annual income of each of these two carpenters is Rs. 350/-, earned from the manufacture of chairs, tables, benches, windows, doors etc. Though they have no fixed customers, they serve in the neighbouring villages on a daily wage of Rs. 1·50 paise to Rs. 2/-

L. Other services

The head of a Lodha household and that of a Bhumij household are engaged in *Other Services*. The former is engaged in the local Office of the Samaj Sevak Sangha, where he is paid Rs. 20/- a month. There he has to do all the work, both indoor and outdoor.

The head of another Bhumij household is the village watchman or *Chowkidar*. He gets a monthly salary of Rs. 18/-. The village watchman has great influence in the village, where he is looked upon as the representative of the Government. He is supposed to keep a nightly vigil all around and to roam

about in the village. He also keeps an account of the births and deaths of the village.

M. INCOME

It is very difficult to estimate the income of the households. None in the village keeps regular accounts of income and expenditure nor has one any idea about them. In computing the income, special difficulty arose due to the fact that most of the workers of the village did not pursue any single occupation. Moreover, most of the workers, even though they worked as labourers, did not get continuous employment althrough the year. For all these reasons calculation of income in the village is a rather difficult and complicated task. Still, approximate estimates of the income of the respective households have been made.

TABLE 41

DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL ANNUAL INCOME BY CASTE/TRIBE FOR THE YEAR 1963-64

Caste/Tribe	Number of households	Total annual income in rupees	Percentage of the total annual income	Annual income per household in rupees	Average monthly income of households in rupees
Lodha	35	18,369	52·3	525	44
Bhumij	17	12,175	34·7	716	60
Mahato	3	4,570	13·0	1,523	127
Total	**55**	**35,114**	**100·0**	**638**	**53**

The total annual income of the village is Rs. 35,114 for 1963-64. The table above shows the distribution of the total income of the village among the different communities. It can be seen from the table that the income of 35 Lodha families *i.e.*, 63·6 per cent of all households in the village, accounts for 52·3 per cent of the total income, whereas the remaining 20 households (17 Bhumijes and 3 Mahatos) *i. e.*, 36.4 per cent of the total households, account for 47.7 per cent of the total income. It shows the disparity in economic positions of the Lodhas and the rest of the people. In this connection it may be pointed out that four of the six cultivating households among them account for 20 per cent of the total income of the village. Further, 12 households *i.e.*, 22 per cent of the total number of households, account for 40 per cent of the total income of the village. It thus appears that even in Bhumij Dhan Sol, there is some disparity in the distribution of income among the different households as also among the different communities.

It also appears from the table that the average monthly income per household is Rs. 53/- for the village as a whole. The Lodhas have a lower average income than the average income for the village as a whole, while the Bhumij and the Mahatos have a higher average income.

The different sources of income in the village may be examined from the table, given overleaf.

TABLE 42

SOURCES OF ANNUAL INCOME

Source of income	Total annual income in rupees received by			Total annual income in rupees	Percentage of the total
	Lodhas	Bhumijes	Mahatos		
Cultivation	..	4,740	3,420	8,160	23·2
Agricultural labour	9,335	5,020	250	14,605	41·6
Livestock	304	490	500	1,294	3·7
Forestry and hunting	7,845	1,225	400	9,470	27·0
Manufacturing	365	350	..	715	2·0
Service	240	200	..	440	1·3
Others	280	150	..	430	1·2
	(Not specified)	(Money order)			
Total	**18,369**	**12,175**	**4,570**	**35,114**	**100·0**

The table clearly shows the key role of agriculture. Though cultivation is the primary source of income of only six households, 64·8 per cent of the total income of the village come from agriculture. It also appears that even though nearly one fourth of the total income of the village comes from cultivation, no income accrues to the Lodhas from cultivation. Not a single Lodha family possesses any cultivable land and this is, in fact, one of the main reasons for the low standard of living of the Lodha families in comparison to that of the Bhumij and Mahato families.

But the table also shows that next to agricultural labourers who account for the highest single source of income, forestry and hunting are the second single important source of income. 27 per cent of the total income of the village are derived from that source.

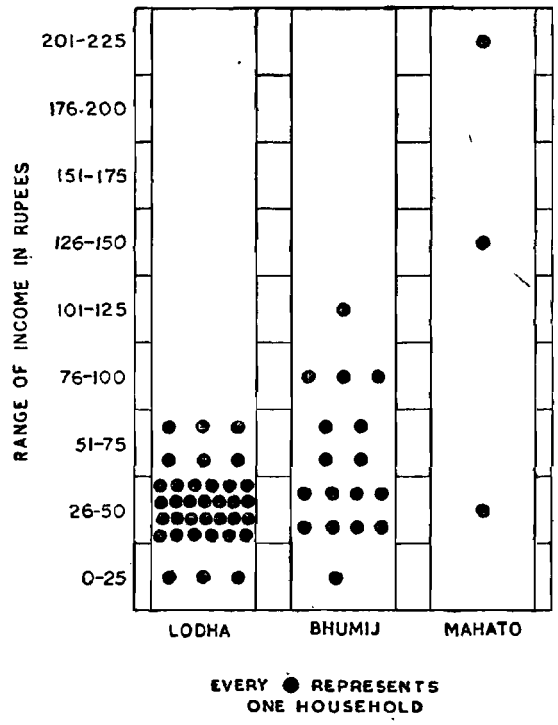
The following table gives the statistics of monthly income of the households according to the occupation of the head of the family.

TABLE 43

MONTHLY INCOME PER HOUSEHOLD BY THE OCCUPATIONS OF THE HEADS OF THE HOUSEHOLDS

Occupation of the head of the household	Number of house-holds	Number of households that have monthly income in the range of (in rupees)								
		Upto 25	26-50	51-75	76-100	101-125	126-150	151-175	176-200	201-225
Cultivation	6	..	..	1	2	1	1	..	..	1
Agricultural labour	29	1	20	8	..	..	..	..	..	..
Livestock	2	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Forestry & hunting	13	2	10	1	..	..	..	..	..	..
Manufacturing	3	..	2	..	1	..	..	..	..	..
Other services	2	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total	**55**	**4**	**35**	**10**	**3**	**1**	**1**	..	..	**1**

HOUSEHOLDS BY MONTHLY INCOME-GROUPS



It appears from the table that 39 households *i.e.*, 72 per cent of the total households, have monthly income of Rs. 50/- or less and all but six households have a monthly income of Rs. 75/- or less. It also appears that out of the six households having income of Rs. 76/- or more, the heads of five are engaged in cultivation and the head of another household is engaged in carpentry. So, if income is taken as an index of the household's standard of living, it may be concluded that only a few cultivating households are somewhat better than the non-cultivating households. The following table gives the income of the various households community-wise.

TABLE 44

MONTHLY INCOME OF COMMUNITY-WISE HOUSEHOLDS

Caste/Tribe	Number of households	Number of households having monthly income in the range of (in rupees)								
		0-25	26-50	51-75	76-100	101-125	126-150	151-175	176-200	201-225
Lodha	35	3	26	6	..	..	..	..	..	..
Bhumij	17	1	8	4	3	1	..	..	..	..
Mahato	3	..	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	1
Total	**55**	4	**35**	**10**	**3**	**1**	**1**	..	..	**1**

The Bhumij and the Mahatos, taken together, have better income than the Lodhas. Out of the 35 Lodha households, 29 families or 83 per cent of all the Lodha households have a monthly income of Rs. 50/- or less. Out of 20 Bhumij and Mahato households on the other hand, 50 per cent have a monthly income above Rs. 50/-. This disparity in economic position between the Lodhas on the one hand and the Bhumij and the Mahatos on the other is due to the fact that the latter possess some cultivable land and the former are totally a landless community.

N. Indebtedness

The following table gives details of indebtedness in the village.

TABLE 45

INDEBTEDNESS OF THE CASTE/TRIBE

Caste/Tribe	Number of households	Number of households in debt	Percentage of households in debt	Total amount of indebtedness in rupees	Percentage of the total debt	Average amount of indebtedness per household in rupees
Lodha	35	16	46	232	9	14·50
Bhumij	17	15	88	2,267	87	151·13
Mahato	3	1	33	100	4	100·00
Total	**55**	**32**	**58·2**	**2,599**	**100**	**81·22**

It appears from the table that 46 per cent of the Lodhas, 88 per cent of the Bhumij and 33 per cent of the Mahato households are in debt. It also appears that the largest proportion or 87 per cent of the total loan is taken by the Bhumij, nine per cent of the total loan is taken by the Lodhas and four per cent by the Mahatos. The average indebtedness per Bhumij household is much higher than that of the Mahatos or of the Lodhas. Another significant feature is that the average indebtedness per Lodha household is much low, compared to that of either the Bhumij or the Mahatos. The average indebtedness per household in the village as a whole, stands at Rs. 81·22 paise. The following table shows the range of indebtedness among the different communities in the village :

TABLE 46

RANGE OF INDEBTEDNESS

Caste/Tribe	Total number of households	Number of households in debt	Number of households by range of indebtedness (in rupees)								
			0-25	26-50	51-75	76-100	101-150	151-200	201-300	301-400	401-500
Lodha	35	16	12	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Bhumij	17	15	2	1	1	3	4	..	2	1	1
Mahato	3	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..
Total	**55**	**32**	**14**	**5**	**1**	**4**	**4**	**..**	**2**	**1**	**1**

Compared to the Bhumij, the Lodhas have a much lower range of indebtedness. The upper limit of indebtedness of no Lodha household exceeds Rs. 50/-. This does not mean that they are well off or that they do not require any higher quantum of loan. The real position is that they too find it very difficult to keep their expenditure within the limits of their income and always look for loans. But, the Lodhas find it very difficult to secure any loan from any quarter due to the following reasons :

(i) Not a single Lodha possesses any land and so, no lender ever ventures to lend them a larger sum without security.

(ii) The alleged criminal nature of the Lodhas discourages a person from advancing loan to a Lodha.

It also appears from the table that majority of the Bhumij households have loans of more than Rs. 100/-.

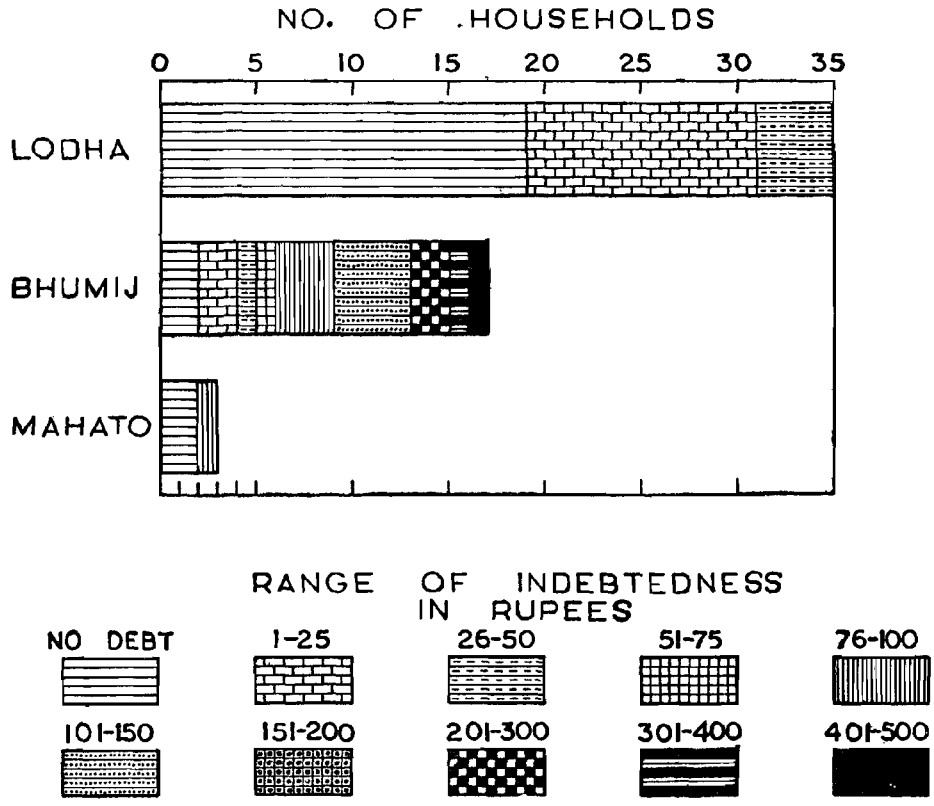
In the following table the range of indebtedness has been correlated to the range of income of the households.

TABLE 47

RANGE OF INDEBTEDNESS AND THE RANGE OF MONTHLY INCOME

Range of monthly income in rupees	Total number of house-holds	Number of house-holds in debt	Households by range of indebtedness (in rupees)									Percentage of house-holds in debt
			0-25	26-50	51-75	76-100	101-150	151-200	201-300	301-400	401-500	
0— 25	4	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	25
26— 50	35	21	11	4	1	2	3	..	..	..	..	60
51— 75	10	7	2	1	..	1	1	..	1	1	..	70
76—100	3	3	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	..	1	100
101—125	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
126—150	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
151—175	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
176—200	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
201—225	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total	**55**	**32**	**14**	**5**	**1**	**4**	**4**	..	**2**	**1**	**1**	..

HOUSEHOLDS BY INDEBTEDNESS



One interesting feature, that emerges by correlating the range of indebtedness with range of income, is that upto a certain extent (here upto an income of Rs. 100/-), the percentage of households in debt rises in direct relation to rise in income. Thus, 25 per cent of all the households in the first income bracket of Rs. 0·25 are in debt, 60 per cent of the households in the second income bracket, 70 per cent of the households in the third income bracket and cent per cent of households belonging to the monthly income group of Rs. 76-100/- are in debt. This apparent contradiction is due to the fact that credit, even if necessary, is not easily forthcoming to the households with lower packets of income. But, the households in the higher income brackets have greater credit-worthiness. Further, with certain rise in income the marginal rise in expenses cannot be avoided. Hence, with rise in income larger percentages of households are in debt. It is also worth noting that all the three households with income of more than one hundred rupees a month are free from debt. With greater income, they manage somehow to keep the expenditure well under check.

Last but not the least, the range of indebtedness may be correlated to the occupations of the respective heads of households.

TABLE 48

RANGE OF INDEBTEDNESS (OCCUPATION-WISE)

Occupations of the heads of households	Total number of house-holds	Number of house-holds in debt	Households by range of indebtedness (in rupees)								
			0-25	26-50	51-75	76-100	101-150	151-200	201-300	301-400	401-500
Cultivation	6	3	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	1	1
Agricultural labour	29	19	8	3	1	3	3	..	1	..	..
Livestock	2	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Forestry and hunting	13	6	5	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Manufacturing	3	2	..	..	..	..	1	..	1	..	..
Other services	2	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total	**55**	**32**	**14**	**5**	**1**	**4**	**4**	**..**	**2**	**1**	**1**

It appears from the table that two-thirds of the households engaged in agricultural labour and manufacturing are indebted, while in the case of other occupations one half of the households are in debt. It is also significant that relatively greater quantities of loan have been taken by the heads of households engaged in cultivation, agricultural labour and manufacturing. The range of indebtedness of the households engaged in livestock, forestry-*cum*-hunting and in other services does not exceed Rs. 50.

(*i*) *Nature of loans*

The nature of loans of different households may now be examined. Five different types of loans were observed to have been taken by the households.

(a) **Loan in cash**—One predominant feature of the nature of indebtedness of this village is that loan in cash forms an insignificant portion of the total amount of loans of this village. This is because there is no registered money-lender in the village or in the neighbouring villages. So, in times of urgent needs, cash-money is not always forthcoming.

(b) **Loan in kind**—Some of the villagers purchase articles from the grocery on credit. But, a popular form of loan in kind is loan of paddy. In times of urgent need people take loan of paddy from the well-to-do cultivators having surplus paddy.

(c) **Mortgage**—The third method of taking loan is to pledge some security against the loan. The villagers in pressing need of loan mortgage their ornaments or utensils. But, when they are in need of larger amount of loans, say for defraying the expenses of marriage, or meeting the cost of other social observances, the land-owners mortgage their lands against the loans taken.

(d) **Dadan**—It is a form of contract, where the borrower takes loan from the lender on condition that he will repay the loan by serving as a labourer. Of course, the *Dadni* labourer is not paid the current wages, but he is paid at a discount as interest for the loan.

(e) **Government loan**—The villagers also take loans from the Government through the Office of the Block Development Officer in the form of agricultural loans, while others are in the forms of cattle purchase loans.

TABLE 49

NATURE OF LOANS

Caste/ Tribe	Number of house-holds in debt	Nature of indebtedness: Loans in cash in rupees	Number of house-holds with loans in cash	Loans in kind in rupees	Number of house-holds taking loans in kind	Loans in mort-gage in rupees	Number of house holds taking loans against mortgage	Loans in *Dadan* in rupees	Number of house holds taking *Dadan*	Govern-ment loans in rupees	Number of house-holds taking loans from Govern-ment	Total loans
Lodha	16	149	11	75	7	4	1	4	1	..	..	232
Bhumij	15	245	6	342	4	1,275	9	200	1	205	6	2,267
Mahato	1	100	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	100
Total	**32**	**494**	**18**	**417**	**11**	**1,279**	**10**	**204**	**2**	**205**	**6**	**2,599**

It appears that among the Lodhas, loans in cash constitue 64 per cent of the total amount of loans taken, while loans in kind constitute 32 per cent. Among the Bhumij, loans in mortgage constitute 56 per cent, loans in kind 15 per cent, loans in cash 11 per cent, while loans on *Dadan* and from Government constitute nine per cent each. It is worth noting that only the Bhumij have availed themselves of Government loans for the obvious reason that they have some land to cultivate.

(*ii*) *Nature of interest on loans*

It has been found that 18 households have taken 24 items of loan in cash from different sources. In four cases, the loans are free of interest. Of course, in three cases the lenders are relatives. In only one case, the loan is secured with an interest of 25 per cent per annum. In four cases the rate of interest is 50 per cent per annum. In two cases, the rate is 100 per cent per annum. In eleven cases the rate of interest is 150 per cent per annum. In one case the rate of interest is 225 per cent, while in another case it is as high as 300 per cent per annum.

Of 11 cases of loans in kind, in five cases the loans have been secured against purchase of commodities from the grocery on credit for which no interest is charged. In six other cases loans of paddy have been taken. The rate of interest is 25 per cent in one case, 50 per cent in three cases, 100 per cent in another case and 150 per cent per annum in the last case.

There are 11 cases of loans against mortgage taken by 10 households. In only one case the loan is taken against mortgage of ornaments and the rate of interest is 75 per cent per annum. In 10 cases loans are taken against mortgage of cultivable land. The mortgagee enjoys the right of cultivation of the mortgaged land, so long as the loan is not repaid in full. By computing the money-value of the agricultural produce, it has been found that the rate of return to the lender in terms of produce varies from 50 to 100 per cent by way of interest.

In case of loans as *Dadan* the borrower has to repay the loan by serving as a labourer. Normally no interest is charged in such cases, but at the time or repayment the borrowing labourer is paid a wage lower than the prevailing rate of wage.

On Government loans interest at the rate of $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent per annum is charged.

(*iii*) *Purpose of indebtedness*

On the basis of data pertaining to purpose of indebtedness, indebtedness has been classified as productive and unproductive. The following table gives the details of indebtedness according to purpose.

TABLE 50

INDEBTEDNESS FOR PRODUCTIVE AND UNPRODUCTIVE EXPENSES

Occupation	Total number of households	Number of households in debt	Total amount of indebtedness (in Rs)	Productive: Purchase of cattle, implements, land etc. (in Rs)	Productive: Construction of house (in Rs)	Productive: Agricultural production (in Rs)	Productive: Education (in Rs)	Productive: Total (in Rs)	Unproductive: Domestic expenditure mainly on food (in Rs)	Unproductive: Medical expenses (in Rs)	Unproductive: Purchase of cloth (in Rs)	Unproductive: Social observances like marriage, *Sradh* etc.	Unproductive: Miscellaneous (in Rs)	Unproductive: Total (in Rs)
Cultivation	6	3	885	175	..	90	250	515	100	20	..	250	..	370
Agricultural labour	29	19	1,254	126	100	120	..	346	168	133	12	595	..	908
Livestock	2	1	10	..	..	..	..	..	10	..	..	..	..	10
Forestry and hunting	13	6	60	..	..	..	..	..	20	..	10	..	30	60
Manufacturing	3	2	340	65	..	..	..	65	75	..	..	200	..	275
Other services	2	1	50	40	..	..	..	40	10	..	..	..	..	10
Total	**55**	**32**	**2,599**	**406**	**100**	**210**	**250**	**966**	**383**	**153**	**22**	**1,045**	**30**	**1,633**
Percentages	..	..	*100*	*15·6*	*4·0*	*8·0*	*9·6*	*37·2*	*14·7*	*6·0*	*0·8*	*40·2*	*1·1*	*62·8*

It appears from the above table that 37·2 per cent of the total amount of loan have been taken for productive purposes, while 62·8 per cent have been spent for unproductive purposes. This is definitely a dismal feature of the economy of this village. It is significant that the heads of households, engaged in cultivation, have utilised greater amount of the loans for productive purposes, while in the households of agricultural labourers major amount of the loan has been utilised for unproductive purposes. So also are the cases of households, engaged in manufacturing.

It is remarkable that a little over 40 per cent of the total amount of loan have been utilised for social observances, mostly for incurring the expenses of marriage and *Sradh* ceremony. All this imposes a weighty burden on the households living on the subsistence level. 15·6 per cent of the total amount of loan have been taken to purchase land, cattle and implements, while 14·7 per cent of the loan have been taken to meet domestic expenses, mostly on food.

(*iv*) *Source of loan*

The table overleaf gives the details of the source of loan :

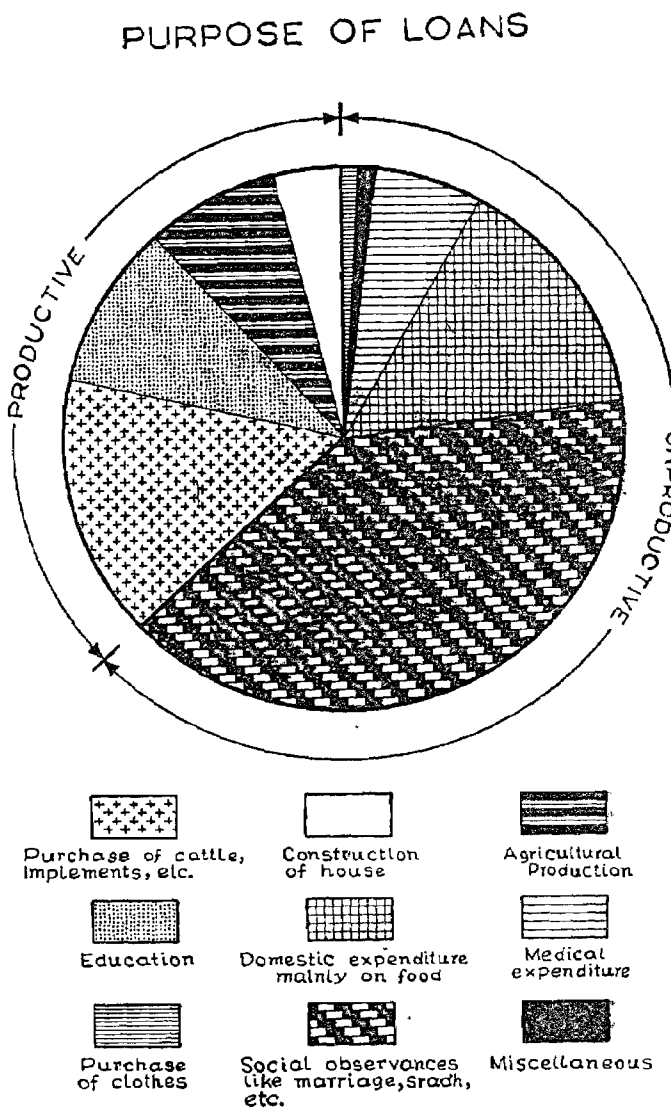


TABLE 51

SOURCES OF LOANS OF THE CASTE/TRIBE

Caste/Tribe	Total amount of debt in rupees	Amount of loan in rupees taken from: Friends and relatives	Persons belonging to the community of: Bhumij	Lodha	Mahato	Kshatriya	Bagal	Moyra or Modak	Paramanik	Santal	Sunri	Government
Lodha	232	57	17	8	..	..	20	..	..	..	130	..
Bhumij	2,267	200	10	..	190	200	..	20	210	202	1,030	205
Mahato	100	..	50	..	50	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total	**2,599**	**257**	**77**	**8**	**240**	**200**	**20**	**20**	**210**	**202**	**1,160**	**205**
Percentage	*100*	*9·9*	*2·9*	*0·3*	*9·2*	*7·7*	*0·8*	*0·8*	*8·1*	*7·8*	*44·6*	*7·9*

It appears from the previous table that the villagers secure only 7·9 per cent of total amount of loan from the Government ; but, for the bulk of the loan (92·1 per cent) they depend on private persons. So, in a village, where the Government and other institutional sources do not cater to needs of the villagers, the people are at the mercy of the private persons for securing loans. This explains why the private persons charge exorbitant rates of interest. As pointed out earlier, the rates of interest in majority of the cases vary between 100 per cent to 150 per cent per annum, and in one or two cases it is as high as 300 per cent.

The most important source is one Sunri resident of the adjoining village. This source accounts for 44·6 per cent of the total amount of loan in the village.

It may also be pointed out in this connection that in matter of getting loans, the Bhumij have transactions with greater number of communities compared to the Lodhas, who are not regarded in high esteem and are not treated with favour. Consequently, the Lodhas find it difficult to secure any loans from the members of other communities and whatever loan they get from these sources is secured by personal influences.

Another striking feature of the indebtedness of the village is that 12 per cent of total amount have been secured from within the village, while 88 per cent of the loans have been secured from outside the village upto a distance of 25 kilometers.

O. Expenditure

Data relating to expenditure of the households were collected with some difficulty. In some cases, where the illiterate tribals could hardly present the estimates of their yearly expenditure, the day to day expenditure pattern had to be studied by estimation and approximation. Despite honest efforts, the estimates may not be accurate to the extreme. Still, by adopting various precautions a reasonably satisfactory study has been made.

By correlating the income of the households with their expenditure, some features of the budgetary pattern of the households may emerge from the following table :

TABLE 52

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE OF THE HOUSEHOLDS

Caste/Tribe	Number of house-holds	Total amount of annual income of households in rupees	Amount saved out of current income in rupees	Amount of annual expen-diture of the households in rupees	Extent of deficit in rupees	Manner of meeting this deficit		
						Sale of assets in rupees	Out of saving in rupees	Loans in rupees
Lodha	35	18,369	..	19,321	952	720	..	232
Bhumij	17	12,175	127	13,197	1,149	314	150	685
Mahato	3	4,570	400	4,732	562	160	310	92
Total	**55**	**35,114**	**527**	**37,250**	**2,663**	**1,194**	**460**	**1,009**

Several interesting features emerge from the above table. The average expenditure per Mahato household is the highest, followed by that of the Bhumij family, while the average expenditure of a Lodha family is the lowest.

It is also observed that very few households are able to save a portion of their income. Only 1·5 per cent of the total amount of income of the village has been saved.

It may also be noticed that all the Lodhas, the Bhumij and the Mahatos have excess of expenditure over their income. Forty five per cent of this deficit have been met by sale of assets like land and livestock, 38 per cent of the deficits have been met by taking loans, while 17 per cent of the deficit have been met out of past savings.

The following table throws more light on the budgetary pattern of the households.

TABLE 53

BUDGETARY PATTERN OF THE HOUSEHOLDS

Caste/Tribe	Total number of house-holds	Number of house-holds, having excess of income over expenditure	Number of house-holds, having excess of expen-diture over income	Number of households whose income and expenditure are equal
Lodha	35	..	20	15
Bhumij	17	1	10	6
Mahato	3	1	2	..
Total	**55**	**2**	**32**	**21**

Fiftyfive per cent of the households have excess of expenditure over income and 38 per cent of the households have kept their expenditure equal to their income. It is also worth noting that only two households save a portion of their income.

The following table highlights the details of the pattern of expenditure.

TABLE 54

ANNUAL EXPENDITURE ON DIFFERENT ITEMS

Caste/Tribe	Total annual income in rupees	Total annual expenditure in rupees	Amount of annual expenditure (in rupees) on					
			Food	Lighting	Clothing	Travelling	Education	Medical
Lodha	18,369	19,321	14,884	171	935	270	..	185
Percentage		100	77	1	5	1	..	1
Bhumij	12,175	13,197	8,339	152	745	40	415	120
Percentage		100	63	1	6	..	1	3
Mahato	4,570	4,732	2,525	57	265	60	25	..
Percentage		100	53	1	6	1	1	..
Grand Total	**35,114**	**37,250**	**25,748**	**380**	**1,945**	**370**	**440**	**305**

TABLE 54—*contd.*

Caste/Tribe	Amount of annual expenditure (in rupees) on: Drink (*Hanria*)	Agriculture	Purchase of implements	Repair of houses	Repayment of old loans	Payment of fine	Rent	Other social observances like *Sradh*, etc.
Lodha	1,489	..	136	..	5	60	..	1,186
Percentage	8	..	1	..	..	..	..	6
Bhumij	674	910	494	80	190	..	146	892
Percentage	5	7	4	1	1	..	1	7
Mahato	60	870	..	50	..	..	15	865
Percentage	1	19	..	1	..	..	..	17
Grand Total	**2,223**	**1,780**	**630**	**130**	**195**	**60**	**161**	**2,883**

It appears from the table that the Mahatos spend 53 per cent of their total expenditure on food, the Bhumij spend 63 per cent on that item, while the Lodhas spend 77 per cent of their expenditure on the same.

In general the experience is that of the two communities, one is relatively more well off than the other ; the former keeps smaller percentage of their expenditure restricted to food than the latter. With betterment in the economic position of the households, the percentage of expenditure on food falls off, while that on non-food items increases. So far as this village is concerned, the Mahatos are better than the Bhumij, while the Bhumij are more well off than the Lodhas. The table on expenditure also shows that the Mahatos spend the smallest percentage on food, while the Lodhas spend the highest percentage on the same. This study of expenditure thus holds good for the surmise, made earlier.

All the three communities spend one per cent of the expenditure on lighting. As regards clothing, it is found that the Lodhas spend five per cent of their expenditure, while the Bhumij and Mahatos spend six per cent on that item. Most of the people spend some money on travelling. The Lodhas spend on this item, while they go out to distant places in the agricultural seasons and most of the Bhumij and the Mahatos undertake travelling out of necessity as also recreation. Both the Bhumij and the Mahatos spend one per cent of the expenditure on education, while the Lodhas spend nothing on education, the latter having sent none to school.

Another interesting feature of the expenditure pattern is that even though the Lodhas are not economically in the same footing as the Bhumij or the Mahatos, they spend greater percentage of their expenditure on *Handia* than either the Bhumij or the Mahatos. The Lodhas spend eight per cent on drinks, while the Bhumij and the Mahatos spend five per cent and one per cent respectively on that item. The fact that the Lodhas are more fond of drinks than the rest of the villagers stands proved from the analysis of the budgets.

The Lodhas do not own any land and do not spend any money on agriculture. The

Bhumij and the Mahatos spend seven per cent and 19 per cent respectively on agriculture.

Last but not the least, mention ought to be made of the fact that quite a lot of expenditure is made on social observances like birth, marriage, *Sradh* and other social rituals. The Lodhas have spent six per cent on this item and the Mahatos 17 per cent.

After dwelling at length on the salient features of the expenditure pattern, a brief discussion on the pattern of per capita expenditure is necessary. The following table gives the details of the per capita expenditure on the principal items, *i.e.*, food, clothing and drink.

TABLE 55

ANNUAL PER CAPITA EXPENDITURE ON THE PRINCIPAL ITEMS

Caste/Tribe	Annual per capita expenditure on		
	Food	Clothing	Drinks*
	Rs. p.	Rs. p.	Rs. p.
Lodha	85·54	5·37	18·85
Bhumij	94·76	8·47	15·67
Mahato	132·90	13·95	6·00

*In calculating expenditure on drinks, persons of 20 or above have been taken into account.—Editor.

The previous table shows beyond doubt that the per capita expenditure on food and clothing is much higher among the Mahatos than among the Bhumij or the Lodhas. Again, the per capita expenditure on these two items among the Bhumij is higher than that among the Lodhas. From this it is apparent that the Bhumij and the Mahatos are more well-fed and well-clothed than the Lodhas.

No less striking is the fact that while the Lodhas spend much lesser amount on items of food and cloth than either the Bhumij or the Mahatos, they spend the highest amount on liquor.

CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE

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- *Changes in population*
- *Density of population*
- *Classification of population by age and sex*
- *Sex-ratio*
- *Composition and size of families*

Social characteristics

- *Family structure*
- *Marital status*
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- *Internal organisation*

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Jahir Buru
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Kundra
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Pretasun
Chirkuni or Pretni
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Sannashi Bhut
Galasha Bhut
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CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE

Demography

Changes in population

For giving some idea about the growth of population in this village the help of the statistical data, available at hand, has been taken.

TABLE 56

GROWTH OF POPULATION

Year	Population	Males	Females	Increase or decrease	Rate of growth in percentage per annum
1951	148	N. A.	N. A.	..	..
1961	245	125	120	+97	+6·5
1964	281	147	134	+36	+4·9

Density of population

The area of the village is 275·04 acres with a population of 281. The density of population of this village comes to 253 per kilometer as against 319 per kilometer for the district of Midnapore as a whole. The density of population per square mile is 654 as against 772 for rural areas of the district as a whole. The density of population of this *mouza* is fairly low in comparison to that of the district.

The comparatively lower density of population is not a unique feature of this village alone. This is the almost common characteristic of the western tracts of Midnapore as a whole due to the arid and unproductive nature of the soil as also due to abundance of the forest regions. As a consequence, a substantial area of the surrounding regions of the village is almost uninhabited.

Classification of population by age and sex

A study of the distribution of population by age and sex is most important. From this it may be possible to pinpoint one's attention on some demographic aspects of the village-life. This may also give one an idea about the quantum of the labour-force and also about the composition of the people belonging to the productive and non-productive age-groups. For this purpose the population has been divided into three broad age-groups.

(i) Persons of the age-group 0 to 14 have been termed as minors.

(ii) Persons from 15 to 59 years have been treated as adults.

(iii) The third group consists of old persons of 60 years and above.

TABLE 57

SEX-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION IN DIFFERENT AGE-GROUPS

Age-group	Males	Percentage	Females	Percentage	Total	Percentage
0— 4	24	16·3	25	18·7	49	17·4
5— 9	24	16·3	21	15·6	45	16·1
10—14	18	12·2	19	14·2	37	13·2
Sub-Total	**66**	**44·8**	**65**	**48·5**	**131**	**46·7**
Percentage	..	*50·4*	..	*49·6*	..	*100·0*
15—19	10	6.8	8	6·0	18	6·4
20—24	14	9·6	15	11·2	29	10·3
25—29	8	5·4	9	6·7	17	6·0
30—34	15	10·2	11	8·2	26	9·3
35—39	5	3·4	5	3·7	10	3·6
40—44	7	4·8	7	5·2	14	5·0
45—49	6	4·1	2	1·5	8	2·8
50—54	6	4·1	2	1·5	8	2·8
55—59	..	..	2	1·5	2	0·7
Sub-Total	**71**	**48·4**	**61**	**45·5**	132	**46·9**
Percentage	..	*53·8*	..	*46·2*	..	*100·0*
60 & above	10	6·8	8	6·0	18	6·4
Sub-Total	**10**	**68**	**8**	**6·0**	**18**	**6 4**
Percentage	..	*55·6*	..	*44·4*	..	*100·0*
Grand Total	**147**	**100·0**	**134**	**100·0**	**281**	**100·0**
Percentage	..	*52·3*	..	*47·7*	..	*100·0*

One may observe from this table that in the age-group 0 to 14, the males constitute 44·8 per cent of the total male population and the females constitute 48·5 per cent of the total female population of the village. Males and females, taken together, constitute 46·7 per cent of the total population. A higher proportion of population, belonging to this group, is of vital importance, so far as the growth potential of the population is concerned.

Similarly, in the age-group 15 to 59, the males constitute 48·4 per cent of the total male population and the females constitute 45·5 per cent of the total female population of the village. Further, total persons in this age-group form 46·9 per cent of the total population. Persons in the age-group of 60 and above form 6·4 per cent.

46·9 per cent of the population belonging to the age-group 15 to 59 constitute in general the potential labour-force of the village and may rightly be termed as the economically active class. If 46·7 per cent (infants and children) and 6·4 per cent (old) of the population are summed up, one gets an idea of the economically dependent class. Thus, 53·1 per cent of the population constitute the dependant class. A greater proportion of population, belonging to the economically inactive or dependant class, is an indicator of the greater burden on the economically active class, so far as the question of maintenance of the dependant class is concerned.

Sex-ratio

Among the Lodhas, the males and females

are almost in equal proportion in the age-group 0-14. In the next age-group 15 to 59 there are 39 Lodha males against 35 females ; within the age-group of 60 and above there are seven males against four females. As a whole, there are 90 Lodha males against 84 females. This means that there are 933 Lodha females per thousand Lodha males.

Among the Bhumij, the proportion of males and females is almost at a ratio of parity in the age-group of 0 to 14 (18 males against 17 females). In the next age-group 15 to 59 there are 25 males and 22 females, while in the age-group of 60 and above there are two males and four females. The sex-ratio among the Bhumij as a whole approaches almost unity, or in other words, there are 960 Bhumij females per thousand Bhumij males.

Among the Mahatos, there are four males and three females in the age-group 0-14, seven males and four females in the age-group 15-59 and only one male above 60 years. Among the Mahatos, there is an abnormally low sex-ratio of 583 females per thousand males. This abnormality can be explained by the fact that there are only three Mahato families in the village ; so, the individual abnormalities cannot be offset. On scrutiny of the sex-ratio of the population as a whole, it is observed that there are 147 males and 134 females. This gives one an overall sex-ratio of 911 females per thousand males. In the age-group 0-14 males constitute 50·4 per cent and females 49·6 per cent. The age-group 15-59 comprises 53·8 per cent of males and 46·2 per cent of females. In the age-group 60 and above, 65·6 per cent are males and 44·4 per cent are females. There is no significant variation in sex-ratio in any age-group.

