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# MAN IN INDIA

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# MAN IN INDIA

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## THE JAJMANI SYSTEM IN A DESERT VILLAGE

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*(Received on 26 August 1964)*

**Abstract.** The jajmani system has been studied in a village in Western Rajasthan. Data were collected through interviews and schedules filled from the heads of sample households selected by the method of stratified random sampling. The findings show that many households still utilise the services of Suthars, or CARPENTERS, Lohars or BLACKSMITHS, and Bhambis or LEATHER WORKERS under jajmani. The jajmans or PATRONS have larger land-holdings. The remuneration actually paid depends upon yield. The system ensures a cheap and dependable labour supply to jajmans or PATRONS and an assured income to *kamins* or SERVANTS. It is undergoing change with respect to the services offered, remuneration received and relationships between patron and servant.

### *Introduction*

THE jajmani system has received the attention of social scientists interested in the caste system. Wisner (1936), Gould (1958), Lewis (1958), Beidelman (1951), Kolenda (1963) and Rowe (1963) have indicated the sociological aspects

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inherent in its functioning and have, in the process, emphasized the importance and interplay of different factors. The functions of the system, roles, distribution of power, benefits, codes and relationship with other systems have also been discussed. This study is an attempt to add, through empirical evidence, the information collected on the jajmani system in a desert village with respect to Suthars, Lohars and Bhambis who constitute the three most important occupational castes working under *aat*, which is the name by which jajmani is designated locally. Of these three, Suthars are ranked the highest in the caste hierarchy and are considered as one of the upper castes in the village. Lohars occupy an intermediate position while Bhambis are ranked as one of the lower castes from whom the upper castes maintain social distance, both overt and symbolic.

Investigations were conducted during the latter half of 1963 in a village in Barmer district of Western Rajasthan. The data were collected by mean of schedules and interviews. One hundred and twentynine schedules were filled from the heads of sample households selected by the method of stratified random sampling. The village has a population of 405 households but at the time of survey, several households of Bhils had migrated temporarily from the village as this was a famine year. The normal annual rainfall is about 20 cm. a year. The community facilities include three primary schools and a village panchayat. The village is the headquarters of the Village Level Worker and the Patwari or land revenue official.

The economy of the village is based on subsistence farming. Cultivation is practised by all the castes. The caste composition is heterogeneous. If castes are grouped on the basis of their traditional occupation, agricultural castes number 233 households (Jat 138, Kalbi 53, Purohit 13 and Rajput 29), castes raising sheep and goats 32 households (Raika), castes serving the needs of agriculturists 16 households (Suthar 14, Lohar 2), castes serving the needs of the community in socio-religious matters 5 households (Brahmans 2, Sadh 1, Sant 1, Sau 1) and castes serving the other needs of the

## CHART I

*Services rendered by Suthars, Lohars and Bhambis and dues received.*

Caste	No. of households	Services rendered and commodities supplied	Castes served	Dues	Remarks
Suthar	14	(i) Making wooden agricultural implements or woodwork of iron agricultural implements, bullock carts, wooden tyre of wheels, doors, windows, wooden framework for building houses and sheds, major wooden articles for household use like cots and cradle stand, <i>toran</i> (used in weddings) and wooden articles required in socio-religious ceremonies, etc.	All castes	Repair and maintenance work is covered under <i>aat</i> . The dues under <i>aat</i> are usually Rs. 4 per plough plus one or two days' labour ( <i>khar khar</i> ) for ploughing and harvesting <i>pala</i> ( <i>sizpy-phus numularia</i> leaves). In case the <i>jajman</i> has a bullock cart, Rs. 1.50 have to be paid in addition. During socio-religious ceremonies periodical gifts are given, the amount of which is not fixed.	Dues under <i>aat</i> are applicable only to households having such an arrangement. Wood has, in all cases, to be supplied by the <i>jajman</i> . Payment could be made in cash or its equivalent in kind or both. The <i>jajman</i> is required to work one or two days for the Suthar to compensate him for the loss in his own cultivation since he is very busy during this time attending to the work of his <i>jajman</i> . This is locally called <i>khar khar</i> .
		(ii) Repair and maintenance of wooden implements and articles.		When employed on daily wages he charges from Rs.2 (during off season) to Rs.4 (during cultivating season).	

Caste	No. of households	Services rendered and commodities supplied	Castes served	Dues	Remarks
Lohar	2	(i) Fitting iron parts to implements, their repair and maintenance. (ii) Supplying petty iron articles for agricultural or household use.	All castes	Services relating to (i) are covered by <i>aat</i> . The dues under <i>aat</i> are usually 8 seers (7.46 kg.) of <i>bagra</i> ( <i>Pennisetum typhoides</i> ) per plough (Rs.3.20p.)  When employed on piece-work basis, he is paid according to the work involved.	Dues under <i>aat</i> are applicable only to households having such an arrangement. Iron parts have, in all cases, to be supplied by the <i>jezman</i> . Payment could be made in kind or its equivalent in cash to both.
Bhambi	17	(i) Dragging dead cattle, sheep or goats from the house or field of his <i>jezman</i> (other dead animals are dragged by the Harijan). (ii) Skinning the carcass and giving the skin for tanning. (iii) Making and supplying conventionally fixed leather articles required for agricultural operations or domestic use. (iv) Making and supplying other leather articles. (v) Repairing and maintaining leather articles and shoes.	All castes except those lower to it in the caste hierarchy like Jattiyas, Bhils, Dholis and Harijans	For supplying petty iron articles, he has to be paid separately.  Services relating to i, ii, iii, v and vi are covered by <i>aat</i> . The dues under <i>aat</i> are usually 32 seers (29.86 kg.) <i>bagra</i> ( <i>Pennisetum typhoides</i> ) per plough (12.80 p.) During socio-religious ceremonies periodical gifts are given, the amount of which is not fixed.  When employed on piece-work basis he is paid separately.	Dues under <i>aat</i> are applicable only to households who have such an arrangement. No part of the hide of dead cattle is given to the <i>jezman</i> . It is retained by the Bhambi for doing the <i>jezman's</i> work. The thread used for stitching has to be supplied by the <i>jezman</i> . Payment can be made in kind or its cash equivalent or both.

## Remarks

## Dues

## Castes served

## Caste No. of households Services rendered and commodities supplied

(vi) Rendering certain services to the *jajman* in socio-religious ceremonies and other occasions, as for instance, carrying message about marriages, etc., serving as caretaker of animals of guests, collecting fuel wood, and carrying wood to the funeral ground for use in the funeral pyre.

community 116 households (Beldar 1, Bhambi 17, Bhil 45, Charan 1, Cheepa 1, Darzi 3, Dholi 3, Daroga 16, Ghanchi 3, Harijan 2, Jatti 1, Jattiya 3, Kumbhar 1, Mahajan 14, Nai 3, Od 1, Sonar 1). There are also 3 Muslim households. Of these castes, only Suthars or CARPENTERS, Lohars or BLACKSMITHS, Bhambis or LEATHER-WORKERS, Darzis or TAILORS and Nais or BARBERS work under *aat*. They also exchange services with households of occupational castes or render services on payment in cash or kind on piece work/daily basis or work on certain personal considerations.

The adjoining chart gives the services rendered and commodities supplied by Suthars, Lohars and Bhambis. These relate to crafts and ritual and ceremonial matters; for the lower caste *kamins* (persons rendering service), as for instance Bhambis, they even involve the performance of menial and field duties. The ritual status of a caste does not always determine the castes to which it will render services. Thus the Suthar and the Lohar work for castes who are much lower in the hierarchy and this service extends in several cases even to non-secular matters, provided these do not compromise with their higher rank in the caste hierarchy. The paragraphs that follow give the prevailing systems for obtaining services and goods.

(i) *Aat*: Out of 14 Suthar households in the village only 8 work under *aat*: 2 households have settled in this village only recently and have not acquired any patrons receiving services and goods for working under the *aat* system; the eldest male member in one is a minor; in the remaining 3 households the parents of the present heads died in their childhood and so they could not learn the craft properly. Both the Lohar households work under *aat*. Out of 17 Bhambi households in the village only 4 follow their caste occupation of leather-work and give their services under *aat*. The other households have given up their caste occupation as a result of the ruling of their *nyat* or territorial council of the caste, which requires Bhambis to give up this unclean work to rise in the caste hierarchy.

Table 1 gives the caste composition of sample households

in the village getting the services of Suthars, Lohars and Bhambis under *aat*. Several castes like Jats, Kalbis, Purohits, Rajputs, Raikas and Mahajans are only jajmans or patrons. Some like the Suthar, Lohar, Bhambi, Darzi and Nai play both jajman and *hamin* roles in different spheres. The data show that six-tenths of the households get the services of the Suthar under *aat*, one-fourth of the households get the services of the Lohar under *aat* and three-fourths of the households get the services of the Bhambi under *aat*. 17.1 per cent of the households get the services of all the three, viz., Suthar, Lohar and Bhambi under *aat*, 3.9 per cent get the services of Lohar and Suthar under *aat*, 36.4 per cent get the services of Suthar and Bhambi under *aat* and 3.9 per cent get the services of Lohar and Bhambi under *aat*. Thus the largest percentage of households get the work done from the Bhambi under *aat*. This is because his work is considered dirty and castes higher in ritual status would not perform his work for fear of defilement. The Bhambi is socially indispensable. Most households would, therefore, like to ensure his services through *aat* as that would mean an obligation on his part to serve the jajman.

Households getting the services of Suthars, Lohars and Bhambis under *aat* are agriculturists and have larger land-holding than those who get their services differently as the data in the following table will show.

TABLE 2

*Size of agricultural holding of households getting services under aat.*

Services	Size of agricultural holding of households getting services under <i>aat</i>	Size of agricultural holding of households getting services outside <i>aat</i>
Suthar	19.46 hectares	15.13 hectares
Lohar	18.33 ,,	17.51 ,,
Bhambi	19.53 ,,	12.63 ,,

TABLE 1

*Extent to which village households obtain the services of Suthars,  
Lohars and Bhambis under aat.*

Caste	Suthars		Lohars		Bhambis	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
<b>Agricultural castes</b>						
Jat	33	13	20	26	41	5
Kalbi	18	2	1	19	20	—
Purohit	3	1	—	4	4	—
Rajput	8	2	6	4	9	1
	62(77.5)	18(22.5)	27(33.7)	53(66.3)	74(92.5)	6(7.5)
<b>Castes raising sheep and goats</b>						
Raika	7(70.0)	3(30.0)	1(10.0)	9(90.0)	10(100.0)	—(-)
<b>Castes serving needs of agriculturists</b>						
Suthar	—	5	—	5	1	4
Lohar	—	1	—	1	—	1
	—(-)	6(100.0)	—(-)	6(100.0)	1(16.7)	5(83.3)
<b>Castes serving needs in socio-religious ceremonies</b>						
Brahmin	—	1	—	1	—	1
Sant	—	1	—	1	—	1
Sau	1	—	—	1	1	—
	1(33.3)	2(66.7)	—(-)	3(100.0)	1(33.3)	2(66.7)
<b>Castes serving other needs</b>						
Bhambi	3	2	2	3	—	5
Bhil	—	6	—	6	—	6
Darzi	—	1	—	1	—	1
Dholi	—	1	—	1	—	1
Daroga	4	1	1	4	5	—
Ghanchi	—	2	—	2	2	—
Harijan	—	1	—	1	—	1
Jattiya	—	1	—	1	—	1
Kumbhar	—	1	—	1	1	—
Mahajan	—	3	—	3	—	3
Nai	—	3	1	2	1	2
Teli (Muslim)	—	1	—	1	—	1
	7(23.8)	23(76.7)	4(13.3)	26(86.7)	9(30.0)	21(70.0)
<b>Total</b>	<b>77(59.7)</b>	<b>52(80.3)</b>	<b>32(24.8)</b>	<b>97(75.2)</b>	<b>95(73.6)</b>	<b>34(26.4)</b>

*Aat* is paid in cash or kind or both. If the *aat* is settled in monetary terms, as in the case of Suthars in the village, then its equivalent in kind, which is almost invariably in food-grains, at current market rates is given if cash is not available and *vice-versa*. Last year, almost half the patron households paid in cash to the Suthars as compared to approximately one-third households paying in cash to the Lohars and Bhambis. On enquiring which mode of payment was beneficial, 76.7 per cent of the patrons said that payment in kind was more beneficial to the *kamin* because of fluctuating purchasing power of money and the possibility of getting a

TABLE 3

*Mode of payment of aat to Suthar, Lohar and Bhambi.*

Mode	Suthar		Lohar		Bhambi	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Cash	41	53.2	10	31.3	35	3.69
Kind	10	13.0	21	65.6	46	48.4
Both	26	33.8	1	3.1	14	14.7
	77	100.0	32	100.0	95	100.0

little extra amount of grain. No side could, however, insist on payment being made in only one of the two forms. Whatever is mutually agreed and convenient is accepted.

Jajman-*kamin* ties are not necessarily confined within the village. Thus 13.9 per cent of the households in the village get their services under *aat* from Suthars outside the village, 7.8 per cent from Lohars outside the village and 12.4 per cent from Bhambis outside the village. The factor contributing to such inter-village relationships is the dispersed character of the settlements, due to which jajmans living in the periphery find it more convenient to have relations with *kamins* in adjacent villages, and the inability of *kamins* in this village to meet the requirements of all since the demand for many of the services is seasonal and very pressing.

The number of jajmans with each Suthar household under *aat* does not exceed 30. Six of them have hereditary ties

with all their jajmans; of the remaining two, one has hereditary ties with 6 households and acquired ties with 3 households; all the 22 households of the other were acquired when the Suthar who formerly served these households died without any adult successor to inherit the right to serve the jajmans.<sup>3</sup> In the case of Lohars, one household of Gadolya Lohars who settled in this village a few years back has acquired all his jajmans. The other household has hereditary ties. Among Bhambis two households in the village core have acquired 82 households in addition to those with whom they had hereditary ties since most of the Bhambi households in the village have left their traditional occupation. The other two Bhambi households following their traditional occupation have hereditary ties with all their jajmans. Within the last five years the number of jajmans served by each of these households under *aat* has remained the same except for the two Bhambi households who have acquired new jajmans.

Thus the ties between the jajman and *kamin* are stable and enduring. It is, however, no longer obligatory for the jajman to get services under *aat* from a *kamin* or for a *kamin* to serve a jajman. The ties are now voluntary. It is not possible, however for the jajman to break his ties with his *kamin* unilaterally and get the services under *aat* from another *kamin*, unless this is permitted by his former *kamin*. There is no case on record in the village of differences between jajmans and *kamins* having assumed alarming proportions due to militant trade unionism by *kamins* on the one hand and refusal to accept services by jajmans on the other. There have, however, been instances when the craftsmen rendering services have, as a group, sought a change in the rate of payment of *aat* or in the quantum of services rendered or in the raw materials supplied by jajmans.

(ii) **Exchange of services:** Among the different castes following traditional occupations there is exchange of services wherever permissible under caste rules. Of the 8 Suthar households working under *aat*, 3 have exchange of services with Lohar, 7 have exchange of services with Bhambi, 3 have exchange of services with Darzi and 3 have exchange of

services with Nai. Suthars also do some of the carpentry work of Dholis and Harijans without charging anything, but it is implied that they will be served in return when the need arises. Both the Lohar households have exchange of services with Suthars, Bhambi and Nais while 1 exchanges services with the Darzi in addition. Of the 4 Bhambi households working under *aat*, all have exchange of services with Suthars, 3 have exchange of services with Lohar and Darzi and 1 has exchange of services with Teli. Thus the ritual status of a caste does not stand as a bar in the exchange of services among occupational castes provided such exchange does not involve pollution.

(iii) **Payment on piecework or daily basis** : Operating side by side with *aat* is the system of paying for each unit of good or service. The rate of such payment shows flexibility and is governed by the relative forces of demand and supply, bargaining power and seasonal fluctuations.

