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## CONTENTS

	Page
The Bhoi Land-Tenure System ... ..	95
<i>—Rev. Fr. Sngi Lyngdoh S.D.B.</i>	
Structure of Bridge and Buffer Communities in the Border Areas ... ..	103
<i>—B. K. Roy Burman</i>	
An Experiment in Development : Rural India ...	108
<i>—P. Alston Waring</i>	
Christian Missions and their Programme of Training Workers ... ..	114
<i>—Jyoti Sen</i>	
Opinion Leaders in a Village in Western Rajasthan	121
<i>—A. B. Bose</i> <i>P. C. Saxena</i>	
Attitude of Minas towards Improved Agricultural Practices ... ..	131
<i>—R. S. Mann</i>	
Panchayat Elections of 1959 and 1963 ... ..	135
<i>—K. D. Gangrade</i>	
Caste Council of the Bhandari of Dapoli ...	159
<i>—S. G. Morab</i>	
The Bhot of Northern Sikkim ... ..	166
<i>—Saradindu Bose</i>	
Class and Caste : A Rejoinder ... ..	172
<i>—Andre Beteille</i>	
Book Reviews ... ..	177

*Edited by*

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# MAN IN INDIA

## PUBLICATIONS

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1. The Mundas and their Country
2. The Oraons of Chota Nagpur
3. Oraon Religion and Customs
4. The Kharias, 2 vols.
5. The Birhors
6. The Hill Bhuiyas

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## THE BHOI LAND-TENURE SYSTEM

REV. FR. SINGLI LYNGDOH S. D. B.

(Received on 3 March 1966)

**Abstract.** The Bhoi are a tribe living in the north and west of the Khasi Hills in Assam. The author, who is a Bhoi himself, describes the land tenure system current among his tribe, and also indicates how it is being subjected to unlawful change in recent times.

Among the Bhoi, land belongs to the community, and individual members are given usufructuary right which lapses under well-defined conditions.

### *Introduction*

**B**EFORE describing the aim of our ancestors in framing our land-tenure system, we would like to point out one of their chief characteristics, namely, *their civic sense*, that is, the desire to do good to all, which was the prime mover of all their actions. It was this civic sense that inspired them to frame such good laws for the benefit of all.

Hence, they framed laws to give ample chance to all of having that minimum of well-being as befits human dignity; and these simple laws are meant to protect the poor and the helpless.

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This is an English translation of a booklet in Khasi prepared by the author under the desire of the Ri Bhoi Dorbar and of the Bhois themselves. The author is Professor of Sacred Scriptures in the Sacred Heart College, Mawlai, Shillong—8, Assam.

### *Some important laws*

#### **1. The whole raj belongs to the people as such.**

The whole Bhoi area is divided into Raj's ruled by the so-called Syiem, Lyngdoh, Pator, Basan and Sordar Raj, who are the keepers and administrators of the whole Raj and not its owners. The people are the owners of the whole Raj, of its lands, forests and fields. Hence, a Raj is called *Ka Raj-Bam-Lang*, that is, the Raj is meant to give food to all as a group or a family.

Consequently, there cannot be *any private land* as such in the Bhoi area, called in other parts of the Khasi Hills *Ri-Kynti*.

#### **2. Every member of a Raj can cultivate where he wants and as much as he can.**

The Raj's land can be cultivated by the people of the Raj wherever they want and as much as they possibly can. If a man can cultivate a hill, let him cultivate a hill; if he can cultivate two hills, let him have two hills; if he can cultivate only a quarter of a hill, let him not wish for more.

#### **3. As long as a man cultivates the land, that land belongs to him, as if it were his own private land.**

In the Bhoi area, the land belongs to him who cultivates it.<sup>1</sup> And as long as he cultivates it, *no one can take it away from him*. As long as he cultivates it, it is considered as his own private land and property. Hence the *title of ownership* in the Bhoi area is *actual use*<sup>2</sup> and not any other thing, not registers or any kind of writing given by the rulers, be they of the Raj itself or of the so-called Hima.