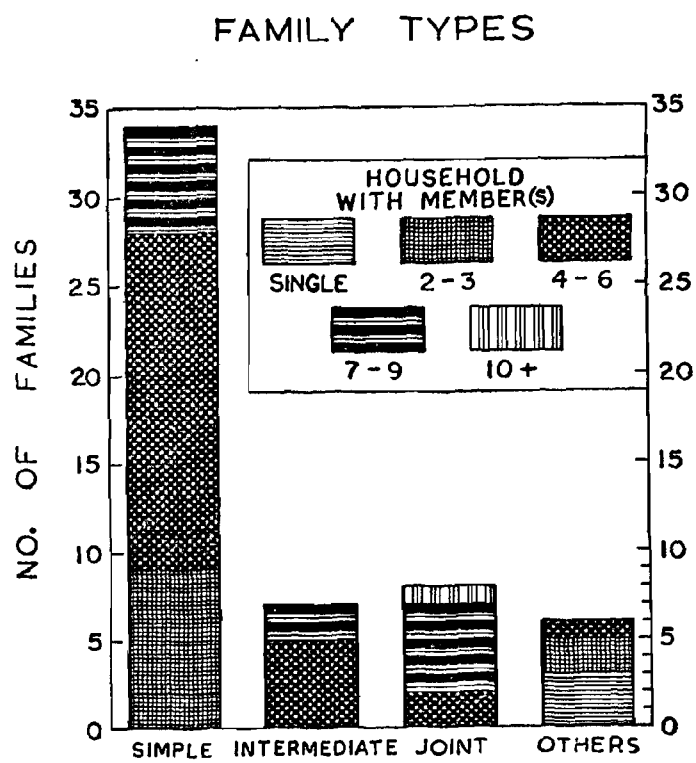
Composition and size of families

For the purpose of the present study, families have been divided into four categories : *simple*, *intermediate*, *joint* and *others*. A *simple* family consists of husband, wife and unmarried children. An *intermediate* family consists of husband, wife and unmarried brothers or sisters or one of the parents, while a *joint* family consists of husband, wife and married sons or daughters or married brothers or sisters. Families, which cannot be set in any of the explained groups or types, have been classified as *others*.

TABLE 58

TYPE OF FAMILIES

Caste/Tribe	Total no. of house-holds	Type of families			
		Simple	*Interme-diate*	*Joint*	*Others*
Lodha	35	24	5	3	3
Bhumij	17	8	2	4	3
Mahato/Kurmi	3	2	..	1	..
Total	**55**	**34**	**7**	**8**	**6**



SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Family structure

Thus, the *simple* families constitute 61·8 per cent of all the families in the village, while the *intermediate* families constitute 12·7 per cent and *joint* families 14·5 per cent. The structure of families has been treated in details in a subsequent section.

From the type of families the discussion may now be made at length about the size of the families. It has been found that an average *simple* family consists of 4·8 members, an average *intermediate* family consists of 6·3 members, while a *joint* family on an average consists of 7·6 members.

TABLE 59

AVERAGE SIZE OF FAMILY

Caste/Tribe	Total no. of house-holds	Males	Females	Total	Average size of family
Lodha	35	90	84	174	5·0
Bhumij	17	45	43	88	5·2
Mahato/Kurmi	3	12	7	19	6·3
Total	**55**	**147**	**134**	**281**	

It is found that the average size of families of the village as a whole is 5·1. Only in the case of the Mahatos an average family is larger than that for the village as a whole. The following table is presented to give an idea of the size of the households.

TABLE 60

SIZE OF HOUSEHOLD

Caste/Tribe	Total no of house-holds	No. of households according to size														
		Single member			2-3 members			4-6 members			7-9 members			10 members and above		
		House-holds	Ma-les	Fe-males	House holds	Ma-les	Fe-males	House holds	Ma-les	Fe-males	House holds	Ma-les	Fe-males	House holds	Ma-les	Fe-males
Lodha	35	2	..	2	7	11	8	18	47	44	8	32	30	..	..	..
Bhumij	17	1	..	1	4	5	6	7	16	21	4	18	11	1	6	4
Mahato/Kurmi	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	6	4	1	6	3	..	..	..
Total	**55**	**3**	**..**	**3**	**11**	**16**	**14**	**27**	**69**	**69**	**13**	**56**	**44**	**1**	**6**	**4**

The largest number of families consist of four to six members. Families, belonging to this group, form 50 per cent of all the families of the village. The next class of families containing members between seven and nine form 23·6 per cent of the total number of families, while the families containing two to three members form 20 per cent. The following table has been devised to correlate the family type with its size.

TABLE 61

FAMILY TYPE AND ITS SIZE

Type of familes	Total no. of families	Single member	2—3 members	4—6 members	7—9 members	10 members and above
Simple	34	..	9	19	6	..
Intermediate	7	..	..	5	2	..
Joint	8	..	..	2	5	1
Others	6	3	2	1	..	..
Grand Total	**55**	**3**	**11**	**27**	**13**	**1**

The table focuses one's attention on the fact that all the *simple* families are not small in size and all the *joint* families are not big. Thus, there are as many as six *simple* families in the village having a number of members varying between seven and nine. Side by side there are two *joint* families consisting of four to six persons.

Marital status

The tables overleaf give the distribution of the population by age, sex and marital status.

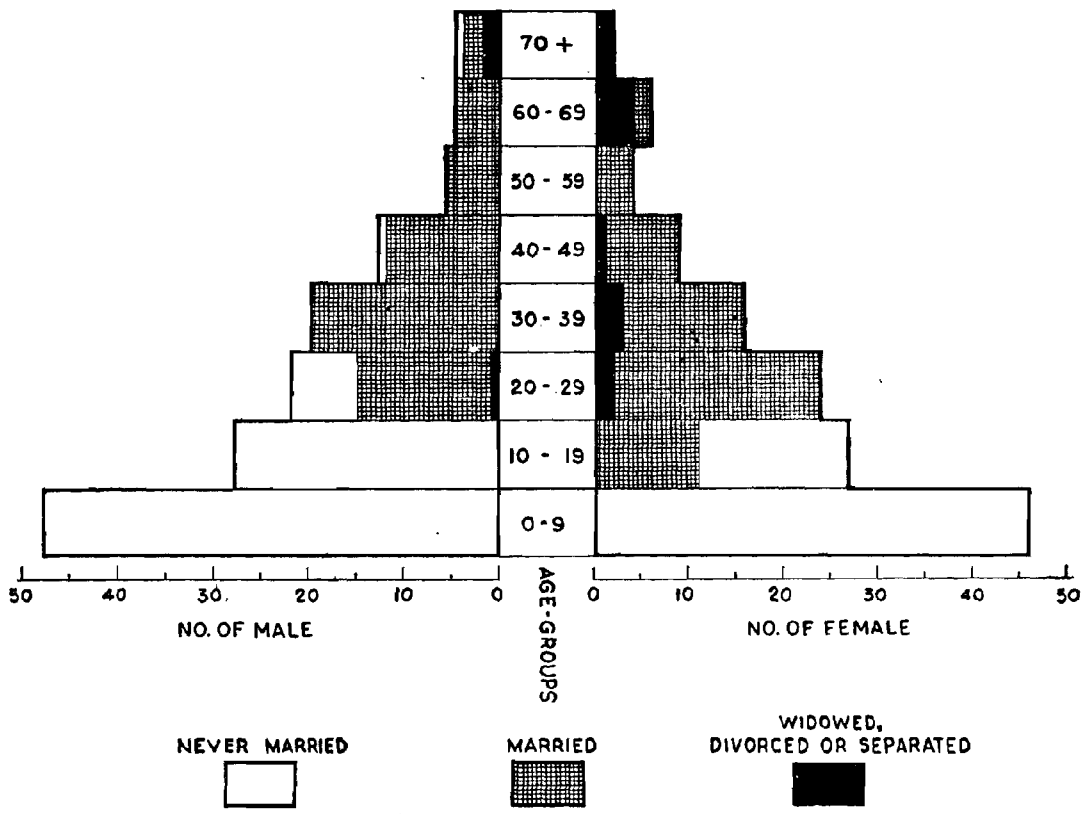
TABLE 62

POPULATION BY AGE, SEX AND MARITAL STATUS

Caste/Tribe	Age-group	Never married		Married		Widowed		Divorced or separated		Total population		
		Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
Lodha	0— 4	14	14	..	..	..	..	..	..	28	14	14
	5— 9	17	16	..	..	..	..	..	..	33	17	16
	10—14	13	14	..	1	..	..	..	..	28	13	15
	15—19	2	..	..	4	..	..	..	..	6	2	4
	20—24	5	..	4	7	..	..	..	..	16	9	7
	25—29	..	..	4	6	..	..	..	1	11	4	7
	30—34	..	..	8	6	..	1	..	..	15	8	7
	35—39	..	..	4	3	..	..	..	1	8	4	4
	40—44	..	..	4	4	..	..	..	..	8	4	4
	45—49	1	..	4	..	..	..	..	..	5	5	..
	50—54	..	..	3	1	..	..	..	..	4	3	1
	55—59	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	1
	60 & above	1	..	4	2	2	2	..	..	11	7	4
	All ages	**53**	**44**	**35**	**35**	**2**	**3**	..	**2**	**174**	**90**	**84**
Bhumij	0— 4	8	9	..	..	..	..	..	..	17	8	9
	5— 9	6	5	..	..	..	..	..	..	11	6	5
	10—14	4	2	..	1	..	..	..	..	7	4	3
	15—19	6	..	..	4	..	..	..	..	10	6	4
	20—24	1	..	1	6	..	..	1	1	10	3	7
	25—29	..	..	4	1	..	..	..	..	5	4	1
	30—34	..	..	5	2	..	1	..	..	8	5	3
	35—39	..	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	2	1	1
	40—44	..	..	2	3	..	..	..	..	5	2	3
	45—49	..	..	1	1	..	1	..	..	3	1	2
	50—54	..	..	3	1	..	..	..	..	4	3	1
	55—59	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	60 & above	..	..	2	..	..	4	..	..	6	2	4
	All ages	**25**	**16**	**19**	**20**	..	**6**	**1**	**1**	**88**	**45**	**43**
Mahato/ Kurmi	0— 4	2	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	4	2	2
	5— 9	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	..
	10—14	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	2	1	1
	15—19	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	2	..
	20—24	1	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	3	2	1
	25—29	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	1
	30—34	..	..	2	1	..	..	..	..	3	2	1
	35—39	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	40—44	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	..
	45—49	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	50—54	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	55—59	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	1
	60 & above	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	..
	All ages	**7**	**2**	**5**	**5**	..	..	..	..	**19**	**12**	**7**

TABLE 62—*contd.*

Caste/Tribe	Age-group	Never married			Married			Widowed			Divorced or separated		
		Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Total population	0— 4	24	25	49	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	5— 9	24	21	45	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	10—14	18	16	34	..	3	3	..	..	..	..	..	..
	15—19	10	..	10	..	8	8	..	..	..	..	..	..
	20—24	7	..	7	6	14	20	..	..	..	1	1	2
	25—29	..	..	..	8	8	16	..	..	..	..	1	1
	30—34	..	..	..	15	9	24	..	2	2	..	..	..
	35—39	..	..	..	5	4	9	..	..	..	..	1	1
	40—44	..	..	..	7	7	14	..	..	..	..	..	..
	45—49	1	..	1	5	1	6	..	1	1	..	..	..
	50—54	..	..	..	6	2	8	..	..	..	..	..	..
	55—59	..	..	..	..	2	2	..	..	..	..	..	..
	60 & above	1	..	1	7	2	9	2	6	8	..	..	..
	All ages	**85**	**62**	**147**	**59**	**60**	**119**	**2**	**9**	**11**	**1**	**3**	**4**



About 52·3 per cent of the population are unmarried, 42·3 per cent are married, 3·9 per cent are widowed and 1·5 per cent are divorced or separated.

Among the males, as many as 58 per cent are unmarried. Of the married males, all but two belong to the age-group of 0 to 24. But, there are two unmarried males belonging to the Lodhas, one in the age-group of 45 to 49 and another in the age-group of 60 and above. Among the females, 46·3 per cent are unmarried as against 58 per cent among the males. This reflects a higher incidence of marriage among the females. This is quite natural, as the girls get married at a much lower age than the males. This will be all the more clear if the position of all the married males and females upto 24 years is reviewed. It is found that out of a total of 33 married males and females in that age-group, as many as 26 are married females, while only seven are married males. This explains the higher incidence of marriage among the females. It may be mentioned here that there is no unmarried girl in the village above 14 years of age.

So far as the married males and females are concerned, 40 per cent of the males and 44·9 per cent of the females are married. There are 59 married males and 60 married females. The excess of one married female to the number of married males is explained by the fact that one married female has been living with her parents here and her husband has not yet taken her to his house.

Though there are 11 widowed persons in the village, there are only three widows in the age-group of 30 to 59, the remaining eight widowed persons being above 59 years of age. The smaller proportion of the widowed persons in the lower age-group is due to the prevalence of the *'Sanga* form of marriage, whereby a widowed or divorced person can remarry after the death or separation of the spouse. Of the four separated persons in the village, two were separated just on the eve of the survey and the other two separated women were living as concubines.

Age at marriage

A study of the age at marriage is of vital importance for examination of its impact on the growth of population.

The rate of growth of population gathers momentum, if people marry at an early age; while marriage at higher age can go a long way in curbing the fast growth of population. But, study of this aspect of demography is beset with limitations. First, the field of study is a tribal village, where the level of literacy is very low. So, in collecting data on age at marriage, the returns are found highly unsatisfactory and specially so, in the case of the aged people. The collected data have been made accurate with the help of checks and cross checks. Secondly, the study being based on a smaller quantum of data, there is every possibility that individual peculiarities might not have been fully offset. The present study has been made on the basis of the age at marriage of all married persons in the village as also of all the widowed persons and persons living separated from their partners.

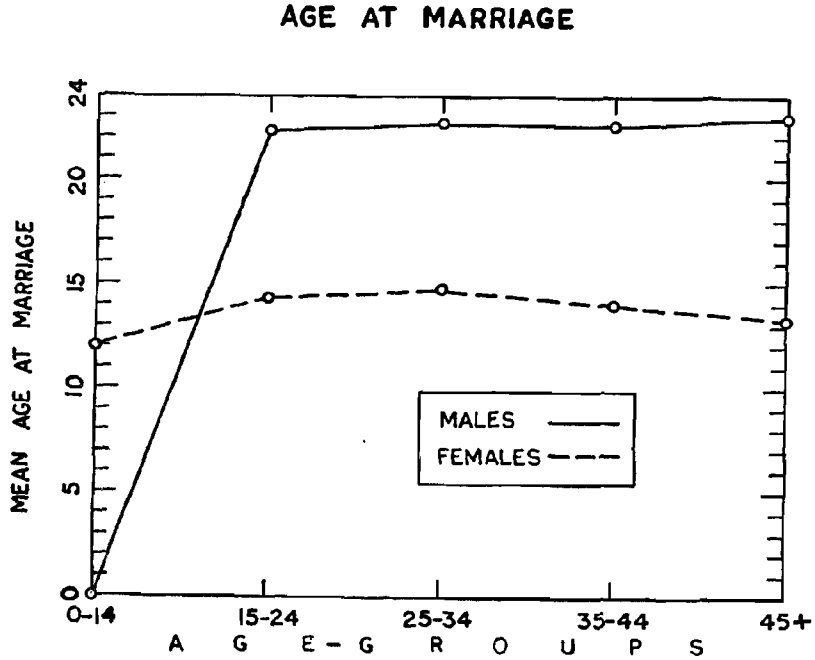
The married persons have been divided into five broad age-groups, namely :

(a) Below 15 years
(b) Between 15 to 24 years
(c) Between 25 to 34 years
(d) Between 35 to 44 years
(e) 45 years and above

TABLE 63

MEAN AGE AT MARRIAGE

Age-group	Males		Females	
	Number	Mean age at marriage	Number	Mean age at marriage
Below 15 years	..	..	3	12·0
15 to 24 „	7	22·3	23	14·3
25 to 34 „	23	22·7	20	14·7
35 to 44 „	12	22·6	12	14·0
45 years & above	20	23·0	14	13·3
	Mean age at marriage for all the 62 married males	22·7	**Mean age at marriage for all the 72 married females**	14·1



No definite trend can be found from the table. The mean age at marriage for females in the age-group 0-15 becomes abruptly lower than that in other age-groups. But, this should not be considered as a trend towards lower age at marriage for the females, as there are only three married females in that group. Though no definite trend can be read from the above table, a slow but perceptible downward trend of the age at marriage is observed there.

Literacy

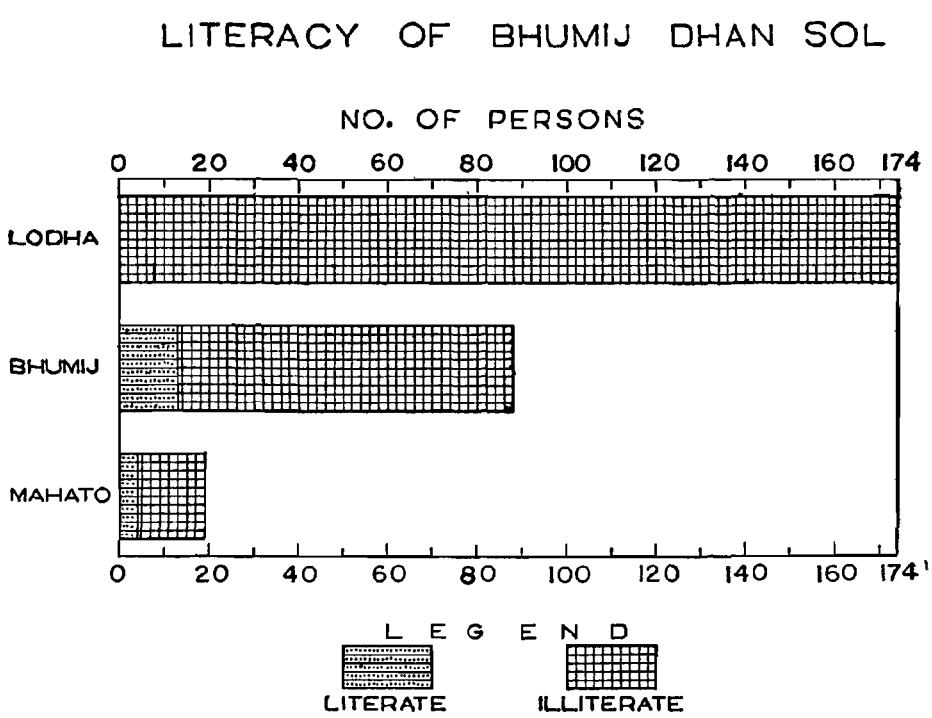
In ascertaining the position of literacy of the people the methods of enquiry have been based on the Census definition of literacy,

according to which one will be considered literate if one can read and write. It has been found that the level of literacy among the people is astoundingly low. Of course, this is not much unusual for a village, inhabited predominantly by the tribals and situated in the heart of the forests, far off from the urban area. Only 17 literates are found in the village, out of which 15 are males and two are females. It may be fruitful to consider the advancement of literacy among the people of the village as a whole during the last thirteen years.

TABLE 64

PROGRESS OF LITERACY

Year	Population	No. of literates	Increase or decrease in the number of literates	Percentage of literates
1951	148	5	N. A.	3·4
1961	245	15	+10	6·1
1964	281	17	+ 2	6·0



It may be seen from the table that though the level of literacy is low, some progress has been made during the decade 1951-1961 ; but still, the level of literacy is almost stationary during the last three years. Apparently, there has been an addition of two female literates during the last three years, but, in fact, both these women belong to a different village and have come to the present village as housewives.

Though the percentage of literates is six only there is a striking variation of percentage figures among different communities. The following table would clarify the exact position further if the literates are scrutinised on the basis of castes or tribes.

TABLE 65

LEVEL OF LITERACY AMONG DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES

	Males			Females			Total		
Caste/Tribe	Number	Literate	Percentage	Number	Literate	Percentage	Number	Literate	Percentage
Lodha	90	Nil	0	84	Nil	0	174	Nil	0
Bhumij	45	12	26·6	43	1	2·3	88	13	14·8
Mahato/Kurmi	12	3	25·0	7	1	14·3	19	4	21·0

It would thus be seen from the above table that the Lodhas are lagging much behind the Bhumij in matter of education. The Lodhas have not yet felt the urge of enlightenment. It would be of some interest to compare the percentage of literates of the Scheduled Tribes of Binpur police station as a whole and of those in the present village.

TABLE 66

LEVEL OF LITERACY IN POLICE STATION

	Percentage of total literates	Percentage of male literates	Percentage of female literates
*All Scheduled Tribes of Binpur police station	10·2	20·3	1·7
Scheduled Tribes of Bhumij Dhan Sol	5·0	9·0	0·8

*Based on 1961 Census Table.

Considered against the background of the figures of the tribal literates of the police station, in which the present village is situated, the two tribes of Bhumij Dhan Sol have not progressed at all in line with all the tribes of the police station.

If the level of literacy among the two Scheduled Tribes of this village is examined separately against those of the Lodha and the Bhumij, the position wouldbe all the more clear. Comparative table on the percentage of literates among the Lodhas of Midnapore District (Rural areas) and that among the Lodhas of Bhumij Dhan Sol is given in the next column.

TABLE 67

LITERACY AMONG THE BHUMIJ

	Percentage of total literates	Percentage of male literates	Percentage of female literates
Lodhas of Midnapore district (Rural areas)	2·3	4·5	0·3
Lodhas of Bhumij Dhan Sol	Nil	Nil	Nil

It would be apparent that the Lodhas of this particular village are much more backward in matters of education than those of the rural areas of Midnapore district as a whole. A

look at the Bhumij from the same angle will yield the following results :

TABLE 68

LITERACY AMONG THE BHUMIJ

	Percentage of total literates	Percentage of male literates	Percentage of female literates
Bhumij of Midnapore district (Rural area)	5·0	9·6	1·0
Bhumij of Bhumij Dhan Sol	14·8	26·6	2·3

The Bhumij of this village stand in a favourable position compared to those in the rural areas of the district of Midnapore as a whole in matters of literacy.

Standards of education

Besides, out of 27,090 Bhumij in the rural areas of the district, there are only nine persons who have read upto the School Final standard or above. In this respect too, the Bhumij of this village have achieved some distinction on account of one young man, who has passed the School Final Examination and is now continuing higher studies in Midnapur town.

So far as female education is concerned, there is not a single female literate in this village. Two young men of this village, one Bhumij and another Mahato, had married two literate females belonging to different villages. It would be interesting to examine the standards of education of the 17 literates, of this village, given below.

TABLE 69

STANDARDS OF EDUCATION

Total no. of literates	No. of persons, who have read upto: Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V	Class VI	Class IX	School Final	Pre-University
17	2	2	4	2	3	1	1	1	1

Of the 17 literates in the village, only two are above the age of thirty, indicating that the level of literacy was almost nil about a generation ago.

Educational facilities

Though the village is situated in the remote forest regions, there are facilities of education in the Primary and Higher Secondary levels. Even in a backward and remote village as Bhumij Dhan Sol there existed a Primary School two years ago. But, the villagers could not appreciate the value of education and did not avail themselves of the educational facilities catered to them. So, the Primary School in the village was attended by the students of the neighbouring villages. About two years ago the structure of the Primary School gave way to a violent storm. The Santals of the neighbouring village Santal Dhan Sol (about a kilometer away) took the opportunity to build a structure for a school in their village and consequently, the Primary School of Bhumij Dhan Sol was shifted to that village. Even then, though the school is situated only a kilometer away, one Mahato and three Bhumij boys from this village attend the School.

The facilities of Higher Secondary education

are also ample. There is a Higher Secondary School at Lalgarh and another High School at Bhimpur. During the survey only one Bhumij young man of 19 years was found to have been reading in Class IX at Bhimpur High School. The boy was receiving regular stipends from the Tribal Welfare Department of the Government of West Bengal. It was pointed out by the father of the boy that he had to incur expenses of Rs. 100/- for his son for the purchase of books and other items.

Attitude towards education

In view of the fact that considerable educational facilities have been given to the villagers in recent years and also of the fact that for the tribals education is completely free upto to the Higher Secondary level, it may seem paradoxical that at the moment there are only five school-going children in the village, where there are 35 families having children in the age-group of 6 to 15. Of them, only four families (11·4 per cent) send their children to school. So, to ascertain the reason for the people's reluctance to send their children to the schools, the heads of all the families with children in the school-going age-group had been interrogated and asked, "Why don't you send your children to school ?" All the 23 Lodha heads of households scoffed the question away. They are still very sceptic of and apathetic to the idea of education. Some of them gave a very pessimistic view and pointed out bluntly, "Education is not meant for forest-dwellers like us". Of late, under the Lodha Rehabilitation Scheme, efforts are being made in co-operation with one local Primary School-teacher to educate the children. But, frequently it was noticed that the teacher had to go to every house in search of boys. During the Investigator's interview with some Lodha boys as to why they did not come forward to receive education, the reply was, "How can we attend the school in rags ?"

Some Bhumij families are found to be somewhat aware of the value of education. But, most of them pointed out that though education was free, it was beyond their means to incur the incidental expenses on books, stationery goods and school-dress. Some others expressed their inability to spare their children for the schools, as they were of invaluable help to their families in the various economic pursuits.

Social structure

Internal organisation

A. Lodha

The Lodhas as a tribe form an endogamous group among themselves. So, marriage outside the tribe is strictly prohibited. No sub-tribe is found among them.

For purposes of exogamy, the whole tribe is divided into a number of exogamous clans or totemic divisions. This closely resembles the division of the castes into various *Gotras*. Anyway, these sibs are marked by their unilineal descent having some common obligation.

This totemic division of the tribe is the basis of their clan-organisation, which exerts a very great influence on building the fabric of their social and political life.

The clan-organisation is still the *sine qua non* of the Lodha tribal body-politics. Those Lodhas, who cannot even remember the names of their grand-parents, mothers or even wives, return the names of their respective clans and totems promptly. In case of any marriage-negotiation between the bridegroom and the

bride, it is the clan-name, which receives their first and foremost attention. Besides, some of the Lodhas use their respective clan-names as their surnames also. The endogamous group is divided into several clan-organisations. To the Lodhas the clan-names are very sacred, as if they have some divine sanction. The following clans are found among the Lodhas in Bhumij Dhan Sol. The names of the totems are given against the names of the clan :

TABLE 70

CLANS AND TOTEMS

	Clan	Totem
1.	*Ahari*	Moon (*Chand*)
2.	*Bhakta*	*Churku Alu i.e.*, a kind of yam found in the forests.
3.	*Bhuiya*	*Sal* fish
4.	*Dandupat* or *bagh*	Tiger (*Bagh*)
5.	*Digar*	Porpoise
6.	*Kotal*	Tortoise (*Kacchap*)
7.	*Mallik*	*Sal* fish
8.	*Nayek*	*Sal* fish
9.	*Paramanik*	A kind of bird (*Manik*)

Here, it should be pointed out that in the case of two clans *i.e. Ahari* and *Kotal*, the names of the totems are different from those given by Dr. P. C. Bhowmick in his book, "The Lodhas of West Bengal". The difference is as follows :

TABLE 71

CLANS AND TOTEMS

Clan	Name of totem as given by Dr. Bhowmick	Name of totem as found in the village
Ahari	*Chanda* fish (Ambasis ranga)	*Chand* (moon)
Kotal	Moon-grass-hopper	Tortoise (*Kacchap*)

It is not surprising that in the life of the Lodhas plants, animals and beasts figure in the totemic structure to show the tribals' dependence on forests. It is also interesting that though the three clans, *viz., Bhuiya, Mallik* and *Nayek* have the same totem, *i.e., Sal* fish, all are exogamous in dealing with each other. In the case of *Ahari* clan the moon is the totem, but the members of this clan respect their totem in a peculiar manner. They throw away all the earthen cooking pots every new moon and buy new ones. In the case of the *Kotal* clan the totem is tortoise. In this village a woman belonging to the *Kotal* clan has been married to a man belonging to the *Bhakta* clan. The woman has reported that if, at any time, a tortoise is cooked by her husband, she cannot accept food, unless all the earthen cooking pots are replaced by new ones and the metallic utensils have been thoroughly cleaned.

1. Totemic taboo

The Lodhas claim some mystic ties with their respective clan-totems, be they plants or beasts. The totemic symbols are highly regarded by them. They would not touch, injure, eat, kill or destroy the totemic plant, animal or any other object.

If by sheer chance or accident they happen to touch or injure or violate their respective totems, they believe that some catastrophe is apt to befall them. To counteract this they are required to observe ceremonial mourning for a certain period. (It involves the throwing of their earthen cooking pots). As a matter of fact they attach divine injunction to their totems. The *Bhakta* clan, the totem of which is *Churku Alu* (a kind of yam), believes that the yam becomes darkred, if a person of the same clan ever happens to touch it.

2. Sib-descent

Among the Lodhas the descent is patrilineal so that after birth, children inherit the clan of their father. For example, children born of *Bhakta* clan also belong to the *Bhakta* clan. But, in the case of a daughter, as long as she is unmarried, she belongs to the clan of her father; but once she is married, she gets into the clan of her husband in addition to that of her father and is to respect the totems of both her father and husband during her lifetime.

3. Division of clan (Sub-clan)

Here, in the case of *Bhakta* clan, it has been observed how a single clan can bifurcate into two distinct clans. The *Bhakta* clan, as pointed out by the Lodhas, was originally an exogamous clan. But, now the clan has split into two exogamous sub-clans—*Bara* (big) *Bhakta* and *Chhota* (small) *Bhakta.* To the former clan, *i.e., Bara-Bhakta,* the bigger variety of *Churku Alu* (a kind of yam) is the totem, while to the latter the totem is the smaller variety of the yam.

4. Clan-exogamy

To the Lodhas a totemic group is also a kinship group. Therefore, the rule of clan-exogamy restrains and restricts the social relations between members of the same clan. A member belonging to the *Kotal* clan cannot marry a girl also belonging to the same clan.

Apart from marriage, any pre-marital or extramarital sexual relation between members of the same tribe is also strictly prohibited. It is believed that all the members of the same clan have descended from the same blood stock. As such, they have blood relations with one another. So, any marital or sexual relation between them is in defiance of the blood-tie and is regarded as such incestuous. The corollary is that the Lodhas abhor any such sexual union. If ever a member marries intentionally within the same clan, knowing well that it is in violation of the rule of clan-exogamy, he is ostracized by their tribal *Panchayat.* At least, this was so thirty years back.

In the present survey many cases of marriage have been studied. But, no case of marriage within the same clan has been found. There is some confusion in case of the *Bhakta* clan. Several cases were noticed, where both the husband and the wife claimed to belong to the *Bhakta* clan. On further enquiry as to whether this constituted a breach of the rule of clan-exogamy, they pointed out that one of them belonged to *Bara Bhakta* clan and the other to *Chhota Bhakta* clan. Barring this, the rule is found to operate in all other cases of marital unions. The Lodhas were frank to point out that on rare occasions intra-clan marriage took place due to ignorance or mistake.

B. Bhumij

The Bhumij too, like the Lodhas, form an endogamous group among themselves. No Bhumij, according to the rules of endogamy, is entitled to marriage outside his or her own community.

1. Titles

Risley mentions four titles among the Bhumij, which are *Manki* (common among the Mundas), *Matkum* (common among the Bhumij of Dhalbhum), *Mura* (common among the Mundas of Manbhum) and *Sardar.* But the Bhumij of this village do not have any of these titles, though some of the elderly mem-

bers mention that they are *Sardar-Bhumij*. From this one may presume that the Bhumij of this village are *Sardar* by title and they have changed their title to *Singh* for some reason or other.

2. Sub-group

According to Risley, the Bhumij are divided into the sub-tribes of *Desi, Tamaria, Sikharia* or *Memo* (supposed to come from Manbhum), *Patkumia, Shelo* (iron-smelters) and *Barabhumia* (Zemindar Bhumij). As pointed out earlier, the Bhumij of this particular village migrated from Sikharbhum in Manbhum and they claim as the Bhumij of Sikharbhum. So, they may very rightly be regarded as *Sikharia* Bhumij. They are aware of the existence of the sub-groups of *Tamaria* Bhumij and *Munda* Bhumij. But they are unaware of other sub-groups. All the sub-groups of the Bhumij have very little social intercourse and communications among themselves.

Each of the above sub-groups forms an endogamous group of its own, so that a *Sikharia* Bhumij will not marry a *Tamaria* Bhumij, nor will a *Tamaria* Bhumij marry a *Sikharia* Bhumij. Again, each of these sub-groups consists of a number of exogamous septs. In sharp contrast to the Lodhas, on whom this traditional clan organization exerts a formidable influence even now, in the case of the Bhumij here the traditional internal social organisation is in a melting pot. They are rapidly forgetting the names of their respective septs and corresponding totems. It is only the elderly members of the tribe, who still carefully remember the names of their respective septs, whereas most of the youngsters do not bother about the names of the septs and totems.

The observation on the traditional organisation of the Bhumij of the village may be understood clearly from the following remarks of Risley :

"A whole tribe of aborigines, or a section of a tribe, becomes gradually converted to Hinduism without, like the Rajbansis, abandoning their tribal designation. This is what is happening among the Bhumij of Western Bengal. Here a pure Dravidian race have lost their original language, and now speak only Bengali ; they worship Hindu Gods in addition to their own (the tendency being to relegate the tribal Gods to the women), and the more advanced among them employ Brahmans as family priests. They still retain a set of totemistic exogamous sub-divisions closely resembling those of the Mundas and the Santals, but they are beginning to forget the totems which the names of the subdivisions denote, and the names themselves will probably soon be abandoned in favour of more aristocratic designations. The tribe will then have become a caste, and will go on stripping itself of all customs likely to betray its true descent. The physical characteristic of its members will alone survive. After their transformation into a caste, the Bhumij will be more strictly endogamous than they were as a tribe, and even less likely to modify their physical type by intermarriage with other races".—*Risley—Vol. I, p. xvii*

In course of investigation among the *Sikharia* Bhumij of this village, the following septs have been found :

TABLE 72

SEPTS AND TOTEMS OF SUB-TRIBES

Sub-tribe	Septs	Totem
Sikharia Bhumij	*(1) Bāddā	A kind of rat.
	(2) Bāgh-bindhā	Ox, which cannot be touched.
	(3) *Chālki*	..

TABLE 72—*contd.*

Sub-tribe	Septs	Totem
Sikharia Bhumij	(4) *Chaprā*	A kind of bird, which cannot be eaten.
	(5) *Ghughu-Sāona*	A kind of dove, which cannot be eaten.
	(6) *Guā-hemrong*	Betel-nut, which cannot be eaten.
	(7) *Hensla-hemrong*	A kind of yam, mostly of the turmeric group.
	*(8) *Kāsyap*	Tortoise, which cannot be eaten.
	*(9) *Obarsāsi*	A kind of bird, which cannot be eaten.
	(10) *Sāmā*	A kind of grass, which cannot be touched.
	(11) *Sāl*	A kind of fish, which cannot be eaten.
	*(12) *Tesā*	A kind of bird, which cannot be eaten.

Of these, the septs marked with asterisks are mentioned by Risley, while others are not mentioned by him. But, he has mentioned some other septs of the Bhumij. They are as follows :

TABLE 73

SEPTS AND TOTEMS

Septs	Totem
Bardā	Not mentioned
Bhuiyā	Fish
Chāndil	Not mentioned
Gulgu	Fish
Hānsda	Wild goose
Hemrong	Betel palm
Jaru	A bird
Leng	A mushroom
Nāg	Not mentioned
Sāgma	Not mentioned
Sālrishi	*Sal* fish
Sāndilya	A bird
Sāola	Not mentioned
Tumarung	Pumpkin
Turi	A sort of vegetable

STRUCTURE OF FAMILY

The families found in the village are all patrilineal, *i.e.*, the families follow their fathers' line of descent. The family is the basic social unit, where all the members are connected together by the web of family ties and interdependence. As a general rule, each family has a head. In most cases, the eldest member of the family is the head ; but once he approaches the age of superannuation, his eldest son or the next brother, as the case may be, becomes the head. The head of the family guides the other members of the family in different stages of life. The head of the family is held responsible for all the activities of its members. If any member of the family commits any wrong or does some mischief in contravention of the social norms, the society calls the head into account. All the families in the village, except three, are patrilocal, *i.e.*, after marriage, the wife lives in the husband's residence. But, there are three cases of matrilocal families, where the husband lives with the wife in her house or in her village. But these are exceptions on which discussion have been made later.

There are three different types of families, each of which denotes a slightly different social unit from the other. The first type of social unit is the *nuclear* or *simple* family, consisting of husband, wife and unmarried children. The second type of social unit is the *intermediate* family, consisting of husband, wife and unmarried brother or sister or one of the parents. The third type of unit is the *joint* family, consisting of husband, wife and married brother or married son. Barring these three types, several other types of social units are there, but they cannot be fitted into any of the above types. For purposes of convenience, they have been termed as *others.*

The simple family constitutes 68.6 per cent of the total Lodha families, 47 per cent of the total Bhumij families and 66. 7 per cent of the

total Mahato families. As a whole, the *simple* family constitutes 61.8 per cent of all the families in the village. The *joint* family constitutes 8·6 per cent of the total Lodha families, 23.5 per cent of the total Bhumij families and 33.3 per cent of the Mahato families. *Joint* family constitutes 14·5 per cent of all the families in the village. Of the three Lodha families, shown as *others*, two are those of concubines, and one family consists of a widow with her children. All the three Bhumij families, shown as *others*, consist of widows with or without children. Though there are eight *joint* families in the village, in none of them members living for more than two generations reside together. There is not a single *joint* family, where for three generations the members live under the same roof.

It is, thus, evident that in the village there is a preponderance of *simple* families. Against eight *joint* families, there are 34 *simple* families. It has been found from the detailed case-histories that most of the *simple* families are the products of the gradual disintegration of the extended or the *joint* families. Of the 34 *simple* families, seven families have been *simple* for a fairly long

TYPES OF FAMILY

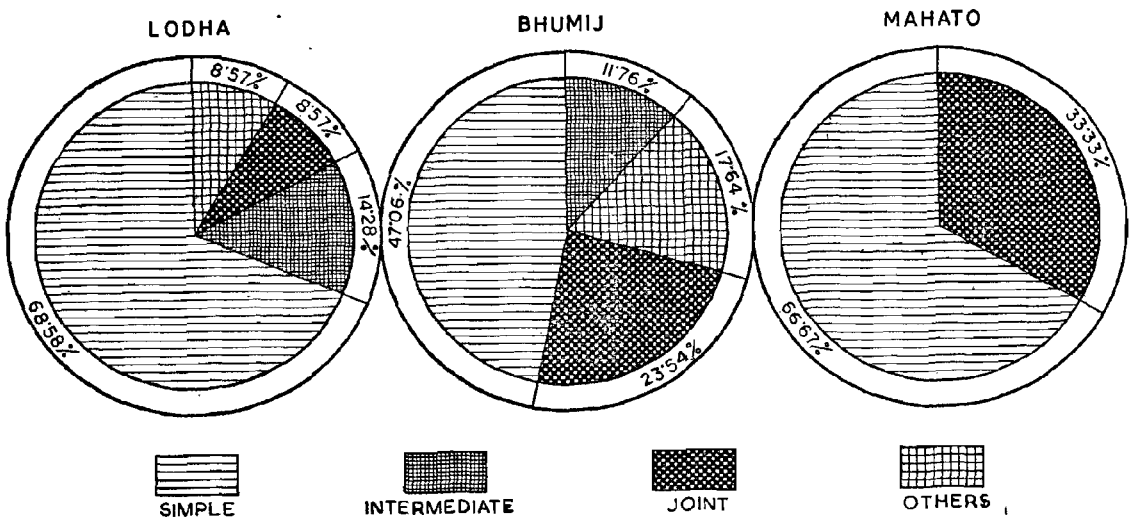


TABLE 74

TYPES OF FAMILY

Caste/Tribe	Total no. of households	*Simple* family	*Intermediate* family	*Joint* family	*Others*
Lodha	35	24	5	3	3
Bhumij	17	8	2	4	3
Mahato/Kurmi	3	2	..	1	..
Total	**55**	**34**	**7**	**8**	**6**

period of time. As many as six existing *simple* families were originally *intermediate*. They have become *simple* in structure either due to the death of one of the parents or due to the separation of the unmarried brother. In the case of the remaining 21 *simple* families it is found that originally they were part of *joint* families, but later they seceded from the parent families due to various factors. The factors responsible for the disintegration of the extended families and the formation of the *simple* families may now be examined at length. As pointed out earlier, out of 34 *simple* families found in the village, as many as seven have been *simple* for a fairly long period. The remaining 27 families seceded from *intermediate* or *joint* families. The heads of these 27 families were specially interviewed to ascertain the reasons of their secession.