(iv) **Personal considerations** : None of the Suthars, Lohars or Bhambis take *aat* for services rendered to the Brahman, Sadh or Sant who occupy the highest position in ritual status. In return, these households may help their *kamins* in advising about auspicious days and time or in propitiating a deity but for major ritual duties performed they are paid. This is both because of the reverence in which these castes belonging to the priestly class are held and because of the feeling now current that they have no ostensible means of livelihood and live on the piety of others. Rajput households related to the former Jagirdar or feudal landlord continue to receive services on payment of only periodical gifts<sup>4</sup> though Rajput households in the dispersed dwellings continue to pay *aat* as in the past. Similarly, on personal considerations several Suthars continue to work for Bhambis without any *aat* being fixed though exchange of services is no longer possible since the latter have left their traditional occupation. On being asked whether they were not perpetual losers in this way, these Suthars replied that since they are living together in the same village they are dependent on each other in various ways

and in the long run they do get some benefits from these households by way of service in agricultural or other spheres.

### *Remuneration*

The amount of *aat* paid to a *kamin* is conventionally fixed and is ordinarily calculated per plough since the quantum of work will increase if the *jajman* has a larger number of ploughs. The rates are relatively inflexible over long periods and difficult to change. The size of the *jajman's* household, the distance at which he lives, the frequency with which he demands work from the *kamin*, the period of his stay in the village, the traditional structure of authority and power, and personal factors introduce some modifications in the rate of *aat* to be paid. Thus households having a larger number of members or living in dispersed settlements away from the residence of the *kamin* have to pay an extra amount to compensate for the additional amount involved. *Raikas* who stay in the village throughout the year pay the rate of *aat* applicable to other castes whereas those among them who are semi-nomadic pay a lower rate. The rate of payment of *aat* has no relation to the position in the caste hierarchy and *Jat* households pay as much to a *Suthar* as a *Bhambi* household, other things being equal.

The amount usually paid under *aat* in the village and the time spent in attending to the work of a *jajman* is given below. The *Bhambi* gets a somewhat lesser average but this is more than compensated by periodical gifts and other concessions which he gets in a greater measure than other *kamins*.

TABLE 4

*Number of man-days spent in a year on the average under aat by a kamin and remuneration received.*

<b>Kamin</b>	<b>Number of man-days for services under aat</b>	<b>Rate of remuneration under aat</b>	<b>Average</b>
<i>Suthar</i>	4	Rs. 9.00	Rs. 2.25
<i>Lohar</i>	1.5	Rs. 3.20	Rs. 2.12
<i>Bhambi</i>	7	Rs. 12.80	Rs. 1.83

Since *aat* is paid at the time of harvest either in grain or its cash equivalent or *vice versa*, the amount actually paid varies with the nature of harvest. If the crops are good, the Suthar, Lohar and Bhambi get their full dues; but if the crops fail a much lesser amount is given. The residual amount is not guaranteed to be carried over entirely next year, but there is always an understanding that if there is a bumper harvest the workman will get an extra kilogram or so over his normal dues. The plea taken by the jajman for paying less when the crops are poor is that he himself has not been fully rewarded by nature although he has worked. A subsistence level has however always to be ensured to the workman. This convention of relating agricultural production to payment actually made under *aat* derives its strength from the belief that all contribute to the production of crops and should share accordingly.

Table 5 gives the average annual earnings last year of Suthar, Lohar and Bhambi *kamin* households from *aat*, as well as from piecework or daily wage basis. Since the year under reference was a bad year from the point of agricultural yield, the earnings, particularly from *aat*, were considerably less than what they would be in a normal year. Periodical gifts have not been taken into consideration. The data show that earnings from *aat* in the case of Bhambi is about five times his

TABLE 5

*Earnings last year of Suthar, Lohar and Bhambi households from traditional occupation.*

Kamin	Average earnings per household under <i>aat</i> (in Rs.)	Average earnings per household outside <i>aat</i>	Total
Suthar	Rs. 49	Rs. 42	Rs. 91
Lohar	Rs. 112	Rs. 185	Rs. 297
Bhambi	Rs. 128	Rs. 25	Rs. 153

earnings outside the system because most of the households in the village obtain his services under *aat*. In the case of Lohar the earnings outside *aat* are higher while in the case of Suthar they are almost equal.

From the economic angle the jajman system thus involves a limited use of money and relates to crafts and services based on simple technology involving few tools, low capital investment, little enterprise or managerial ability, few economic incentives, a restricted market and a limited number of transactions which are direct in nature. The price mechanism has little role in the determination of rewards. There is no direct assessment or measurement of the 'input' factors and no continuous effort to relate them to 'output' units. It would be erroneous to conceive *aat* simply as wage, i.e., as a remuneration received for labour. The jajmani system has to be viewed in the social framework within which it operates. The relationship between jajman and *kamin* is not merely economic. The ties are personalized and are a part of the social system which cannot be substituted or replaced at will. A whole set of values, statuses, roles, hierarchies and conventions are involved. The *kamin* does not simply render a service; he performs a role, fulfils an obligation and acts in conformity with the values and conventions. The amount and quality of service rendered is only one aspect. This does not, however, mean that there is no economic rationality at all or that no attempts are made to measure the goods and services against each other for, in the long run, the economic benefits to each other tend to be mutually acceptable. In the ties between jajman and *kamin* social incentives like status and prestige acquired through conformity to convention, kin-like ties, community living and reciprocal relations and obligations also operate to ensure the performance of duties.

### *Benefits and disadvantages of the jajmani system*

Table 6 gives the views of respondents on what they consider to be the benefits of the jajmani system. The chief benefit to the jajman is a cheap and dependable supply of labour, for the craftsman rendering service to the jajman under *aat* is required to attend to the repair and maintenance of his agricultural implements as soon as he is called even if his own work suffers or more lucrative work is available. If

TABLE 6

*Benefits to jajmans.*

Benefits	No.	% (n=129)
Cheap and dependable supply of labour for agricultural work	126	97.7
Cheap and assured services in socio-religious ceremonies and other occasions	111	86.0
Support in disputes, litigation, etc.	24	18.6
Establishment of close social relationships characterised by co-operation and reciprocity (kin-like behaviour)	20	15.5

the jajman were to pay on piece-work basis, the total amount paid in a year would be much in excess. Further, the payment would have to be made even if the crops failed. The other important benefit is the availability of services on ceremonial and ritual occasions when the duties, roles and expectancies of the different castes are conventionally fixed and certain gifts are due to the *kamin*. When respondents were asked whether any sense of defilement or ritual pollution was involved due to which upper caste jajmans do not perform the work of Suthars, Lohars and Bhambis, all stated that this was not true in the case of the Suthar's work, 5.4 per cent (Brahman, Mahajan and Purohit) stated that this was true in the case of the Lohar's work (the reason given by them was that insects, etc. perished in the fire which he lighted for his work ; this amounted to destruction of life and hence was repugnant), and all stated that this was true in the case of the Bhambi. Thus the jajmani system enabled the upper castes to maintain ritual purity and to display their higher prestige and status since the *kamin* has a subordinate role. Some of the jajmans said that they showed kin-like behaviour towards their *kamin* which was reflected in various customs and ceremonies like *noot pant*, *bandola*, *baan*, *nyota*, *kholian*, etc., and performance of the role of guardian for minors or arbitrator in disputes. Only 2.3 per cent of the jajmans felt that there were unsatisfactory elements and no benefits in the system since they had to stick to the same craftsman and pay him his dues even when he rendered unsatisfactory service.

In order to have the viewpoints of both the sides, Suthars, Lohars and Bhambis working under *aat* were also asked to state what they considered to be the benefits of the jajmani system. The chief benefits to the *kamins* are an assured income and periodical gifts and concessions (as for instance

TABLE 7

*Benefits to kamins.*

Benefits	No.	% (n=14)
Assured income	12	85.7
Periodical gifts and concessions	10	71.4
Credit facilities	4	28.6
Establishment of close ties	4	28.6
Preference in giving surplus land for cultivation	5	35.7
Preference in employment for other work	1	7.1

food and clothing in socio-religious ceremonies and facilities with regard to the use of water, tools, implements, carts, draught animals, fodder, litigation, etc.) which add to their economic stability in view of the absence of alternative sources of livelihood, lack of outside markets due to the largely self-sufficient character of rural economy, and restricted occupational and spatial mobility. For, under this system, the client for the services is assured, whereas under piece rate, the client would feel free to go to any craftsman and may even do some of the minor repairs himself. Thus, out of these 14 *kamin* households, 6 said that this system was preferable while 8 said that the piece rate would be advantageous, but expressed the fear that this would result in a fall of their earnings and loss of jajmans. The importance attached to this assured income from jajmani can be assessed from the fact that when a Suthar died without leaving any adult male member in his household to inherit the right to serve the jajmans, these were readily acquired under *aat* by another Suthar who had settled in the village. 35.7 per cent of the *kamins* felt that they would be preferred in land allotment for cultivation; but since there was hardly any surplus land with a jajman in actual practice, the gain was little. Only 4

*kamins* complained of low and irregular payments by *jajmans* and an element of compulsion in sticking to them and attending to their work. Both *jajmans* and *kamins* were, however, in favour of the continuation of the system.

TABLE 8

*Opinion of jajmans and kamins on whether the jajmani system should be continued.*

Opinion	Jajman's view		Kamin's view	
	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	128	99.2	12	85.7
No	1	0.8	2	14.3
	<hr/> 129	<hr/> 100.0	<hr/> 14	<hr/> 100.0

### *Distribution of authority and power*

The *jajmani* system involved a network of interacting role relationships with the balance of power between the *jajmans* and *kamins* lying in favour of the former. This is recognised by both the groups. The source of strength of the *jajmans* lies in the following factors. Firstly, the agricultural castes

TABLE 9

*Stronger side in the jajmani system.*

Stronger side	Jajman's view		Kamin's view	
	No.	%	No.	%
Jajman	63	48.8	11	78.6
Kamin	44	34.1	1	7.1
Both equally strong	22	17.1	2	14.8
	<hr/> 129	<hr/> 100.0	<hr/> 14	<hr/> 100.5

in the village namely, Rajputs, Purohits, Jats and Kalbis who form 80.5 per cent of the *jajmans* of Suthars, 84.4 per cent of the *jajmans* of Lohars and 77.9 per cent of the *jajmans* of Bhambis own most of the agricultural land. The average landholding per household of these castes is 21.8 hectares as compared to 8.4 hectares with a Suthar household, 9.3 hectares with a Bhambi household and 1.3 hectares with a Lohar

household. The possession of land gives power directly by controlling agricultural production and indirectly by the influence exerted over life in the village through greater wealth and economic security. Secondly the jajman households are in a numerical majority even when households belonging to the occupational castes who play both jajman and *kamin* roles in different spheres are excluded. The percentage of Suthar, Lohar and Bhambi households in the village following their traditional occupations is only 3.6, 0.5 and 1.0 per cent respectively. Thus jajmans have the strength of numbers. Thirdly, jajmans have traditionally been in a superior position. Fourthly, the occupational basis of caste and the belief that a person should follow his caste occupation ensures a continuous and stable supply of services by the *kamins* and removes the threat of refusal to serve. Thus, of the 14 households of Suthars, Lohars and Bhambis working under *aat*, 11 regarded the pursuit of caste occupation as a duty imposed by Hinduism. Fifthly, the essentially localized character of the demand for goods and services restricts the exercise of choice for alternative clients. Though there is no bargaining or trial of strength at every stage, in the long run this factor does put the jajman in a stronger position. Sixthly, the rural social structure with its traditional values and norms, hierarchies and groupings, roles and statuses, gives the jajmans who have mostly a higher ritual status an upper hand.

The *kamins'* interests are also protected. Their fewer numbers, multiplicity of jajmans making their power somewhat diffuse, indispensability (in case of some *kamins*), caste monopoly on the services rendered, kinship ties among the *kamins* in adjacent villages and the unwillingness of another *kamin* to serve a jajman unless permitted by the *kamin* originally rendering service (this factor derives strength from the caste territorial council governing all matters concerning the caste in a group of villages), prevents the jajman from unjustly depriving him of his dues or not fulfilling his obligations as laid down by conventions, traditions and norms. It would be wrong however to infer that the jajmans and

*kamins* are pitted against each other. On the contrary, the inter-dependence is recognized and the roles, expectations and rewards have been accepted as part of the cultural heritage.

### *Changes in jajmani*

The jajmani system has, through the course of time, undergone changes. We shall discuss here the changes that have taken place in recent years. During Jagiri<sup>6</sup> all the occupational castes were required to supply goods and render services to the Jagirdar both in his personal capacity as well as in his position as the head for governing the affairs of the village. Even the cultivating castes had given forced labour or *begar*. The Jagirdar ensured that the occupational castes followed their traditional occupation, that dues as traditionally fixed were paid and services traditionally rendered were continued. The chief beneficiary of the system was the Jagirdar since the whole structure was oriented to his advantage. Changes in the jajmani system have been brought about by (i) the abolition of Jagiri resulting in the removal of an autocratic power over the affairs of the village, (ii) a greater use of money in transactions, (iii) increased opportunities for occupational and spatial mobility, (iv) development of means of communication, (v) inroads made by technologically superior goods and services from outside markets, (vi) spread of education, (vii) changing concept of values and norms, (viii) enactment of legislation recognising the rights of the individual to follow any occupation and (ix) enforcement of the authority of the state. Changes have occurred in the following spheres :

(i) *Begar* has been statutorily abolished but there are still traces of it in a disguised form in the case of lower caste *kamins*, as for instance, Bhambis on whom various types of social and economic pressures are brought.

(ii) Services rendered for the village as a whole by these occupational castes are no longer given ; similarly, certain households who under the patronage of the Jagirdar received free services no longer get these as a matter of right.

(iii) Some of the services given under *aat* have been withdrawn. For instance, the Suthar no longer converts the logs into fuel wood for use in socio-religious ceremonies. Many of the services rendered to the other *kamins* are also less elaborate and are somewhat perfunctorily done.

(iv) The Suthars, who are an upper caste, do not now like to be called *kamins*. During marriages, etc., when the *toran* is brought by the Suthar it is customary for the bridegroom's party to give rewards to different *kamins* like the Suthar, Kumbhar, Lohar and Nai who render service on such occasions. Since such payments symbolize the differential caste status and roles, the Suthars now prefer to give the *toran* on cash payment.

(v) Most of the households of Bhambis have left their caste occupation of leather work. There is thus no compulsion now from the village community on the occupational castes to follow their caste occupation although certain services, like those of the Bhambi, are indispensable for the village community. Nor is there any compulsion for the *kamin* to provide a substitute.

(vi) The number of households getting services under *aat* has gone down and the system is now less embracing and pervasive than in the past. There has, however, been no decline in the demand for the services of these occupational castes which are now obtained to a greater degree under piece system than under *aat*. Eight *kamin* households out of 14 (4 Suthars, 3 Bhambis and 1 Lohar) said that the demand for their services has actually increased on account of an increased agricultural activity and dissociation from traditional occupations by some households.

(vii) The rate of payment of *aat* has remained practically the same ; there is, however, greater use of cash payment rather than kind payment. Bhambis have secured some additional concessions. Formerly when cattle died, half the tanned hide was given to the *jajman*, half was retained by the tanner and one rupee was paid as labour charges to the Bhambi. Now the Bhambi keeps the *jajman*'s share. The thread used for repairing the *jajman*'s leather articles have also now to be

supplied by him. Jajmans allege that the quality of services rendered by the Bhambi has declined. He is less regular, sincere and prompt, and has been quick to take advantage of his indispensability (because upper castes would never do his work for fear of ritual pollution) and the increase in demand for his services (since most Bhambi households have left leather-work).

(viii) There have been complaints from *kamins* of under-payment by jajmans in the matter of periodical gifts and other concessions associated with jajmani. Both jajmans and *kamins* now attach lesser importance to role relationships and and the socio-cultural factors concerning jajmani. There is also a lesser degree of kin-like behaviour. Money and profit are gradually becoming important considerations.

(ix) Though the jajman is still in a stronger position, the authority and power of the jajmans have gone down while that of the *kamins* have gone up.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. This is a contribution from the Human Factor Studies Division, Central Arid Zone Research Institute, Jodhpur. The authors are grateful to Dr. P. C. Raheja, Director, for his guidance and for providing research facilities.