#### **4. If a person does not cultivate any more his land for three consecutive years, that land becomes automatically Raj land, and any other person can take it and cultivate it.**

This is one of the most important laws in the Bhoi area. This law takes away from a person any right on the land if he leaves it and does not cultivate it for three years. After this period, the land becomes *ipso facto* public land, even if it has been registered a hundred times; and any person who-soever who wants to take it and cultivate it, *can do so legally*

*in the Bhoi area.* And the one who has left it fallow for three years cannot have any claim on, or object against the other person's use of it.<sup>3</sup>

**5. The land that a man is permitted to cultivate becomes public land if he does not cultivate it within three years.**

It may happen that a person wants a particular plot of land to cultivate ; but he knows that he cannot cultivate it within a year or two. Hence, he approaches the rulers of the Raj and makes known to them his desire to reserve for himself a particular plot of land to be soon cultivated. The rulers always grant such a good and reasonable request.

But if after three years, he cannot cultivate all of it, what remains becomes *ipso facto* public land and any other person can take and cultivate it without any interference.

**6. No land as such can be bought and sold in the Bhoi area.**

As the whole land of the Raj belongs to the people as such, there cannot be in reality any buying and selling of land in the Bhoi area. Public fallow land is never bought by the people of the Raj but they simply use it as they please. Hence, there cannot be such a thing as a *sale deed* among the Bhois.

But the Bhois do give their already cultivated lands or rice-fields to others on payment. This may seem like selling and buying ; but it is not so. We Bhois call it *Ka Jingsiew Ia Ka Bailut-Baisep*, that is, an adequate compensation given to the other person who has worked on it and has made it productive. This compensation may be very high ; it may reach thousands of rupees.

If a man, after paying, say, Rs. 20,000 for a plot of land, does not cultivate it but leaves it fallow for three years, that land becomes *ipso facto* public land and any other person can take it and use it, even if the man has paid a very high compensation for it, for in the Bhoi area the title for ownership is *actual use* and only *actual use*.

**7. If the Nongmei-nongpa rice-fields are left uncultivated for seven years, those rice-fields become ipso facto public land.**

By *Nongmei-nongpa* we mean those rice-fields or lands that have been cultivated by the same *kur* or family for many

generations. In order that a land or a rice-field may be called a *Nongmei-nongpha*, it must be cultivated by the same family or *kur* for at least ten generations or more. No land that has not been cultivated by the same family for ten generations can claim to be considered as *Nongmei-nongpha*.

In the case of these *Nongmei-nongphas*, there is a special law, namely, that, if they are left uncultivated for seven years, then only they become *ipso facto* public lands, and any other person can take and cultivate them.

**8. The so-called Khyndew-iap-duh goes to the custody of the rulers of the Raj, to be kept for the people as such.**

Rice-fields that have almost become *Nongmei-nongphas* go to the custody of the rulers of the Raj to be kept for the people, if the family or *kur* has become extinct and there is no one to take charge of them. These rice-fields are called *Khyndew-iap-duh* precisely because there are no more heirs to inherit them. These rice-fields *do not become public lands but pass into the hands of the rulers of the Raj*, to be kept and administered for the people of the Raj. No one can appropriate to himself the *Khyndew-iap-duh* without the consent of the people as such; and the rulers of the Raj cannot possibly give them away or sell them away.<sup>4</sup> Only with the consent of the people of the whole Raj can such rice-fields be given to private individuals. Hence, if any one is found to possess such lands without the people's consent, he has to give them back even if he has been cultivating them for many years; for stolen goods remain always stolen goods even if a long time has elapsed.

**9. If a person goes out of his Raj to settle down in another Raj, his cultivated lands in the previous Raj, which he still wants to cultivate and still cultivates, are his still and no one can take them away from him, unless the lands are in the so-called Jaka-rep of the Shnong as such.**

**10. Every village in the Bhoi area has a right to get from the rulers of the Raj a special plot of land near the village to be for good the so-called Jaka-rep of the village as such.**

It is a custom in the Bhoi area to give to every village a rather big plot of land for its exclusive use as such. This special plot is divided among the families of the village

according to their need only and not according to their avarice.

If a family moves away from the village, its portion of the special plot goes back to the village immediately, and the family cannot have any claim on it.

**11. From the village forest, the people of the village can get fire-wood, wood to build houses, to fence their gardens, as much as they need, but only for their personal use in the village itself.**

Every village in the Bhoi area has a right to get a village forest reserved exclusively for that particular village. From this forest, the people of the village can get for their private use, at home and in the village, all the wood they need to burn at home or to build houses.