In the case of thirteen households, the immediate cause of separation was domestic dissension and dispute. In most of the cases, quarrels took place between the daughters-in-law and the mothers-in-law. In few cases, dispute between brothers or between sons and fathers also took place.

In the case of six households, the motive of secession was disparity of earnings of different members. It so happened that some of the adults of the main family were lazy and averse to labour and depended mainly on the income of the earning members. The earning members, therefore, seceded from the main family.

In the case of three other families the reasons for split in the family was that the head preferred matrilocal residences and decided to settle in the village of their wives after seceding from the main family.

In the case of two families, the death of one of the parents turned the extended families *simple*. In the case of a single Bhumij family, the head was ostracized for keeping a Lodha woman as mistress and had to secede from the *joint* family to pay his penalty. In another *joint* family of two married brothers one brother has migrated to Hooghly thus making the family *simple*.

Intra-family relationship

Relation between husband and wife

In the village-society the traditional norms of behaviour and social relations between husband and wife are not much different from those in the neighbouring Caste Hindu community. Here too, the husband is placed in an unassailable position. It is he, who is to dictate in the day-to-day affairs of the family. True, he consults his wife in regard to various urgent and complicated matters; true, at times he too may yield to the decision of his wife; but in very intricate affairs his words are final, even though his wife does not see eye to eye with him. In the domestic front the husband is to issue orders, which the wife is to carry out. The social norm empowers the husband to take to task the erring wife and the wife is to face all the abuses smilingly.

But, what a lot of difference between theory and practice is to be seen here! The days of the passive obedience of the wife to her husband are now past. The change in the attitude of the wife to her husband is observable even to an outsider. She is no more easily corrigible by the reprimands or abuses of her husband or by his threats of the rod. Various factors are responsible for the gradual ascendancy of the wife. In the social structure of Bhumij Dhan Sol the wife is no more as subordinate and obedient as the ideal

dictates her to be or as is found in the neighbouring Caste Hindu community. There is slight variation in the behaviour-pattern of the wife in relation to her husband, between one community and the other, at least, so far as the degree of obedience to her husband is concerned.

Though the wife is almost universally regarded as the life-partner of her husband, a Lodha or a Bhumij wife is something more than a fellow-traveller in life's journey. She is also the partner of her husband in the struggle for existence ever since the day of her marriage. So, the traditional Hindu concept of the wife's exclusive dependence on her husband does not hold good in the present village. The traditional norms of behaviour in the Hindu society assigns to the wife a place within the four walls of the house. But, here the wife has to keep out of doors most of the time. Be it during hunting or food-gathering or working in the fields, the wife is ever present beside her husband in the quest for food. So, it is not surprising that a substantial part of their conjugal life is spent in the jungles or in the fields in their work. They carry on their work chatting, singing and cutting jokes with one another all the time. One will find hardly a more enviable and happy couple than the couple here, working hand in hand. A husband is always grateful to his wife for her helpful role in the economic sphere of life. It is not a rare sight either to find a loving husband mopping the sweat of his wife's brow.

The degree of the wife's participation in the economic sphere is not uniform among all the communities in the village. Among the Lodhas, the wife almost universally shares the burdens of her husband. Among the Bhumij it is said that all the wives worked beside their husbands about a generation or two ago. But, now a distinct trend is discernible among the well-to-do Bhumij not to send the housewife to the fields. Among the Mahatos, only very poor husbands ask their wives to lend them a helping hand.

It is, thus observed that a good deal of responsibility devolves on the average housewife for the maintenance of the family, besides her predominant role in the domestic sphere of life. Just as the loving husband performs all the domestic activities of his wife in times of her illness, so also the wife in her turn undertakes all the responsibilities of the family in times of serious illness of her husband. The Lodha or the Bhumij wife, besides being the life-partner, is also the symbol of security to her husband, at least during the various crises of life.

In the domestic front too the husband and wife co-operate with each other remarkably well. The husband here takes a more direct part in bringing up the children and in training them up. But, as for the domestic activities, the wife plays a far more important role than her husband. In addition to her arduous tasks in the fields or in the jungles from dawn to dusk, she has to perform a host of other domestic activities like preparing food, upbringing the children and doing all other household functions. In a joint family the husband and wife do not get unrestricted freedom in their everyday relation with one another. Here, the wife has to remain subdued to a great extent. The jeering remarks of the mothers-in-law or the critical glances of the sisters-in-law have to be taken easily. For some time after the marriage, the wife calmly submits to the maltreatment. But, once the husband is in her firm grip, she leaves no stone unturned in persuading him to secede from the family. In the independent or nuclear type of family, the

most common type of family structure in the village, the wife gets far more free play than is possible in a joint family. She can now have a more important role in the drama of conjugal life. The frequency and nature of the quarrels depends on the level of the culture and heritage, traditions and history of the community. Thus among the Mahatos, who occupy a slightly higher cultural level, such quarrels are few and far between; among the Bhumij, the frequency of the quarrels is slightly higher. But, among the Lodhas, such quarrels and conflicts are very common and are almost a daily occurrence.

Lastly, mention may be made of another common feature in the husband-wife relationship among the tribals. A sense of mutual suspicion and distrust can always be found to pervade their minds. It has also been noticed that in their conjugal life the husband always nurtures some vague suspicion about his wife, so much so that he keeps a vigilant eye on his wife. But, in a society, torn by frequent quarrels and dissensions, in a society, with intrigues fairly common, certain misgivings cannot be entirely ruled out.

Parents-son relationship

The birth of a son is warmly welcome by all the communities, as he gives a profound sense of security to the parents. The arrival of a newcomer in the family makes them jubilant, as in times of crisis or in old age the parents can depend upon the sons.

During infancy it is the mother who spends the major part of her time in rearing and suckling the child. The father occasionally fondles the baby. The mother is very affectionate and never fails in her motherly duties, despite her pressing activities. Even when she goes out to work, she carries the baby in her arms.

As a son grows up, the father tries to have a firm hold on his son. Sometimes, he is strict and does not spare the rod; sometimes, again, he is lenient. If the son quarrels with his brothers or with other boys, it is the father who reprimands his son. In times of domestic quarrel between son and daughter, the mother generally supports the son. From various other domestic events of daily life the mother's greater leaning towards the son becomes evident. When the father rebukes his son, the latter rushes to his mother and complains against his father.

As the son passes from infancy to childhood, the attitude of the parents undergoes sudden changes. The affectionate parents now assume the roles of trainers and guides. The father trains up the son in different occupations. The first task entrusted to the son is to gather fruits and to collect faggots. As the son reaches his teens, he accompanies his parents in their hunting expeditions or in their agricultural pursuits. In the first phase, he simply plays the role of a stand-by and watches all the operations with rapt attention. At times, he comes to the help of his parents in some phases of the work. It is in this way that the father tutors his son in different vocations of life.

At a still later stage, *i.e.*, when the son is about to cross his teens, his full-fledged service is called for. Slowly but steadily, the son begins to contribute his humble mite to the economy of the family. Gradually, the boy attains adulthood. It is at this stage that the parental affection as also the son's respect for his parents are at their summit. From this time, the grown-up boy tends to avoid his parents and spends the major part of his time

in chatting and gossiping with his friends. Very soon, the son attains his marriageable age. Usually, the parents play a decisive role in the match-making of their son. The son is to get the permission for his marriage from his mother just on the eve of the marriage-ceremony.

The parents-son relationship undergoes a definite change after the marriage of the son. Now, the son's love and respect for his parents are slowly on the wane. Henceforth, his wife, in place of his parents, dominates him. His ties with the family get looser. During frequent quarrels between the mother-in-law, and daughter-in-law, it is not uncommon for the son to support his wife. The seeds of the son's secession from the parents are sown. But side by side, there are instances of father and married son living happily together for a pretty long time. It has been observed, specially among the Lodhas, that even if the sons and parents live independently, affection and love between them is not lost. A sense of oneness and a bond of unity is always there. During dispute with a third party the son is sure to support the parents and *vice versa*. Crisis in life also brings disunited hearts united in tears of joy.

Parents-daughter relationship

As among the neighbouring Caste Hindus, the daughter is not regarded altogether a liability in a village, where the system of bride-price prevails among the people. So, the birth of a daughter is as much welcome as that of a son. The daughter is brought up with the same amount of care and affection as in the case of son. Even though the girl is destined to serve in some other house, no discriminating treatment is made.

As the girl grows up, she is more and more drawn to her mother. Even when she is only seven or eight years old, she participates in the domestic activities of her mother, whose duty is to see that her daughter becomes expert in all domestic work. Even though engrossed with regular household jobs, the mother cracks jokes with her daughter and through the jokes the mother sometimes presents to her an imaginary picture of her future husband's house. For example, if the girl feels overworked and expresses her reluctance to do a particular job, her mother tells her, "My girl, you get so easily overworked ; but, don't you know that you'll have to perform the entire job alone in your husband's house ?" Such occasional comment impels the blushing girl to do the job. At the age of nine or ten the girl helps her mother by gathering edible roots and collecting faggots from the forest. When the girl is about eleven or twelve years old, it is the mother's foremost duty to train up her daughter in the culinary art.

Side by side with her domestic work, a girl has to help her parents by accompanying them to the fields of work till the day of her marriage. Thereby, she gets well-trained in the art as to how to help her husband by sharing his economic burden. The mother becomes the watchdog of her daughter, once she attains puberty. Now, she keeps a constant vigil on her movements. It is the mother's duty to see that her daughter does not get involved in any premarital sexual union with anybody. Usually, she does not allow her daughter to go outside alone. The mother accompanies her daughter or sends someone with her, wherever she goes. The girl's free-mixing with the adult males is also restricted and discouraged.

It is reported that through their friendly conversation, the girl sometimes gathers sexual

knowledge from her mother. In their mutual dealings and conversations with one another, the mother may aptly be called the 'friend and guide' of her daughter.

The marriage of the daughter changes the parents-daughter relationship altogether. The contact is maintained for some years after her marriage, but gradually the girl gets too increasingly entangled in her husband's house to feel for her parents, though the girl visits her parental home during social and festive occasions to renew the contact fading through the passage of time.

Brother-brother relationship

During childhood the brothers are co-partners in their innocent world of joy. In most cases, the parents have to keep out of doors, leaving the lonely boys at home where they spend the day playing various games. Left to themselves, the boys make bows and arrows and enter the forest for mimic-hunting. At times, when the younger brother gets hungry, the elder brother gathers some wild fruits and roots to satisfy his hunger. Thus, the brothers grow up at home and out under the sun and the azure sky.

At the age of seven or eight most of the children have to work as cowboys to supplement the incomes of the family. Then, the brothers start together in the morning with the herd of cows and goats, wending to forest, where they spend the day and play various games to their amusements. The brothers get going together in the fostering care of the woods and the green.

They grow up and attain youth in fun and frolic, frictions and misunderstandings; but fraternal ties are never snapped. The ties become all the more strong in case of a conflict with a third party, when one brother invariably comes to rescue the other from his plight.

It is only after marriage that brothers become more and more self-centred. Occasionally they secede from the parental families and live in nuclear families. Then, the sweet memories of infancy and childhood are lost in passion and the cordial relation sometimes gives way to bitterness.

Brother-sister relationship

The brother-sister relationship is very sweet. Till the age of seven or eight, they play, eat and sleep together. At times, the brother may quarrel with her sister and may even beat her. The beaten sister bursts into a flood of tears and complains to her parents against her brother. But, she has still a soft corner for her brother and she makes a compromise at the earliest opportunity by the offer of a fruit or a root. In a village where the parents have to ply their daily care outdoor, the brothers and sisters are left to themselves. In case the eldest one is a sister, she has to take the place of her mother during the latter's absence. She has to feed her brother and lull him to sleep. The same role is played by the brother, when he happens to be elderly. It is very common to see a sister putting her brother on her lap and lulling him to sleep by singing a village lullaby.

As they grow up, the intimacy between them grows still more. During the absence of the parents, they go to the forests to collect edible roots, fruits and tubers. It is in the forests that they open their hearts. Sometimes they discuss their mother's unsympathetic act towards them, sometimes they discuss about their fellow mates, or talk about the stories of the ghosts and the spirits.

But, the days of joy are numbered. The sister bids adieu to her brother on her marriage in wrenched heart.

Sister-sister relationship

The relation between two sisters is almost like that between two friends, if one is a few years younger to the other. In case one sister is much older than the other, the elderly sister assumes an authoritarian look in her dealings with the younger sister. When the mother is away for work in the fields, the eldest sister is to look after her younger sisters and brothers. The sisters perform all the domestic work jointly in a spirit of co-operation. They feed the younger ones and lull them to sleep. They go to the tank for bath and carry pitcherful of water home. Their most favourite hobby is to go to the forest for the free bounties of nature in roots and fruits. They also fetch head-loads of faggots.

In their mutual dealings they behave like friends. Each one tells the other one's dreams and joys in a tone surcharged with emotion. In their conversation the younger sister derives the knowledge of sex from her eldest sister. After marriage, the two sisters are drawn away from each other to meet once or twice in a year on festivals or other occasions.

ROLE OF WOMAN

In the neighbouring Caste Hindu community the woman has been assigned an inferior position *vis-a-vis* her husband. There the husband is the sole master of the household and the woman unhesitatingly accepts him as her lord. But, in the social structure of Bhumij Dhan Sol the picture is not the same. In different facets of life the tribal woman plays a far more important and active role than her counterpart in the Hindu society.

In every society, the status of the woman is determined largely by the role that she is called upon to play. So, before ascertaining the exact status of the woman in the social structure of Bhumij Dhan Sol it is better to describe the activities of a woman in different spheres of life.

Place of woman in the socio-religious sphere

In the socio-religious sphere a woman does not come to the forefront of the ceremonies proper. The tribals regard the menstrual blood as unholy and they do not allow women to take any active part in the main phase of the ceremonies. They believe that the touch of the unclean women may vitiate the sanctity of the ceremonies.

But, in social festivals like *Bandana*, *Tusu* and *Karam* no such discrimination is practised and women are quite free to participate in the festivals. Only a few years back women used to participate in folk-dances with the men. But, now they have ceased to do so.

Place of woman in the political sphere

The political organisation of the tribals is very simple. Their traditional political organisation consists of the tribal *Panchayats* with different office-bearers, such as the headman, the messenger, the priest etc. Woman has been assigned no place in the traditional organisation. Not to speak of being given any portfolio, the women have not even been allowed to join the deliberations of the *Panchayat*. It is entirely the monopoly of the male members.

As in all other patriarchal tribes, no property is inherited by either the Lodha or the Bhumij woman here also. After the death of the father, the property is divided among the sons, but no share is given to the daughters.

Place of woman in domestic sphere

In the domestic sphere the women are not as docile and submissive as their counterparts in the neighouring Caste Hindu society. In the neighbouring Caste Hindu society the task of performing all domestic activities, from cleaning the house to cooking, rests upon woman. It is the woman's avowed duty to perform all the domestic duties without allowing the male members to have any hand in them.

Here too, the ideal entrusts the women with superintendence over the household affairs. But, in practice the male members work side by side with the female members in the household and it may rightly be said that in the domestic sphere the male members are guided and dictated to a certain extent by the womenfolk. If women have to cook, the male members have to perform the allied activities like gathering edible roots and tubers, carrying faggots and fetching water. No rigid allocation of domestic duties is, however, made. Not infrequently the woman is found grumbling and refusing to cook for her husband. In such cases, the male members reluctantly cook themselves.

INHERITANCE OF PROPERTY

In matter of inheritance, the people are guided by the Hindu rule of succession. Among all the people of the village the sons inherit the property of their father. As a rule, all sons get equal share of property. But the villagers point out that sometimes the eldest son manages to have a bigger share.

The following table highlights the attitude of the different communities towards inheritance of property by daughters equally with sons.

TABLE 75

ATTITUDE TOWARDS INHERITANCE

Caste/Tribe	Number of heads of households	Number of heads of households which agree that daughters should inherit equally with sons				
		Aged above 50	Aged 41-50	Aged 31-40	Aged 21-30	Aged below 21
Lodha	35	3	5	9	2	..
Bhumij	17	1	2	2	..	..
Mahato	3	..	..	..	..	..
Total	**55**	**4**	**7**	**11**	**2**	..

It is interesting to observe that most of the Lodhas, who have no property at all, agree that daughters should inherit equally with sons, whereas the Bhumij and the Mahatos, most of whom own some property, do not agree that daughters should inherit father's property equally with sons.

KINSHIP

The terms of kinship among the people of the place does not differ from those among the Caste Hindus of the neighbouring villages. Thus the terms, such as *Baba* (Father), *Kaka* (Father's younger brother) *Jetha* (Father's elder brother), *Dadu* (Father's father), *Mama*

Dadu (Mother's father), *Kaki* (Father's younger brother's wife), *Jethi* (Father's elder brother's wife) etc., are used by the people of the village.

The rule of avoidance also operates with equal force here as in other villages. A woman is prohibited from touching or speaking to another person, not related by blood-relation. The rule of avoidance operates between a married woman and her husband's father's cousin brothers, husband's elder cousin brothers. Again, the same rule of avoidance operates between a man and his younger brother's wife or his son's wife. In case a woman comes across her husband's elder brother or her husband's father, she is required to cover her face with the end of her cloth. The principle of avoidance is so rigorously followed that the wife is not permitted even to touch or clean the dishes, on which her husband's elder brother or husband's father has taken food.

Utterance of the names of certain relatives by a married woman will be frowned upon by others. Thus, the wife cannot utter the names of the relatives, whom she avoids, according to the principles of avoidance. In addition to these names, the names of her husband, husband's mother or husband's father's brother's wife cannot be uttered by a woman. The husband is also prohibited from uttering the names of his parents-in-law.

Joking relationship exists between grand-father or grand-mother and grand-son or grand-daughter, between husband and his wife's younger sisters and between wife and her husband's younger brothers.

Besides, artificial relationship or ceremonial friendship also exists among the people. Through such relationship members of various communities get together. Ceremonial friends, ceremonial brothers or sisters and *Makar* (friend) are examples of this relation. Usually, such convivial relation is established between two members on festive occasions.

A Lodha woman of this village is in *Makar* relation with a Bagal woman, residing in the adjacent village of Jhitka. The friendship was established on the *Ratha-Jatra* festival, when each presented the other a new *Sari*. From time to time, they invite each other and serve parched rice, cakes, sweetmeats etc. A Bhumij boy is also in friendship with another boy of the Mahato community of the neighbouring village. Such artificial friendship fosters brotherhood among members of different communities.

Marriage, society and morals

In addition to the previous discussions on the beliefs and practices connected with marriage, an analysis of some dry to dust facts is made in the following, with the purpose that it may indicate some social implications.

Monogamy is prevalent in the village. Polygyny, though socially sanctioned among the Lodhas and the Bhumij, is not practised now. Some elderly Lodhas and Bhumij point out that their grand-fathers had more than one wife. But economic hardships of the present do not embolden them to have more than one wife.

Two types of marriage are practised by the people. The marital union between a bachelor and a maid is the regular form of marriage, while that between a widowed or a divorced man and a widowed or a divorced woman or between a bachelor and a widow or a divorced woman or between a maid and a widower or a divorced person is remarriage and is locally

called *Sanga*. The *Sanga* form of marriage is widely practised by the Lodhas and the Bhumij. As for the Mahatos, remarriage or *Sanga* was widely practised by them 30 years back. But in recent years there is a tendency to withhold social sanction for the remarriage of the widows. In this respect the Mahatos are inclined to follow the Caste Hindus who do not ordinarily favour remarriage of the widows.

Marriage prohibition

Among all the three communities of the village, cross-cousin or parallel cousin-marriages are strictly prohibited. Again, senior sorrorate (where the husband marries the elder sister of the deceased wife) or senior levirate (where the elder brother marries the wife of the deceased younger brother) are also prohibited. But junior sorrorate or junior levirate is socially sanctioned.

To the Lodhas, as pointed out earlier, a totemic group is also a kinship group. Therefore, the rule of clan exogamy restrains and restricts marital relations between members of the same clan. Thus, a person belonging to the *Ahari* clan cannot marry a girl also of the same clan.

The Bhumij are similarly guided by the rule of exogamy of septs. Thus, a person of *Badda* sept cannot marry a girl of the same sept.

Age at marriage

The mean age at marriage for all the males in the village is 22·7, while that for the females is 14·1. Child-marriage is not uncommon among the Lodhas and the Bhumij, as there is a case where a girl was married at the age of 10 years. A case has also been observed where a girl has been married at the age of 15 or 16 years. Among the males too there are cases, where a person has been married at the age of 20 years and another at the age of 28 or 29 years.

Negotiation for marriage

Negotiations for marriage are generally made by the parents. Sometimes, relatives play a key role in selecting the bridegrooms for the brides. They generally provide the preliminary information leading to the final negotiation. Sometimes, the *Laia* (priest) or the *Mukhia* (headman) of the Lodhas and the Bhumij acts as a go-between among the parties. Sometimes, the bridegroom himself visits the village of the bride and offers the proposal.

Bride-price

In the marriage-ceremony of all the three communities the bridegroom is required to pay some amount of money to the parents of the bride. This is known as the payment of bride-price. At the time of field survey it was found that all the households could not remember correctly the exact amount of bride-price, paid or received by them during the marriage-ceremony of the members of their households. It was, therefore, not possible to collect the figures of bride-price in all cases of marriage. The table in the next page would give some idea about the amount of bride-price, paid or received by some of the households.

In the case of the marriage-ceremony of the Mahatos, the customary rule requires the payment of a token bride-price of Rs. 3/- or Rs. 5/-. In the case of a Bhumij marriage, the usual bride-price is Rs. 25/-. In the three marriages among the Bhumij

TABLE 76

BRIDE-PRICE

Caste/ Tribe	Number of cases	No. of cases by the amount of bride-price paid or received by the households								
		Upto Rs. 5	Rs. 6-10	Rs. 11-20	Rs. 21-30	Rs. 31-40	Rs. 41-50	Rs. 51-60	Rs. 61-70	Rs. 71-80
Lodha	22	..	..	..	9	8	2	1	1	1
Bhumij	15	..	2	1	11	..	1	..	..	..
Mahato	3	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total	**40**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**20**	**8**	**3**	**1**	**1**	**1**

where the bride-price was Rs. 20/- or less, either the bride was very handsome or the parents of the bridegroom were too poor to pay the full amount. As for the Lodhas, it may be pointed out that most of the marriages, where the bride-price ranged from Rs. 21/- to Rs 30/-, took place 10 years back or even before. But, the marriages, where the bride-price is higher, took place in recent years. The bride-price among the Lodhas is getting increasingly higher and higher. That is why, a son in the marriageable age poses a great problem to the Lodha parents. It may be pointed out here that two Lodhas, one aged 70 years and another aged 45 years, remained bachelors for their failure to collect the bride-price in the prime of their life.

It is interesting that even though the bride-price is lowest among the Mahatos and highest among the Lodhas, the average total expenditure associated with a marriage-ceremony is generally highest among the Mahatos and lowest among the Lodhas. The total expenses incurred in the recent marriage-ceremonies in course of the last two or three years is shown in the form of a table to pinpoint the observation.

TABLE 77

EXPENDITURE OF MARRIAGE

Caste/ Tribe	Number of cases studied	No. of households in which total amount of expenditure incurred in marriage was								
		Upto Rs. 100	Rs. 101-150	Rs. 151-200	Rs. 201-250	Rs. 251-300	Rs. 301-400	Rs. 401-500	Rs. 501-600	Rs. 601-700	Rs. 701-800
Lodha	6	3	2	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Bhumij	5	..	..	1	2	..	1	1	..	..	..
Mahato	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Total	**12**	**3**	**2**	**2**	**2**	..	**1**	**1**	..	..	**1**

Most of the households of the village collect the expenses of marriage in one or more of the following ways :

a) Sometimes, the members of the household having marriageable children migrate to the distant areas of Midnapore district in the agricultural season, work there and save the bulk of their earnings.

b) Sometimes, the adult males work in the houses of the cultivating households as agricultural labourers (*Munish*) for one or two years and thereby earn the amount of money required for the marriage.

Different forms of marriage

The marriages of all the married, widowed, divorced or separated persons in the village have been studied and accordingly the different forms of marriage have been shown in the following table.

TABLE 78

MODE OF MARRIAGE

Caste/ Tribe	Total number of cases studied	Regular marriage with payment of bride-price	Regular marriage without payment of bride-price	Re-marriage or *Sanga*	Marriage by choice	*Ghar Jamai* or matrilocal residences	Marriage by service	Marriage by exchange	Junior sorrorate	Junior levirate
Lodha	42	26	..	9	1	1	..	3	1	1
Bhumij	25	23	..	5	..	..	..	..	..	..
Mahato	5	5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total	**75**	**54**	..	**14**	**1**	**1**	..	**3**	**1**	**1**

It appears from the above table that regular marriage with payment of bride-price is most common here. About 72 per cent of all the marriages are of this type. Next to this type, *Sanga* or remarriage is the other widely practised type of marriage, 19 per cent of the marriages being of this type. It also appears that the incidence of *Sanga* type of marriage is higher among the Lodhas than among the Bhumij.

A Lodha young man of this village fell in love with a widow. Initially the father of the young man did not give his consent to the marriage. But, the pressure of public opinion forced the father to change his opinion and give his approval. Then, the two were married with the requisite social sanction.

Another Lodha, originally a resident of a neighbouring village, has after his marriage been living in the house of his wife's father jointly for the last two years as a resident son-in-law or *Gharjamai*. But, even then the couples had to secede eventually from the parental households after some years partly due to quarrel and partly due to other domestic problems.

Three cases of exchange-marriage among the Lodhas have been studied in the village. In one case the son and daughter of a Lodha have been married with the daughter and son of another Lodha of the same village. The exchange form of marriage has become popular with the Lodhas. The advantages of exchange-marriage are that no bride-price has to be paid. Secondly, such a marriage almost halves the total expenses, as the marriage of the two can take place on one and the same day.

Junior sorrorate is permissible in this village. There is one case, where a Lodha of the village had, after the death of his wife, married her sister. There is also an instance of a junior levirate, where a Lodha young man of this village married the wife of his deceased elder cousin. This man has taken the responsibility of his step-daughter also.

Marital zone

The present village was the place of residence of either the husband or wife or of both before their marriage in as many as 68 cases out of 75 cases of marriage within the village. In the remaining seven cases the places

of residence of both the husband and the wife were outside. The present study concerns these 68 cases. Each marital zone implies the number of marriages that have taken place in each zone situated at a particular distance from the centre of the zone, *i.e.*, the village. The table below gives one an idea about each marital zone.

MARITAL ZONE

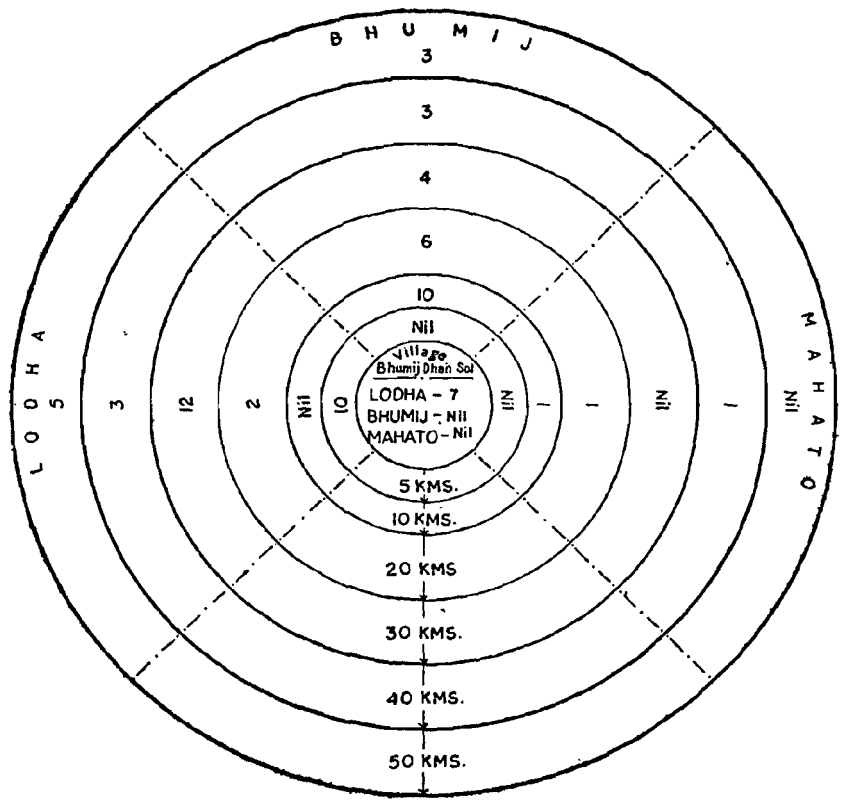


TABLE 79

MARITAL ZONE

Caste/ Tribe	Total number of marriages	Number of marriages taking place within a radius of						
		The same village	5 kilo-meters	10 kilo-meters	20 kilo-meters	30 kilo-meters	40 kilo-meters	50 kilo-meters
Lodha	39	7	10	..	2	12	3	5
Bhumij	26	..	..	10	6	4	3	3
Mahato	3	..	..	1	1	..	1	..
Total	**68**	**7**	**10**	**11**	**9**	**16**	**7**	**8**

The same may be seen more clearly from the diagram on marital zone. The inner circle means the village where seven marriages have taken place.

It appears from the table that no marriage has taken place between any two Bhumij households within this village, though there are seven such cases among the Lodhas. This is partly explained by the fact that there are only 17 Bhumij families in the village and most of them have consanguineous relationship among themselves, forbidding marital union. Any marriage has, therefore, to be contracted outside. Again, it appears that among the Bhumij no marriage has taken place within the second zone. This is because of the fact that within the second zone, there is no village inhabited by the Bhumij.

The maximum number of marriages of the Lodhas has been negotiated in the fifth zone, within which several villages in the police station of Jhargram are situated. Likewise, the maximum number of marriages of the Bhumij has been in the third zone containing the villages of Tarki, Bahardanga and Amla of the police station of Binpur and the villages Abhaya and Dhangharia in the neighbouring police station of Salboni. Most of the marriages in the sixth and the last zones consist mostly of villages in the police station of Jamboni, on the border of the State of Bihar.

In one sense, the marital zone of a particular place (*i.e.*, the centre of the zone) partially reflects its cultural zone too, inasmuch as there is continuous inflow and outflow of members from the centre to the other zones and *vice versa*. Once an affinal relationship has been established with a particular place, there is every likelihood that there will be constant visits and counter visits of relations. To that extent, a thin thread connects Bhumij Dhan Sol with the wider tribal cultural zone of the frontier Bengal, consisting mainly of her western tracts.

Divorce

Instances of separation of the spouse are fairly common. At the time of survey, one male and three females were found to have been living separated. All these four cases of divorce were not effected in the court of law. In two of the four cases it was the wife, who took the initiative in separation. In one case, impotence of the husband was the cause of separation. In the second case, the quarrelsome nature of the mother-in-law and her alleged ill-treatment compelled the wife to separate herself from her husband. In two other cases, the husbands took the upper hand in causing separation. In both the cases the cause of separation was husband's suspicion of the wives' fidelity.

There are 14 cases of remarriage in the village. In five cases remarriage was caused by the death of either the husband or the wife. In other cases, the remarriage was preceded by separation of one of the couples. In four such cases among the Lodhas the separation was initiated by the husbands. The reasons for separation in two cases were sexual lapses on the part of the wife, in the third case the reason was unwillingness of the wife to co-operate in economic pursuits, while in the fourth case the cause of separation was alleged barrenness of the wife. In the remaining two cases, the separation was initiated by the wives and in both the cases the cause of separation was the ill-treatment of the husband.

Among the Bhumij, there have been three cases of separation, of which two were initiated by the husbands. The reason in one case was the wife's quarrelsome nature, while in another case the reason was her barrenness. In the third case it was the wife, who had left

her husband on account of his sexual intrigue with a Lodha woman.

Pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relations

Among all the three communities of the village pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relations are strictly forbidden. Both these acts are looked upon with contempt. If any case of pre-marital sexual relation is exposed, the village-society condemns the offender, fines him and if possible and practicable, compels him to marry the girl. About four or five years ago, one such case among the Lodhas came to public view. The offender fled away from the village and stayed away for some time. Later, the girl was married to a different person and they have been living happily ever since.

Extra-marital sexual lapses, though strictly prohibited and deemed highly objectionable, are yet not uncommon. Several such lapses among the Lodhas came to notice during investigation. The exposure of such relation usually leads to the separation of the couples. In one case after the exposure of such an illicit relation, a Lodha woman was mercilessly beaten by her husband. Then, she fled to her father's house, never to come back. Later, the husband married for the second time. During the survey another case of illicit relation was causing great headache to the Lodhas of the village. A young Lodha, aged 22 years, was in illicit relation with another Lodha married woman, aged 38 years. The woman was beaten black and blue time and again. She escaped to her father's house, but was brought back to the village by her deaf husband. After some time, she was again off the way. The latest development was that the young man was going to marry very soon another girl of the same village.

An interesting episode of an extra-marital union between a Bhumij and a Lodha girl may be related here. The widowed woman left her son and began to live as husband and wife with a paramour of her choice. Because of this gross breach of the social norm, both were ex-communicated from their respective societies and both had to lead an isolated life for a pretty long time. The man expressly claims himself to be the husband of the woman and at present lives with her in a hut near the Lodha Colony. The rigours of social sanction against them have now been softened to some extent and they are at present allowed to attend social ceremonies, but on condition that they must maintain reasonable distance from other members of the society. Even if they are invited to feasts, they are served food separately. There is also a similar instance concerning a Lodha widow, who has been living in the house of a Bagal resident of the adjoining village Jhitka as his wife, though not properly married.

There are also two young Lodha women, who were married, but later divorced by their husbands. Now, they have been living separately in a remote corner of the Lodha Colony and leading a life of concubinage.

All the foregoing discussions produce ample evidence that the communities have certain rules and regulations of their own on marriage and morals. There are breaches, but the village-society usually does not accept a compromise. Still, the delinquents have been forgiven in some cases and exonerated in others. But, in no case is there an instance of the watch-dogs of society to have relaxed their vigil on the aberrations of morality. Nowhere have they allowed the rule of passion, instead of reason, to have a full play in the village-life.

IS IT A PLANNED PARENTHOOD ?