2. All the castes practise cultivation in addition which is the chief means of subsistence of even the non-agricultural castes.

3. The *kamins'* right to serve jajmans can be inherited but is not saleable.

4. During Jagiri this was a privilege like non-payment of land revenue enjoyed by them.

5. This does not include the amount received as periodical gifts in socio-religious ceremonies in the house of jajmans. It is conventional for Bhambis, particularly those living in *dhanis* to receive *sogra* (loaf) from jajmans on alternate days.

6. This system of feudal landlordism came to an end after independence with the introduction of land reforms.

7. All the non-agricultural castes practise cultivation in addition which is the chief means of subsistence for them.

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# THE POTTER SERVANTS OF JAGANNATH AT PURI

N. K. BEHURA

(Received on 22 August 1964)

**Abstract:** The paper describes the services rendered by the hereditary castes of POTTERS in the temple of Jagannath in Puri in Orissa and also relates the changes to which they have been subject in recent times.

## *Introduction*

THE field work among the potters of Kumbharpara village has been carried out in two different phases: first in April, 1963 and again in April, 1964. The total period of field work consisted of three weeks. The village is situated on the western outskirts of the Puri town. Originally it was a uni-caste village, and in course of time, it has become a multi-caste one. Data were collected from the potters serving the Jagannath; from the Deulakarana, the traditional scribe of Jagannath temple; and from Pandit Vinayak Mishra, an Indologist of Orissa. *Mādalāpānji* or the temple chronicle and certain documents pertaining to the potters of Kumbharpara village have also been consulted.

## *The Potter Servants of Jagannath*

It appears that, in the later half of 12th century, seven POTTER (Oriya potter) families had been brought from Parbatipur village, six miles to the south-west of Puri, in order to supply earthenware for the daily cooking of the consecrated food for the Deity. They were endowed with 143 acres of land on the outskirts of Puri town, for supplying requisite

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number of pots to the temple free of cost, where the present Kumbharpara village is situated. Out of these lands, 140 acres were divided among the seven families equally and the remaining 3 acres were kept as common land for procurement of clay for pot-making.

Within seven hundred and odd years, the total number of potter families in Kumbharpara has gone up to 137. Originally the Kumbharpara village was purely a POTTERS' settlement, but in course of time people belonging to various other castes have settled in this village by acquiring this endowment land from the POTTERS by means of lease, in which the rulers never interfered. Although the POTTERS themselves have disposed of a major portion of the endowment land assigned to them they still serve the temple ungrudgingly.

The original seven families belonged to seven different lineages. Each lineage traditionally supplied one day's requirement of pots to the temple for one week. Notwithstanding the passage of time, the former arrangement of supplying the pots to the temple continued till 1957 (each lineage a day). But within the POTTER group, the family-wise frequency of service to the temple decreased. The change in the system after 1957 will be discussed later on.

Delivery of the pots in the temple premises is the responsibility of the POTTER. He delivers them to the Hāndijogāniāsuāra or Cook-in-charge of pots on the previous day of his turn. And as soon as he completes his turn, he also hands over the *palipata* or token-of-turn to the next man, which is suspended against the frontal eave of one's roof, thereby constantly reminding him of his turn. And thus the token rotates from one house to another.

The POTTER delivers the pots to the Hāndijogāniāsuāra or Cook-in-charge of pots in the temple precincts on the previous day of the date of his turn. In the long past, the POTTER was forbidden from entering into the inner sanctum of the temple ; but this has been lifted.

Prior to 1927, the POTTER never received any transportation charge from the temple for carrying the pots ; but instead used to get a bulk of *Mahāprasād* or sacred food, which was

more than enough for his family's daily consumption. But during 1927, when Orissa was caught in the grip of a famine, the then Raja of Puri, Shri Ramchandra Dev, stopped supplying *mahāprasād* in bulk to the various ritual servants of the temple. He granted to the POTTER six annas daily as transportation charges and one *magajaladu* or hard rice-cake as emolument. During the early forties, the transportation charge was increased to one rupee, and now it stands at one rupee and six annas.

The POTTER who carries the pots to the temple must be ritually clean. Neither he personally nor his agnatic kin group should be subject from any sort of ritual defilement. When an agnatic kin group is polluted, its members are not to supply pots to the temple. Under such circumstances, a polluted man has to pay some of his neighbours (other than agnates) and ask them to supply vessels to the temple.

Black pots are not usually used in the temple, only red pots are supplied. A pot cannot be used twice, and hence a fresh set of pots is required every day. The present day market price of all the pots that the POTTER supplies to the temple is Rs. 22.50.

On the occasions of *Makarsankrānti* and *Saptapurī amāvashya* which commence during the months of Māgha (January-February) and Bhādra (August-September) respectively, one of the priests and a couple of cooks of the temple visit the Kumbharpara village to collect *tara* or large baking pans required on these occasions. While carrying these pans from Kumbharpara to the temple the party is accompanied by a band played by low-caste musicians.

### *Commercial earthenware*

Besides various types of ware needed for cooking etc. every day, numerous other types of earthenware are also needed to meet extra demands for sanctified food that arises owing to the ceaseless visit of pilgrims from all parts of the country. These pots can only be had from the POTTERS in service to Jagannath and from none else. In order to retain

the exclusive privilege of supplying the additional requirement of pots, the Sevak POTTERS of Kumbharpara did obtain a decree from Purushottam Dev (who ruled over Orissa from 1479 to 1504 A.D.) during 1500 in lieu of an annual supply of 1000 pots to the latter as *bheti* (*bheti* is a ritual offering of gift symbolizing continued loyalty) on the occasion of *sunia* (*sunia* is the occasion during which the King holds the anniversary of his crowning). The gift of earthenware as *bheti* continued upto 1857. In 1857, Dibyasingh Dev demanded one hundred rupees from the POTTERS in addition to the one thousand pots as *bheti*, and it was complied with also. This amount was, however, enhanced to two hundred rupees by Ramchandra Dev in 1926. And in 1955, the amount was further raised to Rs. 500.00.

In 1857, Dibyasingh Dev also imposed the system of royalty on the sale of pots in the temple premises. The royalty was fixed at the rate of one anna per head-load of pots, and this money was credited to the temple fund.

### *Formation of Co-operative Society*

But the selling of pots in the temple premises to priests and cooks by the POTTERS individually led to unhealthy competition among them. In order to stop this, the POTTERS formed a *Sahajoga Samiti* or Co-operative Society in 1923, in order to regulate the sale of pots. The Society concluded an agreement with the Raja to pay Rs. 180 per annum as royalty to the temple fund and retention of the right to issue entry passes to its members. The entry passes were sold at the rate of two annas each, and each pass was valid for carrying one head-load of pots into the temple premises once only. The selling price of a head-load of pots was fixed by the Society, but not by the owner. And it was strictly incumbent upon each POTTER to sell his products at the price fixed by the Society. Any one who violated this regulation was not given an entry pass for a stipulated period of time. The entry passes were prepared out of palm leaf in those days. And now they are on printed paper.

There is however no record of this Society. The late Ratnakar Bisoi, the then headman of the POTTERS of Kumbharpara village, managed the affairs of the Society till the early forties when his son, Chintamani, succeeded him.

In 1955, the present Raja Shri Birakishore Dev raised the royalty on the sale of pots from Rs. 180 to Rs. 500. And this induced the POTTERS to establish a far more effective co-operative society. Hereafter the Society started supervising the manufacture of pottery in order to ensure quality, and took over completely the right of marketing within the temple premises on behalf of its members. The Society thus purchased earthenware from all its members and sold them in the temple premises through one of its office bearers. But the supply of earthenware for Jagannath's *Koṭhabhoga* or personal offering remained unaffected.

As office-bearers of this Society, Chintamani Bisoi, Lachhman Das and Ganga Bisoi were elected as President, Secretary and Cashier respectively. Eleven other persons were elected as members of the Working Committee of the Society. The office of the Society functioned in the village *Baiṭhakghar* or club-house. The Working Committee met every Friday evening to discuss the business of the Society. A senior POTTER was appointed by the Society as *Tadārakhi gumāstā*, or Supervisor, to look into the maintenance of the required standard in earthenware, and was paid fifteen rupees per month out of the Society's funds as remuneration. Another POTTER was appointed to sell the pots in the temple premises at a monthly remuneration of ten rupees. The President, Secretary, Cashier and the Working Committee members each received Rs. 2 during every attendance in the meeting of the society.

The fund of the Society was maintained by the profit it derived from the trade on pottery. The Society usually kept a margin of two rupees on each head-load of pots. The Society also paid the transportation charges of pots from Kumbharpara village to the Jagannath temple out of this profit, which was six annas per head-load of pots on an average.

*The Budget of the Society during 1955-1956.*

Total income	Rs. 7,280.00
Total expenditure	Rs. 6,676.12

*Details of expenditure :*

(1) Payment of allowance to different office bearers and officials	Rs. 5,448.00 per annum
(2) Payment of royalty on the sale of pots to the temple fund and <i>bheti</i> to the Raja	Rs. 1,000.00 per annum
(3) Freight charges	Rs. 135.75 ,,
(4) Miscellaneous	Rs. 92.00

The balance in the year 1955-56 was Rs. 608.88.

The Society lasted for three years. It was disbanded in the latter half of 1958, as the funds of the society were alleged to have been defalcated by the President, Secretary and Cashier. They did not present the account for the year 1956-57 before the Working Committee meeting during 1957-58. This roused sufficient suspicion and discord among the members. Consequently, some of the members being led by one Damodar Bisoi established a parallel sales depot in the temple premises in the name of the Society.

Chintamani Bisoi, the President, brought this matter to the notice of the Raja and induced him to prevent Damodar Bisoi and his group from selling their pots in the temple premises. This gave an opportunity to the Raja to nullify the previous agreement of paying the royalty in bulk annually. He ordered that henceforth one who would sell his pots in the temple premises should pay two per cent of the sale proceeds directly to the temple fund ; and this has been obeyed.

In 1959, the administration of the Jagannath temple passed from the hands of Raja to that of the Temple Endowment. As the Raja was removed from the helm of the temple affairs, the POTTERS seized this opportunity to stop the traditional payment of *bheti* to him (Raja).

Now there are three different factions among the POTTERS of Kumbharpara. One faction is led by Chintamani Bisoi, the tradition headman. The other two factions are led by Damodar Bisoi and Nanda Das respectively. These latter factions have been wilfully refraining from fulfilling their traditional obligations to the Deity; they have not been supplying pots for the personal offering (*Koṭhabhoga*) of Jagannath. But the other group headed by Chintamani Bisoi has been duly supplying pots for Jagannath's personal offering round the year. Since the transference of temple administration from Raja to the Endowment is still in a transitional phase, the concerned authorities have not paid any attention to this sort of anomaly. It is yet to be seen as to what action the administration takes if the group that fulfils the traditional obligation decides to refrain from it.

# THE PANCHAYAT SYSTEM OF THE DHURWAS OF BASTAR (M. P.)

KIDAR NATH THUSU

(Received on 26 October 1964)

**Abstract.** The paper describes how the panchayat works among the Dhurwas of Bastar District in Madhya Pradesh. A number of cases of a varied nature have also been reported.

## *Tribal Council*

IT has been reported in an earlier article<sup>1</sup> that the Dhurwas of Bastar lack a centralized authority to regulate their social and religious life. Instead, they possess what may be called the areal tribal councils, referred to by them by the term *panchayat*. Each of these councils exercises control over the Dhurwas living in certain specified areas of the Dhurwa tract of Bastar.<sup>2</sup> Such a panchayat in the area of our study<sup>3</sup> is headed by the Cetia<sup>4</sup> of Tongpal, who belongs to the Dhurwa ethnic group. The Dhurwas who recognize the authority of Bhina Cetia of Tongpal as their headman (Naik) live in the following six villages: Tongpal, Marenga, Littiras, Perma-ras, Marjum and Tahakwada.

It is worth while mentioning that the first four villages are traditionally grouped under the Hamirgarh Pargana of the (former) Sukma Zemindari and the (earlier-settled) Dhurwas living in these four villages not only regard themselves as the consanguineally related kins (*toler vaub* or *kutamb*), but also perform their annual ceremonies jointly in the common shrine at Tongpal, known as the Bhandarin Mata. The present position, nevertheless, is that the Dhurwas living in all the above - mentioned six villages, irrespective of the fact as to whether they are related to one another as consanguines

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or as affines (*saga*), recognize the Cetia of Tongpal as their Naik or headman.

While the office of the Cetia is hereditary, inasmuch as the succession passes from father to son, he is assisted in carrying out his functions by a council of Dhurwa elders. This council has neither a standing body nor is its membership fixed; the Cetia of Tongpal also does not directly select the elders. In fact, the composition of the council varies from time to time. Generally speaking, the members who 'guide the collective action of the Panchayat' are the prominent elderly males (*siyan log*) living in the above six villages. They are well known for their personal qualities like oratory, organizing ability, etc. and/or are holders of the secular/sacred offices like the Pelac, Patel, Sirah, etc. On certain occasions, the members participating in the council meetings represent some of the influential Dhurwa families/lineages/kin groups residing in the above villages.

The main function of such a tribal panchayat at present is to take cognizance of such breaches of the social rules which require purificatory rites to be performed for re-admission of the guilty person into the community. In these cases, the presence of the Cetia of Tongpal, namely, Bhima is essential, for only he can sprinkle the holy water on the guilty person after expiation, for which he is paid in cash. The guilty person has to bear the expenses of the ceremonial feast where Bhima Cetia is treated as the honoured guest.

Breaches of the rules recognized by the Dhurwas in the area of our study as constituting serious social offences, requiring expiatory rites, are as follows : —

1. To accept cooked food from a person belonging to an ethnic group 'lower' in status than his own, e.g., the Mahars, the Ghasias, the Bison-horn Marias, the Bison-horn Maria Lohars, etc.

2. To enter into wedlock with a woman belonging to the 'lower' ethnic group than his own.

3. To be imprisoned in gaol for committing murder, etc.

While it was reported by our informants that though breaches of the above rules seldom occur, still two cases involving

violation of the rules marked above as (2) and (3) came to our notice, and are reported below.

**Case 1.** In the first case, a Dhurwa of Marenga village, Ramu by name, had married Butki by the *tika* form, under the mistaken belief that she was a Dhurwa woman; for Butki could speak the Parji language and also behaved exactly like a Dhurwin. After leading a normal married life for about seven years, giving birth to three children, it was learnt that Butki was in reality a Gond (i.e. Bison-horn Maria) woman, having been previously married to a Gond of Sergipal village. In fact, her true identity was disclosed by her Gond husband, who had succeeded in locating her in Ramu's house in the village of Marenga. What had happened was that the Gond husband of Butki had left her long ago to work in the tea gardens of Assam. After return from Assam, he found that his wife had also left the village of Sergipal. Butki wandered through different villages, working as a field and road labourer; she was ultimately brought by the Rawat and the Bhatra co-villagers of Ramu Dhurwa from a village in the Koraput District of Orissa. She had told them that she was a Dhurwin, having lost her parents during childhood. Accordingly, when she was brought to the Dhurwa village of Marenga to get settled there, Ramu whose wife had run away from him some time ago, finally entered into wedlock with this hard-working young woman of unknown origin.