It is not allowed to fell trees and carry away the wood to be sold in the market without the consent of the whole village Dorbar. In the case of famine or any other calamity, the village can allow poor families to get some bundles of wood to be sold in the market. It is not allowed to cultivate in the village forest.

No one can take away this village forest from the village ; it is considered as the private property of the village as a whole. If any one goes away from the village, he cannot get any more wood from it.

#### **12. Houses.**

The people of the Raj can build their house in any free place they please, except in the village forest, in the *Jaka-rep* of the village, on highways, in cremation places and cemeteries and in the play-fields of schools.

As long as the house stands, that land and a little more around the house, belongs to the owner of the house and no one can take it away from him.

If a man destroys his house and goes elsewhere, then the place becomes public land, unless he cultivates it as a garden.

#### **13. The Raj forest is a forest specially reserved for the Raj.**

The Raj forest is a forest specially reserved for the Raj because of its productiveness, to meet the expenses of the Raj. In this forest, no one can cultivate and no one can fell trees as he likes without the consent of the people of the Raj.

### *The political structure of Bhoi society*

A word or two must be said on this subject because of its importance for the general good of the Bhoi people. Because of the neglect or ignorance of this relation, endless troubles and sufferings have fallen on the poor Bhois. It is high time that all should remember it again, so that their already hard life as cultivators may be sweetened a little.

#### **A. The Bhois' relation with their Raj-rulers.**

The Raj-rulers are not owners of the Raj but only its keepers. The owners are the people themselves as such. The Raj-rulers are trustees of the people.

Hence, they cannot do whatever they like with the lands, forests, markets, products of the Raj. They may not sell any land to any person without the people's consent. They may not lease any forest to any person whatsoever without the people's consent.

Lastly, all the profits from lands, forests, buffaloes, cows, markets, etc. etc. must go to the Raj-fund and not to the private pockets of the Raj-rulers. Hence, they may not bring into the Raj, the so-called (Nepali) *Khuti-keepers* with their hundreds and hundreds of buffaloes that destroy the fields of the Bhois. They may not give permission to set up stills without the consent of the people. This holds good also for the Hima-rulers. Without the people's consent, no *khuti* and no still (*pata-kiad*) can be set up. But now this law is disregarded everywhere to the great woe and suffering of the poor and the helpless. The time has come now to put a stop to all such baneful abuses.

But the Raj-rulers are not like *chowkidars*. They are considered as 'big brothers' in a family. The people respect and love them. They should be obeyed and followed, if what they command is for the good of the people as such.

#### **B. The Bhois' relation with the Hima-rulers.**

At present, almost all the Bhoi area belongs to the Myllem and Khyrim Himas ; but originally it was not so. The Bhoi area was a unit by itself, that is an independent confederation of many Raj's.

Those who know well the history of the Bhoi area, such as the Shris Rolin Shadap, Jesaia Makdoh, Dlosingh Lyngdoh and a host of others, tell us that once the king of Jaintiapur invaded the Bhoi area. A battle took place in Nongtluh-Nongbri, where many Bhois fell. Hard pressed by the king of Jaintiapur, the Bhois asked the kings of Shillong for help. With the latter's help, they defeated the king of Jaintiapur and freed their area. After victory, the kings of Shillong wanted to go back. But the Bhois, of their own free will, wanted to be one with the Hima Shillong. A treaty was made, the conditions of which were as follows :—

1. The kings of the Hima of Shillong were not the owners of the various Raj's.
2. They would have power only on men, that is, on criminals who deserved to be bound hand and foot and cast into prison.
3. They would respect the laws and customs of the Bhoi.
4. The lands, forests, markets and profits from the Bhoi area should go to the various Raj's as such.

Thus, the Bhoi area became part of the Hima of Shillong for defence purposes. Later on, the Hima of Shillong was divided into two kingdoms, that of Myllem and that of Khyrim. Consequently, the Bhoi area too was divided into two parts; one part went to the Myllem State and the other to the Khyrim State.