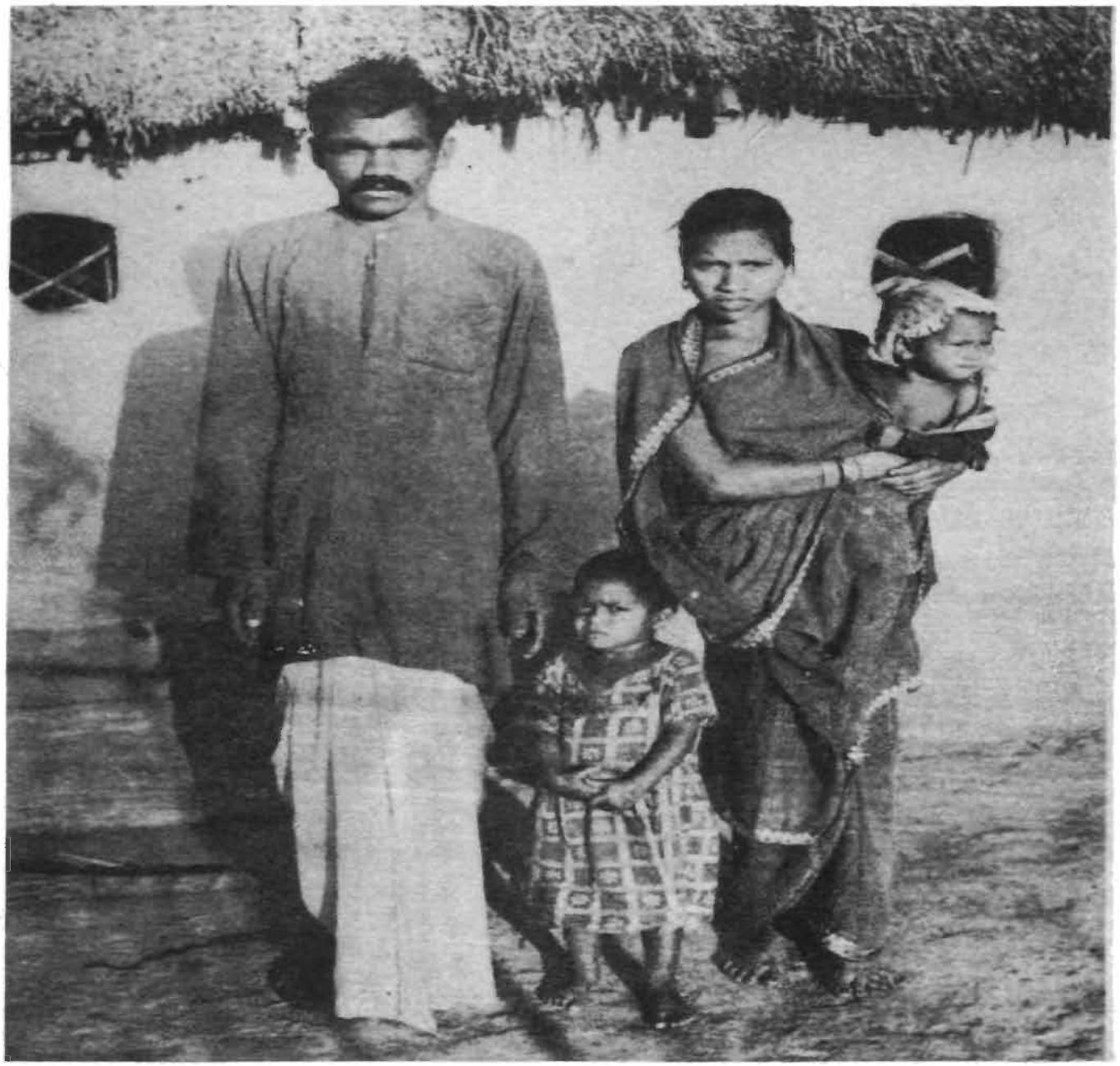


A *Simple* Lodha family with the couple and of two children

A CROSS-SECTION OF THE VILLAGE-COMMUNITY



A *nucleated* Bhumij family with husband, wife and two children



A Mahato family, *simple* in structure, with husband, wife and a couple of issues



A FUN, A GAME, AND AN OCCASIONAL MEANS OF SUBSISTENCE

A Lodha archer about to shoot an arrow at the prey—communion with jungles is re-established through these chance hunting expeditions, sometime alone and sometime in groups

SOCIAL HYGIENE IN MESS-UP



Sanitary condition of the people needs no elaboration, nor does their awareness of public health —people and their livestock get their bath and wash themselves merrily in the same tank



A DIVERSION FROM DRUDGERY

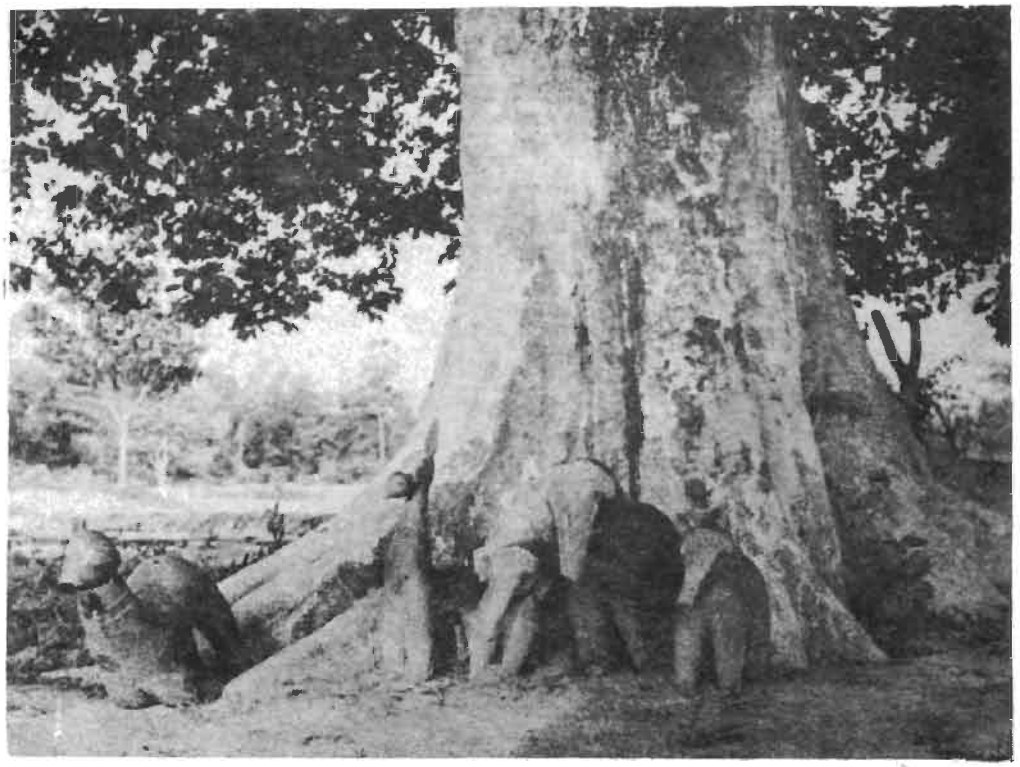
An absorbing cock-fight in a fair, visited by villagers—the fight here is competitive and one of the cocks in view is a Bhumij villager

IN "THOUGHT-LESS FREEDOM"



Innocent infants of the woods on a buffalo wander in the forest—recreation of village cow-boys

GODS THAT SURGE THE SOULS



Thakur Than (sacred altar) of the Lodhas is a raised earthen altar, strewn with terracotta elephants and horses—here the community worship of all the deities of the Lodhas is held



Kali Asan Than under an *Asan* tree is a sacred altar of the Bhumij for their religious festivals on community basis

FIELDS HARK TO THIS GOD



Jahir Than or a sacred grove in the heart of the jungles is the abode of *Jahir Buru* at the foot of *Asan* and *Piasal* trees—*Jahir Buru* is the superintending deity of cultivation among the Bhumij



A MOMENT'S MIRTH AT BACCHUS'S CALL

Day's earnings for the sweat and toil as day-labourers spent on bouts of drinks in the *Handia*-shop at Jhitka, while Faggin smiles at the success of his exploitation

AN OPEN HAIR-CUTTING SALOON, A POINTER TO SOCIAL RANK TOO



Services of the *Paramanik (Napit)* barber were denied to the Bhumij in the past, but now the restriction is lifted

HEALTH AND SANITATION

The health of the people and sanitation of the village may be discussed now. The Bhumij and Mahatos live in thatched huts and the Lodhas live in huts with roofs of corrugated iron sheets. It has been found that most of the houses are without any window; naturally the rooms do not get air and sunlight. It is no wonder, therefore, that the inhabitants are susceptible to diseases like tuberculosis, reheumatism and respiratory diseases.

Not a single household in the village possesses any latrine. All of them ease themselves in open fields or in jungles. As regards source of water, there is not a single tank or pond in the village proper. A tank, lying about a kilometer off, is used for both men and cattle of all the three neighbouring villages. People take their bath, wash their clothes in the tank and at the same time use its water for cooking and drinking purposes. Cattle waliowing in the tank and people collecting water from it for domestic use are almost a common sight. Though there are four wells in the village, the level of water goes down in summer. Water looks muddy and becomes unfit for human use. It is specially in summer that people use water of the tank for drinking purposes without knowing the fundamentals of disinfection. Water thus becomes the main carrier of a good number of diseases; water-borne disease like dysentery, cholera and other gastro-intestinal troubles are very common, dysentery being a disease of almost daily occurrence.

To recall the earlier observations on dress, most of the people possess one or at best two clothes. Regular washing of clothes is very rarely done. Sometimes the people do not put off a cloth, until it is completely soiled. The use of washing-soap is not popular. Instead, the villagers occasionally boil their clothes with ashes of burnt-wood for washing purposes. The use of toilet soap is restricted to only one or two households. The majority of the households use local mud for cleaning their bodies. Due to abject poverty the people cannot smear their hair or bodies with any oil. The matted hair becomes infested with lice. Due to ignorance of personal hygiene, skin-diseases among the people are fairly common.

It is interesting that the villagers have different ideas about the cause of diseases. They still cling to their age-old belief that most of the diseases are caused by the malevolent spirits, witches etc. Only some young men know faintly the exact scientific explanations of some diseases.

The people are very little aware of the modern treatment of diseases. They believe in magical cures, charms and amulets. When somebody is ill with any disease, he at once consults the medicine-man. The treatments are confined to *jharphook*, divination with water, oil, salt, mustard seeds etc., discussion on which has been made in details in the section dealing with magico-religious beliefs and practices. The custom of offering fowl or pigeon for sacrifice to the Goddess *Sitala* is but to solicit divine blessings for the cure of diseases. It has been found that all the households in the village depend primarily on the magical cures and on indigenous herbal medicines.

It should, however, be borne in mind that even a few years back the villagers had no other alternative than the magical cures and herbal treatment to rely upon. So, the alleged utility of this treatment, at least in injecting an element of security into the minds of the sufferers, should be appreciated.

Even now, there is not very much scope for modern amenities of treatment. The Union Health Centre at Lalgarh affords modern treatment and more and more people are availing themselves of the Health Centre, at least for serious and protracted diseases. In some cases the diseases are not cured in the Health Centre at Lalgarh, the patients are sometimes ambulated to Midnapur Hospital.

Besides the Union Health Centre at Lalgarh, there is a quack doctor at Bhimpur. Sometimes the villagers visit the quack for consultation, fees varying from Rupee one to Rupees two.

A good number of villagers are basically afraid of modern medicines. The proverbial weapons of the doctor, the knife and the needle, pose serious threats to them. The subconscious notion that Goddess *Sitala* might get offended, once they take recourse to modern medical treatment, also acts as a strong deterrent. It is only when all the available traditional methods of treatment fail to produce any result that they take the help of modern medical treatment. Besides, in the moribund cases or in cases of protracted illness or of abnormal labour, the people would normally send the patient to the Rural Health Centre or would consult the doctor. It is pointed out by some households that lack of means also stands in the way of getting medical treatment. In course of an interview with the villagers it was ascertained that in the matter of treatment of diseases, 31 households depended primarily on magical cures and herbal medicines, while in the complicated cases they relied on allopathic treatment. The remaining 24 households took exclusively to the magical cures and herbal medicine in the majority of the diseases.

The villagers still view small-pox and cholera as dreadful diseases, as these can ruin a village within a day or two. It is believed that these dangerous diseases can be prevented by offering sacrifices to the deities of *Sitala* and *Yugini* and also by holding their worship. So, when such diseases occur, it is believed that the Goddesses have been offended and instead of getting themselves vaccinated or inoculated, they worship the deities with greater reverence.

The extent of popularity of vaccination and inoculation may be understood from the following table :

TABLE 80

INOCULATION AND VACCINATION

Caste/ Tribe	Total no. of households	No. of households that get themselves vaccinated		No. of households that do not get themselves vaccinated	No. of households that get themselves inoculated		No. of households that do not get themselves inoculated
		Regularly	Irregularly		Regularly	Irregularly	
Lodha	35	22	4	9	1	3	31
Bhumij	17	8	6	3	..	3	14
Mahato	8	2	1	..	..	1	2
Total	**55**	**32**	**11**	**12**	**1**	**7**	**47**

It appears from the table that though the members of only 32 households get themselves vaccinated regularly, 47 households do not get themselves inoculated. To aggravate the

problem, all members of the house live under the same roof mostly. So, quarantine is practically impossible. Finally the ideas of disinfection or of hygienic ways of life are yet to appear among them. All these explain why cholera and small-pox appear in the village so frequently and sometimes take some toll of lives. During the year 1963-64 (June to May) there were 33 cases of small-pox and chicken-pox in the village, though there was no death from small-pox in that year.

During the same period, *i.e.*, June, 1963 to May, 1964, there were 18 maternity cases in the village. The following table shows how the maternity cases were confined.

TABLE 81

CARE OF MATERNITY CASES

Caste/ Tribe	Total no. of maternity cases	Hospital	Health Centre	Home	If at home, whether attended by: Doctor	Midwife	Untrained *Dai*	Eldery women in the family or in the community
Lodha	8	..	1	7	..	..	..	7
Bhumij	9	..	1	8	..	..	3	5
Mahato	1	..	..	1	..	..	1	..
Total	**18**	..	**2**	**16**	..	..	**4**	**12**

It appears from the table that in all but two cases, the deliveries took place at home and only in four cases out of 16 maternity cases confined at home, untrained nurses (*dai*) attended. The remaining 12 cases were looked after by the elderly women of the respective communities. The two patients taken to the Health Centre were cases of abnormal and protracted labour.

To get the figures of major diseases, from which the villagers had suffered in course of the last 10 years, a question was asked, "From what major diseases the members of your family have suffered or have still been suffering in course of the last 10 years ?"

The majority of the villagers returned the names of the diseases. The symptoms of diseases were also collected, where the villagers had failed to name the diseases. Later, from the symptoms the diseases have been diagnosed in consultation with a Registered Doctor. Admittedly, it is a very risky venture due to the illiteracy of the people. There is every probability that some of the serious diseases might have been omitted, while some of the diseases occurring more than 10 years ago have been included. With all the limitations the table has great utility to highlight the major diseases breaking out in the village.

In collecting data regarding the incidence of diseases, the cases of minor diseases like cough, fever, influenza or diarrhoea or infectious diseases, like cholera or small-pox, were deliberately not collected, as such cases were fairly common and no household could give any correct figure for the cases.

It has been found that incidence of heart-diseases like coronary thrombosis is rare among these people. But, surprisingly enough, there is high incidence of tuberculosis in the

TABLE 82

VITAL STATISTICS OF DISEASES

Name of disease	Occurrences in course of the last 10 years	No. of chronic diseases that the people have been suffering from at the time of survey	No. of cured cases	Mortality during the last 10 years
Tetanus	4	..	1	3
* Acute menstrual trouble	5	2	..	..
Typhoid	13	..	10	3
* Gastric ulcer	7	2	..	..
Pneumonia	5	..	2	3
Tuberculosis	7	1	..	6
Chronic dysentery	15	3	12	..
Eclampsia	2	..	..	2
Famale disease	3	3	..	..
* Gout	9	2	5	..
Retained placenta	1	..	..	1
Ulceration of tongue	1	..	1	..
* Cholera	N. A.	..	..	3
* Small-pox	N. A.	..	..	6
Unknown diseases	8	2	..	6
Total	**90**	**15**	**31**	**33**

* These are cases where only occurrences could be gathered but not other particulars—Editor.
N. A.—Not available.

village, though the people live in plenty of air and sunshine. In the last 10 years, at least six lives have been claimed by tuberculosis ; of the casualties, five were Bhumij and one was a Lodha. At the time of survey, one person was found to be suffering from the disease. All the five Bhumij victims were blood-relations. The high incidence of this disease may be partly attributed to overwork and partly to lack of nutritious diet.

As regards leprosy, none was found suffering from this disease at the time of survey. Though the villagers suffer from fever many a times, fever with history of malaria is rarely heard and incidence of filaria is fairly infrequent. Though an attempt is made to collect history of venereal diseases, people hardly give a correct story and no appraisal could be made about these diseases. The incidence of tetanus, typhoid, dysentery, gout, gastric ulcer and female diseases is quite high.

FAMILY-PLANNING

There is no Family-Planning Centre in or near the village. All the heads of the households expressed their ignorance of family-planning. An interview with the villagers reveals how the people react to questions on the utility of family-planning. Most of the people agree that it is good. But, they are afraid of interfering with births. They ardently believe that children are the gifts of God and that God might be offended, if ever they interfere with births. Moreover, they have no knowledge of the modern methods of contraception.

The question, "Do you want to have more children ?" was put to every married head of the household. The table, prepared on the basis of the answers, will show the attitude of the households.

TABLE 83

ATTITUDE OF FAMILIES DESIRING CHILDREN

Caste/ Tribe	Total no. of married heads of households	No. of households aware of family planning	No. of households having more than three children	No. of households (wanting more children)				
				Having one to three children	Having no son	Having no daughter	Having no child	Total
Lodha	32	..	3	6	3	5	2	19
Bhumij	14	..	1	2	4	2	..	9
Mohato	3	..	..	1	..	..	..	1
Total	**49**	..	**4**	**9**	**7**	**7**	**2**	**29**

TABLE 84

ATTITUDE OF FAMILIES WANTING NO MORE CHILDREN

Caste/ Tribe	No. of households having more than three children	No. of households (wanting no more child)				
		Having one to three children	Having no son	Having no daughter	Having no child	Total
Lodha	12	1	..	..	..	13
Bhumij	2	2	..	..	1	5
Mahato	2	..	..	..	..	2
Total	**16**	**3**	..	..	**1**	**20**

It appears from the table that of 49 households, the heads of 29 families want more children. Of these 29 households, 16 heads have either no son or no daughter or no child, while the remaining 13 households have children. On the other hand, of the heads of 20 households which do not want to have more children, 16 households have more than three children, three households have one to three children, while one household has no child at all. The household, which has no child and also desires no more, does not want to clarify why the husband and wife do not want any child.

Though the villagers are not aware of family-planning, it is observed by some villagers that two Lodhas, one male and another female, are aware of some very powerful herbal drugs. It is claimed that these powerful oral and herbal contraceptives have the desired effect of checking birth. One or two women in the village are said to have used it. But, the details of these herbal contraceptives are kept secret and no information about the plants could be collected from the people.

Leisure and Recreation

To the people of Bhumij Dhan Sol, who drives the ventrous 'ploughshare to the steep' as labourers, or ramble through the forests for humble catch, leisure seems to be a mockery, for it means starvation to them. Yet, the people take work in the best of spirits. Work is more meaningful than leisure. They have leisure, only when they have no work. They 'laugh and be merry', stand awhile and stare without purpose, while they work. They seem to find respite from their work, if they at all require it. Of the varied urban ways of

recreation like cinema, theatre or radio and football, hockey or cricket, they have none. Far from the din of urban life and situated almost in the heart of the forests, they have their own ways of pleasure and entertainment. Various folk-tales and folk-songs, ceremonies and festivals, songs and dances, games and sports, chatting and drinking take away the drudgery of their life.

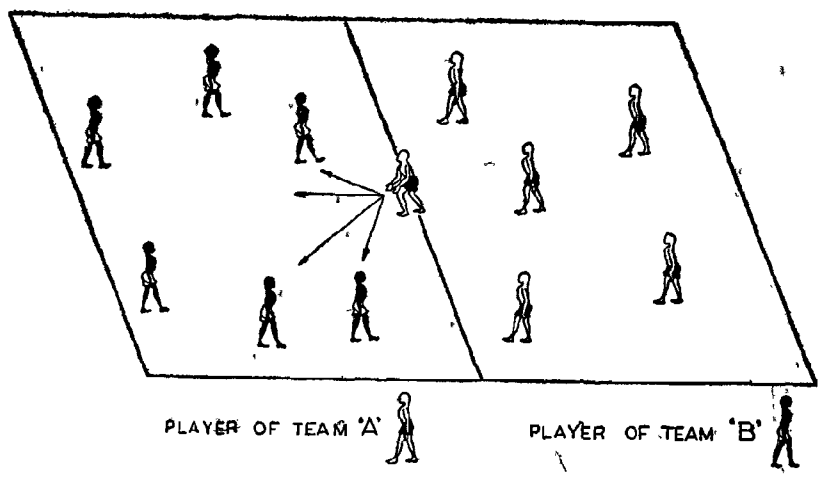
The people go to work together and have many discussions on the way, as they please. Even while they work, they enjoy the time. Now and then, they smoke awhile and chat with one another. Sometimes, they are found singing in subdued tones, while they work.

The boys and girls, left behind by the elders to look after the infants and babies at home during the period of absence of their elders, play games of their own. The school-going children spend the afternoon in other sports and games. But, in Bhumij Dhan Sol, where there are only five school-going children, the hours of play vary from morning till evening. Some of the very favourite games of the children of this village are described in the next column.

Ha-du-du

In this game the participating children are divided into two teams, A and B, each team consisting usually of four or five players. There is a starting line and the teams stand on two opposite sides of the starting line. Then, one player of the team A starts from the starting line and rushes towards the players of the team B with the sound of *du du* in one breath. Uttering the sound all the way, he would try to touch as many players of the team B as possible and the players of the team B would try to get hold of him. If he succeeds in coming back to the starting line without losing his breath, the players whom he has touched would be temporarily disqualified according to the rule of the game and would retire. If on the other hand, he is held back by the opposite players and fails to reach the starting line, he would be disqualified. Likewise, a player of the team B would rush towards the players of the team A. The disqualified player would be brought back to game, once a player of the opposite camp retires by disqualification. The team which can send back all the players of the opposite team will win finally.

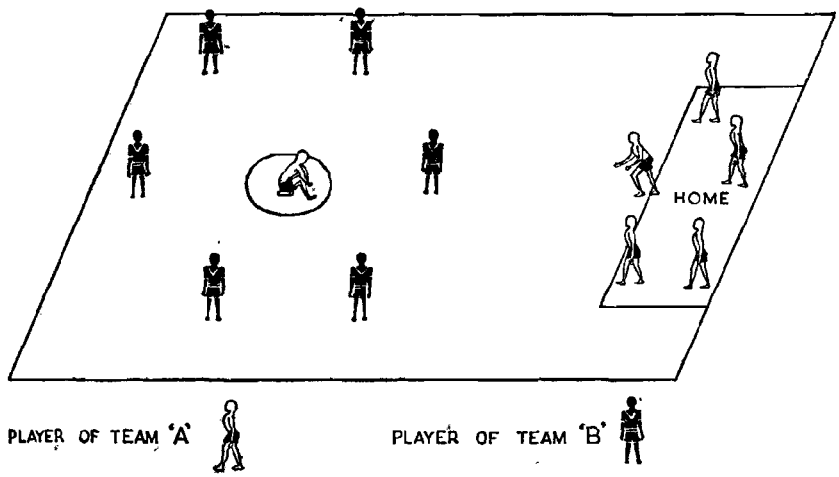
GROUND PLAN FOR THE GAME OF HA-DU-DU



Bou du-du

There is no restriction on the number of participants in this game, which centres round a player in the role of *Bou* (wife). All but one player of the team A stand in their *home*, while the other player, the *Bou* (wife), sits 10 yards away from *home*. All the players of the team B stand round the player *Bou* (playing the role of wife) and try to prevent him from reaching *home*. Each player of the team A would go to the *Bou* and rush towards the opposite players with the sound and girls may participate. To start with, one of the boys and girls is blindfolded with the help of a piece of cloth. Then, the other boys and girls stroke his forehead with their fingers, take him to the centre of the ground and leave him off there. There the blindfolded boy or girl has to catch hold of one of the boys or girls and tell his or her name correctly. If he or she succeeds in telling the name correctly, the boy or the girl, caught hold of, is blindfolded and the play continues in like fashion.

GROUND PLAN FOR THE GAME OF BOU-DU-DU



kit-kit in one breath. If he comes *home* without losing his breath, the player, whom he has touched, would retire from the game temporarily. Then another member of his team would start. Thus, while the player of one team chases the opposing players, the *Bou* would try to come *home*. The team would win or lose, according as the *Bou* succeeds or fails to reach *home*.

Kanamachi or Blindman's buff

Kanamachi is another interesting game of the children. In this game any number of boys

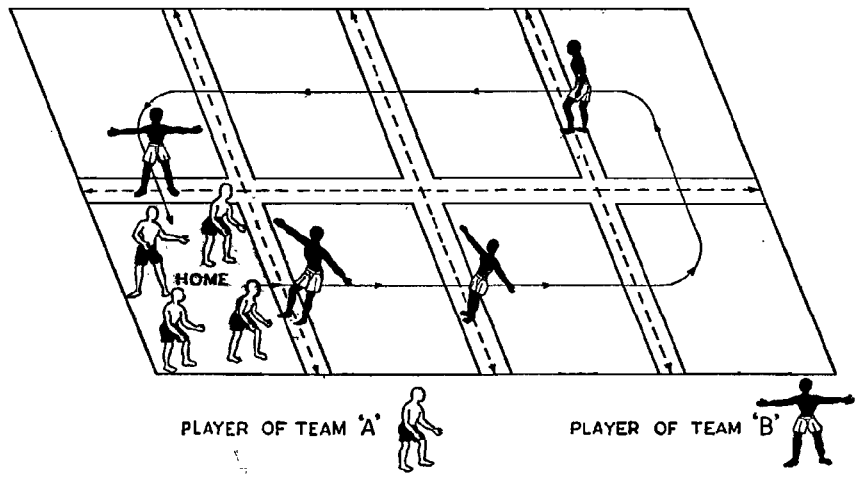
Dainra

This game is played by two teams, each consisting of four or more players. Three or four parallel lines are drawn and another line intersects them in the middle. To start with, all the players of the team A stay at *home*. while each of the players of the team B stands on guard on each of the lines to prevent the players of the team A from crossing the lines. The team A will win a game, if any player of the team comes *home* after touching all the other chambers, but without being touched by the opposite players. They will lose the game,

if any of their players is touched by the players of the team B. In that case, the team B will take charge of *home* and the game will continue.

bows and arrows for the purpose of shooting birds. It matters very little if a bird is shot or not; such mimic hunting expedition provides them ample joy and fun. Sometimes, groups

GROUND PLAN FOR DAINRA



Karia

This game consists of two wooden poles, one a cubit long and the other about eight inches. The shorter pole is known as *Karia*. The crux of the game lies in hitting the *Karia* thrice with the longer pole. He who can send the *Karia* at a longer distance than the rest usually wins the game.

Others

Besides the above games, the children also play hide and seek in various ways. The two favourite games of the girls are *Gutikhela* or game with small pieces of stones and *Ikirmikir* or play with fingers. Marbles are another favourite game of the boys.

Besides these sports and games, the children also derive pleasure and recreation from the forests in many ways. It is a common sight to see groups of boys entering the jungles with of hungry boys enter the jungles to gather wild fruits, roots and tubers. There, they sit on the branches of the trees, singing and swinging themselves with the wild fruits in their mouth. Sometimes, the children catch the drones, beetles and other worms and insects, tie them up with threads and rotate them in the air. There is also another source of joy and merry-making for the cow-boys and cow-girls. These cowherds drive the cattle to the field in the morning and return in the evening, spending the major part of the day in the fields and jungles, where they play their games. Sometimes, they ride on the buffaloes. At times, they wear leafy crowns on their heads, take a flute and pose as Lord *Krishna*. The innocent infants of the woods thus pass 'the livelong day' in 'thoughtless freedom'.

As regards the leisure and recreation of the adults and elderly people, it has been pointed out before that they have no organised method of recreation. Almost all the men and women

in the working age-groups return from work between 3 P.M. to 4 P.M. and go to bed at about 7 P.M. So, in the day-to-day life of the villagers the primary recreation materialises in a visit to the local liquor-shop. It is at this place that the villagers congregate in the afternoon and refresh them up. Usually 30 to 50 villagers, both male and female, are always found sitting in the liquor-shop. Here the weary villagers sit together to shake off the fatigue of the day. They chat with others pretty long and take the liquor. After drinks, they start homewards. It is pointed out by the villagers that this short spell of drink and animated gossip in intoxicated moods revitalise them. By evening, most of the villagers finish their meals and household duties. Groups of villagers are then found in the open, relaxing, smoking *chuttis* and talking listlessly over village-gossips or telling endless sleepy stories about nothing. One may be discussing about the non-availability of a bride for one's son, another about the prolonged illness of his wife. A third man may crane his neck and declare proudly that he has purchased a cloth for his wife. The younger people hold their sessions in like manner and discuss either one's coming marriage, while another may tell in a muffled voice his love for his wife.

There is a community radio-set for the Lodhas in the Office of the Samaj Sevak Sangha, where some of the villagers drive their team and listen to film-songs and other broadcasts with rapt attention. Young children can be found clasping their hands round the necks of their mothers and grandmothers and listening to the folk tales, lying snugly beside them. Occasionally, groups of people, belonging to the Bhumij and Mahato communities, are found playing at cards. Even the elderly people participate in these games. In addition, the weekly open-air markets at Lalgarh and Bhimpur are also occasional diversions. It is immaterial, whether the people purchase or sell anything in the market ; a mere visit to the place is welcome by many. Here is the place, where people of all communities participate freely in selling their wares and buying some and opening their hearts. The children are found licking the sweetmeats or sucking the icecreams avidly. The womenfolk present a colourful sight, purchasing ornaments of silver, or zinc and higgling over cheaper wares shrilly. The elderly people gamble at a secluded corner of the market surreptitiously.

Cock-fight is another favourite pastime of the villagers. Such fights are organised mostly in winter. A good number of people, both male and female, enjoy the fight. First, two small but sharp blades are tied round the claws of two cocks. The cocks are then let off and severe fight starts. The cock, first striking its opponent, wins ; while the cock, which runs away or retreats, loses. This is just a sort of gambling, for the owner of the winner cock gets the vanquished as a trophy, either alive or dead. The cock-fight, organised on a grand scale, specially in winter, is an attraction of the market at Lalgarh. Sometimes, it takes place in the village itself to create much enthusiasm among the sporting people.

The villagers also visit their relatives outside with a fowl or some cakes or with some green vegetables tied in a bundle and often look upon such a visit as a pastime. Their relatives also reciprocate it in like manner. Sometimes, though very infrequently, the Bhumij and the Mahato youths go to Midnapur, the district head-quarters and visit the cinema. They recount the tales of pictures on return home thread-bare and become the heroes of the evening. Songs and dances also add colour to the life of the village.

During ceremonies and festivals, rituals on birth, marriage and death, the worship of *Baram, Garam* and *Sitala*, the *Tusu* festival, the cattle-caressing festival, the *Karam* festival, and *Kathinach* etc., the villagers become over too busy. Even when the festivals are far ahead, the villagers spend days and nights in rehearsing the songs and dances for the festivals. Some of the households bring out their musical instruments like *Changal* or *Baikundal*, *Madal* and flutes of various sizes. Women, however, do not participate in the dances. But, the males are not discouraged thereby. Usually some six to eight people stand in a semicircle, while some others with the musical instruments stand opposite to them. There is no special method of playing on these musical instruments. The instruments are placed on the breasts and the players beat on the drums to attain the crescendo. The dancers dance in perfect harmony with the musical strokes. Now and then, they move three or four steps backward, followed by an equal number of forward steps. Sometimes, the dancers dance on their toes, sometimes they dance on their heels. Sometimes, the dancers dance to the left and sometimes they dance to their right. The dances are not very much varied, either in form or in expression or in poise. But, the villagers enjoy the dance alright, even though an outsider may get bored. During the worship of the goddess *Durga*, the villagers perform *Kathinach*, when the dancers dance with sticks.

Songs of Tusu

As pointed out earlier, songs are an integral part of *Tusu* festival. The *Tusu* songs, sung by the womenfolk, are concerned with the people's daily life and conjure up the picture accordingly. In the lines following the womenfolk sing a song in praise of *Tusu*.

তোরা দেখে যা'না ।
মোদের টুসুর কি বাহারের মুখখানা ॥
মোদের টুসুর মুখ যেমন লো, সেই পূর্ণিমার চাঁদখানা।
টুসুর বাহার দেখ্‌লে তোরা, চোখ ফিরাতে
পারবি না ॥
ঝিকিমিকি কোরে কেমন লো, মাথায় ঐ মুকুটখানা।
কাণে আছে সোনার দুল ভাই, গলায় দুলে হারখানা ॥

Please don't miss,
See how nice our Tusu's face is.
Our Tusu's face looks like the full moon,
Look once and you can't turn your eyes soon.
See how glittering is the crown she wears,
As also the necklace and the ring in her ears!

Here, a loving housewife feels a strong urge for visiting the house of her father during the *Tusu* festival. So, she entreats her husband to release her from her domestic duty for a few days.

এ বছর মকরে।
দয়া কোরে যেতে দাও বাপের ঘরে ॥
ভাল শাড়ী, সায়া, ব্লাউজ দাওনা তুমি আমারে ;
তাইতো বলি এ বছর আর, রইব নাকো মকরে ॥
বাপের ঘরের লোক এসেছে গো, ল'য়ে যে'তে
আমারে
শশধর বলে, "একা রেখে, যাবে গো কেমন করে" ?

Oh my darling ; I pray thee,
Allow me to visit the house of my mummy.
You don't give me any saree or blouse,
Please allow me to visit my father's house.
Don't you know my mother has sent for me ?
During Tusu days, there must I be.

Here, the husband appeals to her lady-love to kindly postpone her visit, as otherwise it would be very difficult for him to bear the separation from his wife.

বিদায় তোমায় দেব কেমনে
আমি তোমায় ছেড়ে বাঁচি গো,
একলা ঘরে কেমন করে, থাকবো গো পরব দিনে !
তাইতো বলি আমায় ছেড়ে, যেয়ো নাগো সেখানে,
বরং শাড়ী, সোনার চুড়ি দেবগো তোমায় কি'নে ;
শশধর বলে, "তবে তুমি যাবে গো কিসের জন্যে" ?

Oh God ; How hard it would be to stay for me.
Pray thee, My sweet-heart, how can I leave thee ?
Tell me, how shall I stay alone on that ceremony ?
Oh pray thee again, don't leave me so lonely.
I would purchase for you a saree and a nose-ring.
Oh pray thee, don't go, be merry and sing.

Jhumur songs

The Jhumur songs, in honour of *Lord Krishna*, the mythical hero, bears testimony to the *Vaishnavic* influence on the cultural life of the people. Most of the songs describe the pangs of separation of *Krishna* from his lover and are very popular with the villagers.

Being unable to bear the separation any longer, *Krishna* sends his mate *Subal* to bring *Radha*. But, *Radha* expresses her utter helplessness to visit her lover.

ভেটিবারে রসরাজে,
ওনায় তো পাইনা খুঁজে (সুবলরে)
দিনমানে বনমাঝে যাব কি প্রকারে,
শাশুড়ী ননদ ঘরে, কিরূপে যাব বাইরে...সুবলরে।
দাস পীতাম্বরে আশা করে, যুগল হেরিবারে।

Oh tell me dear, how can I leave home ?
My mother-in-law will just now come.
Don't you know they 'll take me to task,
For visiting my dear in the dusk ?

Subal, the playmate of *Krishna* hits upon a plan to enable *Radha* to visit her lover in the jungles.

ওগো রাধে ভাব কি কারণে—
ওনায় না ভেবে কি এসেছি এখানে,
কুলমান সকলি ডুবে, মন আশা পূর্ণ হবে...রাধে গো।
উভয়ের দুঃখ যাবে উভয়ের মিলনে।
আমার সাজে তোমায় সাজাই,
তোমার বেশ করিয়ে ধারণ,
গৃহে আমি থাকবো এখন...রাধে গো
অবিলম্বে করগো গমন।

Pray thee, I pray thee, don't cry any further,
Listen to my plan to hoodwink your mother.
Very soon you 'll have his warm embrace.
Please cry no further and lose your grace.
Please put on my dress and give me your robes,
And visit your darling yonder in the groves.

According to the plan, *Radha* puts on the dress of *Subal* and leaves her house in that guise, while *Subal* stays on at home in the robes of *Radha*.

On another occasion the sorrow of *Radha*, heightened by the prolonged absence of *Krishna*, is expressed in the following lines :

আঁখ দু'টি রাখি পথ পানে
আমি ঘুমায় লহে, তোমার আসার তরে
ফুলমালা গাঁথি অতি যতনে
মালা রইলো তোলা, বঁধুর আসার জন্যে,
হেসে হেসে বঁধুর ধরব গলা কত আদর ক'রে—
আপনা গেলনা শান্তি পরাণে, সকল বিফল হ'লে।

My eyes are cast unto the road, my dear,
I fail to sleep. Why are you not here ?
For thee these garlands and flowers divine,

Whom else can I offer these, Oh dear mine ?
How I wish to clasp round thy neck !
Oh ! Never be so cruel for heaven's sake !

Songs of Bandna or cattle-caressing festival

During the *Bandna* festival on the night of the new moon, the cattle are not allowed to sleep for the whole night, when songs are sung by the womenfolk to keep the cattle awake. One such song runs thus :

জাগো মা লক্ষ্মী, জাগো মা ভগবতী,
জাগো মা ভগবতী, জাগো অমাবস্যার রাত্রি
জাগো মা প্রতিফল, দেবগো মালিনী,
পাঁচ পুতায় দশ ধেনু গাইরে ॥

Keep awake, O Goddess of plenty,
Keep awake, O Goddess Bhagabati,
Keep awake, O new moon night,
Till the arrival of morning light,
And for this, Goddess will give us boon,
We 'll have ten cows and five sons soon.

Songs are an integral part of the *Bandna* festival. Most of these songs are sung on the third day in the closing stage of the festival. In one such song a young maiden, jealous of her newly married maid, asks her :

কো নেহি দিলা ভালা ঝিরিহিরি শাড়ীরে···বাবুহো।
কো নেহি দিলা ভালা ধেনু গাইরে···বাবুহো।
কো নেহি দিলা ভালা দুই কানে সনুয়া···বাবুহো।
কো নেহি দিলা ভালা সিঁথে সিঁদুর রে···বাবুহো।

Who gave you the costly saree dear,
Who gave you the healthy cow to rear ?
Who gave you the golden ear-ring,
Or the vermilion on your hair-parting ?

The married maiden sings in reply :

ভাইয়ে দিলা ভালা ঝিরিহিরি শাড়ীরে বাবুহো।
বাপেতে দিলা ভালা ধেনু গাইরে বাবুহো।
মায়েতে দিলা ভালা দুই কাণে সনুয়া বাবুহো।
পরের পুতাই দিলা ভালা সিঁথে সিঁদুর রে বাবুহো।

Brother has given me saree, O dear,
Father has given me cow to rear,
Mother has given me the ear-ring
Husband has given me the nuptial ring.

In the following song the friend of a cowboy holds out a grim picture :

বইনী তোরে ভালা শশুরালী যাওয়ারে
মা বুড়ী তো মরি হারায় যাওয়ারে।
হাত পাঁড়রী ভালা ভাগি চুড়ে যাওয়ারে,
বাঁশীয়াইত লাগি' যাব ঘুনয়ে।

Sister will be married and stay not here,
Mother will grow old and die, O dear,
The stick of your hand will break one day,
The flute may be destroyed, who can say ?

Against this dim and stark reality the cowboy paints an optimistic picture :

বইনী কেরে ভালা আনা লেগা করাবো,
মায় বুড়িকে অমৃত পাণি খাওয়াব;
হাত পাঁড়রী ভালা, হিজলী জালাব,
বাঁশীয়াকে রূপাতে বাঁধাবো।

I will frequently visit my sister,
To mother, I 'll give the divine nectar,
I will throw the stick in fire,
The flute, I will inlay with silver.

MAGICO-RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

The life of the people in Bhumij Dhan Sol can never be fully appreciated without reference to the underworld, with which the people have had some mystic ties. Their underworld is haunted by many supernatural elements, mostly spirits and ghosts. Most of

these people, specially the Lodhas, were forest-dwellers for a considerable period of time, during which they had to live with innumerable animals, beasts and snakes. It is quite obvious that they devised ways and means to propitiate the superintending deities of the forests and hills, which had exerted a very great influence in moulding their magico-religious rites and rituals, beliefs and practices.

The underworld of these people is interesting. Their magico-religious rituals are synonymous with the antiquated customs and practices based on quaint superstitions. Here, in the underworld the individual is completely subjugated by a passive obedience to the mystic forces of the supernatural world of spirits, ghosts and witches.

The *sine qua non* of tribal religion is their belief in the existence of certain impersonal powers. There is a constant innate struggle between the people and the power to get the better of each other. A certain dichotomy is reflected in the people's casual attitude to the unseen power. The supernatural power, which is favourable, is deemed benevolent and the power, which is unfavourably disposed, is dubbed as malevolent. The tribals of the village believe that these mystic forces or powers regulate their destiny. So, the Lodhas and the Bhumij always worship the benevolent powers, so as to keep them in good humour. But, they maintain a certain amount of caution in their reverential fear of the malevolent spirits. They firmly believe that these malevolent spirits can affect their lives most adversely. So, they take recourse to rites and rituals to appease them.

The hard core of the tribal life is based on this magico-religious super structure. Here, the bond between magic and religion is intimate. Both are means to the same end and both inject an element of security and confidence into their minds against the capricious currents and mysterious forces of nature. To a certain degree one supplements the other. Where magic fails, religion steps in ; where religion fails, magic comes forward. In essence, the basic difference between magic and religion here lies in the people's attitude to the mystic forces of the underworld. The art of religion lies in appeasing the powers and forces, while the art of magic assumes an element of mastery over them. In fact, magic is motivated by a fighting zeal against the odds of the latent forces, whereas religion proclaims man's utter helplessness against them and prescribes passive obedience and submission.

The religious structure of both the Lodhas and the Bhumij is such that magic is assumed to be the dominant factor. To some living beings and some objects of nature, they attribute an impersonal magic-force. They hold that man is surrounded by supernatural spirits and ghosts, in charge of certain phases of human life, which exert influences on the different spheres of human activity. Thus, the Lodhas have *Baram,* the presiding deity of the woods and forests, *Sitala* and *Jugini,* the presiding deities of cholera and small-pox, and the Bhumij have *Barapahar,* the presiding deity of the hills. This belief in the miraculous powers of the malevolent spirits is the essence of animism. Most of their magico-religious rites and practices are motivated by the urge to counteract their evil influence and to ward off the uncanny dangers, they are apprehensive of.