Although Butki had deceived everybody about her birth and antecedents, still when her true identity was revealed she was not driven away from the house of Ramu, because her long married life and general good behaviour had impressed everybody and stood in her favour. Thus, her Gond husband, who had come to demand the compensation (*kharcha*) from Ramu for having married his wife, was paid, after much haggling, Rs. 15 in cash, five measures (*pailis*) of rice and one cock. Butki, though released from the hold of her previous husband, still belonged by birth to a 'lower' group than that of the Dhurwas. As such, the tribal panchayat headed by Bhima Cetia of Tongpal decided that the circumstances of the case demanded that Butki alone need be formally admitted

into the Dhurwa community (*zat*). Accordingly, the Cetia performed the purificatory rites (*nirul kurral nindam*) by sprinkling on her body and head the holy water, which was procured ceremonially from the shrines of Danteshwari Mata of Hamirgarh village and Bhandarin Mata of Tongpal village. The Cetia was paid for his services Rs. 5 in cash, while each of the council elders was paid Re. 1. In addition, a communal feast was arranged for as many as 20 Dhurwa men, who hailed from different neighbouring villages. For this purpose, Ramu had to provide one pig and one goat, while wine worth Rs. 5 was also served to the assembled members including Bhima Cetia of Tongpal. It was estimated by Ramu that he had to spend nearly Rs. 100 for entering into wedlock with a (married) woman belonging to a lower *zat* than his own, though this had been done by mistake. Unfortunately, Butki died a few months after she was admitted into the Dhurwa community, leaving behind her only surviving son, Shukra by name, studying in Class II in his village school.

**Case 2.** The second case is concerned with the married sister of Mahengu Dhurwa of Marenga village, Iyeti by name, who was found guilty of murdering her husband, Ramu, of Marjum village. According to Iyeti, it all happened suddenly in the winter of 1955, when she and her deceased husband were sitting in front of the fire kindled in the courtyard of their house in Marjum. Ramu who had heavily drunk distilled liquor went on abusing and beating her. Ultimately, Iyeti, in exasperation took hold of a burning stick and struck it against the head of her husband, thereby causing his death. She was duly arrested and the court at Jagdalpur awarded her two years' imprisonment. During her period of imprisonment, it was her brother, Mahengu, accompanied by his wife, Sonadei, who visited her a few times. After her release, she preferred to stay in her brother's house in Marenga rather than in her husband's house in Marjum.

When Iyeti returned to the village of Marenga, she was required by the panchayat to undergo purificatory rites, as she was considered to have been polluted by imprisonment. Accordingly, holy water was procured from

different shrines situated both within and outside the village. This was ceremonially sprinkled over her by the Cetia of Tongpal as well as by the head of the lineage group to which she belonged by birth. This ceremony was performed in the shrine of Bairam Dev in Marenga, which is associated with her natal Tiger clan. The respective priests (*Pelackul*) belonging to the Marenkheria and the Tippin Palia segments of the dominant Cobra clan of Marenga as well as the priest or Pujari associated with the Tiger-affiliated Dhurwas of the village, were specially present on that occasion. The other participants hailed from the neighbouring six villages, including the kins of the deceased husband of Iyeti. After the expiatory ceremony was over, a general feast was arranged by Iyeti's brother, Mahengu, for the Dhurwas present on the occasion. The main items of expenditure for the feast consisted of eight measures of rice, two pitchers of rice-beer, one pig, one cock, wine worth Rs. 2, salt, chillis etc. The total amount spent by Mahenga on this occasion was estimated by him to cost approximately Rs. 25, including the fees paid to Bhima Cetia.

Over and above violations of the above rules, the Dhurwas in the area of our study also take cognizance of breaches of the following rules,<sup>6</sup> though these are regarded as less serious in nature, for no expiatory ceremony is required for their violation :

1. To eat new crops and fruits (like rice and *ragi*, mango and *mahua*) without performing the necessary ceremonies in public, jointly, with the three neighbouring villages.

2. To break taboos by constructing a house or a part thereof, or to perform a marriage ceremony during the period when the sowing of the consecrated rice seeds is being celebrated by the cluster of four neighbouring villages.

3. To perform the fair-festival (*mandai/bazaar*) in the village earlier than that celebrated in the village of Hamirgarh for the Hamirgarh Pargana as a whole.

While breaches of rule No. 3 are dealt with at the Pargana level (i.e., by fourteen villages forming the Pargana of Hamirgarh, irrespective of the fact as to whether

the violations are due to the Dhurwas or others), breaches of rules marked as No. 1 and No. 2 are dealt with by the cluster of four (Dhurwa) villages forming a unit within the Hamirgarh Pargana, namely, Tongpal, Marenga, Littiras and Perma-ras. The punishment imposed on the guilty person for violation of the above rules is generally to arrange for the sacrifice of a pig/goat, the meat of which is cooked and eaten together by the participants in an informal gathering. It may be added in this connection that violation of the above-mentioned rules were reported to be almost negligible.

### *Village Panchayat*

In addition to the tribal council of the above description, we find another council, also called *panchayat*, at work in the area of our study. While the territorial sphere of the areal council of the Dhurwas is spread to a number of neighbouring villages, the jurisdiction of the latter is confined to a single village; hence this may be termed the village council. In the village of Marenga, the Dhurwas form nearly 80% of the total population, while the rest is comprised by Rawats, Mahars, Bhatras, Bisonhorn Marias and the Bison-horn Maria Lohars. Quite obviously, the village council is not an exclusive body of the Dhurwas, however dominant they may be in both size and position in the village, but its membership is open to all the ethnic groups living in the village. As in the tribal council, the members participating in the village council are also prominent elderly males representing the main lineage groups and/or holding secular/sacred offices in the village. In fact, the selection of the village elders as well as the convening of the village panchayat is largely left to the parties concerned; the village headman or Patel has practically no say in the matter. Of course, on certain occasions, some prominent elderly men from outside the village, e.g. the Pargana Manjhi, etc., may be specially requested to attend the village panchayat meeting.

Since the major offences are at present dealt with by the Police, the functions of the village council mainly centre round

settling the minor civil and criminal matters pertaining to the compensation demanded by a husband whose wife has eloped with another man, and other petty quarrels arising among the villagers. The village council also holds its meeting whenever any Government demand for taxes and labour are to be met with by the villagers as a whole. So also does it deal with the contributions to be made in cash or kind by the villagers for celebrating the annual ceremonies, individually or in common, with neighbouring villages or on the Paragana level.

The venue of the meeting of the village council is any conveniently situated open place, e.g., the threshing floor, dancing ground. The procedure generally followed is that, as soon as any misdemeanour occurs in the village, the prominent elders of the village are informed. After the elders assemble together at a common place, the proceedings start, when the statements of the complainant and the accused, as also of other witnesses, are heard. While oaths are frequently used by the parties concerned to establish their innocence, efforts are made by the village council to arrive at a compromise by discussion and persuasion, and the judgement has finally to be arrived at unanimously. The most common form of punishment is by fines, which are imposed, as in the case of quarrels, on both the parties. The amount of fine thus realized is shared by all the participants; and the water-mixing ceremony is performed by the village Pelac to solemnize the happy ending. Similarly, in the case of an elopement, the actual marriage expenses are determined and the amount of compensation is finally settled by the village panchayat. Likewise, the contributions in cash/kind/services are fixed for the communal activities concerning the performance of any ceremony.

We may now cite a few typical cases which were recently dealt with by the village panchayat of Marenga.

**Case 3.** The first case concerns a quarrel that arose between Shudu Bade Bhatra and Dharmu San Bhatra alias Raja Muria. Both of them were residents of Kana Para of the Marenga village for more than a decade.<sup>7</sup> Permission had been given

to them by the village Pelac and others. While Shudu was mainly engaged in preparing earthen tiles, Dharmu primarily worked as a servant of the village Patel. Both of them, however, supplemented their income by working as agricultural labourers. An ill-feeling existed between them on the ground that Shudu would not accept Dharmu as a Bhatra, and, as we learnt, later on, Dharmu was really a Raja Muria who claimed to be a Bhatra, albeit a San Bhatra. One day, it so happened that Dharmu's young son, Loknath, refused to graze the cattle owned by Shudu, perhaps, at the instance of his father, although he had already been tending the cattle of others. On being provoked, Shudu became angry and, while he met Dharmu on the way, he lost control over himself and started abusing him and even threatened to shoot him with his bow and arrow. Though Dharmu listened quietly in the beginning, but after a while he answered back and brought out his axe to fight. Due to the intervention of the co-villagers, the quarrel did not take a serious turn ; but it was realized that the whole affair should be referred to the village pauchayat.

Accordingly, the pauchayat was held at about 8 A.M. on 30 November 1958 in the open ground of Kana Para. The elders who constituted the council were as follows :—

1. Thokru (Dakar)—Ex-Pargana Manjhi of Hamirgarh village.
2. Dhanurjai (Mahanti)—Ex-Forester (Dafedar) of Tongpal village.
3. Sumit (Mahar)—The Kotwal of Marenga, Tongpal & Littiras villages.
4. Mansa (Sundi) - of Tongpal village.
5. Ganga (Dhurwa)— ”
6. Narsingh (Dhurwa)—The Pelac of Marenga village.
7. Raju (Dhurwa)—The younger brother of the Patel of Marenga village.
8. Kandru (Dhurwa)—of Marenga village
9. Sonu (Dhurwa)— ”
10. Murra ( ,, )— ”
11. Shadu ( ,, )— ”
12. Sukalu (Mahar)— ”
13. Kamla ( ,, )— ”
14. Urra ( Lohar ) ”

It is worth while mentioning that neither the Rawats nor the Marias of the village were called to the meeting. In fact, all the hamlets of the Marenga village were not represented in the meeting. The last three (viz. 12-14) were specially asked to be present, because they happened to be present when the quarrel between Shudu and Dharmu had reached its climax. Obviously, the neighbouring householders of Shudu and Dharmu largely attended the meeting.<sup>1</sup> Regarding the elders from outside the village (nos. 1-5), they were contacted by Dharmu and Shudu separately, and persuaded to attend the meeting. In fact, they actually participated as full members in the deliberation. While Thokru and Dhanurjai were specially requested to sit on a cot laid on the ground, the remaining elders took their seats on the bare ground, forming a semicircle. Both Dharmu and Shudu, however, sat in opposite corners.

The proceedings started when Dharmu with folded hands bowed his head on the ground and described the facts which led to the situation as described above. Shudu listened quietly to all the charges levelled against him, and on being questioned, he admitted that he had misbehaved under the influence of drink; but made a counter-charge accusing Dharmu of provoking him and insulting him time and again. Then the statement of other witnesses was taken and a general discussion followed. It was finally decided that a fine of Rs. 5 should be imposed on Shudu, though it was at first suggested that a deterrent fine of Rs. 15 should be imposed on him. Dharmu was also asked to pay Rs. 5, more or less as a deposit for his good behaviour, and as such he was to pay Rs. 5 later on, according to his convenience. But a fine of Rs. 5 was required to be paid by Shudu there and then, and he did so instantly.

From this amount, a few bottles of distilled wine of *mahua* were purchased for some of the participants, while the rest of the money was shared among them at rates varying from annas 2 to 4 per head. Thokru and Dhanurjai, however, were paid Re. 1 in cash, as a mark of respect. Before sharing

the amount, the water-mixing ceremony was performed by the village Pelac named Narsingh Dhurwa.

This ceremony consists of invoking the Earth (Mati) deity and putting a few particles of rice inside a brass *lota* containing the water. If the two rice particles meet together at the bottom, the omens are read as favourable, otherwise it is considered that the parties may not have happy and harmonious relationship with one another; but generally the omens indicate favourable results. After reading the omens, Narsingh Pelac poured the water into four leaf-cups. These leaf-cups were placed in the hands of Shudu, Dharmu, a witness (Raju Dhurwa) and Narsingh Pelac. After changing these leaf-cups among all these four persons, the water was drunk by them. And, thus, the panchayat meeting came to an end by about 10 A. M. amidst the general mirth and fun (participated by the complainant and the accused also) caused by intoxicating drinks.

**Case 4.** The second case also deals with a quarrel that arose between Chaitu Dhurwa and Boda, a Bison-horn Maria. Both of them, though close neighbours residing in the Patel Para of Marenga village, were not on friendly terms. One day, it so happened that Chaitu accused Boda that it was because he had some unknown malevolent deity (*Devi*) in his command, his children were suffering from various ailments. Boda denied the charge; but since Chaitu was the priest of the shrine associated with the Neutak kin group (*jama*), and enjoyed considerable influence<sup>8</sup>, his words carried great weight. As such, Boda realized that he would have no peace so long as he continued to live as Chaitu's neighbour. Accordingly, he constructed a new house far away from Chaitu's house in another hamlet, namely, Dhurwa Para. But even after living in the new house, Chaitu continued to be unfriendly towards him and went on pestering him with the same old charge. Matters reached such a pass that the village panchayat was convened at the instance of Boda.

When the village council met on the appointed day in the threshing floor adjacent to Chaitu's house, it was realized that enough members had not gathered, so the meeting was post-

poned till next day. On the next day at about 12 noon, not less than twenty persons, including the ex-Pargana Manjhi, gathered together. After hearing both the parties, it was decided that since the quarrel between Chaitu and Boda involved the question of the invisible spirit (*Devi*), the verdict of the presiding deity of the Pargana of Hamirgarh, namely, Danteshwari Mata was needed. Accordingly, a party of seven participants, including Chaitu and Boda, went to the shrine of the Mata in Hamirgarh village. The verdict given by the Mata (as shown by the fall of a single rice particle from the lot of the rice-mixed-in-milk placed on the top of the stone image of Danteshwari Mata) was that Chaitu's accusations were false. Nevertheless, when the panchayat met again, it was decided that both Boda and Chaitu should be fined. While Boda was required to pay a fine of Rs. 10 which was to be shared by all the participants, Chaitu was to pay for a goat, and portions of its meat were to be distributed among all the participants. Furthermore, both of them were asked to contribute Rs. 8, with which distilled spirit was to be purchased and served to all the village elders attending the meeting. After extolling the virtues of living together amicably and invoking the aid and blessing of the Earth deity, the Pelac of the village solemnized the occasion by mixing the water and changing the leaf-cups containing the water among Chaitu, Boda and one or two other witnesses.

**Case 5.** The other cases dealt with by the village panchayat relate to the compensation demanded for eloping with a widow (Rawat) and with a married woman (Dhurwa). In the first case, it was on 10 March 1958 that a group of Rawats from the distant village of Oler came to Marenga to demand compensation from Sahadev Rawat for having eloped from Oler with and 'keeping' Sukti, a young Rawatin widow with a minor child. As soon as Sahadev heard of their demand, he contacted the village elders and by about 2 P.M., as many as eight Dhurwas and eight Rawats of Marenga assembled in the open ground near the house of Sahadev. At first, the Oler villagers demanded Rs. 40 as compensation for 'keeping' Sukti, which was vehemently opposed by the

Marenga villagers. After a great deal of hot discussion, it was decided that the following articles should be paid by Sahadev to the Oler villagers, namely, three measures (*paili*) of rice, one goat and Rs. 7 in cash. A few days later, Sahadev served distilled wine of *mahua* to all the village elders who had assembled and helped him in the settlement of the compensation.

**Case 6.** In the fourth case, a dozen Dhurwas from the Chindawada village came to Marenga on 19 March 1958 to demand compensation from Cheetu Dhurwa, for his son, Sahadev had run away with and was living with a young married Dhurwa woman named Kachedi of Chindawada. On hearing their demand, Cheetu informed the village elders and by about 9 A.M. as many as eighteen Dhurwas, four Rawats and the Mahar Kotwal assembled in the open ground lying adjacent to Cheetu's house. The two parties sat opposite one another and argued for a long time by citing precedents and describing the actual expenditure of the bride-wealth paid for marrying Kachedi. Tempers often ran high, and every time it looked as if the two parties would come to blows. But neither did Cheetu nor his son participate in the discussion. Kachedi, too, was found attending to her normal routine duties within the house, unconcerned and untouched. Finally, by about noon, a compromise was arrived at, and Cheetu agreed to pay Rs. 30 in cash, four measures of rice and a cock to the party from Chindawada. This settlement was solemnized by the water-mixing ceremony. Later on, in the same afternoon, wine worth Rs. 5 was served by Cheetu to the village elders participating in the panchayat meeting.

**Case 7.** The next case of this description deals with Sahadev Dhurwa, the son of the village Pelac. Though duly married to Sonei, Sahadev had developed for a number of years intimacy with a married woman of Kodripal, Devali by name. After some time, Devali ran away from her husband and started living with Sahadev, along with his wife Sonei. Then the residents of Kodripal went to Marenga in order to demand compensation from Narsingh, the father of Sahadev. Narsingh accordingly informed the village elders, when nearly

twenty of them assembled in order to discuss the terms of settlement. After a long drawn discussion between the two parties, Narsingh was persuaded to pay to the Kodripal villagers Rs. 80 in cash, five measures of rice, one goat and one cock. The village panchayat was, as usual, later on treated to wine worth Rs. 6 ; Narsingh paid Rs. 5 and the Kodripal people the balance of Re. 1.