### *Conclusion*

We have briefly described the land-tenure system in the Bhoi area. They are based on the Bhois' conviction that men are all brothers, and that the good things God has given us must be shared equally for the benefit of all.

We do hope that those charged with the heavy duty of ruling over us, will help us to preserve these good laws relating to land in the Bhoi area. .

### NOTES

1. We have said that as long as a man cultivates a plot of land, that land is his.

'To cultivate' does not mean only to dig or to plough, but it means also to plant trees, fruit-trees and other useful plants, such as bananas, etc.

'As long as a man cultivates' does not mean only as long as he digs or ploughs. It means as long as the signs of his labour and perspiration are visible, that is, as long as those useful trees planted by him are still standing and bearing fruit.

Lastly, 'to plant fruit trees' does not mean to plant one here and another after a mile and a half or half a mile away. 'To plant' means to have a garden or a field.

2. As the title of ownership in the Bhoi area is *actual use*, the so-called *Skut Jaka Khlem Rep*, that is, to mark out huge plots of land for oneself without cultivating them, is outright illegal in the Bhoi area.

This *Skut Jaka Khlem Rep* was unknown in the past. Taking advantage of the ignorance of the Bhois, some people have marked out for themselves huge tracts of land which they do not cultivate and cannot possibly cultivate, and file unjust cases against the the Bhois or others who go to cultivate any part of them in accordance with our Bhoi laws.

**The rule of Rep-bhura :** When one person gives his already cultivated land or rice-field to another on condition that the latter should give him part of the produce, the owner is said to give his land or rice-field as a *Rep-bhura*. As long as he does this, he is considered as still cultivating the land or rice-field himself.

### 3. *Mortgage in the Bhoi Area.*

Any person can mortgage his already cultivated lands or rice-fields. Uncultivated lands cannot be mortgaged by any person.

He who gets lands or rice-fields through mortgage, must cultivate them and must not leave them fallow. If he does so, after three years the lands or rice-fields become public, and any person can take and cultivate them.

4. **The Dulir of the Raj-rulers :** In order that no quarrels may take place, the Raj-rulers usually, though not obligatorily, give the so-called *dulir*, that is, a document to show that so-and-so is the cultivator of this or that plot of land or rice-field. Registers as such are not needed; nay, they are harmful and can cause the baneful zemindari system to come back to life.

The Raj-ruler's *dulir* is indispensable when the *Khyndew-iaṣ-duh* are given to private individuals. He who takes away any of the lands that are *Khyndew-iaṣ-duh* without this *dulir* and the consent of the people, is considered as a thief and he must give back to the Raj the lands or rice-fields he has stolen.

**The Ri-Bam Syiem :** Among the Khyriam, there are some lands reserved for the various royal families, called *Ri Bam Syiem*. But there is no such thing in the Bhoi area, except in the Raj Nyrleng where there are some plots of land for the Syiem Raj.

# STRUCTURE OF BRIDGE AND BUFFER COMMUNITIES IN THE BORDER AREAS

B. K. ROY BURMAN

( *Received on 12 August 1965* )

**Abstract.** The author describes the functions of tribes who live between two powerful neighbours ; powerful either economically or politically. He suggests how this has led to segmentation among some of these 'bridge' or 'buffer' tribes. The nature of segmentation, in his opinion, has varied in accordance with the function performed by the tribe.

IT is generally considered that, until recently, the tribes in the border areas used to live an isolated existence. This is not wholly correct. While the tribes in the extreme border did not have regular contact with the plains, they had very often some sort of understanding covering commercial and political matters. Besides, they had contact with the people across the border. It is to be examined how their social relations were regulated in such a contact situation.

In an earlier paper it has been pointed out that, sometimes in the border, certain communities may play the role of bridge communities and certain others may play the role of buffer communities, as the case may be, between two or more politically dominant communities.