Bhagawan or Supreme Being

Almost all the villagers are conscious of the existence of a Supreme Being, called *Bhagawan.* They do not have any clear idea about their Supreme Being, but all of them are unanimous

that *Bhagawan* is the Creator and the Master of the Universe and it is He who regulates all their activities. They also believe that *Bhagawan* is all pervasive, omnipresent and omniscient. The conception of a Supreme Being, called *Bhagawan*, is the outcome of the influence of the neighbouring Hindu communities on them.

Dharam Devata or God of Righteousness

The villagers have no definite conception about the shape or form of *Dharam Devata*, but they hold that like *Bhagawan*, He is also all pervasive, supervising the deeds and misdeeds of man. There is no shrine or altar for him. Heaven or *Swarga* is said to be His abode. The Bhumij and the Mahatos likewise believe that He is the brother of *Karam Devata* or the superintending deity of human activities. The Lodhas identify Him with the Sun-God.

The villagers are unanimous about the role of *Dharam Devata*. They hold that after death, the soul of man is taken by him for judgement. All activities of men in the mortal world are weighed by him in the balance. A man is rewarded, if his good deeds more than outweigh his evil deeds and is retributed, if his evil deeds are greater than his good deeds.

In their everyday life even the people are conscious of the constant vigilance of *Dharam Devata* over their activities. This subconscious notion seems to exert a restraining influence over their misdeeds. It is their belief in the God of Righteousness that prompts them to invoke His aid at the time of different rites and rituals and specially at the time of marriage ceremony, when the bridegroom is made to take vow in the name of *Dharam Devata*. It is interesting that the Lodhas shy off the question as to how *Dharam Devata* checks the criminal activities of some and reviews the crimes committed by them.

Sitala, the Superintending Deity of Epidemic Ddiseases

Sitala is regarded as the chief deity by all the people in the village. She is held in awe and reverence by all sections of the people. She is supposed to be the presiding deity of all epidemic diseases, like cholera, small-pox etc. It is the foremost concern of all to keep the deity in good spirits. It is believed that if the goddess is offended, her wrath is bound to engulf the whole village, consequencing in the outbreak of epidemic diseases on a large scale. The goddess can only be appeased by regular worship.

At the height of the epidemic, the people invoke the aid of *Sitala* by making various vows. The people claimed that many of them were cured by holding worship of the Goddess *Sitala*. It may seem incredible that many villagers are staunch believers in the supernatural powers of the Goddess *Sitala*, so much so that even now-a-days majority of them do not feel the necessity of getting themselves vaccinated or inoculated. They are also apprehensive that preventive public health measures will offend the deity of *Sitala*. In the rituals of the neighbouring Hindu communities also, the Goddess *Sitala* occupies a very pre-eminent place. It could not be ascertained whether *Sitala* was the traditional deity of the tribal people of the village.

Baram

Tutelary deity of the Lodhas, *Baram*, popularly known as *Baghut*, is the presiding deity of the woods and is believed to be very powerful. In the pantheon of the Bhumij

or the Mahatos, however, there is no deity, known as *Baram.*

In the book, "The Lodhas of West Bengal", Dr. Bhowmick has equated *Baram* with *Garam.* But, the Lodhas of this village do not subscribe to this view. They draw a clear line of demarcation between *Baram* and *Garam.* In his capacity as the superintending deity of the village, *Garam* is supposed to see to the well-being of the villagers and protect them from various dangers. *Baram,* on the other hand, is supposed to have nothing to do with the jurisdiction of the village, as pointed out by Sri Trailokya Bhakta, the traditional *Deheri* (official priest) of the Lodhas.

Though *Baram* is supposed to wield tremendous influence over all the wild animals, the Lodhas associate him mainly with tiger, which animal is supposed to be the carrier of *Baram.* The Lodhas adhere to the age-old belief that the wild animals in the forest can be kept in check, only if they worship *Baram.*

It is also held that if ever *Baram* is displeased, tigers are sure to appear in the village and devour the people. A few years ago an elephant visited the neighbouring forest regions for a few days and took a toll of many cattle and trampled on a man of the nearby village. The Lodhas of this village held that *Baram* was infuriated and it was considered necessary to propitiate him. All of them invoked the aid of *Baram* and it is reported that the elephant went away soon after the worship. It is also claimed by the Lodhas that though the elephant had inflicted heavy losses on the Bhumij and on their houses, it did no harm to the Lodhas.

Before the Lodhas enter the forests to collect silk cocoons in August-September they worship *Baram* once on any day in the month of *Bhadra* (August-September). The Lodhas offer earthen horses to *Baram* during his worship. Occasionally they also offer him earthen tigers. But, as the earthen tigers are costly and not easily available, they are seldom offered.

Though the Bhumij and the Mahatos do not have any deity known as *Baram,* they mention a malevolent spirit known as *Baram Bhut,* which is supposed to be the dominant spirit of the tiger. The *Baghut Bhut* of the Bhumij and the *Baram* of the Lodhas are the same.

Jogini or Jugini

Jugini is supposed to be an attendant of *Sitala.* The villagers believe that *Sitala* does not make any mischief herself. It is *Jugini,* who carries out the orders of *Sitala.* Some Lodhas hold that *Sitala* deals exclusively with cholera, whereas *Jugini* deals with small-pox, chicken-pox and measles. That *Jugini* is the most mischievous of all the malevolent spirits is agreed on by everyone. Blood-thirsty and cruel, *Jugini* is always on the look out for new lives to quench her thirst.

The people are of the opinion that so long as *Sitala* is pleased, *Jugini* is incapable of doing any harm or mischief and is well under check. But, once *Sitala* is offended, she lets loose her attending spirit *Jugini. Jugini* eagerly looks forward to the time, when she will be allowed to cause havoc. Once she is let loose, her avarice knows no bounds and she lays waste villages after villages.

The people fail to understand the highly contagious nature of the epidemic diseases, but argue that *Jugini,* once set to ravage a locality, goes out of control and causes wide-

spread devastations. The people imagine her to be wretched in appearance and haggardly in her look. During the epidemics, when dead bodies are thrown away in the forests or in the fields, *Jugini* is imagined to be drinking the blood of the corpses at the dead of night.

The Lodhas sacrifice a black fowl to *Jugini* every year. There is no fixed time for her worship. Whenever epidemics break out, the Lodhas organise her worship, the day of which is fixed by the *Mukhia* (Headman) and the *Dakua* (Messenger) of the Lodhas. The decision is intimated to the *Deheri* (Priest). On the day of worship the *Deheri* collects broken winnowing fans, baskets, broomsticks and earthen pots from all the Lodha houses. A black fowl is also collected. At night some young Lodhas carry the articles, collected by the *Deheri*, and also a new earthen pot and a black fowl. They leave the village and go to a far-off place in the field or in the forests, where they throw away all the broken articles and sacrifice the black fowl to *Jugini* at the dead of night. There they spend the night in the worship of *Jugini*. The malignant spirit of *Jugini* leaves the village as soon as the refuse is thrown away. The villagers spend the night wakeful in dance and music.

Garam (Village-god)

Garam is the tutelary deity of the village. The name of the deity is most probably derived from the Bengali word *gram*, meaning a village. *Garam* is supposed to be a very benevolent deity, who looks after the well-being of the villagers and protects them from various dangers and crises of life. It is also believed that his authority does not extend beyond the boundary of the village, in which his shrine is located. The villagers invoke his blessings to ward off sickness and disease. He is also supposed to provide water for drinking as also for the crops. *Garam* thus exercises a protective influence over his votaries. It is held that *Garam* usually rides on an elephant, just as *Baram* rides on a tiger. So, during the worship of *Garam* the devotees offer him earthen elephants.

It is pointed out by the Bhumij that in some areas *Garam* is also known as *Deoshali*.

Barapahar or Great Mountain

In the Bhumij pantheon there is mention of one deity, known as *Barapahar*, supposed to reside on top of a great mountain (no definite name of any mountain is mentioned). The Bhumij cannot throw any light on the origin and power of this deity. They say that their parents and grand parents had worshipped this deity. So, they pay their homage to this deity tradition-bound, though no elaborate or separate worship is arranged. At the time of worship of other deities, they also pay respect to *Barapahar*.

Some elderly Bhumij, when asked about *Barapahar*, say that though they live in the plains at present, most of their forefathers and grand parents resided in the forests and near the mountains and hills, where they had worshipped the Mountain God. They point out that *Barapahar* is also the presiding deity of the rains and it is he, who regulates rain. If ever he is displeased, drought will follow and consequently, there will be loss of crops to the untold miseries of men.

It may not be a digression to compare the *Barapahar* of the Bhumij with the Mountain God of the Mundas, the *Marang Buru* or

Buru Bonga. [1] "The highest or most remarkable hill or rock in the neighbourhood is the shrine of this deity or spirit (*Marang Buru*)." [2] "The importance of the wooded hills in securing the needful supply of rain, and trusting entirely to rain for irrigation, and regarding *Buru Bonga* as the head of the heavenly water department" should be borne in mind due to its resemblance with the hill-god of the Bhumij.

Jahir Buru

Just after their settlement in this village more than hundred years ago, the Bhumij had consecrated *Jahir Than* (sacred grove), in the vicinity of the forests at the foot of *Asan* and *Piasal* trees. This *Jahir Than* is said to be the abode of *Jahir Buru*, the superintending deity of cultivation represented by no image. She is believed to be a very benevolent spirit, who, if properly worshipped, will offer abundant crops. But, her offence is apt to damage the standing crops.

In the Bhumij pantheon *Jahir Buru* occupies a very important position, though she is not individually worshipped. During the worship of other deities, such as *Garam* or *Sitala, Jahir Buru* is worshipped. It may be pointed out that during some agricultural festivals such as *Ashari, Jahir Buru* is offered respect by the Bhumij.

Malignant spirits and ghosts

The villagers believe in the existence of various supernatural spirits and ghosts, which haunt either the lofty trees in the forests or the tanks. Powerful and malignant, they look for pretexts to make the hell empty of all ills. Unwary people are liable to be damned with *mischiefs manifold and sorceries terrible.* A discussion on the dreadful spirits will give an idea about them and their realms.

Kundra

The *Kundra* ghosts are of two types :
(a) *Kala Kundra* and
(b) *Dhana Kundra*

(a) **Kala Kundra** (*Black Kundra*)—These ghosts, *capable of all ill* are *outrageously* malevolent. Black in colour and lanky in appearance, the ghosts are always on the chase for men. If ever they overpower a man, the latter is sure to be off his head. The abode of these ghosts is the jungle. The ghosts haunt the fields at night to take the toll of human lives.

(b) **Dhana Kundra** (*Kundra for wealth*)—It is believed that some of the well-to-do peasants or cultivators keep *Dhana Kundras* tamed in their houses with the help of some black art. The *Dhana Kundra* is very much obedient to one, who appeases it. It is believed that a *Dhana Kundra* always carries a yoke athwart the shoulder to carry loads. At night, the ghost slips out to sneak paddy and rice and carries the pilfered booty back with the help of his yoke. The peasant, who retains the ghost, is believed to become very rich shortly. But, if the ghost is offended, the result is disastrous for the peasant. The ghost ruins even the members of the family. The villagers believe that some of the well-to-do peasants of the neighbouring locality still retain these ghosts to be *correspondent to their command.*

Rangahari alias Bisaychandi

Believed to be a foul ghost capable of doing mischiefs to men, witches are believed to make a vassal of this malignant ghost who

1 & 2 Dalton—Descriptive Ethnology, p. 426 Bengal Past & Present, Vol. I., p. 48

translates their evil designs. The ghost has the specialised power to cause miscarriage to pregnant women.

Pretasun

When the dead body of a pregnant woman is buried or cremated with the child in her womb, she becomes a *Chirkuni* and the child in her womb becomes a *Pretasun*. The *Pretasun* is believed to live in the graveyards and crematoriums. It is sometimes believed to be moaning loudly in the graves. Jealous of any child in the womb as also of the new-born babies, it casts its evil eyes on them.

Chirkuni or Pretni

Unless the child is taken out of the womb of a dead pregnant woman before her burial or funeral, she becomes a *Chirkuni* or *Pretni* with dark long teeth and flickering light within her mouth. These ghosts come out at night in quest of food. They are very fond of raw fish. They have inordianate desire insatiated. So, they hanker after the young men and try to possess them, specially on the day of their death. Whenever a *Chirkuni* touches the shadow of a young man, he is sure to die, after being possessed by her spirits. The *Chirkuni* is believed to live with him. Very much jealous of pregnant women, these ghosts try to do harm to them. They fear only the young woman wearing iron bangles.

Go-muha alias Go-mukho Bhut

If a cow dies during delivery, she is believed to become a *Go-muha* ghost with the appearance of a cow. But, it assumes different other shapes and forms of animals and intimidate the passers-by. It is believed that this ghost has a unique *modus operandi* in possessing men. It always tries to pass between the two legs of a man. If it ever succeeds in doing so, it can possess him and ultimately kill him. This ghost is very dangerous ; even the fright of it is bad. A man, nervous at the different shapes of a *Go-muha*, is sure to die. The villagers perform a peculiar observance, whenever they apprehend that they are face to face with this ghost. They urinate on the ground and throw the earth towards the ghost, which will then scamper away.

One Bimal Mahato, a resident of this village, was once intimidated by this ghost some three or four years ago. When interviewed, Sri Mahato narrated his experience thus :

One evening he was busy in searching his lost calf. As he was passing under a tamarind tree and a jack-fruit tree, he noticed all on a sudden a hopping calf rushing towards him. He took it for his own lost calf. But the calf had taken the shape of a horse and was coming close to him. Then, it began to roll about on the earth. He screamed in horror and shouted for help. He also tried to defend himself with his stick. Instantly the villagers rushed to the spot. But, before they could arrive, the horse had disappeared.

Sannashi Bhut

After death, a monk becomes a ghost, known as *Sannashi Bhut*. Very calm, reserved and clad scantily, this ghost lives far off from human habitation and comes out of its abode only at night. Fond of hemp, opium and drinks, this ghost is benevolent in nature. But, if enraged, it does not hesitate to cause evil. It can be pacified only by drinks, opium and intoxicants.

Galasha Bhut

A man, who commits suicide by hanging,

becomes a *Galasha Bhut*. These ghosts are highly discontented for their unfulfilled desires on earth and as such, are envious of all human beings. They try to possess men. A man, possessed by these spirits, is tempted to commit suicide by hanging, to swell the ranks of these ghosts after death.

Kalpurush

It is the name of another malevolent male spirit, jet black in colour and very tall in size, sometimes as tall as a palm tree or a cocoanut tree. Like the *Go-muha*, it is also supposed to assume different shapes and forms for intimidating human beings.

Daini Bhut

After the death of a witch, she is supposed to become a *Daini Bhut*, as malignant and malevolent as the living witches. A man is bound to become indisposed, if ever this spirit casts its spell on him.

Baghut Bhut

Spirit of a man killed by a tiger, this ghost accompanies the deity of *Baram* as his attendant. The spirit is alleged to sit on the attending tigers of *Baram* as a hunter, who appears in the forests to kill a man-eater. The hunter should cut the forefinger of the corpse, the victim of the tigers, so that the *Baghut Bhut* of the dead man cannot point him out to *Baram*.

Kantha

A type of water-spirit and a denizen of the tanks and rivers, the spirit is called *Kantha*, as it resembles a piece of patched-up cloth, locally called *Kantha*. After death of any person, the patched-up, tattered clothes belonging to him are thrown into the bushes or the jungles. It is believed that evil spirits catch them and take shelter in water. The spirit, sometimes seen floating above water, resemble a *Kantha*. It is believed that if ever it succeeds in suffocating a bathing man with the tatters, he gets drowned in water.

Shigal (Chain)

This is also another spirit living in water, resembling an iron chain and is usually eight to ten cubits in length. When a man bathes in a tank or a pond, this spirit, holding his legs, drags him down into the deep water. The belief goes that the spirit employs the drowned victim as his servant and gets all his evil designs executed by him.

A tank in the adjoining village of Santal Dhan Sol is believed to be the abode of this spirit. About five years ago, Sri Iswar Lodha, a resident of this village had gone to have his bath in that tank in the evening. But, just as he was getting into the water, the spirit was believed to have almost caught hold of one of his legs. But, Iswar was very careful and could somehow come out of the water. Since then, he has never visited that tank out of fear.

Magic and witchcraft

As already said, the villagers believe that the surroundings of their village, the jungles, the forests, the unholy places, the big trees and the tanks are the happy haunting grounds of numerous supernatural spirits and ghosts. Naturally, therefore, the villagers have great confidence in the power of magic and magicians to counteract their evil influences. The persons possessing the acquired magical power, may be grouped into several categories according to their different magical functions.

Magical functionaries

(a) *Gunin* (Medicineman and sorcerer)
(b) *Dain* (witch)
(c) *Ojha* (Snake-charmer)

GUNIN

Gunin is the person, who can cure any disease or illness of the people, though the method of treatment is not the same for all. There are some *Gunins*, who cure illness mainly by magical spell, but there are also others who treat diseases or illness with the help of medicinal herbs and roots. *Gunins* of the former class, strictly speaking, are a magical functionary. The latter type of *Gunins*, also known as *Kabiraj*, will be discussed later. *Gunins* also deal with snake-bite cases and in that role they are known as *Ojhas* or snake-charmers. The villagers have great confidence in the power of the *Gunin* or sorcerer. The *Gunin* is supposed to have great mastery over the supernatural spirits and ghosts. He deals with diseases or illness, supposed to have been caused by malevolent and malignant spirits. In curing such cases, the *modus operandi* of a *Gunin* lies in casting his magical spell and in prescribing amulets. By uttering chantings and incantations and by taking recourse to varied occult and esoteric methods, he is supposed to counteract the evil influences of the spirits, ghosts and witches and thus cure the persons under possession of a spirit.

MODE OF TRAINING OF THE GUNIN

A *Gunin* has to achieve great mastery in the art of counteracting the evil influences of the supernatural spirits. This is not an easy task. He has to undergo several protracted and prolonged processes of trial and error under a powerful preceptor or *Guru*. It is said that the preceptor does not teach his magical art to all, but strictly restricts it within a very limited circle of disciples. It is believed that magical power becomes more and more ineffective, as greater number of persons acquires proficiency in the art. So, the *Gunin* has to win the confidence of a powerful preceptor who imparts the training to the disciple initially by magical words and incantations, uttered repeatedly. The trainee is to learn them by heart. It is only when the trainee has learnt all the spells and incantations that the *Guru* or the preceptor starts the practical course. It lies in giving some practical demonstrations of his magical art by invoking various deities and spirits. After the disciples gain mastery over all these processes, the preceptor would take him to a crematorium or a burial-ground on a new moon night on any Saturday or Tuesday. There the trainee is to try his magical spell to appease the malignant spirits and enlist their support. The preceptor, when convinced that his disciple has acquired sufficient mastery, authorises him to practise independently. Sometimes, the preceptor, before he finally authorises his disciple, asks him to go to the crematorium and give a demonstration of his power. The disciple is to go to the crematorium and to take his seat on the site of a funeral pyre and then to utter magical incantations. It is said that the ghosts and spirits of the underworld are out to intimidate him ; the bamboo poles used for burning the dead bodies suddenly stand up. If the *Gunin* is frightened or becomes nervous, he dies. On the other hand, if he is undaunted and capable of giving a hot chase to the spirits, he is recognized as a *Gunin*, to whom the malignant spirits and ghosts are believed to yield and work according to his dictates.

It is believed that if a *Gunin* is to be an expert and to attain mastery over all the reigning spirits and ghosts, mere training

under a preceptor will not suffice. In addition, if he is to dominate a spirit or a ghost to act as his slave, he is to collect the bone of the upper arm (humerus) of the corpse of an illegitimate child, which serves as a powerful agent for many miracles.

An illegitimate child is killed for the purpose, after it is born, and is stealthily buried. The *Gunin* goes to the burial-ground with a sharp knife and some parched rice (*Khai*) in search of the body. The *Gunin* would go to the particular funeral pyre, take his seat on it and would go on uttering incantations. The ghosts and other spirits trying to intimidate the *Gunin* will be offered parched grains by him. The *Gunin* would then cast his magical spell on the spirit of the illegitimate child and tell him, "Here I am to take you with me. Will you not help me in performing the miraculous powers ?" The spirit of the illegitimate child, so much under the spell of the *Gunin*, gives its consent. The *Gunin* would dig up the ground, take out the dead body and cut away the humerus of the child. This bone is locally known as *Bindha har* or *Sadhak har* and it is believed that a *Gunin* in possession of such a bone can have complete control over all spirits and ghosts.

Method of treatment by the Gunin

Most of the *Gunins* can feel the pulse of the patient and diagnose whether a person has been possessed by a spirit or not. They also examine the eyes of the patient, as it is believed that pale and yellow eyes are the symptoms of the possession by a spirit.

Sometimes, the *Gunin* tries another method, known as *Telpara*. The *Gunin* puts three drops of mustard oil on three leaves of *Sal* and rolls them up. After some incantations are uttered, he unfolds the *Sal* leaves to examine the drops of oil. If the oil is sticky as before, it is believed that the man is not possessed by any spirit. But, if the oil rolls down the leaves, the man is under the possession of spirits. Sometimes, he applies *Jharphook*. During its application he utters long-winded incantation by invoking the aid of various deities and spirits, blows air from his mouth over the body of the man and repeats the process thrice.

The *Gunin* sometimes takes recourse to the following methods to cure diseases :

(a) *Jalpara* (divination of water)
(b) *Telpara* (divination of oil)
(c) *Dhulopara* (divination of dust)
(d) *Nunpara* (divination of salt)
(e) *Sarshepara* (divination of mustard seeds)

The methods are more or less the same as *Jharphook*. Sometimes, he also applies the smoke of the burning incense on the body of the man. The *Gunin* performs a practice, known as *Nimchha*, to tackle difficult cases, where a powerful spirit is the author of the mischief. *Nimchha* is believed to have been effective in curing protracted illness too. A very dangerous and risky method, it can be performed only by very expert *Gunins*. The villagers return many tales about how a *Gunin* had to die at the time of performing *Nimchha*. That is why, two or three *Gunins* are sometimes required to perform the method. The *Gunin* carries with him the following articles to practise this difficult method .

(i) A black fowl,
(ii) Some drink (liquor),
(iii) Vermilion.
(iv) A few betel nuts,
(v) Mustard seeds,
(vi) Incense.

The *Gunin* worships and appeases the deity, spirit or ghost, (supposed to have cast its evil eyes on the man to be treated) by offering it the black fowl and drink. Sometimes, the fowl is buried. It is believed that the spirit or ghost, satisfied after relishing the fowl and wine, leaves the man.

Magico-religious functionaries

Among the Lodhas, there are three magical functionaries or *Gunins*, but none of them has acquired any great magical skill. They can read the pulses and detect cases of possession by a spirit. They can cure the relatively minor cases with the help of *Jharphook* and divination of water, oil or mustard seeds. But, their limited skill does not allow them to go too far. Most of them deal with cases within their own community.

The *Laia* or priest of the Bhumij has also some magical skill and deals with minor cases. But, he does not treat cases of possession by spirits. There is a reputed *Gunin* in the Mahato community, known for his great magical skill. His father was also a very renowned *Gunin* and the former had learnt this skill from his preceptor father. The father is now old and has trained his son in the magical knowledge. Spirits and ghosts apart, snake-bite cases are also treated by him. People of the region come to him for consultations and treatment, for which he does not claim any remuneration. But, the patient vows to offer something to God after his recovery. The *Gunin* does not retain any tamed spirit or ghost, but prescribes various herbal roots and administers incantations.

Witches and witchcraft

The popular belief in the power of witches is widely prevalent here. Witches or *Dains*, malevolent by nature, are born to cause harm to men without rhyme or reason. The villagers state that four or five decades ago, there were some very powerful witches here in the village and they had great mastery over magical powers. They used to climb up the tall banyan trees and fly down to Kamrup and Kamakshya in Assam. There, they used to have training in witchcraft and would possess the mischievous spirit, *Rangahari* or *Bisay-chandi*, as a handmaid for their evil designs. They would come back with their evil attendant, whom they employed to the horror of everybody for various mischievous pranks and caused death to many persons and cattle.

Nevertheless, it is held that even now there are powerful witches in the neighbouring villages. These witches come out of their dens at the dead of night and meet at a certain place. They dance on their hands with their legs upwards. They take night-soil, supposed to be their main item of food. A witch first tests her power on a tree. A withering tree bears testimony to her skill. The witch casts magical spell on the tree to give it life. The power of giving and taking plant-life is reckoned to be an index to her skill in witchcraft.

The effect of magical spell on a child differs from that on an adult person. The very sight of a healthy and handsome child arouses an ardent desire within the witch to drink the blood of the child. She casts her evil eyes on the child and this pheomenon is called *Najarlaga* or *being possessed*, the result being the sickness of the child with symptoms of fever and nausea. At times the child cries at night. A possessed child gradually emaciates and ultimately dies. Only a wizard (*Gunin*) can cure a possessed child. After many incantations, the *Gunin*

applies his charms on some mustard seeds, which are then tied round the child's loins, to guard him against the evil eyes.

An adult, once cursed by evil eyes of a witch, will sob and laugh now and then and becomes delirious. The wizard immunes his own body with magical spell first. He then applies his charms to the possessed person, whips him with a cane and starts conversation with the possessing witch, who answers him back through the possessed man. The witch, if vanquished by the magical spell of the *Gunin*, is compelled to withdraw from the possessed person. A case study of a girl under spirit-possession is given below :

The girl, a daughter of one Sobharam Bhumij visited a fair in the neighbouring village, where she had spent some hours and had taken some sweets. The very evening when she was watching dances, she started weeping. The very next moment she burst into laughter to the surprise of everbody. The hysterical fits of sob and laughter continued unabated. The villagers summoned a *Gunin*, Asutosh Mahato, who after elaborate rituals and incantations started whipping the girl with a cane and asked her, "Who the hell you are ?". The girl answered in a nasal voice, "I am an old lady of X village".

Gunin : "Why have you possessed her ?"
Girl : "I asked for some sweets from her (the possessed girl), but she did not care to spare me any. So, I have captured her".
Gunin : "I say, go at once. Leave her alone or I will teach you a very good lesson".
Girl : "Alright, I'll do that"
Gunin : "Vow that you are not making any attempt to possess her further".
Girl : "No, I'll never do that again".

As the witch withdrew, the girl rushed forward and fell unconscious on the ground. It took her about fifteen minutes to regain her consciousness and to come back to senses. She was offered some cooked rice, which she took, and looked quite normal. It was confirmed then that the witch had left her. When asked by the villagers about her experience, the girl expressed complete ignorance of all that had happened.

Ojhas or snake-charmers

The villagers have great faith in the power of the *Ojha*. The *Ojha* or snake-charmer is a person, who can treat snake-bites by incantations and charms. There is an expert *Ojha* belonging to the Mahato community and he is also the *Gunin* of the village. He has learnt the art of curing snake-bite cases from his father, also a well-known *Ojha*. When interviewed, the *Ojha* claimed that he could cure even the poisonous snake-bite cases, only if the man was not in a coma. The villagers admitted that the *Ojha* had cured many cases of poisonous snake-bites. His service is widely recognised by the people not only of this village but also of the surrounding areas. This *Ojha* has a sacred altar of *Manasa* in his courtyard. When questioned, the *Ojha* humbly points to the sacred altar and says that it is the Goddess *Manasa*, who is to be thanked for his power. He worships the deity on the altar and lights an earthen lamp there every evening. He charges no remuneration for his service but only asks the victim to take a vow to offer some prescribed articles to the Goddess *Manasa*, after he is cured.

SUPERSTITIONS

Superstitions among the villagers are endless. The villagers have been so much

steeped in these superstitions that these have become the accepted norms among them. Some of the superstitions are given below :

(1) On the outbreak of any epidemic disease like cholera, small-pox, measles etc., in the village, the villagers are prohibited from combing their hair, washing their clothes, smearing their hair or body with oil, eating non-vegetarian dishes and from wearing new clothes.

(2) When an epidemic ravages a village, marriage, religious festivals, performance of dance and music are postponed, till after the epidemic.

(3) A person who has not washed his mouth or have not washed after easing himself, must not enter an orchard or kitchen-garden or touch any fruit-bearing tree. It is believed that such an act infests the plants and trees with insects and pests.

(4) One should not tread the urine of a man suffering from gonorrhoea, as this might cause infection.

(5) One must not cross a broken egg-shell ; an abscess may be caused by this act.

(6) If someone comes across a person carrying a bag on his shoulder, he instantly requests him to place the bag down on the earth, as otherwise his eye-lashes might fall off.

(7) When a cow gives birth to a calf, the first milk is poured down into a well. It is believed that one will have a constant supply of milk from the cow, as one gets water from a well.

(8) When someone has thorn-like pimples on his face, he makes friendship with a screw-pine tree (*Keya*). This is believed to cure pimples and prevent further eruptions.

(9) At the time of operating a *Dhenki* (a foot-driven husking implement), one must be very careful that the pestle does not strike the edge of the pit (mortar), lest this should lead to quarrel within the family.

(10) Very few people here cultivate balsam-apple (*Karala*) plants, even though the fruits are tasteful. It is believed that if the bulbous roots grow as big as the head of a man, the cultivator would die.

(11) If a bunch of banana happens to be inclined to the south, the fruits are offered to a Brahman ; otherwise, serious disaster may befall the owner of the tree. This is specially the belief of the Bhumij and the Mahatos.

(12) In case a kite, a vulture or an owl sits on the ridge of a house, one should hold worship of any deityin the house ; otherwise, it is believed that some members of the family may die.

(13) On the night of the first day of *Magh*, (January-February) the villagers besmear their feet with oil, as heresay goes that witches, equipped with needles to find a person with no oil on his feet, hover around. An erring man becomes a victim to the witch, who makes a bore on the victim's body with the help of the needle and sucks his blood.

Religion

All the people of the village claim to be Hindus and do not return any sect. They do not know what a sect is. Just as the members of the Caste Hindus have *Gotras*, the Lodhas and the Bhumij have got their respective clans and totems. The Mahatos claim to have various *Gotras* like *Punoria*, *Dumur* (fig) etc.

Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*), the sacred plant of the Hindus, is found only in the courtyard of the *Laia* or the official priest of the Lodhas. But no Lodha family has either any household deity or any sacred altar of *Tulsi*.

The Lodhas have a sacred community altar, known as *Thakur Than* in the middle of

their enclave, where all their community worships take place. The sacred shrine is a raised earthen altar, on which several terracotta elephants and horses are strewn. The *Laia* officiates in the ceremonies.

Tulsi plant can be found in the courtyards of the Bhumij households. Three other Bhumij families have in their houses raised earthen altars, known as *Manasamancha* for the worship of the Goddess *Manasa* on the last day of the month of *Aswin* (September-October). The head of one of these families pointed out that his grandfather was an *Ojha* (snake-charmer) and used to perform this worship to please the deity. But, the present head, though not a charmer, continues the worship of the deity, in addition to that of the Goddess *Sitala* on the first day of the month of *Magh* (January-February) on the same altar. Terracotta elephants and horses can be found in the altar as marks of devotional offerings.

All the three Mahato families have *Tulsi* plants in their courtyards, where they light earthen lamps every evening. The head of one Mahato family is the *Ojha* (snake-charmer) of the village. There is a *Manasa-mancha* in his courtyard, where the *Ojha* himself performs the worship of the Goddess *Manasa* on the last day of the month of *Aswin*. Unboiled rice, milk and honey are offered to the deity with the sacrifice of a goat and a pigeon. Sticks of incense are burnt on the altar every evening.

The Bhumij have two places of community-worship, one known as *Jahir Than* and the other known as *Kali Asan Than*. The *Jahir Than* is situated in the jungles, a little away from the enclave of the early Bhumij settlement, where they had consecrated *Jahir Than* (sacred grove), as the abode of *Jahir Buru*, described before. Most of the community worships of the Bhumij take place on the *Jahir Than*. *Kali Asan Than* is another sacred altar of the Bhumij (located in the map) situated under an *Asan* tree. Terracotta dolls or toys are not placed there.

The Mahatos do not have any separate place of worship for themselves. In all the community festivals of the Bhumij the Mahatos participate freely. The *Deheri* or the priest of the Bhumij officiates in all the ceremonies and worships of the Mahatos.

Festivals

In matters of festivals the Lodhas form an entity, distinct from that of the Bhumij and the Mahatos. The festivals of the Lodhas are performed exclusively by themselves and people from other castes or tribes seldom participate therein. But, in the festivals of the Bhumij the Mahatos participate quite freely. As there are only three Mahato households in the village, it is not possible for them to perform separate festivals of their own. As a result, most of the festivals of the Bhumij are now performed jointly by the members of these two communities. Even some households, belonging to the Sunri and Bagal castes of the adjoining village Jhitka, also participate in the festivals of the Bhumij. As Jhitka is a very small village consisting of eight to ten households, they do not organise separate festivals in that village.

Besides the general festivals, there are several other festivals which are connected with the economic operations. Thus all the cultivating households, the Bhumij, the Mahatos and the Lodhas, perform *Janthal* and *Ashari* festivals in the belief that the deities of cultivation will produce abundant crops. Likewise, the Lodhas

worship the deities before setting out for hunting or for raising silk cocoons (*Tassar*).

Lastly, during several other community festivals members of different castes and tribes participate in merry-making. The examples of such community festivals are *Bandna* or cattle-caressing festival, the *Karam* festival etc.

The festivals in the village may be arranged as follows :

A. Festivals of the Lodhas
B. Festivals of the Bhumij
C. Festivals connected with economic pursuits.
D. Community-festivals.

A. Festivals of the Lodhas

1. Worship of *Garam*

Garam, the tutelary deity, supposed to be very benevolent, protects the villagers against all odds. A rider on an elephant and a resident in the sacred grove, *Garam* is worshipped usually on the *Paus Sankranti* day *i.e.*, the last day of the Bengali month of *Paus* (December-January).

A few days before the festival, *Dakua* or the messenger of the Lodhas raises subscriptions in cash from all the Lodhas residing in the village. A few terracotta elephants are purchased for this worship from Nischindipur, a neighbouring village. Sometimes fowls are purchased for sacrifice to *Garam.* Early in the morning, men and women belonging to the Lodha community congregate in the sacred altar. Prior to the commencement of the worship, the women purify the sacred altar with water mixed with pastes of cowdung. Then, the articles required for the worship, such as flowers, *Durba* grass, a piece of country napkin, fruits, sweets, incense, vermilion etc. are kept before the altar. The *Laia* accompanied by some persons of the same community go to the nearest tank for fetching water in earthen pitchers. Water being brought, terracotta elephants are bathed by the priest, and vermilion-marks are put on them. The *Laia* then invokes the aid of *Garam.* No chanting is uttered by the *Laia* except with the words, "*Oh father Garam, please protect us all from disease and illness. Pray thee, let all our children be in excellent health*".

During the worship all the Lodha families, specially the womenfolk and the children, congregate at the place of worship in clean dresses. The *Laia* distributes the fruits and sweets among the devotees. The working members of the family, whether male or female, absent themselves from work. Good dishes are prepared at home. Drinks also mark the festivity of the occasion.

2. Worship of *Dharam* (The God of Righteousness)

The worship of *Dharam,* a household festival, is unique in the life of the Lodhas, performed only by the households having sons of marriageable age. According to Sri Trailokya Bhakta, the *Laia* of the Lodhas, the worship of *Dharam* by the Lodhas resembles the sacred thread ceremony of the Brahmans. Just as in the case of the Brahmans, the performance of the sacred thread ceremony precedes the marriage ceremony, so also in the case of the Lodhas the worship of *Dharam,* the God of Righteousness, must precede the actual marriage ceremony. Through the worship of *Dharam Devata* the bridegroom is believed to get divine sanction for marriage.

The worship usually takes place early in the morning of the *Dol-Purnima,* the day of full moon in the month of *Phalgun* (February-March). The barber is called in and he thoroughly shaves the head of the young

man concerned. After his bath, the young man comes to the open field and lies on the ground on his breast. He also keeps his face turned towards the rising sun and invokes the aid of *Dharam Devata* by offering him some fruits and sweets. He prays to the God of Righteousness, *"Oh Father Dharam, please bestow your blessing on me, so that I can lead a happy and peaceful life here on earth."*

No priest is required for this ceremony. On the day of worship the household concerned is to entertain other members of the tribe to a hearty feast. If for some reason or other, a particular family having marriageable son fails to perform this worship, it is done on the day of the actual marriage ceremony.

3. The worship of *Baram*

As pointed out earlier, *Baram*, the principal deity of the woods and forests, is also known as *Baghut*.

The festival of *Baram* has a great bearing on the economic pursuits. As hunters, the Lodhas traverse the jungles, where they raise silk cocoons also. But, they do not set out for the jungles without worshipping *Baram*, whose wrath, they believe, entails the attack of tigers upon them.

The worship of the deity usually takes place in the Bengali month of *Bhadra* (August-September), but on no fixed date. A few days before the auspicious day of the festival fixed by the *Laia*, the *Dakua* or official messenger of the Lodhas is asked by the *Laia* to raise subscriptions. The *Dakua* collects the subscriptions from the Lodhas and deposits them with the *Mukhia* (official headman of the tribal *Phanchayat* of the Lodhas).

The *Mukhia*, the *Laia* and some other members of the commuity go to the market and purchase the following articles :

(i) Fruits including green cocoanut, plantains, date-palm etc.
(ii) Betel leaves and areca-nuts.
(iii) Sweets including sugar, *Muri* (parched rice), *Murki* (fried rice mixed with molasses) and *Chira* (flattened rice).
(iv) Powdered incense and incense sticks.
(v) A piece of red cloth and country napkin.
(vi) Vermilion and *Alta* (lac-dye).
(vii) *Atap chal* or unboiled rice.
(viii) *Chandmala* (a decorative paper necklace).
(ix) Several earthen vessels with lids.
(x) Goats and fowls.
(xi) Terracotta tigers or horses and elephants.
(xii) Earthen lamps.

In addition to the above, the following items are also collected.

(i) Mud.
(ii) Several bamboo poles.
(iii) Some unhusked rice.
(iv) Maizes and *Tassar* or silk cocoons.
(v) Flowers and *Tulsi* leaves.

In the morning of the day of worship, devotees of both the sexes throng the shrine, the only place of community worship (shown in the map) in their enclave. The female members thoroughly clean the shrine with water and paste of cowdung after having their bath. A piece of red cloth is hung above the shrine as a canopy.

At about 7 A.M. or 8 A.M. the *Laia* comes to the shrine after bath and wearing new or clean clothes. He fasts the whole day. By the time the *Laia* begins the ceremonial worship, a large gathering of Lodhas of the village assembles there. The *Laia* with his assistants

fetches water in earthen pitchers from the nearest tank. A mango twig is placed on an earthen pitcher, filled with water. The terra-cotta tigers or horses and elephants are washed by the *Laia* in water. The decorated paper necklace (*Chandmala*) is put on the clay-horse or tiger.