**Case 8.** As already mentioned, the village council also holds its meetings whenever any Government demand is to be met by the villagers in common, or for celebrating a ceremony individually or jointly with other villages. Thus it was observed that a meeting of the village elders, consisting of thirteen Dhurwas, two Mahars, two Bison-horn Marias and three Rawats, was held at about 4 P.M. on 28 March 1958 in an open place, used as a threshing floor, lying near the dwelling house of the village Pelac. In that meeting, a number of issues pertaining to monetary transactions were taken up for discussion and settlement. One of the issues was to the effect that, a few years ago, the Marenga villagers had been asked to pay Rs. 25 collectively as the Janpad Cess (?). After payment, this amount had however been refunded, as the said due was required only from the Thekadari villages and not from Kham villages such as Marenga. This refund was duly spent by the village elders for such communal purposes as the *mandai*, etc. In 1958, however, a notice was served to the Marenga villagers through the concerned Patwari that they should remit the the arrears of Rs. 25 due from them. Since Phagnu Dhurwa was the Patel of the village when the amount of Rs. 25 initially collected and eventually spent, he was authorized to collect again this amount of Rs. 25 to meet the Government dues. As the time was short, it was proposed in the meeting that Phagnu should meet the Government demands from the sale proceeds of his bullock amounting to Rs. 45, and the village elders assembled in that meeting promised to subscribe the respective shares to Phagnu, the ex-Patel of the village.

**Case 9.** In a similar manner, a meeting of the village elders was held at about 8 A.M. on 6 January 1959 in the same

open place. The meeting was attended by as many as seventeen elders, consisting of eleven Dhurwas, three Rawats, one Mahar, one Bison-horn Maria and one Maria Lohar. The panchayat assembled for fixing the dates for the celebration of the Laundel or Diari festival. It was decided finally that the festival should be celebrated in the village from 28th to 31st January, 1959. It may be pointed out that the dates fixed by the village council are meant to be convenient to all the villagers; for in this season, marriages are usually performed by the Dhurwas, Rawats, and others. The dates should also grant enough time to the villagers for making such preparations as, for example, purchasing new cloth, preparing rice-beer, etc. Furthermore, the festivals should not coincide with celebrations in neighbouring villages.

**Case 10.** Finally, we may mention that another panchayat took place on 11 March 1959 on the same threshing floor, attended by fifteen persons, both Dhurwas and others, belonging to the village of Marenga. This meeting was convened in order to fix the contributions to be made for participating in the Pargana *mandai* or fair-festival which was to be celebrated in Hamirgarh from the 2nd to the 4th of April, 1959. After a lengthy discussion, the panchayat decided that, excepting for the householders of Tippin Palia, one *paili* of rice worth 4 annas from the Nagarias, i.e. owners of large fields, and two *sulis* of rice worth 2 annas from the Thotias, i.e., field labourers, should be realized to meet the expenses connected with the celebration of the Pargana fair. It was expected that while the householders of Tippin Palia would subscribe the sum of Rs. 5, the Nagarias would pay Rs. 6.62, and the collection from the Thotias would amount Rs. 6.75. Thus, the total sum to be collected from all the householders settled in the village of Marenga would amount to Rs. 18.37. Out of this sum, one goat, jaggery, flowers, wine, etc., would be purchased for offering the same as the contributions from the Marenga village as a whole, towards celebrating the Pargana *mandai* or fair. Further, it was decided that the symbols of the various deities propitiated in the village would be carried in palanquins, which would be escorted by five

Sirahs (mediums) and attended by twenty young Dhurwa male dancers.

### *Summary*

The foregoing account concerning the panchayat system of the Dhurwas of Bastar shows that there are two distinct councils at work. One of them is the tribal panchayat, which is headed in the area of our study by the Dhurwa Cetia or Naik of Tongpal. Its jurisdiction is spread to six neighbouring Dhurwa villages; hence it may be referred to as the regional tribal council. Its main function is to deal with cases which involve the breach of socially accepted norms and, as such, require the guilty person to undergo expiatory rites at the hands of the Cetia of Tongpal. While the office of the Cetia is hereditary, he does not directly select the elders constituting the tribal council. Neither has this council a standing body, nor is its membership fixed or permanent. Generally speaking, the members of the tribal council are those prominent elderly Dhurwas who are known for their personal qualities and/or are holders of sacred/secular offices, and/or represent the influential families residing in any of the six villages recognizing the authority of the Cetia of Tongpal as their headman. Two cases involving violation of the social rules were recently dealt with by the tribal council of the above description and have been described already.

The other council or panchayat has been operating at the level of the village; hence it may be termed the village council. In a village dominated by the Dhurwas, both in terms of their number and influence, such as Marenga, the membership of the village panchayat is not confined to the Dhurwas only, but is open to all the ethnic groups living in the village. It has been observed that the selection of village elders or *siyan log*, i.e. 'wise men' as well as the convening of the village panchayat is largely left to the parties concerned. On certain occasions, some influential persons from outside the village are specially requested to attend the meeting, though usually the members constituting the village council are mainly the holders of the sacred/secular offices in the village

and/or happen to be the close neighbours/friends/kins of the parties concerned. It is up to the particular village elder to participate in the village panchayat or plead some excuse for his inability. As such, the composition of the village council varies from time to time. The main function of this panchayat is to deal with matters affecting law and order in the village, e.g. to settle the terms of the compensation demanded by a husband whose wife has eloped with a man living in the village, or to persuade the parties concerned to come to an amicable settlement whenever any quarrel or dispute arises between them. It also holds its meeting whenever any Government demand for taxes and labour is to be met with by the villagers as a whole. So also it fixes the amount and rate of subscription for celebrating a joint festival or ceremony. A few typical cases recently dealt with by the village panchayat have been given to show its actual working and the composition.

It may, finally, be remarked that other ethnic groups of Bastar, namely, the Mahars, Rawats and Bhatras, have also an organization of their own which is headed by their headman (Naiks), 'to regulate their intra and inter-ethnic relationship in accordance with their established customs'. The territorial sphere of this council is spread, as among the Dhurwas, to a number of villages. But what is interesting is that, out of the six villages recognizing the authority of the Cetia of Tongpal, only four form a kinship and ritual unit and constitute a part of the Pargana of Hamirgarh. Even at present, certain breaches of custom are taken at the level of the Pargana, while others are dealt by the cluster of four Dhurwa villages; but these social offences are considered to be less serious in nature than those which are dealt with by their (areal) tribal councils.

#### N O T E S

1. Thusu, K. N. : 'The Dhurwa Tribe of Bastar,' *Vanyajati*, Vol. XI, No. 1 (1963), p. 21.
2. Thusu, K. N. : 'Distribution of the Dhurwa Population and their Habitat in Bastar', *Vanyajati*, Vol. XI, No. 4 (1963), p. 157.

3. The unit of study for undertaking researches on the Dhurwas of Bastar was, in the words of Dr. S. Sinha, under whose guidance the present study was undertaken by me, as follows :

'A village community of dominant ethnic group in an area of maximum concentration of that particular ethnic group viewed in terms of significant extensions, with scope for comparison of variants later on.'

- Accordingly, the village of Marenga was selected for the intensive study, for not only do the Dhurwas form nearly 80% of the village population but they also hold all the important sacred/secular offices in the village as well as own more than 80% of the agricultural land in the village. Furthermore, although such territorial units as the Pargana, Zemindari and the State are no longer sufficiently functional at present, still it was found during the course of my field work from 1958-60 (with breaks) that because of their significant historic depth, these units exercise comprehensive influence on the inhabitants. Hence, the Pargana of Hamirgarh, the Zemindari of Sukma and the State of Bastar were viewed as significant extensions of the village level community life. It was, moreover, realized that 'however comprehensive a village may be as a stage for social and cultural manifestation, many of the details of cultural life actually centres round such kinship (fictitious or assumed and real) units, as the tribe or caste, clan, lineage, family, etc.' Hence, we kept these kinship units as implicit in our study of the Dhurwas of Bastar.
4. According to Grigson (Ref. *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*, 1938, p. 288), the headmen of the Hill Maria parganas of Antagarh tahsil are sometimes called Sethia, while the Naiks are recognized as their (caste) headman by such ethnic groups of Bastar as the Bhatras, Mahars, Rawats, etc.
  5. Ploughing by Dhurwa women is also said to constitute a serious social offence ; but no case relating to the breach of this rule was reported by our informants.

6. A large number of breaches of the rule of exogamy, specially among the Cobra-affiliated Dhurwas, is explained by our informants as due to the fact that the Dhurwa society was divided in the past into two large exogamous groups, namely the Cobra (*Burtu Nang*) and their affines collectively referred by the generic term of the Tiger (*Du or Bagh*). While the Cobra moiety includes the Cobra clan (*Shukul Nang*) within its fold, nothing is remembered about the other moiety. Although no marriages could take place previously within the Cobra moiety, but now this rule of exogamy is brought in practice to the level of the Cobra clan. The result is that all the breaches of the marriage rule have occurred within the Cobra moiety and are socially accepted as such, but not within the Cobra clan. In this connection, mention may be made that Elwin (Ref. *Bondo Highlander*, 1950, p. ) has also noted that the two moieties of the Bondos hardly serve their exogamous purposes at present.
7. It is usually reported by all those who have settled in the village of Marenga from outside that specific permission of the Pelac or the Neutak was taken before they settled in the village. Similarly, if a person who has recently settled in the village dies, then the site for the burial ground within the confines of the village, is granted only by either the Pelac or the Nautak, who acts on behalf of the village community.
8. Chaitu was later selected by the villagers as their Patel, as the old Patel, Phagnu, tendered his resignation to the local authorities on grounds of ill health.

# THE BHANDARI CASTE COUNCIL

S. G. MORAB

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**Abstract.** The Bhandari are the toddy-drawers of Ratnagiri District in Maharashtra. The paper describes a judgment delivered by the panchayat of the caste. It also shows how the panchayat's authority is partly dependent on its association with a particular deity.

CASTE councils were considered as an effective instrument in controlling and regulating the behaviour of individual members of the caste. The establishment of British courts which administered justice through a uniform criminal and civil law removed many matters from coming under the purview of caste councils ; and in many cases, the High Court set aside the decisions of these councils. This was considered a death-blow to the existence of the institution of caste councils. After independence, again, when steps were taken towards democratic decentralization, it was considered necessary to introduce a new type of village council, which is both structurally and functionally at variance with the traditional council of a village. The cumulative effect of all these should have been the reduction of the traditional caste council into non-existence. But in many places, and among some castes, the traditional caste councils are still functioning effectively, and their decisions are not flouted, in spite of changed social and economic conditions.

The present paper is based on the study of the caste council of the Bhandaris of Ratangiri District in Maharashtra. An attempt has been made here to give a description of the Bhandari caste council and of the work done by it.

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The Bhandaris are a toddy-tapping caste, and are concentrated along the coastal belt of Ratnagiri District. They had to abandon their traditional calling and take to other professions on account of the policy of prohibition of the erstwhile Bombay Government. They were well organized and administered by their caste councils which functioned effectively in Ratnagiri, Guhagar, Dapoli, Rajapur, Malwan and Vengurle talukas of the District. But now their caste council functions only in places like Rajapur, Guhagar and Dapoli. The present description relates to the caste council of the Bhandaris in Rajapur Taluka.

There is a permanent council of the Bhandaris with its headquarters at Meethagavane in Rajapur taluka. This council is called *Gadi* or 'caste-seat', and has a hereditary headman known as Daivādhikāri. The jurisdiction of this Gadi extends to both Rajapur Devgad Talukas, comprising mainly the following villages: Rajapur, Jaitapur, Vijayadurg, Meethagavane, Madban, Shirse, Dande, Pangere, Sakhare, Nate, Abulgad, Pandavare, Kasholi, Gaunkhadi, Bhalavali, Vetaye, Kambe, Wada Giraye, Harchali and Dhaniware. Every village has a local council called Gāuñki. The disputes which remain unsolved at the village level by the Gāuñki are usually referred to the Gadi at Meethagavane where the representatives from all the above villages assemble to decide the case at the feet of deity Shree Sthambha. Such decisions are binding upon the members of the caste, and instances of disobedience are very few and far between.

The office of the Daivādhikāri is hereditary and has statutory recognition of the Shree Shankaracharya of Karvir Sankeshwar Mutt in Belgaum District. The family of the present incumbent possesses a *sanad* (certificate of recognition) from the Shree Shankaracharya. It is mentioned by McGregor and Mead (*Census of India*, 1911 : 232-233), that there were two families of Daivādhikāris formerly recognized as the caste headman. It is said that one of the headman's predecessors was withdrawn by the Shree Shankaracharya for abusing his power. We find only one family of Daivādhikāri

at the present time. It was true that the caste members had the authority of ousting the Daivādhikāri in case of misconduct or misuse of power by the former, but this was done with the approval of the Shree Shankaracharya Mutt. There is a record to show that one of the previous headmen was ousted from his post. Now-a-days, no such *sanads* are issued by the Shree Shankaracharya Mutt.

The Gadi used to deal with cases like infringement of rules of the caste, contracting marriages with other castes, committing sexual crimes, beating or killing a cow, etc. In case of religious dispute, the Gadi refers the matter to the Shree Shankaracharya Mutt, Karvir Sankeswar. Punishment varies according to the severity of the offence, ranging from feasting the caste members, performing purificatory rituals, to ostracism.

The office of the Daivādhikāri is held in high esteem. Previously he was invited to caste assemblies held in Ratnagiri, Sangameshwar and Dapoli. The Daivādhikāri has earned respect not only for himself but also for all persons of his village of Meethagavane, which can be seen from the first service given to the guests from Meethagavane. Even when there is no guest from Meethagavane, the host will customarily ask at a reception given during marriage whether there is any guest from Meethagavane (*Meethagavanyacha pahuna koni ahe ke ?*).

It is clear from the above description that the Gadi has been able to establish strong tradition in maintaining its structure and functions smoothly. The caste members still hold it as an institution of adjudication, especially when there are disputes arising within the caste. I shall describe here an intra-caste dispute, referred to by a caste member, which was held in 1961, when the trial was conducted by the Gadi.

#### Case 1.

A case relating to sex crime was reported to the Daivādhikāri of the Gadi at Meethagavane. The Daivādhikāri,

Shree Gavanakar, along with other members, tried this case. A man had been allegedly involved in the seduction of a girl of the same caste. The trial was conducted according to the usual practice. It was a prolonged one. The caste assembly was convened four times, in which the views of both complainant and the accused were heard, evidences were taken, and a unanimous verdict was ultimately announced.

The documents in the case include statements of the concerned parties and a detailed record of the judgement given at the assembly held on the occasion of final disposal of the case. The records maintained by the headman are in Marathi. The names of the parties mentioned in the case are not disclosed here. The salient features of the case, in brief, are as follows :

X of Bhalavali village (Rajapur Taluka) of the Bhandari caste filed a written complaint on 17 March 1961 with the Daivādhikāri accusing a caste member Y of his village. He stated that the latter had seduced the complainant's sister, S, as a result of which the complainant's sister gave birth to a male child. The complainant also stated that he had lodged a complaint against the accused with the Police Sub-Inspector, who advised him to get his grievances redressed with the help of caste authorities. X approached the Gadi and prayed for judgement and infliction of punishment on the guilty person.

On receiving the complaint, the Daivādhikāri sent notices to the accused Y and the victim, S, summoning them to appear before the caste assembly. The date was fixed on 2 April 1961.

The meeting was held at Bhalavali village. In the caste assembly, Y denied the accusation made against him and ascribed the probable reason to personal quarrels (*vaiyaktik bhandān*) between him and the complainant. The victim, S, on the other hand, was emphatic in her statement made on 5 April 1961, in holding Y alone, who had given her every hope of marriage, as guilty of the commission of the offence.

The caste assembly again met at Meethgavane on 12 January 1961. In the meeting, Y, once again, denied the charges against him and said that he was innocent. But the complainant, the victim, and the mother of the victim, deposed that Y was the person who had committed the offence and no one else. The victim, S, prayed the elders for entrusting the responsibility of rearing the child to the accused.

The Daivādhikāri served notices on 5 October 1961 on Y, and also on one Shree Narvekar of Bhalavali, summoning them to attend the meeting fixed on 15 October 1961 for hearing the case. The meeting was held on the latter date, but the accused was not present. He had communicated to the Daivādhikāri his inability to attend on account of illness. This was supported by a medical certificate sent by the accused by registered post which was received following the day, after the meeting had been held. The complainant was present at the caste assembly, and once again, repeated his charges.

The Daivādhikāri once again, summoned the concerned parties requesting them to attend the meeting fixed on 14 November 1961 along with witnesses (*sākahī*), and evidences (*purāva*), if any. In his letter to Y, the accused, he warned that failure to attend the caste assembly on the specified day would force the assembly to dispose of the case according to tradition (*jāti dharmā*), i. e., there might give an ex-parte verdict.

Then the caste assembly held its deliberation on 14 November 1961, at the Gadi in Meethgavane in the shrine of the deity Shree Sthambha. The parties concerned were all present.

Three witness, namely, Shree Manjrekar, Bhosle, and Hatiskar, who were present at the time of the preliminary enquiry and the Police Patil of Bhalavali (who was of the same caste), testified that the victim had named Y, and nobody else, as the person responsible for seduction.

But Y, the accused, denied having committed the alleged offence, the victim S, swore on the name of God Shree

Sthambha of the caste, and repeated her charge against Y.

The trial was concluded after recording the statements made on 14 November 1961. The caste assembly gave the following verdict.

**Summary of the case :**

The Daivādhikāri of the Gadi at Meethagavane with a view to disposing of the complaint filed by Y of Bhalavali, on 17 March 1961, accusing one Y of the same village, as having seduced the complainant's sister, S, summoned the concerned parties for trial. On scrutiny of the statements made by the complainant, the victim, the accused and some of the caste members, the caste assembly which met four times, came to the conclusion that Y was the real culprit and deserved punishment. The accused did not produce any reliable evidence to support his innocence, beyond his denial of the alleged charge. Therefore, the caste assembly had to take the decision of imposing social boycott on the accused, until the latter admitted his guilt and surrendered himself to the caste authorities.

The assembly's decision, contained in the judgement given on 14 November 1961, is as follows :—

‘.....The said Y shall not be given tobacco pipe (*ghurgudi*) for smoking by any caste fellows, and none shall smoke his pipe. No person shall dine with him, neither shall invite him to any function, nor attend any of his. Any person of the caste who is found attempting to have any sort of relationship (with the culprit), shall be similarly boycotted. The caste has imposed social boycott on Y, and the same shall remain until the culprit admits his guilt, performs penance and surrenders himself to the caste. Any person of the caste, opposing this decision (shall suffer from the wrath or *sapath* of God Shree Sthambha, and of the caste. Day, 7, Kārttika, Plavanām Samvatsar, 1883, dated 14 November 1961.’ (Extract from the original document translated from Marathi.)

The above document was signed by 32. caste members who were present at the assembly representing the villages of Madban, Meethagavane, Bhalavali, Harchali, Kambe, Betaye, Pangere, Dhanivare and Jaitapur.

### *Observations*

The above case illustrates to what extent the caste council exercises its power of adjudication and punishment of the offenders when the guilt of the persons is proved. In this particular instance, a caste member raised the issue at the caste council for arbitration, when he had failed to get any settlement at the hands of the law courts. The picture, however, would have been different, had the case been conducted in accordance with Indian Criminal Code. But the caste member was keen on taking up the case to the caste court of the area, as it was realized that the traditional council was powerful enough to mediate in such cases. Its authority was regarded as supreme.

# CASTE PANCHAYAT OF THE KURMI MAHATOS OF SINGHBHUM

S. K. GANGULY

( Received on 12 August 1964 )

**Abstract.** The Kurmi are an agricultural caste in West Bengal and Bihar. Their panchayat was studied in a village in the Singhbhum District of Bihar. The author reports a number of cases brought up for decision in that panchayat.

THE Kurmis are a populous cultivating caste of Bihar distributed mainly in the districts of Hazaribagh, Singhbhum, Patna, Darbhanga and Muzaffarpur. They are also found in the adjacent States of West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. The caste panchayat of the Kurmi Mahatos is popularly called *Desh*. The unit of such a panchayat consists of twelve or more contiguous villages where the Kurmi Mahatos form a majority. The proceedings of one such caste panchayat were studied in Chandil Police Station (P. S.) of Singhbhum District, whose penal jurisdiction extends over the villages of Ketunga, Nimdih, Sangra, Raghunathpur, Tilla, Ghuitadih, Bamni, Janta, Gunda, Sirka, Ramnagar and Sidhagora.

The Deshmandal is the chief executive of the Desh. Kamal Mahato, a septuagenarian of Raghunathpur, holds the office presently (1963). It is reported that, about forty years ago, the late Sasadhar Mahato of Andharejore-Kendih (Patamdah P. S.) was their Deshmandal; and his sphere of influence covered a large part of Patamda, Barabazar and Chandil P. S. He derived his authority from the Raja of Barabhum Pargana to whom an annual payment of twelve rupees was made. But on experiencing administrative difficulties

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in its management, he created a number of new Deshmandals directly under his authority in different parts of the territory. In return, each of them agreed to pay him an annual sum of Rs.1.25. Thus, Jagarnath Mahato of Kherua in Barabazar P. S. ascended to power with his jurisdiction embracing the area under review besides some other adjoining villages. It so happened that Jagarnath sometimes failed to attend the caste conventions, and on such occasions, the Mahatos themselves used to adjudicate cases after assuming full powers of the Deshmandal, who was symbolically represented there by his walking stick. A fraction of the money realized as penalty was remitted to the Deshmandal. But this arrangement did not last, as quarrels arose between the Deshmandal and the Mahatos. Ultimately, they severed all connexion with Jagarnath by electing one of their colleagues to the post. Later on, his tenure in the present office was approved of by the Rajah for a payment of an annual fee of Rs. 1.07. But Kamal discontinued this payment soon after the abolition of the zemindary system in 1952.

The Deshmandal, also known as Desamanjhi, is assisted by two smaller officers, namely, the Potloi and the Mahato. All these posts are hereditary, and do not carry any emolument or endowment of free land. Potloi, the Secretary, performs certain specific rituals during an expiatory ceremony. Haru Mahato of Sangra held the post till his death. His younger brother, Srikanta, then succeeded him. The Mahato is the traditional village chief, and is believed to be the first settler of the village. He maintains law and order in his domain and wields considerable influence. No social ceremony connected with birth, marriage or death is regarded complete without his presence.

Theoretically, the panchayat can be summoned whenever breaches of caste rules and regulations are brought to its notice by the Mahato of the affected village. Among the offences, it specially takes cognisance of cases like (a) elopement or illicit relations with a different caste-man, (b) divorce other than by mutual consent, (c) death of a bullock or a cow due to the owner's fault, (d) *Mechapatta*, or if

the wound of a person is infested by worms, this being ascribed to secret sinful acts. When any of the above cases takes place, the village Mahato sends one of his associates to the members of the panchayat for acquainting them with the situation. Then, in consultation with his colleagues, the Deshmandal convenes a meeting at his residence in order to hear the defendant. When a guilt is proved, a fine is imposed according to the culpability and means of the offender. Moreover, he is required to perform a purificatory ceremony in the presence of his relatives, members of the panchayat and the villagers. A feast is deemed essential to mark his re-admission to caste.

**Case 1.** In Nimdih, X Mahato's\* daughter had an affaire d'amour with an Oriya pump-driver. This man had to leave the village and the girl was also chastised. Some months later, she secretly left the village with a Bihari labourer. Her father had to perform an expiatory ceremony and also was fined Rs. 80, as he failed to control his erring daughter. The incidence occurred about 30 years ago.

**Case 2.** It so happened that one evening Y Mahato's younger sister left her husband's house and was alleged to have passed the night with a Kharia young man. She came back home next morning. Eventually, the case was brought up before the panchayat. Meanwhile, Y secured the support of his village Mahato for a sum of three hundred rupees and also promised to pay another two hundred rupees to the panchayat. In the caste meeting, the girl's presence in the village was vouched for by the Mahato of Ghuitadih and so the case was lost. The girl was taken back to caste. This happened about twenty-eight years ago at Ghuitadih.

**Case 3.** About twenty-five years ago, in village Bamni, Z Mahato's daughter and daughter-in-law ran away with a person of unknown caste to Jamshedpur. The panchayat demanded a sum of two hundred rupees for restoration of Z's caste. This was beyond his means, and he was excommunicated. Then the

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\* Nowadays even an ordinary Kurmi adds 'Mahato' after his first name in order to enhance his social prestige.

Mahato of the village in collusion with his followers invited another Deshmandal residing in the village of Lawa to perform the expiatory ceremony in place of Kamal, their own Deshmandal. A sum of rupees eighty was extorted from Z, most of which went to enrich the coffers of the Mahato. Since then, some people of Bamni have transferred their allegiance to the Deshmandal of Lawa.

**Case 4.** A Mahato girl of village of Tilla discovered soon after marriage that her father-in-law was a leper. She was compelled to serve food to him in spite of her protest. She reported this to her parents on return to her natal village and declined to go back. So her parents secretly negotiated her marriage with another man of a distant village. On hearing the news, her husband brought it to the notice of the panchayat. But in the caste meeting, the divorce was readily granted and she discarded the iron bangles in the presence of the panchayat to signify the formal separation. This took place about twenty-three years ago.

**Case 5.** About 17-18 years ago, in the village of Bamni, A Mahato's daughter-in-law was arrested by some villagers while eloping with an outsider. The seducer somehow escaped, and the girl was brought back to the village. She was re-admitted to caste when her relatives paid a fine of Rs. 200 to the panchayat. The zemindar of the area, whose seat was at Bamni, also extorted a sum of Rs. 50 from them on the ground that the incident had damaged the reputation of his village.

**Case 6.** About 15-16 years ago, Z Mahato of the village of Sangra, while working in Jamsbedpur, had a mistress whose mother was employed in a liquor shop. A few years later, when one or two children had already been born, he married her without the approval of his relatives. On return to his natal village, he was excommunicated on the ground of his spouse's doubtful parentage. However, the Mahato of the village, in co-operation with his friends at Ketunga and Raghunathpur, re-admitted him on a payment of five hundred rupees. But he did not share the sum with the villagers, which infuriated his opponents. In collaboration with some people of Nimdih, they

brought the matter to the notice of the panchayat. Accordingly, a meeting was convened at Nimdih to discuss the affair in the presence of a Mahato lawyer from Purulia. There, the latter strongly pleaded on behalf of he accused and the majority verdict went in his favour. It was reported that Z Mahato spent more than one thousand rupees to win the case.

**Case 7.** About 13-14 years ago, the father of Mahato M fell ill, and worms began to appear in his nostrils along with blood. He was consequently socially boycotted. The case was referred to the panchayat. He had to perform the customary expiatory ceremony in the presence of a Brahman, and the members of the panchayat were given a sumptuous feast to mark the occasion of his re-admission to caste.

**Case 8.** About 8-9 years ago, a Mahato woman of Ghuitadih deserted her husband in the company of a cowherd of the Sahis caste. On enquiry, it was found that the girl had taken the initiative in the above affair. Hence, no charge was framed against the cowherd. But the woman's husband had to perform expiatory ceremony and spend about eighty-five rupees. Her minor son observed a mourning period of ten days, as if a death had taken place in the family, and offered *pinda* or funerary oblations, signifying the social death of his mother.

**Case 9.** A Mahato of the village of Samanpur wanted to divorce his wife by implicating her in a sham theft case. Her parents referred the case to the panchayat. In the meeting, the husband was advised to withdraw the charge on humanitarian grounds, otherwise it would turn the girl and her child shelterless and destitute. But the young man's father would not listen and tried to influence some of the panchayat members by offering them Rs.500 for dissolution of the marriage. One section of the panchayat took the side of the young man while others opposed it. The latter recommended some penal measure on the man for insisting upon divorce. Ultimately, the man's father was fined Rs. 100 and had to give a feast to the panchayat. The above incident took place about five years ago.

**Case 10.** About four years ago, a Mahato of village Ketunga assaulted his younger brother's wife during a domestic quarrel,

thus violating the customary rule of avoidance. He was accordingly asked to perform an expiatory ceremony, which he refused to undergo. He was consequently excommunicated. But the man circumvented the situation by swearing allegiance to L. Mahato, the leader of another village faction. He has not performed the expiatory ceremony till now, and is living in the village without any consequence.

**Case 11.** About two years ago, a Mahato's married daughter conceived while she was living with her parents, and the culprit responsible for this was found to be their cowherd, also a Mahato by caste. When it attracted notice of the villagers, he gave her in marriage with that man although she had already been married. The people were lulled by a lavish feast and the case was suppressed without reference to the panchayat.

**Case 12.** A year and a half ago, a diseased bullock succumbed in a Mahato's house in the village of Ketunga. It so happened that the man's son had tied the bullock to a post on the night of its death. So the man had to perform an expiatory ceremony in the presence of a Brahman priest. The members of the panchayat were also invited to a feast.

**Case 13.** About a year ago, the daughter of a Mahato of Ketunga was detected in a compromising position with a man employed in a local office. But the case was hushed up, as the man was on friendly terms with one of the village factions. His supporters argued that reference of the incident to the panchayat would tarnish the reputation of the girl's father.

**Case 14.** About a year ago, a Mahato of the village of Ketunga secretly brought his employer's married daughter to his village. It was reported to the panchayat of the seducer's village by the girl's parents and relatives. But the people said that they knew nothing about the incident. Soon after this, her father and some village elders of Baghra visited Ketunga to take her back; but she refused. After a joint deliberation, the whole incident was treated as closed, after the accused had provided them with a sumptuous feast. Since then, the two

have been living in the village as husband and wife without having gone through a formal marriage ceremony.

**Case 15.** A few months ago, a Mahato of Ketunga assaulted an old Mahato woman for abusing his wife. The aggrieved brought it to the notice of others. When nothing was done, she lodged a formal complaint to the panchayat, but her case was dismissed.

The above are some typical cases disposed of by the caste panchayat, from which a few relevant facts emerge. The panchayat or Desh is essentially a semi-religious organization, effective in maintaining approved social standards.

It has also been observed that communal feasting constitutes an integral part of the expiatory ceremony, which symbolizes the offender's re-admission into caste. The active participation of the relatives, villagers and members of the panchayat to the feast impart a feeling of solidarity among the caste members. The services of a Brahman priest in a few expiatory ceremonies is an attempt to add a religious touch, as well as enhance the prestige of the culprit.

Lately, the institution of panchayat has been undergoing rapid transformation. The abolition of the zemindary system has synchronised with changes in the traditional leadership of the place. It has imparted a severe blow to the social institution in question. So long the panchayat flourished under the zemindar's active patronage. Now it is bereft of power to a considerable extent. The Mahatos, who were also petty village landlords, have lost grip over their subjects in their respective areas. Now village factions have arisen, and brought in further complications.

The feeling of caste solidarity unifying the people of dispersed villages under one social institution, namely, the Desh is being gradually replaced by the idea of the village's territorial unity and solidarity. It is more pronounced among the elite of the villages who lay stress on the unity and solidarity of their village instead of adhering to the age-old caste organization

which spread over several villages. As a result, the influence of the *Desh* or caste panchayat is rapidly dwindling.