At the outset the *Laia* would put three marks of vermilion on the *Sal* tree, adjoining the sacred shrine, in memory of Lord *Jagannath*, supposed to have been once their traditional God and now in the possession of the Brahmans. The words that are uttered by the *Laia* are, "Oh Lord *Jagannath !* It is not possible for us to go to Puri to pay our homage to you. Here with the help of these sacred marks of vermilion, we pay our homage to you. Please protect us from various dangers and difficulties of life".

The *Laia* would offer flowers to the various articles required in the ceremony for the purpose of sanctifying them. All this is done with the beating of *Changals* (a kind of musical drum) by the males. The *Laia* puts marks of vermilion on the terracotta tigers or horses and elephants. He then says, "*Oh Baram, Pray thee ! Let all the villagers be in perfect health. Please save us all.*" Prayers over, the fruits and sweets are offered to Lord *Jagannath* and then to *Baram*.

This is followed by the sacrifice. The sacrifice of the birds and beasts may be of two kinds : (i) community sacrifice *i. e.*, sacrifice offered on behalf of the community as a whole, and (ii) individual sacrifices, *i. e.*, sacrifices offered by certain individuals in fulfilment of their vows. Usually goats, fowls and pigeons are offered to the deity. The *Laia* sprinkles water on the dedicated animals and puts marks of vermilion on the foreheads. One of the assistants to the *Laia* performs the sacrifice with one stroke of a big sword. The blood of the sacrificed animals along with their heads is collected on leaves of plantain and offered to the deities. The sacrifices are made to the beating of *Changal* and *Baikundal*. The ceremony comes to an end after sacrifice and the sweets and fruits are distributed among the members of the community.

4. Yearly *Sradh* or *Bachhri* ceremony

The Lodhas perform yearly *Sradh* ceremony either on the first day of the Bengali month of *Magha* (January-February) or on the *Chaitra Sankrati* day (the last day of the Bengali year). This ceremony is performed in individual households in memory of the departed souls. On this occasion the old and used earthen pots are thrown away and replaced by new ones. Cooking is done in new pots and only food is offered to the deceased ancestors first in three *Sal* leaves near the hearth. The ceremony is also known as *Natun-handi-Utsab* (ceremony with new pots). Marks of vermilion are put on the implements and baskets. Fowls are sometimes sacrificed. This ceremony also occasions a rest-day for the Lodhas.

B. Festivals of the Bhumij and the Mahatos

1. Worship of *Sitala* and *Garam*

Among the Bhumij the worship of *Sitala* (the presiding deity of cholera and small-pox) and *Garam* (the presiding deity of the village) takes place simultaneously with the worship of *Barapahar* (the presiding deity of rainfall), *Manasa* (the presiding deity of the snakes), *Baghut* (the presiding deity of the tigers) and *Kali* (the Goddess of protection) simultaneously. The worship of *Sitala*, though held at one and the same place with other deities at the same time, receive special attention of the people.

Represented by a piece of stone in the sacred shrine (*Jahir Than*) in the jungles situated in the Bhumij enclave, *Sitala* is worshipped in the month of *Chaitra* (March-April). There is no scheduled date for her worship. A few days before the worship is decided to be held, the *Dakua* (the official messenger of the Bhumij) asks all the heads of the Bhumij and the Mahato households to attend a meeting to chalk out a programme for the worship. Accordingly, a meeting is held under the initiative of the tribal *Panchayat* of the Bhumij, where all the details, particularly the rates of subscription and the date of worship, are discussed. The subscriptions are raised by the *Dakua* and deposited with the *Mukhia* (the official head of the tribal *Panchayat* of the Bhumij). One or two days before the worship, the *Mukhia* goes to the local market to purchase the necessary articles for the worship.

In the morning of the day of worship, the village women cleanse the *Jahir Than* with water and cowdung paste. The necessary articles for the worship are carried there and a red piece of cloth is erected overhead as a canopy.

The *Deheri,* who takes unboiled rice the day before and observes fast on the day of worship, comes to the shrine at about 2 P.M. after taking his bath and wearing either new or clean clothes. First, he sprinkles water on the terracotta horses and elephants, smears them with mustard oil and puts marks of vermilion thereon. Then, he places the *Chandmala* (decorative necklace made of paper) and a pair of bangles on the sacred altar. The various articles for the worship including the sweets and fruits are placed on the leaves of plantain in front of the sacred altar. Nine marks of vermilion are painted on the ground. Some sweets, *Murki* and milk put in an earthen pot (*Malsa*) are warmed in fire and offered to the deities with the words, "Oh Goddess *Sitala,* please accept these humble but respectful offerings. We pray to you to protect us from various diseases and illnesses."

The same prayer is made to other deities *viz., Garam, Barapahar, Manasa, Baghut* and *Kali.* It is worth noting that the Bhumij too, like the Lodhas, do not use any set incantations. But, unlike the Lodhas, they have a method to ascertain whether the deities have been pleased with them or not. For this purpose they bathe the sacrificial goats and let them off before the offerings (*prasad*) of sweets and fruits. The goats eating the offerings will be an indication of the acceptance of the offerings by the pleased deities. If, on the other hand, the goats do not touch the offerings, the deities are supposed to have been offended and rejected their offerings. This is a premonition for disasters of the future. All the people solemnly vow to offer goats, fowls, pigeons, etc. to the deities next year. On such a promise, the deities are believed to be pleased and the goats eat the offerings.

Some rites are then observed for foretelling the future. The man inquisitive about his future requests the *Deheri* to place flower in his name on the terracotta horse or elephant. If the flower drops from the clay figures, the desire of the enquiring man is believed to be fulfilled. If, on the other hand, the flower does not drop down, the desire of the man will not be fulfilled and he makes vows to the deities for their blessings.

This is followed by sacrifices of various animals to the deities, such as a black goat for *Sitala,* a white goat for *Barapahar* or the Great Mountain, a pigeon for *Manasa,* a red fowl for *Baghut* and a black goat for *Kali.*

The animals are bathed and the *Deheri* puts marks of vermilion on the heads of the animals, which are brought to the scaffold and their necks are put into a Y shaped wooden stump. The *Deheri* then severs the heads with one stroke of a big sword. The heads of the pigeons and the fowls are severed with the help of a sharp knife. After the sacrifice, blood is collected in earthen vessels and offered to the deities.

It should be pointed out that on the same day after the conclusion of the worship of *Sitala* or *Garam*, the *Deheri* visits the adjoining sacred shrine of Goddess *Kali* situated under an *Asan* tree in *Kali Asan Than* and pays homage to her. Though no elaborate worship takes place there, the *Deheri* offers fruits and sweetmeats to the deity and a sheep is worshipped there. After the worship, the *Deheri* visits the houses of the Bhumij and the Mahatos and distributes among them flowers, offered to the deities. The *Dakua* is entrusted with distribution of the offered fruits, sweetmeats and meat of the sacrificed animals and birds to the Bhumij and Mahatos of this village and to the *Bagal* (milkman) and *Saha* (wine-seller) households in the adjoining village Jhitka.

The people spend the night in a very festive mood, when they drink rice-beer and participate in dances to the beating of drums, known as *Changal* in the courtyards of their respective houses.

2. The worship of *Manasa* (Goddess of snakes)

Manasa, the Goddess of snakes, is held in high esteem by the people. It is believed that snakes do not cause any harm, unless she is displeased. The Bhumij and the Mahatos worship *Manasa* twice a year, once on the *Dak-Sankranti* day or the last day of the Bengali month of *Sravana* (June-July) and once more on the last day of the Bengali month of *Aswin* (August-September). Terra-cotta snakes required for the worship are purchased from the market. The *Deheri* goes to the nearest tank with an earthen pitcher, fills it with water in the name of *Manasa* after taking his bath and carries it to the shrine (*Jahir Than*). He wears clean clothes during the worship. Three marks of vermilion are put on the ceremonial pitcher, on the terracotta snakes and also on the ground. The *Deheri* then places several *Tulsi* and *Bel* leaves on the vermilion-marked ground as also on the various articles of worship including the sweets and fruits to be offered. The sweets, fruits, milk etc. are then offered to the deity with the prayer, "Oh Mother *Manasa*, please accept these humble offerings. Please save your children from the snakes."

Offerings given on community basis are followed by sacrifices of a goat and a pigeon to the deity and the worship is over.

In the afternoon the roving snake-charmers give demonstration of their feats with snakes before the villagers. At night, the womenfolk sing various songs in honour of *Manasa*.

The following afternoon the villagers gather at the sacred shrine and carry the terracotta snakes and the earthen pitchers to the nearest tank in a procession for immersion. The ceremony concludes after immersion.

C. Festivals connected with economic pursuits

1. *Ashari* festival

This festival is organised specially by the cultivating households. But, as a rule, even

the non-cultivating households celebrate it, for their well-being is intimately linked with the cultivation of crops.

The main purpose of the festival of *Ashari* is the expectation of a bumper harvest. Seeds of paddy are not sown, before the festival of *Ashari* is held. There is no fixed date for the festival. It may be held on any day of the month of *Ashar* (June-July). The *Deheri* visits the sacred shrines of *Jahir Than* and *Kali Asan Than* and pays homage to the deities, specially to *Barapahar* and *Garam*.

As regards the Lodhas, the official priest goes to the sacred shrine and puts marks of vermilion on the ground in the names of *Garam* and *Baram* praying them to be bountiful in return of harvests. Fruits and sweets and unboiled rice are also offered to the deities on community basis. The priest gets a portion of the offering.

The Bhumij and the Mahatos raise subscriptions for the festival. The *Deheri* fasts on the day of the worship and visits the sacred shrine (*Kali Asan Than*), where vermilion and oil are smeared thrice on the tree and thrice on the ground in the name of *Barapahar* (the Great Mountain) praying for abundant harvests. Sweets are offered and a fowl is sacrificed.

2. *Janthal* festival (Festival of new crops)

This festival is celebrated after the harvesting of paddy and it is only after this festival that paddy can be consumed. The festival is performed mostly by the Bhumij and the Mahatos. There is no fixed date for the performance of this festival, which is held twice a year, once in the month of *Bhadra* (August-September), when autumn paddy is harvested, and again in the month of *Aghrahayana* (November-December) and *Paus* (December-January), when winter paddy is harvested. Saturday and Sunday are believed to be the two auspicious days for the celebration of this festival.

On the day of the festival the *Deheri* collects a bundle of paddy from each house and proceeds to the sacred shrine (*Jahir Than*). He smears the shrine with oil and vermilion and places the bundles of crops thereon. After the worship, he visits all the households and distributes the offerings of paddy to all.

Janthal is a household festival inasmuch as all the households enjoy the occasion by a special preparation of rice with milk and molasses (*payas* or *nabanna*). It may be pointed out that this festival resembles the *Nabanna* festival, performed by the cultivating households of the Caste Hindu community.

3. The Hunting festival of the Lodhas

Hunting, being one of the traditional occupations of the Lodhas, the Lodhas frequent the forests all through the year. The worship of *Baram* is their traditional hunting festival, which takes place in the month of *Bhadra* (August-September). The worship of *Baram* marks, in fact, the festival of hunting, as described before.

4. Community festival

Bandna or festival of the cattle is very popular in the district of Midnapore specially among the Mahatos.

The villagers believe that cow, as the incarnation of God, is adored by all. The villagers believe that their well-being depends

on the cows and bullocks. So, through the *Bandna Parab* (the cattle caressing festival) they take the opportunity of expressing their gratitude to the cattle. Two legends connected with the festival are put forward by the villagers. After God had created man, He gradually felt the necessity of sending a cow to earth. So, He implored *Kapila*, the mythical cow, to go down to earth and multiply. At first, *Kapila* was not inclined to leave Paradise, as one is destined to undergo mundane sorrows and miseries on earth. But, God pursuaded her to go down to earth and assured her that He Himself would serve her there. It is well-known that God, in His incarnation as Lord *Krishna*, came down to earth, tended and served the cattle as a cow-boy. As the cattle were served by God Himself, the villagers take the cattle for a part of God.

Another legend associated with the cattle-caressing festival explains why the festival is observed on the new-moon day of the month of *Kartik* (October-November). Once a bullock expressed his resentment to God that he was being maltreated by the cultivators on earth. He complained that he was put to strenuous labour from morning to night, beaten very hard and given inadequate food. God assured him that the matter would receive His personal attention. On the new-moon night of the month of *Kartik* He visited earth to see the condition of the bullock with His own eyes. But what he found was a completely different picture. The bullock was in an excellent condition, with his horns smeared with oil, forehead marked with vermilion, and his head covered with a crown made of paddy. He was in an idyllic home. The manger, in front, was full of fodder. The complaint of the bullock was naturally dismissed. It is believed that since then God pays a visit to the earth on every new-moon of *Kartik* to inspect the cattle. That is why, special care is taken of the cattle on this night through the cattle-caressing festival.

All the households, possessing cattle, observe this festival irrespective of their castes and communities. On the day preceding the annual festival all the households are engaged in preparing cakes with pulverised rice and molasses, and the cakes are supposed to be an essential part of the festival.

On the day of the festival the cow-sheds are thoroughly cleaned with water and cowdung paste. The womenfolk paint decorative designs on the ground, specially of the cowshed, with solution of pulverised rice. In the afternoon the cow is taken to the pond and is given a thorough wash with water and turmeric paste. The cow returns at dusk and she is given a ceremonial reception by the womenfolk. They take a dish, containing an earthen lamp, some unboiled rice, *Durba* grass and some unhusked paddy. They move the dish twice in front of the cow with the belief that they worship Goddess *Bhagawati*. They smear the horns of the cow with oil and put marks of vermilion on the forehead. They slip a garland round her neck and kiss her. Then, a crown made of unhusked paddy, is set on her head. They offer her cakes also. A fowl is sacrificed in honour of Goddess *Bhagawati*. This is a departure from the usual custom of the Caste Hindus who do not sacrifice any animal before the Goddess *Bhagawati*. Throughout the night the members of the household keep awake and go on singing songs to keep the cows sleepless. The day following the new-moon is a day of merry-making and is known as *Khutan Parab*, during which the cow is specially decorated with flowers all over her body, garlands round her neck and crown of

paddy on her head. For the whole day the people take the cow out and walk through the village, dancing and singing all the time to the beating of drums.

In the afternoon several angry bulls are tied to a post. People stand in groups round each bull. Two persons hold two circular hides in front of the bulls, while others go on beating musical drums, singing and dancing. The sound infuriates the bulls. With their tails up, they run amock round the posts, to which they are tied and try to pierce their horns through the skins held before them. The people enjoy this fun most.

On the third day of the festival (on the day of *Khutan Parab*), people from different communities, Santal, Bhumij, Mahato, Lodha etc., participate in the festival.

D. Community festivals of the village

1. *Tusu* festival

It is a very popular community festival. The *Tusu* festival is known in different names in different regions. In this village the festival of *Tusu* is also known as *Makar Parab* or *Paus Parab* and is held on the last day of the month of *Paus* (December-January).

The word *Tusu* means a doll. Naturally therefore, *Tusu Parab* is the festival of dolls. Unlike some other festivals connected with economic pursuit like the *Janthal* or *Bandna*, it is a social festival, observed exclusively by women. Housewives, elderly or young, look forward to this day, when they would come back to the houses of their fathers even for a day during the festival. The festival thus acts as a great social forum, when the participants forget the worries of their daily life, get together and talk about the old and happy incidents of their past, reminiscent of their childhood.

On the penultimate day of the Bengali month of *Paus* the womenfolk collect different articles for the preparation of cakes. At home they pulverize rice in *Dhenki* (indigenous hand driven husking implement), the powdered rice being an essential ingredient for the preparation of the cakes. At night the womenfolk of every household prepare the cakes, specially of the *Puli* (small) variety. Groups of women assemble community-wise to make *Tusu* or miniature dolls of boys and girls from clay in the courtyards of their own houses. While they make the earthen dolls, they go on singing songs in a chorus. They are sojoyful that they do not stop, not even to sleep.

The next day *i.e.*, on the last day of the month of *Paus*, or *Makar-Sankranti* day, the village wears a festive look. The girls put on clean clothes and get together round a doll. The *Tusu* or the doll is placed on a dish and is decorated with flowers and garlands. Incense sticks are burnt before the doll, and sweets and cakes are offered. The women spend their time singing songs.

On the third day of the festival *i.e.*, on the first day of Bengali month of *Magha*, *Tusu* is taken out in a procession by women who sing songs. The procession leads to the nearest tank for immersion. After the immersion the womenfolk come home and exchange cakes.

The festival of *Tusu* is highly popular and has some social value. It enables women, specially the married ones, to escape from the drudgeries of life and to recall the sweet memories of their maidenhood. The festival also acts as a great unifying force in bringing the women together, in clearing misunderstandings and in fostering good relation among the participants.

2. The worship of *Karam*

The worship of *Karam* takes place in the month of *Bhadra* (August-September). The branch of a *Karam* (*Nauclea Parvifolia*) tree is worshipped on the day. In the morning the *Deheri* visits the jungle with an axe. He puts some marks of vermilion on the *Karam* tree and cuts its branches. He carries the branches to his house and plants them ceremonially in the middle of the courtyard.

Young boys and girls observe fast for the day and assemble in the courtyard round the branches of the *Karam* tree in the courtyard. Powdered unboiled rice and some grains of paddy are sprinkled on the branches and marks of vermilion are put on them. One of the boys narrates a tale about *Karam* and after the narration of the tales music and dances follow. The girls perform the dance, known as *Jaona dance*, in which they move thrice round the implanted branches of the *Karam* tree. Then the boys dance. The dance and music continues non-stop throughout the night. The next morning the branches are carried in a procession to the tank for immersion. After the ceremonial immersion, the boys and girls come back home after taking their bath. Then they break their fast in the name of *Karam* with *Panta* (rice soaked in water and kept overnight). The festival is thus concluded.

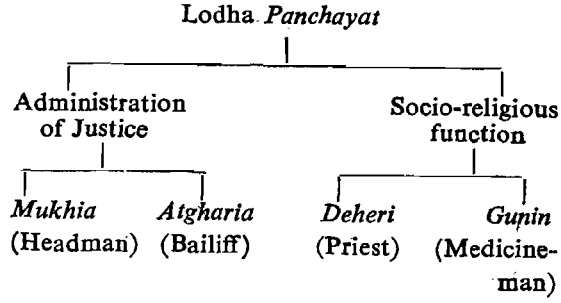
Karam tree is supposed to satisfy the desires of the devotees, if they pray to it. On the occasion of the *Karam* festival, the spinsters pray to it for their marriage and for good-looking consorts.

Caste or tribal panchayats

Panchayat of the Lodhas

The traditional organisation of the village is now in a melting pot. On one hand the traditional tribal *Panchayat* is fast receding to the background, while on the other statutory *Panchayat* is coming to the fore.

The Lodhas and the Bhumij have their separate tribal organisations. The organisation of the tribal *Panchayat* of the Lodhas in the village may be seen in the following chart.



It thus appears that the Lodha *Panchayat* is more or less well-defined with two distinct wings for the administrative and the socio-religious functions. It is also worth noting that two or three officials are attached to each wing.

Adminstrative wing

All the adult members of the tribe are regarded as members of the *Panchayat* in its deliberations. The following cases figure prominently in the *Panchayat's* activities.

(i) Serious breaches of social norms.
(ii) Divorce.
(iii) Illicit sexual relations.

Usually, the complainant brings the case to the notice of the *Mukhia*, who then convenes a meeting of the *Panchayat*. The bailiff or the assistant to the *Mukhia* informs all members of the village of the scheduled

meeting, date and place. In the meeting of the *Panchayat* the versions of both the parties are heard. If it is proved that any offence in contravention of the traditional norm has been committed or that some injustice or wrong has been done, the *Panchayat* has the power to right the wrong ; it may also impose a fine on the offending party. In case of serious breach of the social norm or in case where the party concerned defies the mandate of the *Panchayat*, the *Panchayat* can even go to the extent or ostracizing a particular-individual or family. Such severe penalty is, however, rarely awarded.

As pointed out earlier, all the members of the *Panchayat* take initiative in the deliberations of the *Panchayat*, the predominant role being played by the *Mukhia* in conducting the proceedings.

1. Officials of the administrative wing of the *Panchayat*

(a) *Mukhia*

The *Mukhia* is in charge of the administrative wing of the *Panchayat*. The *Mukhia* of the Lodha *Panchayat* is the first citizen of the Lodhas, so to say. In the daily life of the Lodhas the *Mukhia* exercises enormous influence. Even in matter of deliberations of the *Panchayat*, it is he who always gets the upper hand. He is, in general, entrusted with the maintenance of peace among the Lodhas. The post of *Mukhia* is hereditary. After the death of the *Mukhia* his eldest son succeeds to his office. The present *Mukhia* is selected from the original *Mukhia* family, that had earlier settled in the village.

At present, Sri Swarup Bhakta, aged 68, is the *Mukhia* of the Lodhas. It was pointed out that the present *Mukhia* is too aged to discharge his duties efficiently. The eldest son of the present *Mukhia* does not want to succeed to his father's office. So, the Lodhas are on the look-out for a man, who will accept the portfolio of the *Mukhia*.

As the headman of the *Panchayat*, the *Mukhia* is the mouth-piece of the Lodhas. The local police officials and other public servants keep in touch with the *Mukhia* and collect information about the Lodhas. Even in social matters the *Mukhia* is consulted. In case the Lodhas of a different village want to negotiate any marriage with any Lodha resident of this village, they first come to the *Mukhia* and take his opinion. Whenever there is any dispute between the Lodhas and different communities either of this village or of a different village, the matter is sometimes brought to the notice of the *Mukhia*.

(b) *Dakua* or *Atgharia*

The *Dakua* or *Atgharia* is the messenger of the Lodhas. He is also to act as an assistant to the *Mukhia*. Whenever the *Mukhia* wants to convene a meeting or give any general information to the Lodhas, he asks the *Dakua* to convey the information. The *Dakua* has to act as the assistant to the *Deheri* (the priest) also. On the eve of every community festival or ceremony, the *Deheri* summons the *Dakua* and informs him of the tentative date of the festival. The *Dakua* conveys this message to all members of the community. He has also to raise subscriptions for the festival from all the Lodha households. He has to deposit the subscription either with the *Mukhia* or with the *Deheri*, sometimes he has also to purchase the articles for the community festivals.

For all these reasons the *Dakua* is an influential functionary in the Lodha *Panchayat*. Unlike the Office of the *Mukhia*, the Office of the *Dakua* is not hereditary in this village. The *Dakua* is unanimously elected by the Lodhas. The present incumbent was nominated by the Lodhas jointly, as because he was unencumbered (married but without any issue).

Socio-Religious Officials of the Lodha Panchayat

1. *Deheri* Priest

If the *Mukhia* is the administrative head of the Lodhas, the *Deheri* is their spiritual head. As pointed out elsewhere, the Lodhas do not accept the spiritual hegemony of the Brahmans ; so, in their different socio-religious rites and rituals the service of a Brahman priest is not called for. The *Deheri*, the priest of the Lodhas, also belongs to the Lodha community. He may belong to any clan. He officiates in all the ceremonies.

On the eve of any ceremony or festival, he consults the *Mukhia* and fixes the date for the ceremony. Accordingly, the decision is conveyed to the *Dakua*. Sometimes, the *Deheri* himself makes the purchases for the festival. It has been pointed out by the *Deheri* that during the ceremony he does not use any chanting or incantation, nor does he use any Sanskrit words. Just on the eve of the ceremony, he only utters some words of invocation in distorted Bengali. He prays for the well-being of the community and the village. The method of worship by the *Deheri* is very simple.

In rituals of birth, marriage and death the service of the *Deheri* is not essential ; but he is always ready to officiate in these ceremonies, as and when called. As the spiritual head of the Lodhas, the *Deheri* wields tremendous spiritual influence over them. To him the Lodhas look for spiritual guidance. The post of the *Deheri* like that of the *Mukhia* is hereditary. Sri Trailokya Bhakta was the *Deheri* of the village during the survey. His eldest son Sri Bhupati Bhakta, aged about 40 years, succeeded to the office on the death of his father, Sri Trailokya Bhakta, who was dear to the people for his manners and profound knowledge.

According to Dr. P. K. Bhowmick, another religious official *Talia* or *Chharidar* also assists the priest on festive occasions in discharging the religious services. But, in the present village no such office-bearer was found. During festive occasions various people come to assist the priest, as and when required.

Dr. Bhowmick has also mentioned of *Hantakar*, the official sacrificer in the religious organisation of the Lodhas. It has been pointed out that in the community festiyals the *Hantakar* performs the sacrifices. But in the present village, the post is unknown to the people. There is no fixed person to perform the sacrifice. Any willing person is allowed to perform it.

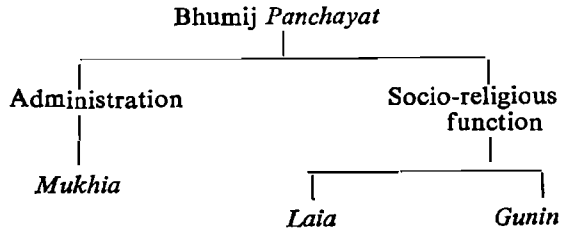
2. *Gunin* or Medicine-man

Strictly speaking, the *Gunin* or Medicine-man is not an official in the *Panchayat* of the Lodhas. But, as a person, bestowing supernatural benediction on the people, the *Gunin* has some bearing on the social structure of the Lodhas. The *Gunin* is regarded as the medical functionary of the Lodhas. He mutters a good deal of chanting and incantation and at times uses medicinal herbs and roots. He is well-known for his magical power to ward off evil spirits.

The post of medicine-man is not hereditary. Any member can learn this art. At the time of survey, three medicine-men were found in the village.

Panchayat of the Bhumij

In both structure and spirit the tribal *Panchayat* of the Bhumij does not differ from that of the Lodhas.



The powers and functions of the office-bearers of the Bhumij *Panchayat* are just like those of their Lodha counterparts. Hence, the description of the powers and functions of the officials of the Bhumij *Panchayat* would be a repitition.

Office-bearers of the Bhumij *Panchayat*

1. *Mukhia*

Like his Lodha counterpart, the *Mukhia* of the Bhumij is the traditional headman of the village. Even 20 or 30 years back, the *Mukhia* of the Bhumij wielded enormous powers and exercised very great influence over the Bhumij of the village. He was then the mouth-piece of the Bhumij of this village.

The present *Mukhia* is one Sri Debendra nath Halder, aged 32 years. The Office of the *Mukhia* being hereditary, he has succeeded his father to that Office. For the last 10 to 15 years much of the power and influence of the *Mukhia* have been supplanted by one influential Bhumij chieftain, Sri Charan Singh, at present the *Adhyaksha* of the newly constituted *Gram Panchayat*. The present *Mukhia* of the Bhumij is, in fact, their nominal head. Still, the Office of the *Mukhia* has some associational value to the Bhumij. In all household festivals and ceremonies the *Mukhia* is the first man to be invited. Whenever any newly married Bhumij enters the village after his marriage, he visits the house of the *Mukhia* and pays respect to him. It is said that formerly the *Mukhia* used to exercise considerable power in settling disputes. But, at present these are being done by the statutory *Panchayat*. The *Mukhia* now looks after the observance of the social norms by the Bhumij. He does not enjoy any special privilege or concession. He enjoys the respect of the people. In case of violation of social norms, cases are always referred to the Caste *Panchayat*.

2. *Laia*

The *Laia* is the priest of the Bhumij. Like the *Deheri*, he also conducts the religious functions and ceremonies. But, unlike the *Deheri*, the *Laia* of the Bhumij does not have any assistant like the *Dakua*. The subscriptions are raised by the *Mukhia* and deposited with the *Laia* with the assistance of some other persons. Purchases of the necessary articles are also made by him. After each ceremony, the *Laia* visits every Bhumij house and extends divine blessings by distributing the offered fruits. The Office of the *Laia* is hereditary. Sri Sobharam Bhumij, aged 60, is the present *Laia* of the Bhumij. A *Laia* has some concessions for his post. He gets two handfuls of grams from each plot within and outside the village belonging to the Bhumij of this place during harvesting.

3. *Gunin* or Medicine-man

At present, there is no expert medicine-man among the Bhumij. It is pointed that about 25 to 30 years ago, there was an expert Bhumij medicine-man ; but his son did not find it worthwhile to pursue his father's profession. There are one or two Bhumij residents of the village, who use divination with oil, water etc., and occasionally prescribes herbs and roots, but their amateurish activities have not established them as expert *Gunins.*

Panchayat of the Mahatos

As there are only three Mahato households in the village, they do not have any Caste *Panchayat* of their own. In general, they are guided by the functionaries of the Bhumij *Panchayat.*

The Traditional Panchayat

This, in short, is the structure of the traditional tribal organisation of Bhumij Dhan Sol. The people opine that their traditional *Panchayat* is now-a-days not as powerful as it was before. The *Panchayats* are now concerned more with socio-religious functions than with administration of justice. The *Panchayats* have now diminished influence on the people concerned. The *Mukhia* or the headman does not command as much respect, as he did before. Two reasons are put forward for the gradual disintegration of the traditional *Panchayats.*

Disobedience of the younger generation

It is alleged by the elderly people belonging to the Bhumij and the Lodhas that they have no hold over the younger generation and that the younger people very rarely comply with their mandates. Not to speak of showing any respect, they are even defiant of the elderly people and at times discourteous. They smoke and drink in presence of the elderly people and even use abusive languages.

According to the villagers, the statutory *Panchayat* constituted by the Government has shaken the traditional tribal organisation to its very roots. In the settlement of disputes more and more people now go to the statutory *Panchayat.*

Notwithstanding the waning influence of the tribal *Panchayats,* it should be borne in mind that in the past these organisations succeeded in unifying and integrating the tribals. At the most critical time, when their highly prized social values were at stake, it was the tribal *Panchayats* that upheld their ideas and ideals. For all these reasons the people are attached emotionally to their traditional organisation and all the households think that their traditional *Panchayat* should continue functioning side by side with the statutory *Panchayat.* That the traditional tribal *Panchayats* of the Lodhas and the Bhumij are still acting as potent and active organisations may be understood from the fact that 30 families, of the 35 Lodha households, and 13 Bhumij households, out of 17 families, are aware of the existence of their tribal *Panchayats.*

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK AND STATUTORY PANCHAYAT

In 1960 the village was brought under the scope and jurisdiction of the National Extension Service Block. The Office of the Binpur Block Development Officer is situated at Lalgarh. Though all the households are aware of the existence of the Block Development Office, only 29 families have admitted that they derived some benefit from the same. Most of these benefits are said to be in the

form of loans, doles and various relief measures. The Lodhas gratefully remember how about three years ago they were given protection by the local Block Development Officer, when the Mahatos had raided and smashed their huts.

Only 11 households could state the functions of the *Gram Sevak* correctly. Again, it is reported by only 15 households that the *Gram Sevak* regularly visits their village, while the remaining 40 households have given a contrary opinion. The general consensus is that the *Gram Sevak* visited the village in 1962-63 several times, but since then no *Gram Sevak* ever appeared in their humble abode.

The Office of the local *Anchal Panchayat* is situated at Palli at a distance of four kilometers and a half. No member of the *Anchal Panchayat* is a resident of this village.

The name of the *Gram Panchayat*, of which this village forms a part, is known as *Podiha Gram Panchayat (No. 78)*. The *Gram Panchayat* consists of the villages, Bhangdali, Santal Dhan Sol, Bhumij Dhan Sol and Jhitka. Two Bhumij of this village, elected to the two top offices of the *Gram Panchayat*, namely the *Adhyaksha* and the *Upadhyaksha*, have taken up the leadership of the people. It is striking that in a village, where the Lodhas consitute 62 per cent of the total population, the two elected members of the *Gram Panchayat* come from the Bhumij community. The reason is that the Lodhas as a community want to live in isolation and they have no craving for leadership.

All the households of the village are aware of the existence of the *Gram Panchayat*. But, only 12 households can state correctly since when the *Panchayat* has been in existence. Of the 55 households, 26 families aware of the functions of the *Gram Panchayat*.

The party-spirit have not yet taken its roots here and has not operated behind the election of the *Gram Panchayat* as an unseen force. Considerations of caste, personal influence or power seem to be the deciding factors in election of the candidates to the *Gram Panchayat* and *Anchal Panchayat*. Till now, the Bhumij have the clarion voice of a leader in the day-to-day working of the *Gram Panchayat*.

29 families, of the 55 households in the village, pointed out that they have derived some benefit from the *Gram Panchayat*. Though the activities of the *Gram Panchayat* have, as yet, been limited to the construction of a *kutcha* road and the resinking of a well, the villagers point out that the *Gram Panchayat* has rendered a great service to them by settling their disputes, which activity is not actually within the scope of the *Panchayat*. If any dispute has been settled by it, it must have been extra-statutory ; for *Nyaya Panchayat* (for the administration of justice) has not yet been formed here in this village.

There is no fixed place for housing the Office of the *Gram Panchayat*. The necessary papers of the *Gram Panchayat* are kept in the custody of the *Adhyaksha*. The members of the *Gram Panchayat* are in constant touch with the *Anchal Panchayat* and the Office of the Block Development Officer. Sometime, the members of the *Gram Panchayat* meet in the house of the *Adhyaksha*.

The present *Adhyaksha* of the *Gram Panchayat* expresses his inability to have done any useful work for the village and he attributes his failure to the paucity of funds. It is also

pointed out by him that as the *Adhyaksha* of the *Gram Panchayat* he is called upon by the people to act as the arbitrator in disputes in the village under his jurisdiction.

Crime and the village

The Lodhas, regarded as habitual criminals till the first half of the present century, were brought in 1916 under the scope of the Criminal Tribes Act, 1871. Consequently, the various provisions of the Act were applied to them. A Lodha criminal was registered for the purpose of the above Act, if ever he was convicted of any non-bailable offence. Prior to the repeal of the Criminal Tribes Act, more than 30 per cent of the adult males in the tribe were treated as habitual criminals. Dubbed as criminals, even innocent Lodhas were subjected to inhuman humiliation and torture. Even now, if one visits the Lodhas, one hears many stories about the punishment and atrocities, they had suffered in the hands of the British rulers. The Lodhas narrate how prior to the repeal of the Criminal Tribes Act, they were subjected to stringent restrictions and regulation on their movements. They had to keep indoors after dark. Not to speak of the movements, they could not even leave the jurisdiction of the police station without the previous permission of the police authorities. The police or the local *Chowkidar* (village watchman) used to visit the houses every night to check up whether they were at home.

The history of the Lodhas is an apt illustration of the way, in which the community had prolonged and strenuous struggles. They were plunged into a seemingly irrecoverable bog of dismay and distress. Goaded by the torments of hunger and humiliated by tyranny, oppression and exploitation, the Lodhas wandered from place to place like fugitives. For the criminal propensities of some delinquents they were denigrated as criminals as a group. Criminal proclivities were believed by other people to have been in their blood and not treated as a social misbehaviour or a delinquency.

According to Dr. Bhowmick, the forests, in which the Lodhas lived, had been denuded by some agricultural communities. Absolutely ignorant of the agricultural practices and operations, the Lodhas had to depend on their outmoded forest-economy. In tracing the cause of crimes among the Lodhas Dr. Bowmick observes, "The economic and territorial displacement under a new setting with the impact of scheming communities all around, affected very seriously their old patterns of economic life and ultimately upset the equilibrium of the whole society. Probably under such circumstances pilfering, petty theft, lifting of articles from the houses of the neighbours and clandestine sale of jungle-produce were first resorted to on an individual basis. These individual practices gradually crystallized into a group-habit. Amidst poverty, unsympathetic attitude of the neighbours, and stoic apathy of the then ruling Government, criminality cut a deep gorge in which the people had to roll down helplessly."

Thus, in the past the Lodhas had unrestricted liberty in the matter of utilisations of the bountiful produce of the forests and this was how they had earned their livelihood. In course of time, when the lands comprising the forests were either leased out or rented away, the unfettered movements of the Lodhas in the forests were gradually restricted. The agricultural communities like the Bhumij and the Mahatos adjusted themselves to the changed circumstances rather quickly. But, the Lodhas were displaced both socially and economically, the displacement being more or less in direct proportion

to the extent of their restrictions. Restricted in their movements in the forests and deprived of their traditional means of livelihood, the Lodhas were left with only one course open to them. It was to steal or to earn through some other questionable means. In the context of the changed circumstances and against the background of the most critical period in the history of the Lodhas, what was needed to rescue them from the morass of demoralisation and degradation was not done ; contrarily attempts have consistently been made to dub the whole community as criminals and to isolate them from the society in hatred and contempt. Aptly has [1]Sri. R. Gupta, Deputy Inspector General of Police, West Bengal, commented, "Their crime, if any, was not the crime of an economically 'displaced' tribe but that of economically and socially depressed people and indistinguishable from that of similar classes among non-tribal people". For all these reasons, the Lodhas in the village ruefully cry out like the "Convict",....."so I stole, and they have made what I am, they have made me a thief, God curse them all".

So far as the crime of this particular village is concerned, a discussion with some of the elderly Lodhas, including some suspected criminals was held in the village to ascertain the real cause of their crime.

From the discussions, the following three factors appear to have been partially responsible for some of the Lodhas to take to crime.

(a) In the present village there are some three or four Lodhas ill-famed for their notoriety. All of them are immigrants from Chakulia in Bihar. It is said that these people fled away from their homes for fear of the police and settled in the present village. These criminals tempted other members of the Lodha community in the village to take recourse to crime and thus lead an easy life with ill-gotten money through dubious means.

(b) It is also pointed out that some of the Lodha convicts on their return to the village, after serving the terms of imprisonment, held out before their mates imaginary and attractive tales about the prison-life and tempted them to take to the path of crime. Far from dissuading their friends and relatives, these people encouraged the commission of crime.

(c) There are some interested parties among the neighbouring people, who induce, persuade and encourage the Lodhas to commit theft and burglary. After the commission of theft, the Lodhas deposit the stolen articles with those harbourers, who pay only a nominal price for the stolen articles. According to an estimate, if the price of a stolen article is Rs. 100/- the Lodha thief is paid an amount of Rs. 10/-, to Rs. 15/-, whereas the interested party sells it to a person at a price of Rs. 60/- to Rs. 70/-.

Crimes, that are generally committed by some of the Lodha delinquents, are thefts, extortions, burglary and, in very rare cases, dacoity. Thefts of ducks and drakes, fowls, goats and utensils and at times wood from the forests deserve mention. With respect to stealing, the Lodha criminals differ from others in their *modus operandi*. Organised groups of thieves generally operate premeditated. But, the Lodhas have hardly any preconceived plans The Lodhas make away with whatever is available on the spot. This strongly speaks of lack of well-thought-out plans and programmes on their part. It is pointed out that there are local informers, belonging to the

1. "Lodhas Revisited"—by R. Gupta, Man in India (Vol. 39, No. 3), July-September, 1959, Page 214.

neighbouring communities, who pass out beforehand the information to criminals among the Lodhas of the things or articles to be stolen. Acting upon the information, three or four Lodhas go out for theft with small knives or steel blades. After theft, they deposit the booty with the informers or the influential parties, alleged to be receivers of stolen goods. The parties then contact buyers and sell the stolen articles to them under cover of darkness. Interested local persons, connected with the Lodhas in their criminal designs, tempt and induce the Lodhas to steal and thus reap the benefit at their cost. As pointed out earlier, it is these people that derive the lion's share of sale-price of the stolen goods. A case-study of a theft is given below :

A local informer informed a group of criminal Lodhas that a resident of a certain village, about ten kilometers away, had sold a pair of cows at a price of Rs. 200/- and that the entire cash was with the said person in his house. On receipt of this information three Lodhas arrived at the particular house in the late hours of the morning, when all the adult members were away in the fields for agricultural work. The criminals posed to the children as their relatives and sent them away to call in their parents. The thieves then searched every nook and corner of the house, found the money lying in an earthenware (*handi*) and decamped with the money. On being called by the children, the elders of the family rushed home and discovered the tricks played on them. An abortive chase was made all around. But, the culprits had already made good their escape with the booty.

Theft in execution of premeditated plan, as is evident in this particular case, is quite unusual on the part of the Lodhas, the present case being only a rare display of tact and tricks. It is reported that there are some Lodha criminals, who roam about in the jungles and are on the look out for the uncared-for livestocks. If any cow or calf is available, they derive it to some distant village and sell it at a very low price there. Sometimes, they lift stray goats, eat the meat and sell the skin. Sometimes, they break open a house and carry the household goods. They also enter the forests, fell down valuable trees and sell them. These are the common crimes comitted by the Lodhas.

Mention may be made in this connection of the comment made by the *Laia* or the traditional priest of the Lodhas. In his comment on the motivations behind the crimes committed by his fellowmen, the *Laia* remarks that the crime has gone down by 25 per cent over the last few years. According to him, crimes now-a-days are committed by very few bad persons. In his view the criminals commit crimes due more to their criminal bent of mind than to any real want. He also observes that only those, who are averse to physical labour, have taken to stealing fowls, goats and calves or to cutting agricultural crops from the fields. They hardly participate in any work. Occasionally, they are found to work with other people ; but this they do, in the view of the *Laia*, merely as a design to hide or conceal their criminal manoeuvres. He also holds that propensity to crime is accelerated by a strong desire to drink indigenous liquor. It is not possible to quench their inordinate thirst by honest income ; so, they proceed in the path of crime.

Some years after the settlement of the Lodhas in this village, two or three Bhumij also took to the path of crime and some were even convicted and sent to prison. The elderly Bhumij are quick to point out that

the criminals were initiated, after they had seen their Lodha brethren merry-making on the spoils of crime. The Bhumij thus shift the blame on the Lodhas.

Though it is not possible to make an acid test of the views expressed by the Bhumij, it has been found that no crime was committed by the Bhumij prior to the settlement of the Lodhas in the village. It is anybody's guess if this proclivity to crime has been associational or not.

To have a more clear picture of the criminals of the village, extracts from some of the case diaries in the local police station at Binpur are given below :

(1) A group of three Lodhas was caught with stolen pigs. They were sent to jail. Year—1930. Place—Khaerdanga, P. S. Salbani.

(2) Theft of a she-goat and utensils of bellmetal from a house with doors open. Accused (Lodha) fined by Rs. 6/-. Year—1937.

(3) Burglary in the house of the complainant by breaking locks. Three accused (Bhumij) fined Rs. 4/- each. Year—1947.

(4) A group of five Lodhas was caught red-handed, while they were stealing paddy from the fields of the complainant. All the accused were sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for one year and five months. Year—1952.

(5) Another Lodha stole utensils worth Rs. 2/- and was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for six months. Year—1952.

(6) Theft of utensils from the forest guard's quarters. Accused (Lodha) fined by Rs. 25/-. Year—1954.

(7) In another case a Lodha woman was sent up to jail on a charge of the theft of a wrist-watch in collusion with the servant in a local house. Year—1955. Place—Forest Beat Office, Bhumij Dhan Sol.

(8) House burglary at night by breaking open the door. Theft of cash (Rs. 182/-) and ornaments (Rs. 25/-). Accused (Bhumij) was caught red-handed, convicted and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for eight months. Year—1961.

(9) A Bhumij who had stolen goat was later caught red-handed with meat and skin and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for two weeks.

(10) Another Lodha was caught red-handed with a *Sindh* (housebreaking implement) on an attempt to commit house-burglary and was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for three months.

All the above cases available from the reports of the Binpur police station, but particulars about the years and places are not available in all cases.

Besides, there are many other cases of theft of wood, recorded in the local Office of the Forest Ranger. In most of these cases, the accused belonging to the Lodha and Bhumij communities have been fined to the extent of Rs. 30/- on charge of theft of wood from the forest.

On scrutiny, most of these cases of theft or burglary, betrays tact and planning on the part of the criminals. Further, in a number of cases the authors of crime had to suffer exemplary punishment. Besides, as an ex-criminal tribe, the Lodhas have still to suffer in various ways. Even now, other criminals commit the crimes and the blame is shifted on the Lodhas. After any crime is committed, every one suspects the Lodhas and sometimes beats the suspects. Some of the

suspects answered, "How can we desist from crimes if in all cases we are to blame, even when we are innocent ?"

The Village Register, maintained in the Binpur police station, contains the comment, "This village is inhabited by Bhumij and Lodhas who are mostly criminals. Proper care should be taken against the Lodhas, otherwise crimes will outbreak and thrush out the *Elaka.* The Lodha should be watched by days and nights."

The people of the neighbouring villages are not very clear about the real nature of the Lodhas. This village is well-known for notorious criminals. Even during the Investigator's first visit to Bhumij Dhan Sol in 1961, people in the villages even at a distance of 25 kilometers or so, gave a distorted picture of the Lodhas. Widespread fictitious stories about the criminal nature of the Lodhas and imaginary fear often raise an artificial barrier of separation between the Lodhas and the non-Lodhas. As a result, the Lodhas are forced to lead a life of isolation.

Thanks to the Government of India, the Lodhas have already been declared a denotified tribe. Since the large-scale attack on the Lodha enclave by the Mahatos in 1961, the Department of Tribal Welfare, Government of West Bengal, have sanctioned Rs, 70,500/- for the rehabilitation of the Lodhas of this village. Lastly, in recent years the Lodhas have come in contact with the visiting anthropologists, sociologists and administrators, who have come to the Lodha enclave from time to time. All these taken together have swept the Lodhas with a feeling of resurgence and emancipation. It has been observed that criminals do not enjoy much prestige in the society as before. They have failed to draw the people near them, for most of the other people are honest toilers. The net result is that crime has now gone down appreciably.

Sense of oneness

Save for the strained relation between the Lodhas and other communities, there is mutual harmony among the rest. The various communities of the neighbouring villages meet almost daily. Sometimes they meet in the fields ; occasionally they also do so in the afternoon, when they have liquor together. The two neighbouring *Hats*, one at Lalgarh and another at Bhimpur, also enable them to have greater intercourse. It is remarkable that no rivalry or conflict mars the happy relation between the different communities either in this village or outside.

Instances of inter-family co-operation are many and varied. But, such co-operation is confined mostly within the community. It augurs well for the community-life that in times of crisis, each family depends on others to a great extent for help and guidance. In the inter-relation of the various families consciousness of caste or tribe plays an important role. There is a feeling of oneness among the families of each community. Each family considers itself to be an offshoot of a larger joint family. In the community-festivals all the families participate ; whenever any birth or death takes place, all the families of one particular clan become ceremonially impure. In the rituals of birth and death of the Lodhas and of the Bhumij, the barbers and washermen are called in to serve all the families of the respective tribes on the day of ceremonial purification, The barber shaves at least one member from each family and the washerman is to take at least one cloth from each family for washing.

In case a particular household is in urgent

need of any commodity or foodstuff or cash money, it does not hesitate to ask for loan from another. Even in times of illness, disease or other needs, each family unhesitatingly seeks help from others. During the social ceremonies one member from each family of the village is invited to the ceremonial feast.

A passing reference to the attitude of the respective castes and tribes towards others may be of some interest to the readers.

The Lodhas claim themselves to be Savars, but the local people call them Lodhas. The Santals and other local communities treat the Bhumij as Mundas and the Mahatos as Kurmis. The Lodhas and the Bhumij call the neighbouring Caste Hindus as *Bangalis* (people of Bengal) and call themselves *Adibasi* (autochthons) in general.

It is stated by the Lodhas that the Mahatos sometimes get their land ploughed by cows and not by bullocks. That is why, the Lodhas abhor the Mahatos and do not take water or cooked food from them. Again, the Lodhas point out that the Bhumij eat some varieties of jungle rats and toads and so they sniff at the Bhumij. The Bhumij and the Mahatos in their turn retort that the Lodhas eat flesh of some varieties of snakes and other chases of the forests and, therefore, they do not take the Lodhas in good grace, Again, all the three communities say that they keep from the Santals, as they eat beef.

Inter community relation

Relation between the Lodhas and other communities

The Lodhas being the members of an ex-criminal tribe and some Lodhas being the authors of some offences in the recent past, the Bhumij and the Mahatos in this village maintain some caution in their daily dealings with them and keep them at an arm's length. Till very recently, the people of the neighbouring villages, irrespective of their communities, maintained a closed-door relation with the Lodhas. Even in the daily life they minimised their contact with the Lodhas. Some years back, the local landowners did not engage any Lodha labourer in their agricultural work, even though the Lodhas charged a lower rate of wage than the local labourers. This unhelpful attitude has, however, changed, after the Lodhas had gained sufficient experience in agricultural activities by seasonal migration to distant areas, as discussed earlier. Further, in the various community festivals like *Bandna*, *Kathinach*, *Karam* etc., in which the members of other communities participate, the Lodhas are kept aside, at least from the main phase of the functions.

Psychologically, the Lodhas like to live in isolation from other communities. The unsympathetic behaviour and the unkind words of the neighbouring communities have been partly responsible for this isolationist tendency.

It is observed that the Lodhas perform all their ceremonies and festivals exclusively among themselves. They have their own priest to officiate at the ceremonies. In their birth, marriage and death rituals, they do not generally invite members of other castes or tribes.

But, there are instances to show that the Lodhas and other communities co-operate even once in blue moon. Mention may be made of an important instance of inter-community co-operation in the village. About seven or eight years ago there was an outbreak or epidemic of a cattle-disease. When the epidemic did not subside at all, the

Bhumij and the Mahatos approached the *Deheri* to invoke the aid of the deities. The *Deheri* performed the necessary rites. The members of all the three communities set out for a distant field carrying all the refuse of the village and they performed the worship of *Jugini* there. It is claimed that the epidemic subsided after the observance of the worship.

The Lodhas do not accept the spiritual hegemony of the Brahmans, who are alleged to have committed a heinous crime by stealing the Godhead of *Jagannath*, formerly belonging to the Lodhas. They do not take water or cooked food from the Brahmans. The *Vaishnavas* of Lalgarh officiate at their birth and death rituals.

The neighbouring communities including the Mahatos think that the Lodhas formerly occupied a pre-eminent position in the caste-hierarchy. Then, the Lodhas were entitled to getting the services of the same barbers and washermen, who also served the local Kshatriya Zamindars, even though the services of the barbers and washermen were denied to all the tribes and even to some of the Caste Hindus. The ignoble position of the Lodhas in the social hierarchy is attributed to their unclean habits, to their fondness to include snakes and other animals of the forests in their menu and also to their criminal habits. At present, the same barber residing at Bandhghara (seven kilometers) serves all the communities in the village, The Lodhas have their own washerman residing at Amdanga (eight kilometers). The services of the barber and the washerman are confined to their social ceremonies only.

The Lodhas would not take water or cooked food from the people belonging to the following communities :

(i) *Hanri*
(ii) *Dom*
(iii) *Muchi* (Cobbler)
(iv) *Methor* (Sweeper)
(v) *Santals*
(*vi*) *Mahali*

Besides, they would generally avoid the contact of the people belonging to the first four castes. They take water and cooked food from the following communities :

(i) *Kumbhakar* (Potter)
(ii) *Karmakar* (Blacksmith)
(iii) *Tili* (Manufacturer of oil)
(iv) *Tambuli*
(v) *Sadgop*
(vi) *Bagal* (Seller of milk)
(vii) *Goala* (Milkman)

Though the Lodhas would not normally take cooked food from the people belonging to Bhumij, Mahato, Kaibarta and Sunri (the Distiller) communities, the male members are found to accept food from them privately. But, the female members would never take food from them. In regard to acceptance of water or cooked food from the members of the other communities, it is pointed out by the Lodhas that though customary rules of their society prohibit them from taking food from most of the neighbouring communities, the necessities of livelihood sometimes force them to act otherwise.

It has been observed that when a woman of the Lodha community carries water homewards, she always avoids contact with other people. If by chance a member of a different community happens to touch her, she at once drains out the water and throws away the earthen pitcher. In such an eventuality, the person, who has touched her, must procure her a new earthen pitcher. The same practice is reciprocated by the Bhumij and the Mahatos also. The relation of the Lodhas

with the neighbouring communities is not smooth but strained. The Lodhas did not get any support or protection from the Bhumij and the Mahatos of this village during the incident of 1961 ; they had to leave their homes temporarily.

Mention may be made of the impact of the development activities on the attitude of the neighbouring communities towards the Lodhas. The neighbouring communities, specially the Santals and the Bhumij, grudge the special privileges being given to the Lodhas. They also wonder why special facilities should not be given to them too. Strong resentment and indignation are expressed by these people against the Lodhas for the privileges, the latter enjoy.

Relation between the Bhumij and others

The relation of the Bhumij with the neighbouring communities is one of mutual help and co-operation. In the neighbouring villages there is a concentration of the tribal people, specially of the Santals and the Bhumij. The Bhumij are linked up with all of them by a feeling of oneness.

The Bhumij are well-known as a community of warriors with great fighting zeal. Their local history is replete with many heroic deeds. The Zamindars of Lalgarh and Ramgarh employed them in the past as warriors and guards. The Bhumij as a community wield great influence, power and respect from the neighbouring people. Even now, the two top Offices of the *Gram Panchayat* are held by the two Bhumij residents of this village. The mantle of leadership has thereby fallen on the Bhumij people.

If the Lodhas live in isolation, the Bhumij live in harmony and co-operation with all. In the regional festivals the Bhumij participate jointly with the Mahatos, the Bagals and the Sunris. These communities also invite the Bhumij to take part in their ceremonies.

Even in the economic life the Bhumij act in co-operation with all the neighbouring communities. The Bhumij cultivating households employ agricultural labourers from the neighbouring communities *viz.*, the Santals, the Mahatos, the Lodhas, the Bagals etc. The well-to-do neighbouring communities like the Mahatos, the Santals, the Telis the Tambulis and the Bagals also engage the Bhumij labourers in the agricultural operations. Some of the Bhumij households have received land from the said communities on crop-share basis.

During the survey twelve labourers of this village belonging to the Bhumij community were employed as resident agricultural labourers (*Munish*) in the houses of the following communities :

(i) *Kshatriya*
(ii) *Mahato*
(iii) *Sunri*
(iv) *Gaura*

Again, two Bhumij households have given some land to two Sunri and Santal households on crop-share basis. Another Bhumij household has received land from a Modak family on crop-share basis. Besides, the Bhumij secure loans from the following communities :

(i) *Mahato*
(ii) *Kshatriya*
(iii) *Bagal*
(iv) *Modak*
(v) *Paramanik*
(vi) *Santal*
(viii) *Sunri*

All these are pointers to the harmonious relation of the Bhumij with their neighbours. So far as the social position of the Bhumij is concerned, though they are not entitled to service by the Brahmans of the Caste Hindus, the Gossain Brahman (the degraded Brahmans with the title of Goswamis) officiates in their ceremonies. The *Vaishnavas* also attend their rituals. Formerly, the Bhumij were not entitled to the services of the barbers and washermen, who served the local Zamindars. They are, at present, served by them. But, the same barbers and washermen do not serve the Santals and Mundas or other castes. This bears testimony to the fact that in recent years the Bhumij have been able to raise themselves in the esteem of others.

The Bhumij would never accept water or cooked food from the Santals, the Mahalis, the Mundas, the Lodhas, the Muchis, the Methors and the Doms. But, they have no hesitation in taking water or cooked food from most of the artisan castes, like the Karmakars, the Kumbhakars, the Telis etc. From other communities the womenfolk are not permitted to take water or cooked food. In the birth, marriage and funeral ceremonies some of the Bhumij households invite the Mahatos, the Bagals and the Sunris of the adjoining village, with whom they are in friendly terms. On such occasions the male members of those communities accept the invitation and sometimes take the cooked food privately. At the time of their own ceremonies the invited communities request the Bhumij to visit their houses.

Relation between the Mahatos and others

As there are only three Mahato families in the village, no clear pattern of their relation with people of other communites emerges. They seem to be conscious that they had migrated to this village for economic reasons and that they will have to live here in the coming future. So, they live in the village by cultivating intimacy and maintaining good relation with all.

As it is not possible for them to organise community ceremonies and festivals separately, they have associated themselves with the Bhumij of the village and the Bagals and the Sunris of the region. In their birth and marriage ceremonies the Mahatos invite the Bhumij, the Bagals and the Sunris. It is observed that a Mahato young man after his marriage pays his regards first to the Bhumij *Adhyaksha* of the village and also to a Bagal. The other communities, specially the Bhumij, also invite the Mahatos to their ceremonies. But, such inter-community co-operation is confined mostly to the males.

Other reform and development measures

Lodha Rehabilitation Scheme

As discussed before, the Lodhas of this village had to suffer miserably due to an unfortunate incident in 1961, when the Mahatos of the neighbouring villages raided the Lodha enclave, set fire to the Lodha houses, attacked the inmates and destroyed their properties. The Lodhas fled away from the village out of fear. They took shelter in the Office of the Block Development Officer at Lalgarh. The Block Development Officer continued relief activities for some time. Later, the district authorities took up the matter, made on-the-spot enquiries to ascertain the facts and arranged for their relief.

But, the relief measures could not be sustained and did not meet the actual requirements. The need for making a permanent scheme of rehabilitation for the Lodhas,

therefore, arose. The initiative in this regard was taken by Samaj Sevak Sangha, a voluntary organisation and a society for the uplift of the backward people. After field-investigations the Sangha prepared a scheme for the rehabilitation of the Lodhas. In the year 1961 they submitted the scheme to the Tribal Welfare Department, Government of West Bengal for consideration and for sanction of the required funds.

It is laid down in the draft scheme that each of the 35 Lodhas families should be provided with a hut of modern type, involving moderate cost. Cottage industries should be set up in addition, and fowls, ducks, goats etc., should be supplied to them to improve their economic condition and meet the rising costs of daily life. Arrangement should also be made to employ all the grown-up males and females in different industrial enterprises, in which they will be in a position to utilise their free time or leisure and earn some surplus money.

The second and third part of the draft plan was as follows :

"This scheme will be continued for three years. During the first year 35 families will be rehabilitated, and in the next, another 15 families settled. With successful implementation of this scheme, friends and relatives of these people might also be attracted to migrate and settle here, and a few selected Lodha families from other villages might like to settle in this self-sufficient village permanently, and thus help in making it economically a viable unit. Scopes for such extra accommodation should be made from the very beginning. After three years, the caretaker organisation will hand over the work of supervision to the local beneficiaries, if they think it proper.

Land and its proper utilisation

The Lodhas have no landed property at all. But very near to this village, a few acres of *Chas* land are available, which should be acquired and alloted to the Lodhas immediately, and this will be the responsibility of the district authorities. After that, a few *bighas* of good *Don* (low) land should be purchased and reclaimed. Double-cropping of different cereals should be done on this land to meet the minimum needs of food. Irrigational facilities like sinking of wells should be taken up simultaneously. Huts for residential purposes should be constructed, at least, one for each family. A community hut, a Co-operative Grain *Gola*, a common cowshed or a big stake, are also to be set up. This community hut will accommodate the unmarried boys and will also serve the purpose of a Social Education Centre and Office. Wells for domestic and agricultural purposes should be sunk, with excavation of a big tank for pisciculture, as well as rearing. Wages should be given to the Lodhas for their services in connection with the implementation of this rehabilitation scheme. They may be paid either in cash or in the form of commodities or dresses, etc. Agricultural implements, bullocks, seeds and nursing fruit plants have also to be supplied to them.

Management

The organisation will set up a Rehabilitation Subcommittee with two Govt. nominees (B.D.O. being one of the ex-officio members), and three of its own members, including the Secretary, the President and one other. This Subcommittee may invite other persons to attend and offer suggestions at the time of its periodic sittings.

Land and other things should be purchased

in the name of the convenor of the Sub-committee. After three years, he will hand over all these to individuals, when they will gain sufficient experience in the rehabilitation work and develop a sense of responsibility. Then a co-operative organisation may be established by them to look after their difficulties and cater to their needs. Other problems may be discussed and their solution attempted, according to the needs of the situation." *(Source : Samaj Sevak Sangha.)*

PART III

Estimate

TOTAL NO. OF FAMILIES—35

(1)	House building, 35 residential huts, one Community Hall, Granary and allied huts and some others	Rs 17,500/-
(2)	Land purchase and reclamation costs (at least a few *bighas* of good type of land and one tank should be excavated)	Rs. 30,000/-
(3)	Well-digging	Rs. 2,500/-
(4)	Seeds, fruits, plants, cattle and bullocks, purchase of agricultural implements, carts, cycles, rickshaws, etc.	Rs. 7,500/-
(5)	Poultry, ducks and fowls of indigenous and imported varieties	Rs. 600/-
(6)	Goat-rearing	Rs. 900/-
(7)	Small-scale cottage industries to be set up including hand-pounding of rice, weaving, spinning, tailoring, rope making, bee-keeping	Rs. 4,500/-
(8)	Pisciculture	Rs. 200/-
(9)	Rent	Rs. 300/-
(10)	Wages to the workers for daily work	Rs. 3,000/-
(11)	Recreational facilities and advances for wedding expenses	Rs. 1,000/-
(12)	Pay of the social workers	Rs. 1,500/-
(13)	Contingent expenditure	Rs. 500/-
(14)	Extra amount to meet the costs of some basic items	Rs. 500/-
	Total	**Rs. 70,500/-**

As the scheme has not yet been fully executed, it is difficult to assess the full impact of the measures on the life of the people now.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Though born free, the villagers are still in chains of tradition and primitive ways of life, of thought and action. An area bounded by the uncared for jungles under the Zamindars of the area, the denizens of which were the unnamed beasts and birds with loyalty to none, Bhumij Dhan Sol attracted some autochthons about a century ago ; but the history remained unrecorded so far. The Bhumij were the first to come, clear some jungles for modest habitation and finally to settle down as *Prajas* (tenants) to mark the establishment of a village, the christening of which was done after their name. The tall green trees of the village-forests caught the eyes of timber merchants of Calcutta, who imported the Lodhas from different parts of Jhargram subdivision and engaged them as coolies, for they charged so little for their sweating labour. The woods became thinner and thinner with the fall of each stroke of axe, till the merchants left the village ; it was no more profitable to run the business. The Lodhas remained here with no definite occupation except the occasional rambles in the forests for fruits and fuel. The Zamindary was abolished and forests were taken over by the Government to mark a different chapter in the life of the Lodhas, if not for the Bhumij, who had struck some roots in the soil as cultivators long ago.

The Lodhas made a frantic bid to live here ; a return to their ancestral homes was out of question, for they had severed all ties. Some learnt the arts of cultivation, for they had the vigour to plough the soil, broadcast the seeds, transplant the seedlings and reap the harvest. All this they did as landless agricultural labourers. Some moved through the forests as lost children and gratefully accepted whatever paltry collection, they could make there, to keep the wolf from the door. The call of the forests they felt in their blood. They would often pick up the good old bows and arrows and set out for hunting.

The aimless way of life found some meaning, when the Lodha Rehabilitation Scheme was undertaken and the Lodhas could get a durable roof to live under, some livestock to rear and a hope for some lands of their own to cultivate. The delinquents, who wanted an easy life as lurchers, brought ignoble shame for the community, which still now suffers from suspicion and lack of good neighbourly feelings of others.

The Bhumij are better in this regard and so also are the Mahatos. They have some vestige of land, to which they cling with the attachment of land-hungry cultivators. For them " to plough is to pray, to plant is to prophesy and the harvest answers and fulfills", but not fully their dreams.

The over-all picture of the people is dismal, difference being only in the shades of poverty and want. Their life moves within the narrow orbit of Bhumij Dhan Sol with occasional break-throughs in surrounding areas. Early in the morning they start with the hope for the day, get sun-burnt in the fields and fatigued in the jungles, return in the evening to whip up their waning energy with a bout of drinks and

by evening they bury their lost hopes in sleep. The interested parties in the adjoining villages suck their life-blood, either by offering them a never-ending supply of country-drinks and appropriating a good share of their hard-earned income or by making a capital of their wants by advancing them ready loans and getting in return disproportionate interest, which would have shocked the hardest banker with the heart of Shylock. Human avarice does not stop here. The numbered few, who operate unseen and carve out the fate of these poor people as a cruel Nemesis, purchase at cheap price whatever the people produce. These avaricious traders sell the needs of the village-life at exorbitant cost, thus reaping the fullest advantage of the lack of any competing shops and traders in the area. The picture is not full without reference to those, who thrive on the crimes of some, by instigating the criminals among the Lodhas to further their interests, receiving the ill-gotten wealth and at the same time branding all the Lodhas as criminals. The *Dickensian Faggin*, thus, acts in disguise.

The results are very apparent. Children remain unclad, women insufficiently clothed and the adult males get emaciated. Scourges of hunger bring tears in the innocent eyes of the babies, who are benumbed to sleep.

The potentialities of nature with her hidden wealth are abundant here and may properly be utilised to harness the resources of the people to productive ends. The Lodhas raise silk cocoons in the forest, collect the fruits of *Mahua* and leaves of *Sal*. While the experiments with the Lodha Rehabilitation Scheme have aroused some hope in the sunken hearts and made the people dreamy about their future, some more schemes for utilisation of the forest produce might be attempted to better their lives. Thus, the fruits of *Mahua* may be crushed to produce oil required for soap-industry, sericulture may be another serious proposition, production of charcoal cannot altogether be obviated, because of the large area of forests in the region.

Whatever might be proposed, it is true that the people inspite of their squalor and poverty have not forgot to laugh. They are mirthful in their age-long religious festivals, in their errands for the *Hats* and visits to their relatives, in the absorbing cock-fights and *Kathinach*, in their simple but philosophic folk-songs and folk-tales. Abysmal ignorance of modern thoughts and developmental activities makes them neither sorry nor ashamed. They still view an outsider in awe and curiosity.

They looked entranced at the road, which winds through the jungles leading the way to the "fabulous city" of Calcutta, situated in a supposedly *Fairy Land* and sighed heavily, when the Investigator had packed up the schedules and left the village in a bus, which rattled out of sight.

APPENDIX I

TABLE

Habit of taking sugar
Habit of taking tea
Prohibited food and drinks
Furniture acquired in last five years
Consumer goods acquired in last five years
Use of mosquito-curtain
Use of soap
Laundry habit
Reciprocal aid in agricultural practices
Livestock statistics
Occupational mobility
Land reforms
Land development
Monthly income
Attitude towards marriage
Permissibility of inter-caste marriage
Range of information
Desirability of inter-caste marriage
Awareness of Untouchability Offences Act
Awareness of the functions of Gram Sevak
Information about functions of Panchayat
Opinion about improvement through Panchayat
Awareness of changes in Hindu Laws
Community Panchayat—existence and attitude
Contravention of marriage rules
Community Panchayat—function
Attitude towards family planning with reference to age of the heads of households
Attitude towards family planning with reference to age of the child-bearing woman

APPENDIX I

TABLE I

HABIT OF TAKING SUGAR AS CORRELATED TO INCOME

Community	No. of households taking sugar, with monthly income of						No. of households not taking sugar, with monthly income of					
	Above Rs. 150	Rs. 101-150	Rs. 76-100	Rs. 51-75	Rs. 26-50	Rs. 25 or less	Above Rs. 150	Rs. 101-150	Rs. 76-100	Rs. 51-75	Rs. 26-50	Rs. 25 or less
Lodha	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	6	26	3
Bhumij	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	4	8	1
Mahato	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..
Total	**1**	**2**	..	..	..	..	..	..	**3**	**10**	**35**	**4**

TABLE II

HABIT OF TAKING TEA AS CORRELATED TO INCOME

Community	No. of households taking tea, with monthly income of						No. of households not taking tea, with monthly income of					
	Above Rs. 150	Rs. 101-150	Rs. 76-100	Rs. 51-75	Rs. 26-50	Rs. 25 or less	Above Rs. 150	Rs. 101-150	Rs. 76-100	Rs. 51-75	Rs. 26-50	Rs. 25 or less.
Lodha	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	6	26	3
Bhumij	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	3	4	7	1
Mahato	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..
Total	**1**	**2**	..	..	**1**	..	..	..	**3**	**10**	**34**	**4**

TABLE III

PROHIBITED FOODS AND DRINKS

Community	No. of households reporting as prohibited		No. that did not report any food to be prohibited	No. that did not report any drink to be prohibited
	Beef	Pork		
Lodha	35	35	Nil	35
Bhumij	17	17	Nil	17
Mahato	3	3	Nil	3
Total	**55**	**55**	**Nil**	**55**

TABLE IV

FURNITURE ACQUIRED IN LAST FIVE YEARS

Community	No. of households which have acquired in last five years		
	Taktapos	*Khatia*	*Khatia* and chair
Lodha	..	..	..
Bhumij	1	1	..
Mahato	..	1	1
Total	**1**	**2**	**1**

TABLE V

CONSUMER GOODS ACQUIRED IN LAST FIVE YEAR

Community	No. of households which have acquired in last five years
	Consumer goods
Lodha	Nil
Bhumij	Nil
Mahato	Nil
Total	**Nil**

TABLE VI

USE OF MOSQUITO-CURTAIN

Community	No. of households that use mosquito curtain, having monthly income of				No. of households that do not use mosquito curtain, having monthly income of			
	Rs. 150 and above	Rs. 101-150	Rs. 51-100	Rs. 50 or less	Rs. 150 and above	Rs. 101-150	Rs. 51-100	Rs. 50 or less
Lodha	..	..	..	..	..	..	6	29
Bhumij	..	..	1	..	..	1	6	9
Mahato	..	..	..	..	1	1	..	1
Total	..	..	**1**	..	**1**	**2**	**12**	**39**

TABLE VII

USE OF SOAP

Community	No. of households that use toilet soap, having monthly income of				No. of households that do not use toilet soap, having monthly income of				No. of households that use washing soap, having monthly income of				No. of households that do not use washing soap, having monthly income of			
	Rs. 150 and above	Rs. 101-150	Rs. 51-100	Rs. 50 or less	Rs. 150 and above	Rs. 101-150	Rs. 51-100	Rs. 50 or less	Rs. 150 and above	Rs. 101-150	Rs. 51-100	Rs. 50 or less	Rs. 150 and above	Rs. 101-150	Rs. 51-100	Rs. 50 or less
Lodha	..	..	..	..	..	..	6	29	..	..	..	..	..	..	6	29
Bhumij	..	1	1	..	..	..	6	9	..	1	1	..	..	..	6	9
Mahato	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	1
Total	1	1	1	..	..	1	12	39	1	1	1	..	..	1	12	39

TABLE VIII

LAUNDRY-HABIT

Community	No. of households that send clothes to washerman, having monthly income of				No. of households that do not send clothes to washerman, having monthly income of			
	Rs. 150 and above	Rs. 101-150	Rs. 51-100	Rs. 50 or less	Rs. 150 and above	Rs. 101-150	Rs. 51-100	Rs. 50 or less
Lodha	..	..	..	..	..	..	6	29
Bhumij	..	..	..	..	..	1	7	9
Mahato	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	1
Total	1	..	..	..	..	2	13	39

TABLE IX

RECIPROCAL AID IN AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

Community	Number of households practising agriculture	Number of households that borrow agricultural implements from others at the time of cultivation	Number of households that take help of neighbours at the time of sowing or harvesting	Number of households that assist neighbours and receive help at the time of cultivation in the form of manual labour
Lodha	..	Nil	Nil	Nil
Bhumij	8	Nil	Nil	Nil
Mahato	3	1	Nil	1
Total	11	1	Nil	1

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TABLE X

LIVESTOCK STATISTICS INCLUDING FISHERY

Community	Milch cattle		Draught bullocks		Young cattle		Goats		Fowls	
	No. of households owning	Total no. of milch cattle	No. of households owning	Total no. of drought bullocks	No. of households owning	Total no. of young cattle	No. of households owning	Total no. of goats	No. of households owning	Total no. of fowls
Lodha	7	9	6	12	10	14	18	45	18	58
Bhumij	6	12	5	12	9	17	7	19	10	42
Mahato	2	6	3	13	2	18	1	1	..	..
Total	**15**	**27**	**14**	**37**	**21**	**49**	**26**	**65**	**28**	**100**

TABLE XI

OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY—NATURE OF ASPIRATION

Occupation	Number of persons in the occupation (Head of households)	Number of persons who want their sons to be in				
		The same occupation as in Col. 1. (*i.e.* his own)	Cultivation	Service	No opinion	Does not arise
Cultivation	6	2	..	2	..	2
Agricultural labourer	29	..	18	4	5	2
Livestock, Forestry, hunting etc.	15	..	7	1	3	4
Manufacturing industries	3	1	1	..	1	..
Other services	2	..	1	..	..	1
Total	**55**	**3**	**27**	**7**	**9**	**9**

TABLE XII

LAND REFORMS

Community	Number of households benefitted by abolition of Zamindary	Brief indication of the manner of benefit	Number of households harmed by abolition of Zamindary	Number of households neither benefitted nor harmed	Can't say	Remarks
Lodha	..	..	3	28	4	Harmed due to restriction of forests
Bhumij	..	..	..	15	2	
Mahato	..	..	1	2	..	
Total	..	..		**45**	**6**	

TABLE XIII

LAND DEVELOPMENT

Community	Number of families benefitted by land reclamation and development measures	Brief indication of the reclamation and development measures
Lodha	Nil	Does not arise
Bhumij	Nil	Does not arise
Mahato	Nil	Does not arise

TABLE XIV

MONTHLY INCOME BY SOURCE OF OCCUPATION

Occupation of household	Source of income	Monthly income per household in the range: Less than 25 rupees	Rs. 25-50	Rs. 51-75	Rs. 76-100	Rs. 101 & over
Cultivation	Cultivation	..	1	2	..	2
	Agricultural labourer	1	..	..	..	..
	Forestry & industry	4	1	..	..	..
	Unspecified (money order)	1	..	..	..	..
Agricultural labourer	Agricultural labourer	10	18	1	..	..
	Cultivation	7	..	..	..	..
	Forestry & hunting	25	4	..	..	..
	Manufacturing industry	5	..	..	..	..
Livestock	Livestock	2	..	..	..	..
	Agricultural labourer	1	..	..	..	..
	Forestry & hunting	1	..	..	..	..
Forestry and hunting	Forestry & hunting	10	3	..	..	..
	Agricultural labourer	9	2	..	..	..
	Manufacturing industries	6	..	..	..	..
Manufacturing industries	Manufacturing industries	2	1	..	..	..
	Cultivation	1	..	..	..	..
	Agricultural labourer	2	..	1	..	..
	Forestry	3	..	..	..	..
Other services	Other services	2	..	..	..	..
	Cultivation	1	..	..	..	..
	Agricultural labourer	2	..	..	..	..
	Forestry	2	..	..	..	..

TABLE XV

ATTITUDE TOWARDS MARRIAGE WITH PERSONS OF DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES BUT OF THE SAME SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

Community	Number of persons interviewed	Number of persons having no objection to marriage with other communities	
		Caste	Remarks
Lodha	35	..	Have objection
Bhumij	17	..	Have objection
Mahato	3	..	Have objection
Total	**55**	..	..

TABLE XVI

PERMISSIBILITY OF INTER-CASTE MARRIAGE

Community	Number of persons interviewed	Number of persons who consider it permissible to form marital tie with any other community
Lodha	35	Nil
Bhumij	17	Nil
Mahato	3	Nil
Total	**55**	**Nil**

TABLE XVII

DESIRABILITY OF INTER-CASTE MARRIAGE

Community	Number of persons interviewed	No. of persons who consider it desirable to form marital tie with any other community
Lodha	35	Nil
Bhumij	17	Nil
Mahato	3	Nil
Total	**55**	**Nil**

TABLE XVIII

RANGE OF INFORMATION

Community	Total no. of households	Number of heads of households which know			
		Anchal Panchayat head quarter	Thana headquarter	District headquarter	Name of principal rivers of the district
Lodha	35	30	35	35	28
Bhumij	17	16	16	16	12
Mahato	3	3	3	3	3
Total	**55**	**49**	**54**	**54**	**43**

TABLE XIX

AWARENESS OF UNTOUCHABILITY OFFENCES ACT

Community	Number of persons interviewed	Number of persons aware of prohibition of untouchability under law
Lodha	35	..
Bhumij	17	2
Mahato	3	..
Total	**55**	**2**

TABLE XX

AWARENESS OF THE FUNCTIONS OF GRAM SEVAK

Community	Number of housholds	No. aware of the functions of Gram Sevak	No. that could describe the functions of Gram Sevak			
			Fully satisfactorily	Satisfactorily	Unsatisfactorily	Incorrectly
Lodha	35	3	..	..	3	..
Bhumij	17	6	..	3	3	..
Mahato	3	2	..	..	2	..
Total	**55**	**11**	..	**3**	**8**	..

TABLE XXI

INFORMATION ABOUT FUNCTIONS OF PANCHAYAT

Community	Number of informants according to whom main parties are	Number of informants according to whom dominant castes are	
		Bhumij	Not known
Lodha	Nil	22	13
Bhumij	Nil	10	7
Mahato	Nil	2	1
Total	**Nil**	**34**	**21**

TABLE XXII

OPINION ABOUT IMPROVEMENT THROUGH PANCHAYAT

Community	No. of house-holds	No. according to whom after establishment of statutory *Panchayat* there has been										
		Settle-ments of disputes	Road	Relief	Road & settle-ment of disputes	Relief & settle-ment of dis-putes	Well & road	Road relief, wells	Road & relief	Settlement of disputes, well, road	No. according to whom after establishment of statutory *Panchayat* there has been harm	No. according to whom after establishment of statutory *Panchayat* there has been neither improvement nor any harm
Lodha	18	4	2	2	1	1	6	1	1	..	..	17
Bhumij	8	..	..	..	1	..	7	..	..	..	..	9
Mahato	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	..	1
Total	**28**	**4**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**1**	**13**	**1**	**1**	**2**	..	**27**

TABLE XXIII

AWARENESS OF CHANGES IN HINDU LAWS OF SUCCESSION AND ADOPTION

Community	Number of persons interviewed	Number aware that there have been changes in Hindu Adoption Act	Number that could describe the changes in Hindu Adoption Act correctly	Number aware that there have been changes in Hindu Succession Act	Number that could describe the changes in Hindu Succession Act correctly
Lodha	35	..	..	2	1
Bhumij	17	..	..	2	..
Mahato	3	..	..	2	1
Total	**55**	..	..	**6**	**2**

TABLE XXIV

COMMUNITY PANCHAYAT—EXISTENCE AND ATTITUDE

Community	Number of households	No. (Head of households) according to whom Community Panchayats exist for		Number according to whom Community Panchayats should exist
		Lodha	Bhumij	
Lodha	35	34	..	29
Bhumij	17	..	17	12
Mahato	3	..	..	..
Total	**55**	**34**	**17**	**41**

TABLE XXV

CONTRAVENTION OF MARRIAGE RULES

Community	Number of marriages in contravention of Caste/Tribal law	Frequencies of each type of contravention	
		Marriage of a Lodha girl	Marriage of a widow
Lodha	1	1	..
Bhumij	1	..	1
Mahato	..	..	..
Total	**2**	**1**	**1**

TABLE XXVI

COMMUNITY PANCHAYAT—FUNCTION

Community	Number of households	Number according to whom functions of Community *Panchayats* are		
		Religious	Settlements of disputes	Religious and settlements of disputes
Lodha	35	1	13	2
Bhumij	17	3	2	..
Mahato	3	..	..	..
Total	**55**	**4**	**15**	**2**

TABLE XXVII

ATTITUDE TOWARDS FAMILY PLANNING WITH REFERENCE TO AGE OF THE HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS

Community	Number wanting more children, the age of the head of household (male) being					Number wanting no more child, the age of the head of household (male) being				
	Above 50	41-50	31-40	21-30	20 or less	Above 50	41-50	31-40	21-30	20 or less
Lodha	1	3	7	8	..	3	6	4	..	..
Bhumij	..	1	4	4	..	3	2	..	..	..
Mahato	..	..	1	..	..	2	..	..	..	..
Total	**1**	**4**	**12**	**12**	..	**8**	**8**	**4**	..	..