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# CASTE AMONG RURAL BENGALI MUSLIMS

UMA GUHA

**Abstract.** This is a report on caste as it exists among rural Muslims of the District of 24 Parganas in West Bengal.

**A**CCORDING to Srinivas, 'The structural basic of Hinduism is the caste system'<sup>1</sup>, and it is generally taken for granted that the caste system is entirely a Hindu phenomenon. But closer scrutiny reveals that other communities besides the Hindu, such as the Muslims, have assimilated this system into their social structure. 'Caste behaviour' among the Muslims may not be as rigorous as among the Hindus, but still it exerts a great deal of influence on the social relations of the Muslims.

This note embodies one of the side-studies of our fertility survey carried out in several villages in 24 Parganas, West Bengal, during 1960-61. This area is predominantly populated by Muslims. The total population is about 15,000, among whom nearly 90% are Muslim.

The Sheikhs or the upper class Muslims, claim descent from one Sheikh Abu Muhammad, a rich zemindar, who had to flee his native place in Burdwan District on account of repeated invasions by Maratha bandits, when he came to this part of West Bengal. He settled in the village of Jhalpata or Nehalpur, as it is named now.

Of all the villages in this area, only Nehalpur is inhabited by Sheikhs. The other villages are mostly occupied by the Cultivator and the Fishermen Muslim groups.

Any inequality among the Muslims is not recognized under Islamic law or custom, nor is caste pollution admitted by the tenets of Islam, which ordains that there should be no distinc-

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tion between man and man due to birth or occupation ; there should be no untouchability or physical repugnance of one group by an other. But in practice, many of the caste observances such as pollution of food and drink, restriction of inter-dining, inter-marriage, are followed by the Muslims of rural Bengal.<sup>2</sup>

Three distinct groups are found among the Muslims of this area, namely, the Sheikhs, the Cultivators and the Fishermen. The structure and organization of these three hereditary Muslims groups are very much akin to those of the parallel Hindu castes of these villages : Brahmans, Hindu Cultivators and the 'Untouchables'.

Socially, economically and educationally, the Sheikhs are very much superior to the other two groups. 91% of the Sheikhs are literate,\* while only 16.04% and 1.04% of the Cultivators and the Fishermen respectively are literate. More than half of the Sheikhs are engaged in the professions of law, medicine and education. The rest are either landlords or businessmen. About 45% of the Cultivators are agriculturists and nearly 72% of the Fishermen are engaged in their own traditional occupation.

There are distinct zones or wards for these groups. A field or two, roads or tanks intervene between these wards. The ponds used by the Sheikhs for drawing drinking water may be used by the Cultivator ; but on no account is a Fisherman allowed to draw water from those tanks. Fishermen have their own separate tanks, and no Sheikh or Cultivator will take water from there.

A Sheikh will not dine at the same table with a Cultivator or a Fishermen. On a ceremonial occasion, such as marriage, if a Cultivator is invited to a Sheikh's house, he has to eat apart from the Sheikhs. If a Fisherman is given food in a Sheikh's house, he has to wait outside with his own bowl. The same is true of the Cultivator. He will not dare to ask a Sheikh to dine at the same table with him or allow a Fisherman to come near his dining table.

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\* Those who can read and write or can only read have been considered as literate.

The same kind of caste behaviour is followed in the mosques also. The Sheikhs occupy the first rows and the Cultivators sit quite apart and far behind them. The Fishermen are not allowed to enter the mosques. During religious ceremonies such as Id, Muharram etc., the Fishermen sit and pray outside the mosque. They cannot also enter the shrines of the Muslims. Even burial places are different ; different groups having their own grounds for the purpose.

A Sheikh can marry only a Sheikh and no one else. It is also true of the other two groups. Some time ago, a Sheikh girl eloped with a Cultivator boy. They were ex-communicated by both the Sheikhs and the Cultivators. They are living at the extreme end of one of the villages. Though a few years have elapsed, the couple is still shunned by all, and no one enters their home.

Another interesting fact may be noted here. Among the Fishermen, there are two sub-groups, namely, the Dhawas, and the Chaudulis. The difference between the two is that both Chauduli men and women catch fish, whereas only Dhawa men catch fish. The Dhawas consider it derogatory for their women to do so.

Though a Dhawa may dine with a Chauduli, he would not marry a Chauduli. There is one instance of a Dhawa boy marrying a Chauduli girl. The couple was expelled from the Dhawa group. The Dhawa boy had to feed the entire Chauduli community and pay a fine to the elders of the community before he was admitted into the Chauduli group. Even then, the couple is treated with some reservation and fingers are pointed at them as an example of the evil influences of the present age.

The caste phenomenon of the Hindus thus operates and reinforces itself through social pressure and public opinion. The same mechanism seems to be responsible for the propagation and continuance of caste behaviour among the Muslims also.

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<sup>2</sup> See Bose, Nirmal Kumar : *Hindu Samajer Gadan*. (Structure of Hindu Society), Calcutta, 1356 B. S., pp. 142-47.

# AN ANTHROPOMETRIC STUDY OF THE KALITA

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*(Received on 9 February 1965)*

**Abstract.** The Kalita are a populous caste in Assam. The authors have described in this paper their physical characteristics. The study is based on 120 individuals.

## *Introduction*

**T**HE Kalita form a very important and interesting caste —group of Assam. Various works have been written as regards the origin of these people, but it is still a subject of speculation. According to some, they entered India through the north-western route, settled in upper India and then migrated eastwards, ultimately reaching the Brahmaputra Valley. They were kshatriya. Again, in the opinion of others, they came to Assam before the Vedic Aryans. They were non-Vedic Aryan and not kshatriya. A very early migration of a section of the Caucasian people has been suggested by many scholars. They were supposed to form a continuous chain extending from the Mediterranean region to south-east Asia.

The present work, however, does not pretend to suggest anything as regards the origin or the ethnic position of the Kalita. It gives only a brief anthropometric account based on measurements on 120 adult male Kalita individuals of the villages neighbouring Rangia, which is situated on the north bank of the Brahmaputra river in the District of Kamrup, and Assam. The data were collected in the months of November and December, 1964. Earlier, Waddell (1901) measured 6 Kalita male individuals and published the averages along with the

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actual data. Datta (1938) attempted to make a comparative anthropological study of some of the castes of Assam. In that connection he took a few important measurements on 18 Kalita males.

### *The Data*

In course of our investigation, the following measurements were taken on 120 adult male Kalita individuals: stature, sitting height, head length, head breadth, head height, horizontal circumference of head, frontal diameter, bizygomatic breadth, bigonial breadth, upper facial height, total facial height, nasal height and nasal breadth. The measurements were taken according to the method prescribed by Wilder.

The following indices have been worked out: cephalic index, length-height index, breadth-height index, upper facial index, total facial index and nasal index. In analysing the measurements and indices, Martin's classification have been followed.

TABLE I

*Statistical constants of the measurements and indices with their respective standard errors.*

Measurements (in cm.)	Range	Mean $\pm$ S. E.	S. D. $\pm$ S. E.	C. V. $\pm$ S. E.
Stature	150.0-177.3	163.63 $\pm$ .48	5.33 $\pm$ .34	3.25 $\pm$ .21
Sitting height	77.9-90.8	84.46 $\pm$ .27	3.02 $\pm$ .19	3.58 $\pm$ .23
Head length	17.6-20.2	18.70 $\pm$ .05	0.57 $\pm$ .03	3.09 $\pm$ .19
Head breadth	13.2-16.0	14.55 $\pm$ .05	0.58 $\pm$ .03	4.00 $\pm$ .25
Head height	10.3-15.1	12.01 $\pm$ .08	0.87 $\pm$ .05	7.31 $\pm$ .47
Hor. circ. of head	51.7-57.2	53.92 $\pm$ .12	1.41 $\pm$ .91	2.62 $\pm$ .16
Frontal diameter	9.1-11.7	10.33 $\pm$ .05	0.58 $\pm$ .03	5.30 $\pm$ .34
Bizygomatic breadth	11.9-14.4	13.20 $\pm$ .05	0.56 $\pm$ .03	4.27 $\pm$ .27
Bigonial breadth	8.8-11.4	10.07 $\pm$ .05	0.59 $\pm$ .03	5.91 $\pm$ .38
Upper facial height	5.6-7.6	6.52 $\pm$ .03	0.40 $\pm$ .02	6.21 $\pm$ .40
Total facial height	9.2-13.1	11.34 $\pm$ .05	0.55 $\pm$ .03	4.92 $\pm$ .31
Nasal height	4.2-5.9	5.03 $\pm$ .03	0.33 $\pm$ .02	6.66 $\pm$ .42
Nasal breadth	3.1-4.3	3.64 $\pm$ .02	0.24 $\pm$ .01	6.78 $\pm$ .43

**Indices**

Cephalic	65.9-88.2	77.87 ± .30	3.34 ± .21	4.30 ± .27
Length-height	54.2-78.6	64.15 ± .42	4.64 ± .30	7.24 ± .46
Breadth-height	69.1-105.8	82.74 ± .59	6.48 ± .58	7.83 ± .50
Upper facial	41.9-61.4	49.98 ± .36	4.03 ± .26	8.07 ± .52
Total facial	73.6-100.7	86.05 ± .52	5.76 ± .37	6.70 ± .43
Nasal	55.1-89.1	72.67 ± .54	5.98 ± .38	8.24 ± .53

S. D. = Standard Deviation

C. V. = Coefficient of Variation

S. E. = Standard Error

Only adult male persons of the age-group 22-55 years were measured. The mean age is  $34.05 \pm .92$  years. It was however very difficult to obtain the correct age of the individuals, as few care to record their age. Even then, an attempt was made to obtain as correct an age as possible.

Statistical constants of the different measurements and indices with their respective standard errors have been given in Table 1.

TABLE 2

*Stature*

Class	Range in cm.	Number	Percentage
Short	150.0-159.9	31	25.83
Below Medium	160.0-163.9	35	29.17
Medium	164.0-166.9	21	17.50
Above Medium	167.0-169.9	14	11.67
Tall	170.0-179.9	19	15.83

Among the Kalita, below medium stature is found to occur in the highest frequency (29.17%). Next to it comes short stature (25.83%), which is followed by medium (17.50%), tall (15.83%) and above medium (11.67%). The mean value of stature, being  $163.63 \pm .48$  cm. with the range varying between 177.3 cm. and 150.0 cm., however, falls on the border line between below medium and medium.

TABLE 3

*Cephalic Index*

Class	Range	Number	Percentage
Hyper-dolichocephal	-69.9	1	0.83
Dolichocephal	70.0-75.9	27	22.50
Mesocephal	76.0-80.9	74	61.66
Brachycephal	81.0-85.4	17	14.16
Hyper-brachycephal	85.5-	1	0.83

Mesocephalic element with a percentage of 61.66 predominates among the Kalita. Next to it stands dolichocephalic head form (23.33%). The percentage of brachycephaly (14.99%) is also not negligible. The mean is also mesocephalic, being  $77.87 \pm .30$ , which varies between 65.9 and 88.2. The mean head length is  $18.70 \pm .05$  cm., the range of variation being from 17.6 cm. to 20.2 cm. The mean head breadth is  $14.55 \pm .05$  cm., the maximum being 16.0 cm. and the minimum 13.2 cm.

TABLE 4

*Length-Height Index*

Class	Range	Number	Percentage
Chamaecephal	-57.6	11	9.16
Orthocephal	57.7-62.5	33	27.51
Hypsicephal	62.6-	76	63.33

Hypsicephalic head occurs in the majority (63.33%). The percentage of orthocephaly (27.51%) is also fairly high. Chamaecephaly (9.16%) is rare. The mean length-height index is  $64.15 \pm .42$  with the maximum and minimum of 78.6 and 54.2 respectively. The mean head height is  $12.01 \pm .08$  cm., with the range varying between 10.3 cm. and 15.1 cm.

TABLE 5

*Breadth-Height Index*

Class	Range	Number	Percentage
Tapeinocephal	-78.9	31	25.83
Metriocephal	79.0-84.9	53	44.17
Acrocephal	85.0-	36	30.00

Metriocephalic head occurs in the highest frequency (44.17%) among the Kalita. Tapeinocephaly (25.83%) and acrocephaly (30.00%) also occur almost in equally considerable numbers. The mean breadth-height index is  $82.74 \pm .59$ , which varies between the maximum of 105.8 and the minimum of 69.1.

TABLE 6

*Upper Facial Index*

Class	Range	Number	Percentage
Euryene	43.0-47.9	41	34.17
Mesene	48.0-52.9	49	40.83
Leptene	53.0-56.9	24	20.00
Hyper-Leptene	57.0-	6	5.00

Though the mesene type of face occurs predominantly (40.83%) the high amount of euryene type (34.17%) suggests a tendency towards the flat nature of the upper part of face of the Kalita. Leptene type of face also occurs significantly (25.00%). The upper facial index varies between 41.9 and 61.4, showing the mean value as  $49.98 \pm .36$ . The mean value of upper facial height and that of bizygomatic breadth is  $6.52 \pm .03$  cm. and  $13.20 \pm .05$  cm. respectively. In the former the range varies between 5.6 cm. and 7.6 cm. while in the latter it varies between 11.9 cm. and 14.4 cm.

TABLE 7

*Total Facial Index*

Class	Range	Number	Percentage
Hyper-euryprosopic	-78.9	11	9.17
Euryprosopic	79.0-83.9	40	33.33
Mesoprosopic	84.0-87.9	29	24.17
Leptoprosopic	88.0-92.9	22	18.33
Hyper-leptoprosopic	93.0-	18	15.00

Though in the majority, the face of the Kalita is short in relation to breadth, as suggested by the highest frequency of euryprosopic type (42.50%), yet the frequency of long type of face is also considerably high, being present in one-third (33.33%) of the sample. Again, medium face (mesoprosopic) occurs in about one-fourth (24.17%) of the population. The mean total facial index ( $86.05 \pm .52$ ), which varies between 73.6 and 100.7, however, belongs to mesoprosopic type. The mean total facial height is  $11.34 \pm .05$  cm., the range varying between 9.2 cm. and 13.1 cm.

TABLE 8

*Nasal Index*

Class	Range	Number	Percentage
Leptorrhine	55.0-69.9	39	32.50
Mesorrhine	70.0-84.9	80	66.67
Platyrrhine	85.0-99.9	1	0.83

The Kalita nose is predominantly mesorrhine, its percentage being 66.67. The mean value is  $72.67 \pm .54$  which

varies between the maximum of 89.1 and the minimum of 55.1. Leptorrhine nose is also frequently (32.50%) met with. Platyrhine type is very rare. The mean nasal height is  $5.03 \pm .03$  cm. with the maximum and the minimum of 5.9 cm. and 4.2 cm. respectively. The mean nasal breadth is  $3.64 \pm .02$  cm., the range falling between 4.3 cm. and 3.1 cm.

### Comparison

In table 9, the means of the anthropometric characters of the Kalita have been compared with those of the Suri, who originally constituted a liquor-distilling and selling caste-group, but now have taken to agriculture. The Suri data were collected from the south bank of the Brahmaputra River in the district of Kamrup. For the purpose of comparison the *t*-test of significance has been applied and the formula used is :

$$t = \frac{M_1 - M_2}{\sqrt{\sigma_1^2 + \sigma_2^2}}$$

where  $M_1$  and  $M_2$  stand for the mean values of the two samples and  $\sigma_1$  and  $\sigma_2$  the standard errors of the two mean values.