TABLE XXVIII

ATTITUDE TOWARDS FAMILY PLANNING WITH REFERENCE TO AGE OF THE CHILD-BEARING WOMAN

Community	No. wanting more child, the age of the child-bearing woman being							No. wanting no more child, the age of the child-bearing woman being						
	Above 40	36-40	31-35	26-30	21-25	16-20	Less than 16	Above 40	36-40	31-35	26-30	21-25	16-20	Less than 16
Lodha	2	..	4	3	8	1	1	4	4	1	3	1	..	..
Bhumij	..	1	2	1	3	2	..	3	2	..	..	..	..	..
Mahato	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	1	..	1	..	..	..	..
Total	**2**	**1**	**6**	**5**	**11**	**3**	**1**	**8**	**6**	**2**	**3**	**1**	..	..

APPENDIX II

PANORAMIC REVIEW OF THE DHANSOLA REHABILITATION SCHEME

APPENDIX II

PANORAMIC REVIEW OF THE DHANSOLA REHABILITATION SCHEME

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I

Dhansola—a multi-tribal village is situated in Binpur P.S., in Jhargram Subdivision, and under the Lalgarh Development Block (Binpur-I). A moorum-road connects this village directly with Midnapur district headquarter. The village is mainly inhabited by the Santals, the Lodhas and the Bhumijes, and these communities, as yet, maintain some sort of segregation. To spurt up the economic condition of these people, at first, a rehabilitation scheme for the Lodhas was taken up and implemented sometime in the middle of 1962, just after a local riot, in which the Lodhas were virtually ousted from their hamlets by the Mahatos, a rather prosperous and scheming community. On a false pretext or plea they attacked the Lodhas, set fire to their shelters in broad day light, and rendered them homeless riot-victims. Most of the Lodhas took shelter in the Block Development Office of Lalgarh for a couple of days, while some of them fled away to distant places for safety and have not returned. It attracted the attention of the district authorities, including the Tribal Welfare Officer, who requested the undersigned to investigate into the happenings, and to draw up a scheme for proper rehabilitation of the Lodhas.

The matter was given due priority and almost all the members of the Board of Trustees of the Samaj Sevak Sangha studied the whole situation and the cause of this enmity and clash, and drew up a detailed scheme, which was submitted for approval to the T.W. Deptt. for financial sanction.

In that scheme the sponsors categorically included provision for wages and excavation of wells, but district authorities did not sanction these expenditures. However, the scheme as subsequently sanctioned on 22nd March, 1962 (*vide* Memo. No. 655-T.W.), for rehabilitation of 35 Lodha families, at a cost of Rs. 70,000/-, which included the following provisions :

TABLE A

(i)	Housing for 35 families and 1 Community Hall.	Rs. 15,250·00
(ii)	Purchase of cultivable land, cost of house-site and reclamation.	Rs. 38,000·00
(iii)	Purchase of agricultural implements, cattle and bullocks, seeds, carts, etc.	Rs. 7,500·00
(iv)	Poultry.	Rs. 600·00
(v)	Goat rearing.	Rs. 900·00
(vi)	Small-scale cottage industry.	Rs. 4,500·00
(vii)	Pisciculture.	Rs. 200·00
(viii)	Rent for land.	Rs. 300·00
(ix)	Recreational facilities.	Rs. 550·00
(x)	Supervision charges.	Rs. 1,200·00
(xi)	Contingent expenditure.	Rs. 500·00
(xii)	Unforeseen expenditure.	Rs. 500·00
	Total	**Rs. 70,000·00**

The scheme was given a start in the middle of April, 1962, and a social-worker was placed in charge of it. A Rehabilitation Subcommittee was also formed, of which the B.D.O. Lalgarh and the S.O., T.W., Midnapur are ex-officio members. Government was pleased to sanction Rs. 17,000 as the first instalment.

II

It took a long time to create confidence in the minds of the people who suffered as a result of the riot, besides the normal disadvantages of a backward people. They had no homes or other shelters, or even any livestock or household utensils. After a few discussions with the Lodhas, a few of them could, however, be convinced that the scheme was for their real welfare. Amongst them there were a few notorious incorrigible jail-birds, and all of the members of the Lodha families were habitual drunkards. There is still a rice-beer shop in the vicinity of the village owned by a Sunri distiller, who also has a grocer's shop. In the evening, almost the whole earning of the Lodhas for the day, goes to that Sunri shop-keeper, who supply them rice, oil, pulses, etc., as well as country-made rice-beer. Thus the situation was very difficult at the initial stage to tackle, as any sort of preaching or discussion with them was difficult to be held during night. Early in the morning, these hungry people hastened for outside places of work, in search of odd jobs, or to collect edible roots and tubers, honey, eggs, etc. from the forest area, or sometimes to catch *iguanas*, the skin of which is sold and the flesh consumed. In this adverse situation the work of rehabilitation had to be taken up.

A few other difficulties were also felt at that time. There was no good well for supply of drinking water (one is there which is useless and it goes dry after winter months) and the workers and the members had to face a lot of troubles for this. We expected that a good cultivable land will be available for purchase, but its price was so high, that we felt embarrassed about its prospect. The then B.D.O. tried his level best to procure this land, but failed to do so. So, the sponsors had to face many problems, one after another. Yet, at the very beginning arrangements had been made to repair some broken huts with thatching, and the Lodhas were given to understand that they should be given a goat each, and these they might purchase according to their own choice in the presence of our social worker. As a result, some of them became interested and came forward to act according to this scheme, and began to help the social worker in the manifold activities. A few agricultural implements, mainly hoe *(Kodali)* were given to each of them. Each individual was supplied with a goat and a few cocks and fowl, both of native breed and improved variety.

During the rainy season each individual was given about 1 *bigha* of homestead land. A demarcation boundary was made for each plot, and they were supplied with good seeds of various vegetables, like maize, ground-nuts and a few varieties of pulses. During this period, they got a bumper yield, which attracted them more and more to the beneficial aspects of this scheme and created more interest for greater participation. The Rehabilitation Subcommittee, in the meantime, held a number of meetings, in which it was decided that they should each be given a mud-built hut, roofed with either C.I. sheets or tiles, because it is their common vicious habit to apply fire in a drunken state to other's habitat, in case there is a quarrel between two individuals. With the help of the S.O., T.W. a few bundles of C.I. sheets were procured, and from one abandoned

Lodha colony, a few such sheets were also collected, for construction of such huts. Altogether 15 twin-quarters were constructed, along with a big Community Hut, with three rooms. The amount, spent for this work, far exceeded the allotment made by the Govt. Five other individuals still remained homeless. They generally use the Community Hut for shelter, as they are without encumbrances, being either issueless, divorced or widowed. A radio set has been placed at this centre and each evening, adult males and females come to listen to the programmes broadcast. In stages, the sponsors purchased two types of land, and procured some *Khas* land, only recently. The following table gives the details of such land.

TABLE B

TYPES OF LAND PROCURED

1.	Homestead (*Khas*)	10·00	acres
2.	*Dahi* land for *Aus* (purchased)	6·56	acres
3.	*Dahi* land (*Khas*)	55·51	acres
	Total	**72·07**	**acres**
4.	Best cultivable land (purchased)	22·96	acres

One bullock cart, 7 bullocks and 2 buffaloes have already been purchased, and major amount sanctioned for purchase of bullocks and setting up of cottage industries (Rs. 10,000) remains yet unspent. It is expected that it will be fully utilised by the middle of July' 65.

A few acres of cultivable land have been purchased early and cultivated by a few Lodhas, who got from these better crops. Arrangements had been made to procure about 10 acres of land outside this village, to be cultivated by *Barga* system or share-cropping, in which the Lodha cultivators will get half of the total production. This year some land was purchased with standing crops, which has been collected and stored at the Community Hut. Other social benefits like, defraying a part of wedding expenditure, etc. were also extended to them by the Organisation. Some of them were given the facilities for touring some places of interest and the like One social worker has been appointed on whole-time basis, to look after the various problems of the Lodhas and he has been giving them all possible assistance in times of need. The output of ground-nuts, maize, etc. are noteworthy and seeds for these were supplied to the B.D.O. Office for distribution amongst the Lodhas. Even the paddy cultivated by the Lodhas under the guidance of the social worker is significantly high and, on the results, the local B.D.O. has requested to allot a few *maunds* more of better seeds, to be distributed to others in the Block area.

III

Rehabilitation is fundamentally a different programme from the work of relief. Besides, the rehabilitation of the Lodhas is a very difficult and intricate problem. They, in general, are not at all an agriculturist people. At best they are unskilled agriculturists. Traditionally they are food-gatherers, and even today, in this particular region, most of them subsist by collection of roots, tubers, honey and various kinds of fruits, which are either sold or exchanged for other articles, with the people of the locality or outsiders. They also catch *iguana* and *dhemna* snakes, and sell their skins. So, achieving efficiency in agricultural operations will take time as well as to obtain a better output, which had been possible due to constant participation of the social worker in their agricultural endeavours. The Samaj Sevak Sangha desires that a few plots should be cultivated by common participants, the output of which will be ultimately for communal purposes and supply of midday meal to the Lodha children reading in the schools. Such

model farms will enable them to grow better seeds and obtain adequate agricultural facilities and advantages, which will be gradually acquired by each of the Lodha members of the Colony.

As they have to stay outside for most part of the day, they are not getting sufficient time to look after their bullocks or other cattle properly. Hence a community cattleshed is also necessary for this purpose.

No wages have been sanctioned by the district authority for those who will participate in common agriculture, as a result of which, the Lodhas will suffer economically during agricultural operations. Because they have no capital or other resources which can be utilised when they will work at their own fields, it is also difficult to introduce as a common practice. The Organisation has, therefore, sent a proposal in this respect to the local Government officials concerned. Besides, utter economic crisis and insolvency have created frustration in their minds, which have indirectly created lack of self-reliance.

They are stigmatised with the habit of thieving and other anti-social activities. A few of them are, however, found to be of a contrary nature. Yet the general consensus and caustic remarks go against them, and these by repitition over years have brought a perpetual moral degenaration. They are also habitually incorrigible liars, and everybody knows of each other's faults. So criminal activities are generally overlooked, and are not protested against by the community members. Even if a protest is made against these, very little support from others is available, though a good number of them have now responded to moral and economic rehabilitation. Due to their theiving habit, they do not get any employment elsewhere. So securing suitable employment for the Lodhas is also a very difficult problem.

The sponsors of this Organisation have set up an agency sometime ago named Minor Forest Produce Co-operative Society Ltd. to provide employment to the Lodhas, but it could not start functioning as yet, due to lack of interest and help of the authorities concerned. Knowing fully well about the scarcity of drinking water in this area, the authorities remained silent for long 3 years, although constantly reminded, until the District Magistrate and the Addl. District Magistrate personally visited the place for investigation, as a result of which a well has been sunk this year, though not capable of meeting the requirement.

This year D.M. and the A.D.M. had kindly recommended for sanction of salary of one social worker here, which was not available for full one year, as the sanctioned amount was exhausted.

However, inspite of all the above defects and drawbacks, the scheme seems to have been partially successful, as it has been able to create some sort of self-confidence in the mind of this denotified community. A few denotified community colonies in this State have been abandoned by the inhabitants, and such examples are not rare even in this district, where a lot of Government money have already been spent, but no actual beneficiaries, in the real sense, exist as yet. Contrary to this, there is demand from outside Lodhas to be settled in this colony, and altogether 5 more Lodha families have come to stay here, for whom an application has been made for the consideration of the local authorities. The Samaj Sevak Sangha has been able to check, in most cases, the drinking habits of the Lodhas, by providing recreational facilities to

them, as an alternative. The Lodha boys are lodged in the Ashram Hostel at Daharpur (Head Office) for better education, and at the time of marriage celebrations, members of the notorious Lodha families are denied any financial help at present, who normally lure other Lodhas to indulge in anti-social activities. Besides, the members of other tribes like the Bhumijes, the Mahatos, the Santals are now also entertained by the social worker and the Lodhas, as a result of which, no hostility or misunderstanding exists at present amongst them.

It seems a tie of new friendship is gradually being fostered amongst them. We are thinking to start a cheap Co-operative Store for all the people here, which will ultimately bridge up and reconcile the differences in attitude, and some sort of economic inter-dependency will be created through this in time. Further, a new social relation which will bind all the communities together for the sake of their own betterment, is expected to be born of this endeavour.

SAMAJ SEVAK SANGHA

P.O. FULGERIA, MIDNAPUR, WEST BENGAL

The society is registered under Act XXI of 1860. It has a Board of Trustees consisting of 5 members, the present office-bearers being Prof. P. K. Das, President ; Prof. R. M. Sarkar, Vice-President ; Prof. K. C. Sasmal ; Dr. P. K. Bhowmick, Founder ; and Prof. R. P. Das, Secretary. This organisation has undertaken betterment work for the backward communities in many places of Midnapur. It has organised a number of social-education centre-*cum*-night schools. Main activities of this organisation are directed towards improvement of the economic and social conditions of the tribal and backward people in Midnapur. The Board of Trustees, when they are vested with the charge of implementation of any Government sponsored scheme of rehabilitation and welfare, generally constitute a Subcommittee, with a few local people, and some ex-officio Government representatives like the S.O., T.W., Midnapur, the B.D.O., the Anchal Pradhan, etc., for administrative convenience and planning. As a result, supervision of work becomes easy and local problems could be studied and tackled effectively without much difficulty. There are, at present, altogether 4 Anthropologists in the Board of Trustees, who are not only interested in determining various local problems but also in the rehabilitation work by application of the methods of field-anthropology or applied anthropology. The nucleus of this organisation is situated at Daharpur, in Narayangarh P.S., quite close to the Railway Station of Narayangarh and the main metalled road. Previously in this village, one model rehabilitation centre for the Lodhas was organised by the Sangha, and later a Co-operative Multipurpose Society has been established by the beneficiaries themselves, the functioning of which, the Samaj Sevak Sangha supervises, as a care-taker institution. A Grain-Gola for the Scheduled Tribes consisting mainly of the Santals, the Mundas, the Lodhas and the Bhumijes has been organised a little later, which is functioning quite satisfactorily. An industrial centre has also been set up, in which, the crafts of mat-making, spinning, weaving and tailoring are taught to the tribal people, to make them economically self-sufficient and independent. This has been done, just to provide the people with gainful employment, during their leisure time, for the present. A few Lodhas have taken such training and have proved themselves capable of being efficient weavers. Thus their income has gone up, and they have secured proportionate economic relief.

A Junior Basic School has already been

sanctioned for this area and an Ashram Hostel for the Lodha boys attached to the Junior Basic School has been established with grants from the Central Government. There is a library, and an woman organiser is in charge of it. Besides this, the Sangha had been extending its help, from time to time, to various institutions, by accommodating temporarily, a few of their research scholars and investigators, at its nicely built community huts in the different villages, and organising University and College anthropological field-trips in this area.

Members of the Board of Trustees generally attend the meetings and symposia, which are held for discussion of the local problems, and to find out remedial measures. This organisation is receiving support and sympathy of many distinguished educationists, social workers and personalities like, Prof. N. K. Bose, Sri Panchanan Bose, Dr. S. S. Sarkar, Dr. M. N. Basu, Sri R. K. Gupta, D.I.G (Arms & Border), Sri A. Mitra, I. C. S., Registrar General, Sri A. N. Banerjee, I.A.S., Sri S. Samaddar, I. A. S. Sri R. R. Bhattacharya, I. A. S., Sri J. C. Sengupta, I. A. S., Shri B. N. Chowdhury, I. A. S. and the high officials of the Tribal Welfare Department of the Govt. of West Bengal.

APPENDIX III

LAND AND TRIBALS

NOTE : Synopsis of a talk given by Dr. B. K. Roy Burman, in Tribal Orientation & Training Centre, Bhubaneswar.—Editor.

53/1/RGI/69-70-36

APPENDIX III

LAND AND TRIBALS

By

Dr. B. K. Roy Burman, M.SC., D. Phil.,

Officer on Special Duty.

Office of the Registrar General, India.

1. A very large proportion of the representations received by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Commission is related to the question of land. To the tribal communities, protection of their traditional rights over lands is of vital importance. By and large the planners and administrators are aware of the necessity of protecting the rights of the tribals, but they are also concerned with the problem of effective and appropriate utilisation of the lands with which the tribal communities are connected for generations.

This difference in emphasis sometimes lead to conflict and tension.

2. Frequently the administrators fail to appreciate that the tribal communities, they are dealing with, have their own concepts about their relation with lands in their territory and this creates many complications. Bailey has pointed out that whereas according to the Government the right to hold cultivated land ultimately derives from itself, and (with certain exceptions) the Government is not concerned with the place of residence or social affiliations, the Khonds have a different notion about it. Each Khond village has a territory which is traditionally considered to belong to it and the members of the community living in that village have right to make use of the land in that territory, in lieu of certain duties and responsibilities discharged by them towards the community.

During the preparation of record of rights, the tribals, therefore, do not care to register their rights over waste land ; as such, rights are taken for granted. Only lands under actual occupation at the time of the survey are included in the record of rights ; the rest of the land are shown as Govt. waste land. But difficulties arise, when Government tries to make use of the waste land for public purposes.

3. The concept of communal ownership of territory, as noticed among the Khonds, is found in various forms among many tribes in other parts of the country.

In the border of West Bengal and Bhutan, there is a small tribe Toto, who are practically found only in one village *viz.*, Totopara. The territory of Totopara covers an area of 3.12 sq. miles. According to the Totos, supreme deity *Ispha* has ordained them to live in this territory alone. Any Toto living outside Totopara for more than a week was in the past required to perform a penance before he was allowed to rejoin his people. Even now, prolonged stay outside the village is discouraged. The relationship between the community and the land is a sacred relationship ; and not merely a proprietary relationship.

The Sherdukpens of the village Rupa in NEFA have relationship of another category with their land. It is of political category.

The territory of the village covers about 100 miles in length and 6-7 miles in breadth. The main residential cluster covers about 1 square mile. There are 7 or 8 hamlets at distances of 10 to 12 miles from the main cluster. One of these hamlets was at a certain stage recognised by the administration as a separate village. But this caused resentment among the local people and the decision was reversed. There is also a settlement of another tribe, *viz.*, the Khowas, within the territory of Rupa. The Khowas are required to pay some tribute to the Sherdukpens. Near the plains of Assam within the territory of Rupa there are some grazing lands, where people of the plains of Assam graze their cattle and some annual payment is made to the Village Council of the Sherdukpens of Rupa.

Similar political jurisdiction over land is found among the Manipur tribes. The Purum Kukis of Purumkhel for instance claim their right over a territory of about 10 square miles. Any person carrying on hunting in this territory has to pay a share to the chief of the tribe. The office of the chief is not hereditary and any person holding the office is entitled to the share. In Kakchin area the tribals collecting forest produce are not required to make any payment as it is their land, but non-tribal potters are required to make payment to the Kuki chief. Here also the office is not necessarily hereditary. This clearly shows that the nature of relationship with land is primarily political and not economic.

4. Sometimes in record of rights the entire territory is shown to be leased in the name of the tribal chief. For instance, in Totopara, the entire mauza is leased in the name of the headman on behalf of the community. In such cases it is sometimes found that there is a confusion as to the nature of authority of the chief over the land. At Totopara it was found that an attempt to make use of land for public purposes with the consent of the headman in some part of the village met with resistance. At Totopara there is some sort of rough demarcation of area for each clan. The members have right of use of the land belonging to their respective clan. Though the entire mauza is leased in the name of the headman, he could exercise his authority only about utilisation of the land of his own clan. Later on, the position has been modified to a certain extent in actual practice. But about 40 years ago, when the headman wanted to exercise his authority outside the territory of his own clan, he failed.

5. In Chhotanagpur it has been found among the Oraons, Mundas and other tribes that the original settler families or Khuntkatti families have special right over the territory of the village. The seniormost member of the original settler family is considered to be in a position to propitiate the supernatural spirits who were disturbed by clearance of the jungles. Hence the original settler families claim special prerogatives. The later settlers can make use of the land cleared by them, and their descendants may inherit the same ; but if they vacate the land the ownership goes to the original settler family.

Similar prerogatives of original settler family or clan is found among many other tribes. Among the Ao Nagas, there is village land as well as clan land and individual land. An individual has right of use of village land or clan land with the permission of village officials or seniormost clan members, as the case may be ; but he cannot sell the land. When the land is left fallow, the ownership reverts to the community.

This has posed some problem in the matter

of development of land. When an Ao Naga wants to develop the land for terrace-cultivation or horticulture, he sometime meets with resistance from the members of his clan, as this would mean that the land would practically become private property of the person concerned for all time to come.

6. Sometimes it has been found that while the trees belong to individual households, the land belongs to the community. During survey and settlement operation in Totopara and in Laccadive, Minicoy and Amindivi islands, this has been found causing many complications.

7. Alienation of tribal land has posed a serious problem for quite a long time. In the middle of the last century, the ignorant tribals of Chhotanagpur, Santal Pargana and other parts of the country were in large number ousted from their land by the clever manoeuvres of money-lenders, landlords and pleaders. This caused strong resentment and culminated in a number of violent outbreaks against human life and property.

The need for special legislative and executive measures to prevent alienation of tribal land was at last recognised. Such measures generally follow two patterns in most of the areas of West Bengal, where there is restriction against transfer of tribal land not only to non-tribals but also to tribals. In some parts of West Bengal and most of the other States, the restriction is only against transfer of tribal land to non-tribals. These two patterns of restriction have different implications with reference to the social structure of the tribal communities concerned. Where the tribal societies are homogenous in character without much stratification, restriction against transfer of land to non-tribals is considered enough. Where on the other hand the tribal communities are very much stratified with reference to economic power and political influence, restriction only against transfer of land to non-tribals enables the richer and influential section among the tribals to exploit their co-tribals. Sometimes, however, such exploitation has been found to have accelerated the growth of middle class, who serves as the spearhead for development activities in their respective areas. It is, therefore, necessary to take into consideration the stage of economic and social development of the tribal communities concerned, and the roles played by the different segments within the tribal communities, with reference to development activities and promotion of the process of national integration, while deciding the patterns of protection against alienation of tribal land.

In Boudh-Phulbani area transfer of land of a Khond to another Khond only is permitted without any restriction. This again confirms what has been stated earlier about the social context of ownership of land.

In connection with protection against alienation of tribal land it is to be noted that the machinary, set up for enforcement of the law, is of very great importance.

In West Bengal Special Officers are appointed for enforcement of the law preventing alienation of tribal land. It has been found that in the districts, where Special Officers were not appointed previously, hardly any attempt was made by the normal administrative machinery to protect the interest of the tribals, and large-scale alienation of their land took place. Measures to restore the land of the tribals could be adopted only after Special Officers were appointed.

In Koraput District of Orissa Special

Officers to look after the tribal interests in land used to be appointed till 1936, when the district was under Madras. After that the post had been abolished.

Serious irregularities have been noticed in the enforcement of the law relating to protection against alienation of tribal land. There was a case in High Court in which it was alleged that a tribal landowner of Bolangir had lost 22 acres of good paddy land for Rs. 60/- In another case, more than 30 acres of land was sold for Rs. 60/-.

These cases show that the formal laws are not enough ; the enforcement of the law through proper machinery is equally important.

8. In Tripura the different tribes are required to pay house-tax at different rates for carrying on shifting cultivation. This seems to be an indication in the diverse political relation of the various tribes with the ruling family during the State period.

9. In many States there was no restriction till recently for the tribal people to carry on reclamation of waste land and settle there. After a period of 2-3 years, they were assessed. This has now been stopped in Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh etc., as a result of which thousands of tribals have been declared as trespassers in these States.

10. As a programme of welfare of Scheduled Tribes, several States have given priority to the Scheduled Tribes in the matter of allotment of waste land, and surplus land vested with the Government since introduction of land reform measures. It has been noticed in Bihar that the land allotted to the tribals is not frequently under their actual possession. They do not have the capital or the necessary interest to develop the land and bring it under cultivation. Hence there are many cases of unauthorised transfer ; or again there are cases of land remaining unused. The same position has been noticed in Orissa also.

Allotment of land to the tribals should not therefore be considered to be the end of the programme but the beginning of the programme.

The tribals require capital to reclaim the land, purchase equipment including draught cattle and also to support themselves till the first crop is raised. The tribals also sometimes require guidance and advice in the matter of selection of crops, use of better seeds, use of manures and fertilisers etc. All these should constitute inseparable parts of a unified land policy in respect of the tribals.

APPENDIX IV

SPECIAL SCHEDULE ON
VILLAGES NEAR FORESTS

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SPECIAL SCHEDULE ON VILLAGES NEAR FORESTS

District———— Police Station————

Village/Mauza———— J. L. No.————

Name of the Head of the Household————

Sl. No.————

1. Do you collect any forest produce ? Do you collect them every month ? On what right do you get the produce ?

2. How much forest produce do you sell during a month ? What price do you get ?

3. Where do you sell the forest produce ? To whom do you sell the forest produce ?

   (a) Individuals
   (b) Wholesalers
   (c) Co-operative Society
   (d) Any other ageney

4. Are you engaged as forest labourer ? For how many months in a year do you get work ? What is your monthly earning on an average ?

5. Do you hunt animals in the forest ? What animals do you find for hunting ? How many animals of different types in a year do you hunt on an average ? Do you sell the carcass ? If so, at what price ?

6. Are you troubled by wild animals ? What preventive measures do you take ?

7. Are you troubled by insects or pests ? Any preventive measures taken by you ?

8. Sources of water and their distance from the village.

9. What are your main occupations in off season ?

10. Do you leave the forest area for your livelihood in off season ? If so, name and distance of the place where you go. What work do you get there ? Do you go there alone, or with any member(s) of your family/community ? For how many years have you been going there ?

11. Has any member of your family died of any usual forest hazard during the last 5 years while engaged in active hunting operations ?

12. (a) What are the hunting implements you use ? Do you prepare them yourself or get them prepared by others or purchase them ? If prepared by others, who are they ? If purchased, wherefrom do you purchase them ? What is the price of each implement in each case ?

    (b) Do you hunt individually ? Why so ?

    (c) Do you hunt on a collective basis ? Who are the participants ? Do the female members and children participate ? If so, what are their roles ? How do you apportion the catch ? Is there any leader during collective hunting ? What is his role ?

    (d) Is there any religious festival connected with hunting ? If so, details.

    (e) Is there any myth or legend about hunting ?

(f) Do you know any practice or belief which foretells bad or good omen connected with hunting ?

(g) Is there any taboo which prevents any member of your family from participation ? What are the disabilities ?

13. What time do you think propitious for hunting and why ?

14. Do you take hunting as a sport/pastime/religious function/convention/means of earning livelihood ?

15. Has any factor curtailed your hunting activity ?

16. Do you think that your activity is restrained or restricted by the forest laws ? What steps do you suggest that may improve hunting activity ?

17. Have you differed in any way from the hunting practices as observed by your forefathers or by the members of your community in your native place ?

LIST OF AGENTS FOR THE SALE OF GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PUBLICATIONS

(as on 17th February 1964)

AGARTALA—

1 Laxmi Bhandar Books & Scientific Sales (Rest)

AGRA—

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

AHMADNAGAR—

1 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—

1 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 Modho, 2-A, Katra Road (Reg.)
5 Universal Book Co., 20, M. G. Road (Reg.)
6 University Book Agency (of Lahore), Elgin Road (Reg.)
7 Wadhwa & 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, Putligarh (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—

1 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, Avenne Road (Rest)
8 International Book House P. Ltd., 4F, Mahatma Gandhi Road (Reg.)
9 Navakarnataka Pubns. Private Ltd., Majestic Circle (Rest)

BAREILLY—

1 Agarwal Brothers, Bara Bazar (Reg.)

BARODA—

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

BEAWAR—

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

BELGHARIA—

1 Granthlok, Antiquarian Bookshellers & Publishers (24-Parganas), 5/1, Ambica Mukherjee Road (Reg.)

BHAGALPUR—

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

BHOPAL—

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

BHUBANESWAR—

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

BIJAPUR—

1 Shri D. V. Deshpanda, Recognised Law Booksellers, Prop. Vinod Book Depot, Near Shiralshetti Chowk (Rest)

BIKANER—

1 Bhandani Bros. (Rest)

BILASPUR—

1 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 Street (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 Lakkami 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 Gain 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 & 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 Bldg. Shri 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. P. Ltd., 54/3, College Street (Reg.)
3 Hindu Library, 69A, Bolaram De Street (Reg.)
4 S. K. Lahiri and Co. P. Ltd., College Street (Reg.)
5 M C. Sarkar and Sons P. Ltd , 14, Bankim Chatterjee St. (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 P. Ltd., 1C, College Square (Reg.)
10 Thacker Spink and Co. (1933) P. Ltd., 3, Esplanade East (Reg.)
11 Firma K. L. Mukhopadhaya, 6/1A. Bancha Ram Akrar 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 Dipository, 4/1, Madan Street (1st floor) (Rest)
21 Scientific Book Agency, Netaji Subash 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—

1 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, Booksellers, Sector No. 22 (Reg.)
4 Universal Book Store, Booth 25, Sector 22 D (Reg.)
5 English Book Shop, 34. Sector 22 D (Reg.)
6 Mehta Bros, 15-Z, Sector 22 B (Rest)
7 Tandan Book Depot, Shopping Centre, Sector 16 (Rest)
8 Kailash Law Publishers, Seetor 22 B (Rest)

CHHINDWARA—

1 The Verma Book Depot (Rest)

COCHIN—

1 Saraswat Corporation Ltd., Palliarakav Road (Reg.)

CUTTACK—

1 Press Officer, Orissa Sectt.
2 Cuttack Law Times (Reg.)

CUTTACK—

3 Prabhat K. Mahapatra, Mangalabag, P. B. 35 (Reg.)
4 D. P. Sur & Sons, Mangalbag (Rest)
5 Utkal Stores, Balu Bazar (Rest)

DEHRA DUN—

1 Jugal Kishore & Co., Raipure Road (Reg.)
2 Natioanl 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. 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 Bldgs., Jawahar Nagar (Rest)
13 Dhanwant Medical & Law Book House, 1522, Lajpat Rai Market (Rest)
14 University Book House, 15, W. B. Bangalore Road, Jawahar Nagar (Rest)
15 Law Literature House 2646, Balimaran (Rest)
16 Summer Bros., P. O. Birla Lines (Rest)
17 Universal Book & Stationery Co., 16, Netaji Subhas 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 & Book-sellers. 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 Book-sellers & 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 Sahity Mandira of Publishers and Bookellers

ERNAKULAM—

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

FEROZEPUR—

1 English Book Depot, 78, Jhoke Road (Reg.)

GAUHATI—

1 Mokshada Pustakalaya (Reg.)

GAYA—

1 Sahitya Sadan, Gauttam Budha Marg (Reg.)

GHAZIABAD—

1 Jayana Book Agency (Rest)

GORAKHPUR—

1 Vishwa Vidyalaya Prakashan, Nakhes Road (Reg.)

GUDUR—

1 The General Manager, The N. D. C. Publishing & Ptg. Society Ltd. (Rest)

GUNTUR—

1 Book Lovers Private Ltd., Kadriguda, 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—

1 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—

1 Tikendra & Sons Bookseller (Rest)

INDORE—

1 Wadhawa & Co., 56, M. G. Road (Reg.)
2 Swarup Brother's, Khajuri Bazar (Rest)

INDORE—

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, 135 Jai Prakash Narain Marg (R.)

JAIPUR—

1 Government Printing 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 (Rest)
6 Popular Book Depot, Chaura Rasta (Reg.)
7 Krishna Book Depot. Chaura Rasta (Rest)
8 Dominion Law Depot, Shah Building P. B. No. 23 (Rest)

JAMNAGAR—

1 Swadeshi Vastu Bhandar (Reg.)

JAMSHEDPUR—

1 Amar Kitab Ghar, Diagonal Road, P. B. 71 (Reg.)
2 Gupta Storses, Dhatkidih (Reg.)
3 Sanyal Bros., Booksellers & News Agents. Bistapur Market (Rest)

JAWALAPUR—

1 Sahyog Book Depot (Rest)

JHUNJHUNU—

1 Shashi Kumar Sarat Chand (Rest)
2 Kapram Prakashan Prasaran. 1 90 Namdha Niwas Azad Mark (R.)

JODHPUR—

1 Dwarka Das Rathi, Wholesale Books and News Ageats (Reg.)
2 Kitab-Ghar, Sojati Gate (Reg.)
3 Choppra Brothers, Tripolia Bazar (Rest)

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, Shradhanand Park (Reg.)
3 The Universal Book Stall, The Mall (Reg.)
4 Raj Corporation, Raj House, P. B, 200, Chowk (Rest)

KARUR—

1 Shri V. Nagaja Rao, 26, Srinivasapuram (Rest)

KODARMA—

1 The Bhagwati Press, P. O. Jhumri Tilaiya, Dt. Hazaribagh (Reg.)

KOLHAPUR—

1 Maharashtra Granth Bhandar, Mahadwar Road (Rest)

KOTA—

1 Kota Book Depot (Rest)

KUMTA—

1 S. V. Kamat. Booksellers & Stationers (N. Kanara) (Reg.)

EUCKNOW—

1 Soochna Sahitya Depot (State Book Depot)
2 Balakrishna Book Co. Ltd., Hazratganj (Reg.)
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, Faizebad 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 St. (Rest)

MADRAS—

1 Supdt.. Govt. Press, Mount Road
2 Account Test Institute, P. O. 760 Emgore (Reg.)
3 C. Subbiah Chetty & Co., Triplicane (Reg.)
4 K. Krishnamurty. P. B- 384 (Reg)
5 Presidency Book Supplies, 8, Pycrofts Road, Triplicane (Reg.)
6 P. 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 Booksnop, 10, Congress Bldg. 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—

1 K. N. Narimhe Gawda & Sons (Rest)

MANGALORE—

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

MANJESHWAR—

1 Mukenda Krishna Nayak (Rest)

MATHURA—

1 Rath & Co., Tilohi Bldg. Bengali Ghat (Rest)

MEERUT—

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

MONGHYR—

1 Anusandhan, Minerva Press Bulding (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, Lansdowne Building (Rest)
5 Indian Mercentile Corporation, Toy Palace, Ramvilas (Rest)

NADIAD—

1 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—

1 Coural Book Depot, Bara Bazar (Rest)

NANDED—

1 Book Centre, College Law General Books, Station Road (Rest)
2 Hindustan 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, 8F, Connaught Place (Reg.)
3 Central News Agency, 23/90, Connaught Circus (Reg.)
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 & Stationary Co., Scindia House (Reg.)
9 Ram Krishna & 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. & Novelles, 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, 65A-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—

1 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—

1 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. Rd. (R.)
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—

1 Shri P. N. Swaminathan Sivam & Co., East Main Road (Rest)

RAJKOT—

1 Mohan Lal Dossabhai Shah, Booksellers and Sub-agents (Reg.)

RANCHI—

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

REWA—

1 Supdt., Govt. State Emporium V. P.

ROURKELA—

1 The Rourkela Review (Rest)

SAHARANPUR—

1 Chandra Bharata Pustak Bhandar, Court Road (Rest)

SECUNDERABAD—

1 Hindustan Diary Publishers, Market Street (Reg.)

SILCHAR—

1 Shri Nishitto Sen, Nazirpatti (Rest)

SIMLA—

1 Supdt, Himachal Pradesh Govt.
2 Minerva Book Shop, The Mall (Reg.)
3 The New Book Depot, 79, The Mall (Reg.)

SINNAR—

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

SHILLONG—

1 The Officer-in-Charge, Assam Govt., B. D.
2 Chapla Bookstall, P. B. No. 1 (Rest)

SONEPAT—

1 United Book Agency (Reg.)

SRINAGAR—

1 The Kashmir Bookshop, Residency Road (Reg.)

SURAT—

1 Shri Gajanan Pustakalaya, Tower Road (Reg.)

TIRUCHIRAPALLI—

1 Kalpana Publishers, Wosiur (Reg.)
2 S. Krishnaswami & Co., 35, Subhash Chandra 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—

1 Shir 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 Glob Book Centre (Rest)
4 Kohinoor Stores, University Road, Lanka (Reg.)
5 B H.U. Book Depot (Rest)

VELLORE—

1 A. Venkatasubban, Law Booksellers (Reg.)

VIJAYAWADA—

1 The Book & Review Centre, Eluru Road, Governpet (Rest)

VISAKHAPATNAM—

1 Gupta Brothers, Vizia Bldg. (Reg.)
2 Book Centre, 11/97, Main Road (Reg.)
3 The Secy. Andhra University, General Co-op. Stores Ltd. (Rest)

VIZIANAGARAM—

1 Sarda & Co. (Rest)

WARDHA—

1 Swarajcya 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, Hosting Street, Calcutta
3 High Commissioner for India in London, India House, London, WC. 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 Bologat, C. E. Fritzes Kungl, Hovobokhandel, Fredsgation-2, Box 1656, Stockholm-16 (Sweeden)
3 Reise-und Verkehrsverlag Stuttgart, Post 730, Gutenoergstra 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, 49. 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, Belgaum
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

On S. and R. Basis

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, Udhna, 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 Bldg. Ajmeri Gate Extension, New Delhi
17 Registrar of Companies, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh, Link Road, Jullundur 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 Bldg. 6, Linghi Chetty St. 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, Cuttak Chandi, Cuttack
27 The Registrar of Companies, Gujarat State, Gujarat Samachar Bldg., 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 The O.I/C., S.I.S.I. Extension Centre, Habra, Tabalaria, 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, Clacutta-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, Pondicherry
44 The Asstt. Director of Publicity and Information, Vidhana Saubha (P. B. 271) Bangalore.