TABLE 9

*Comparison of Means : t-test of significance*

Measurements (in cm.)	Kalita	Suri	Diff. of Means	t
	(present study) n=120	(Das and Deka) n=100		
	Mean $\pm$ S. E.	Mean $\pm$ S. E.		
Stature	163.63 $\pm$ .48	162.62 $\pm$ .57	1.01	1.35
Sitting height	84.46 $\pm$ .27	83.50 $\pm$ .09	0.90	3.24
Head length	18.70 $\pm$ .05	18.58 $\pm$ .06	0.12	1.87
Head breadth	14.55 $\pm$ .05	14.36 $\pm$ .09	0.19	1.84
Head height	12.01 $\pm$ .08	11.89 $\pm$ .07	0.12	1.13
Hor. circ. of head	53.92 $\pm$ .12	53.19 $\pm$ .13	0.73	6.88
Frontal diameter	10.33 $\pm$ .05	9.10 $\pm$ .05	1.23	17.57
Bizygomatic breadth	13.20 $\pm$ .05	13.10 $\pm$ .04	0.10	1.56
Bigonial breadth	10.07 $\pm$ .05	10.18 $\pm$ .06	0.11	1.41
Upper facial height	6.52 $\pm$ .03	6.65 $\pm$ .04	0.13	2.60
Total facial height	11.34 $\pm$ .05	11.30 $\pm$ .06	0.04	0.51
Nasal height	5.03 $\pm$ .03	4.94 $\pm$ .03	0.09	2.14
Nasal breadth	3.64 $\pm$ .02	3.62 $\pm$ .02	0.02	0.31

**Indices**

Cephalic	77.87 ± .30	77.62 ± .35	0.25	0.54
Length-height	64.15 ± .42	64.40 ± .45	0.25	0.40
Breadth-height	82.74 ± .59	82.97 ± .58	0.23	0.27
Upper facial	49.98 ± .36	50.80 ± .35	0.82	1.63
Total facial	86.05 ± .52	86.31 ± .59	0.26	0.33
Nasal	72.67 ± .54	73.65 ± .65	1.03	1.21

It appears from the table that in respect of all the characters, excepting horizontal circumference of head, sitting height and frontal diameter, the Kalita do not differ significantly from the Suri. Thus both the castes, namely, the Kalita and the Suri have similar anthropometric characteristics.

*Summary*

The Kalita are short to below medium in stature, the mean stature being 163.63 cm. Their head is mesocephalic (C. I. 77.87), though dolichocephalic element is also fairly strong among them. The nose is mesorrhine (N. I. 72.67) with a tendency towards leptorrhiny. Hypsiccephalic head occurs predominantly. All three types of head, namely, tapeinocephalic, metriocephalic and acrocephalic, are frequently met with. Though euryprosopic face predominates, the other two types are also fairly strong and the mean value (86.05) is mesoprosopic. The upper face is of the mesene type (mean = 49.98). The frequencies of euryene and leptene are also considerably high.

When the Kalita caste is compared with the Suri caste, it is found that in respect of anthropometric characters there is no significant difference between the two.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

**Essays on the Ritual of Social Relations.** Edited by Max Gluckman. Manchester University Press, Manchester. 1962. 25 shilings net.

This book is a collection of four essays by leading social anthropologists of England. All deal with the significance of ritual in social relationship. The book deals with ceremonies which Arnold von Gennep called *rites de passage*. Von Gennep made a very important discovery and pointed out that each ceremony had specific protective, propitiatory, acquisitive, purificatory, productive and/or predictive purposes according to its situation in social life. The main impact of his thesis was on the study of the mechanism of rituals, rather than on the role which whole ceremonies and specific rites play in the ordering and re-ordering of social relations. He lacked an adequate theory about the nature of society and had little contact with the field. So he was unable to develop the implications of his major discovery. This was done by later anthropologists who worked on their own data.

Meyer Fortes, working on his Tallensi data, develops the full implications of von Gennep's perception that initiation ceremonies mark and organize the transition from childhood to socially recognized adulthood. A person is divested of his status as a child in the domestic domain and is invested with the status of an actual or potential citizen in the politico-jural domain. The function of ritual is described thus: 'Ritual presents office to the individual as the creation and possession of society or a part of society into which he is to be incorporated through the office.' Ritual mobilizes incontrovertible authority behind the granting of office and status and thus guarantees its legitimacy and imposes accountability for its proper exercise.

When an important person dies among the Yako of Nigeria, relations between groups of kin are affected. Most prominent relations of the bereaved kin are with external groups to which the deceased belonged and to which his kin are called upon to fulfil obligations. These external groups, as Daryll Forde shows, are chiefly the associations in which are vested the exercise of ritual and secular power in the community. His treatment of this *rite de*

*passage* is mainly concerned with social relations rather than with rites. The death of an elder is followed by demands from several associations to which he belonged that his place be filled, to reconstitute the network of ties based on diverse membership of individuals and through them of their kin groups in this network.

Turner discusses the actual mechanism of initiation ceremonies among the Ndembu of Northern Rhodesia. He analyses the meaning of three of the main symbols used in the ceremony. He explains how the people themselves interpret these symbols. Secondly, he shows what people and the groups do with the symbols. Thirdly, he relates the symbols to other symbols used in the same set of rites. He probes into the web of conflict and co-operation which composes Ndembu society.

Max Gluckman examines the historical development of studies of this type of ritual, and puts forward a theory to suggest why rituals of social relations are more highly developed in tribal society than they are in modern urban society. The margin between success and disaster in tribal society contributes to the high incidence of rituals. Anxiety about crops, about survival of children, about growth of the young to manhood, about movement of villages, etc. become intricately involved in social relations. Professor Gluckman advances two propositions, namely, (i) the greater the secular differentiation of role, the less the ritual; and the greater the secular differentiation, the less mystical is the ceremonial of etiquette, and (ii) the greater the multiplicity of undifferentiated and overlapping roles, the more the ritual to separate them.

It would be worth while to examine the validity of these theoretical formulations in respect of complex cultures such as the Hindu culture in which the number of rituals is legion and yet it is far removed from tribal societies.

Sachchidananda

**Social Welfare in Indian: Mahatma Gandhi's Contributions.** By Annu Menon Muzumdar, Pp. 179 with bibliography and index. Asia Publishing House. Rs.12.50.

The book has a foreword by Professor Haridas T. Muzumdar and is divided into three parts. The chapters in part I are: Background of Social Welfare in Indian and Mahatma Gandhi;

Mentor of Modern Social Welfare in India. Part II has three chapters, namely, Harijan Welfare, Women's Welfare and Rural Welfare. Part III has one chapter, namely, Social Work in the Indian Tradition.

Supported with an excellent bibliography, the present book is an outgrowth of the dissertation of the author presented to the New York School of Social Work, Columbia University, in 1960. Probably because of her deep conviction in the charismatic leadership of Gandhiji the author has devoted pages to a discussion of Gandhiji as a charismatic leader at the very beginning of the book. This is almost an adulation which warps judgement, and she has failed to give us an objective treatment of the subject although she had every opportunity to do so because of her wide experience both in India and abroad. In a book on social welfare in India, a description of *darshan* (divine vision) of the Mahatma is not only out of the place but tends to suggest that Gandhiji alone has been responsible for social welfare in India and his predecessors were mere pygmies. An almost left-handed compliment has been paid to his predecessors like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dayanand Sarawati, Ranade, Lady Abala Bose, Pandita Rama Bai, etc. Although it is correct that Gandhiji imparted a new urgency to the social welfare work in India, the ground had long been prepared by a galaxy of men and women, both Indian and foreign. Their great work under very unfavourable and even hostile circumstances should have been properly appraised.

The author has also failed to make a proper appraisal of Gandhiji's first struggle in India, namely, the satyagraha movement in Champaran in connexion with indigo plantation. A fleeting reference has only been made to this part of Gandhiji's work, although almost whatever Gandhiji did afterwards regarding social welfare in India was first attempted in the Champaran District. The author might have pursued the thesis more objectively and discussed the causes of the failure of some of Gandhiji's attempts for social welfare in that district.

It is unfortunate that the deep reverence of the authoress for Gandhiji should have prevented her from being objective in analysing Gandhiji's thoughts, principles, philosophy and concrete activities by correlating them to the forces and circumstances already created and then to the newly emerging social welfare programmes.

P. C. Roy Choudhury

**Politics of a Periurban Community in India :** *Edited with an introduction by Professor A. H. Somjee. Pp. 57. Asia Publishing House. Rs.4.50.*

Six villages on the periphery of Baroda were studied to appreciate the social trends and forces which make up life in the villages. The very nearness of a city creates peculiar circumstances which have already gone deep into the life of villagers. The contributions throw a considerable light on the peculiar problems of village politics, leadership, caste tensions, reasons other than caste causing ruptures, etc. This new angle of study has been highlighted in the introduction. The Postgraduate students of Professor Somjee in the M. S. University of Baroda have indeed done a good job. One or two articles, however, might have been more properly edited to avoid repetition.

The book is recommended to our political leaders and advanced students of politics and sociology.

P. C. Roy Choudhury

**L'Arche'ologie du Delta du Mekong.** *Par Louis Malleret. Paris—E'cole francaise d'Extreme-Orient. 1963.*

This is the 4th volume of a detailed report on the archaeological exploration of the Mekong Delta (former Indo-China) carried out by Louis Malleret. The previous volumes have already been reviewed. The present one completes this study. A great number of statues, both in stone and wood, have been discovered. The first three chapters deal with the archaeological yield ; chapters 4 to 6 attempt an historical outline of this region on the basis of the archaeological finds. Buddhism apparently penetrated into this region already in pre-Angkoran times, possibly coming from Ceylon, though both the Mahayana and the Hinayana sects co-existed in this region.

Forty pages of photographs (mostly of statuary) form an interesting supplement to the volume.

**Archiv Orientalni.** 1962-63.

This periodical is a quarterly published by the Oriental Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences in Prague. Some of its numbers were mentioned here previously. Naturally, much of its contents is not of topical interest to readers in India. Volume 30/3 (1962) runs a fascinating study on the chronology of Ibn

-F. E.

Battuta's travels. Ibn Battuta (14th century) is in a class with Marco Polo. His travels took him to Mecca, India, China, as well as to Spain and the Sudan. But it is not easy to identify all the places he visited, nor to verify the accuracy of all his affirmations. Recent numbers contain a variety of linguistic studies bearing on Dravidian, Semitic, Chinese as well as Aryan languages. The Book Review section—much of it in English—is carefully done. F. E.

**Biennial Review of Anthropology, 1963.** *Edited by Bernard J. Siegal. Stanford University Press, Stanford, California. 1963.*

This volume continues the policy of collating and evaluating the most significant recent published works in the subject between 1961 and 1963. An effort has been made to select as judiciously and critically as possible from among all available items in the literature.

One change from the last volume is that the section on 'Anthropology of Development' has been discontinued and its material has been distributed in the sections on Medical Anthropology and Culture Change. The editor realizes the increasing concern with ethnographic method and research methodology. The material on this has been included in different sections. No section has, however, been provided for cultural ecology and evolution. Siegal hopes to present distinct sections for these two branches in the 1965 volume.

One of the regions in which anthropological studies have taken great strides in recent years is India. American, British, French and Japanese scholars, besides a number of Indian research workers, have done a large amount of work both in the tribal areas and in rural peasant societies. This has received scant attention in this volume.

Sacchidananda

**Family and Marriage.** *Chief Editor : K. Ishwaran. Editor : John Moge. Publisher E. J. Brill, Leiden, The Netherlands. Issued on behalf of the Department of Social Anthropology, Karnatak University, Dharwar, India. 1963. Pp.153.*

The ten articles contained in this book were published in a special number of the *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, Vol. III, No. I in 1962.

This book presents a series of research papers about interchanges between different family systems and the societies concerned. Madan deals with the definition of the term *joint family* from the standpoint of comparative usages. Nakane deals with the ways in which the South Indian Nayar *tarawad* has changed its social functions. Mitchell describes marriage, matrilineal and social structures among the Yao of South Nysaland. Jayawardena in his paper describes the family organization in British Guiana. Willems is of opinion that social class and residence patterns are factors which explain the variation in family forms in Portugal. Dennis reviews English studies on the subject and finds that, in the course of this century, the goal sought in marital relationship has changed. Two papers by Karlsson and by Jacobsohn and Matheny endeavour to introduce system and order into the study of open or preferential marriage. Harold T. Christensen's paper is one in the series of articles comparing sexual intimacy within and across three modern societies in Denmark, Mid-western United States and Intra-montane United States. The paper by Murray A. Straus and Cytrynbaum reports the development of a system for scoring Thematic Apperception Test (T A T) protocols, or other written materials, for the power of nuclear family members in relation to each other, and for the patterns of affective support between family members. The paper outlines the scoring system and presents the findings which resulted from the application of those procedures to a group of University students in Ceylon.

Salil Kumar Roy Chowdhury

**Politics and Social Change—Orissa in 1959.** By F. G. Bailey. Published by the University of California, Pp. 241, 1963, \$ 5.

In this book the author deals with the question of relationship between parliamentary democracy and older forms of social and political organization. The author uses the techniques of social anthropology in analysing a complex society in the State of Orissa in India.

Salil Kumar Roy Chowdhury

**The Oraons of Sundarban.** By Amal Kumar Das & Manis Kumar Raha. Special Series, No. 3. Bulletin of the Cultural Research Institute, Tribal Welfare Department, Government of West Bengal, Calcutta. 1963. Pp. 476.

This is the third publication in the social monograph series sponsored by the Tribal Welfare Department of the Government of West Bengal. The book deals with groups of Oraons who migrated from Chota Nagpur in Bihar to the Sundarban area of West Bengal about a century ago. One cannot escape the impression that it is rather loosely written.

It is illustrated with tables and photographs.

Salil Kumar Roy Chowdhury

**The Revolution in Anthropology.** By I. C. Jarie. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London. 1964. Pp. 246. 40s.

This book is a critical study of the anthropological tradition. It works out the implication of Popper's Philosophy of Science for the study human society. It also contains a critical discussion of the problem of the *Cargo Cult*. The author describes one revolution in the study of man which happened a generation ago and indicates another which is going to take place in the immediate future.

This book mainly deals with the methodological discussion of anthropological problems.

Salil Kumar Roy Chowdhury

**The Basis of Human Evolution.** By Bertram S. Kraus. Harper & Row, New York. 1964. Pp. 367. \$ 6-50.

In this book the fascinating subject of human evolution has been dealt with in a manner what the author calls the 'simpler way'. The author quite rightly divides the book into ten problems instead of chapters. The problem are (1) Man's Kinship with the Animal Kingdom, (2) Perspective in Space and Time, (3) Foundation of the Theory of Evolution, (4) The Mechanism of Evolution, (5) Principles of Evolution, (6) The Nature of the Evidence : Bones and Teeth, (7) The Fossil Evidence for Human Evolution, (8) The Development of Human Culture and its Biological Implication, (9) Biological and Cultural Status of Modern Man and (10) An Interpretation of Human Evolution.

The concepts and findings on human evolution have been very ably presented for the general readers.

Salil Kumar Roy Chowdhury

**The Yanadis.** By V. Raghaviah. Published by Bharatiya Adimjati Seva Sangh, New Link Road, New Delhi. Pp 451, 1962, Rs. 17'50

The book gives an authentic account of the Yanadis, an ancient but little-known Indian tribe residing mostly in the coastal strip of Andhra Pradesh. It will be useful for social workers and scholars alike.

Salil Kumar Roy Chowdhury

**Some Aspects of Family in Mahuva.** By I. P. Desai, *Sociological Department of the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda and Asia Publishing House, Bombay etc.* Pp. 239. 1964. Rs. 18.

The author has carried out a sample survey of 423 households in Mahuva, an ancient sea-port in the Kathiawad Peninsula.

It gives an account of the present condition of the people in the small pre-industrial town with particular reference to the institution of the family. The book also shows how caste system and religious grouping impede social growth.

Salil Kumar Roy Chowdhury

**India ; A Critical Bibliography.** By J. Michael Mahar. *The University of Arizona, Pp. 119. 1964.*

This work is one of the series of reference guides to facilitate the study of Asia in American colleges.

This guide contains selected, graded and annotated list of works, mainly in English, dealing with the study of traditional and modern India.

Salil Kumar Roy Chowdhury

**Indian Women through the Ages.** By P. Thomas. *Asia Publishing House, Bombay, Calcutta etc.* Pp. 392. 1964. Rs.25.0.

In this book, the author has attempted to give the readers a connected account of the gradual subjection of women in India which started from very early times and continued right down to the 18th century. Emancipation began, according to the author, in the 19th century and found its fulfilment in the economic, social and political equality established by law and guaranteed by the Constitution of India.

The author has dealt with the non-Hindu in addition to the Hindu population of India.

Although the book is primarily intended for general readers and students, it will be a very useful source of authentic materials for anthropologists and sociologists.

Salil Kumar Roy Chowdhury

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