The Totos, a small tribe living in the border of West Bengal and Bhutan, provide an illustration of a bridge community. The Totos are slightly more than 300 in number, and practically live in one village named Totopara. To the north of the village is the area of the Bhutias and to the south is the area of the Mech-Koch group of tribes. In the pre-British period, Totopara changed hands several times from the Bhutias to the Koches and vice versa. At the time of

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British conquest in 1868, Totopara was under the political jurisdiction of Bhutan and the Totos were the slaves of the Bhutias. They were required to carry rice, salt and other essential requirements of the Bhutias from the markets situated in the Koch kingdom to important centres inside Bhutan. For the purpose of such porterage the Totos were divided into two groups—one group going to the south for carrying the commodities from the Koch markets to Totopara and another group carrying the commodities from Totopara to places inside Bhutan. These two groups were formed on the basis of clan division ; and while all clans were equally free to consociate with the Bhutias, the clans going north were required to observe certain commensal restrictions in respect of the tribes of the south, namely, Mech and Koch ; but the clans which used to visit the southern markets were not required to observe these restrictions. Thus one segment was allowed to partially identify themselves with the southern tribes, whereas another segment was considered to be closer to the tribes of the north, i.e. the Bhutias and the Dayas, because of the restrictions they observed in respect of the tribes of the south. At the same time, the unity of both the segments was maintained by making it compulsory for all the families of both the segments to participate in some common rituals of the tribe.

The above organizational device admirably qualified the Totos to play the bridge-role. Due to segmental identification, it was possible for each segment to establish rapport with the dominant political community with which it was in contact, without corroding the separate identity of the community as a whole. It served the purpose of the mutually antagonistic dominant political communities as well. It was in their interest to maintain the commerce intact ; if the Totos were completely identified either with the Bhutias or the Koches, it would have been impossible to maintain the flow of commodities undisturbed during the period of active hostility between the Koches and the Bhutias. But as the Totos were partially associated with both, as well as separate from both, a certain amount of continuity could be assured.

This organizational device was significant not only in terms of group dynamics, involving the various ethnic groups, it was also significant in respect of acculturation processes. As it was in the interest of the dominant political groups—the Bhutias and the Koches, which were also dominant culture groups—to maintain the separate identity of the Totos, it was logically inevitable that they would not desire the culture of the Totos to be totally submerged by the culture of either the Bhutias or the Koches. The acculturation processes were therefore likely to be consciously arrested by both the groups as a matter of policy. Toto traditions seem to indicate that this was actually done; the rulers actively fostered the distinctive traits of the Totos, and there are instances when they penalized the deviants.

In the border areas, there are several other communities which have played a similar bridge-role. For instance, the Mishmies in N. E. F. A. seem to have served as a sort of link for maintaining commercial and political contact between the tribes of the north, like the Abors on the one hand, and the tribes of the south and east on the other. They had two segments—one having tradition of origin from the north and the other having tradition of origin from the south. Because of their segmental identification both with the north and the south, the community as a whole could help in maintaining the trade line comparatively intact, even when the tribes of the north and the south were in conflict with one another.

Among the communities which appear to have served the role of buffer between two or more aggressive tribes, mention may be made of the Kukis. Perhaps it will not be wrong to say that on a long range process, they functioned as buffer between the Mizos on the hand and the Nagas on the other. For effectively functioning as buffer, they had to adopt a different kind of organizational strategy than the one described in the case of the bridge communities. The Kukis do not constitute a single tribe; a number of separate tribes are considered to belong to the Kuki group. Some of them, like the Hmars, are more closely related to the Nagas. These are the

fringe communities; but both the types of fringe communities are considered to be historically related to the core Kuki tribes. In the past, this sort of structural arrangement allowed the Kukis to have fringe identification or conflict with the dominant aggressive group in contact, while the core remained free to serve as shock absorber. It is to be noted that, as in case of a bridge community, in the case of a buffer community also, some sort of segmentation is necessary. But there is a fundamental difference between the two types of segmentation. In the case of a bridge community the segmentation is ritual in character, and the segments constitute parts of the same tribe. The two moieties intermarry and interdine and, except in some ritual matters, there is absolutely no difference between them. On the other hand, in the case of a buffer community, the segmentation is political in character and the segments are distinct tribes, differing from one another in language, material culture, social organization and other matters. They do not also intermarry. If, inspite of these differences, they are considered to be one, it is at the secondary level, and this is because of a more or less common pattern of political relationship with the neighbouring communities.

To gain a clear idea about the social situation in the border, it would be desirable to have a passing view of the pattern of relationship among the components of secondary social entities. As mentioned above the Kukis are a secondary social group. But such social structures at the secondary level are found not only among the buffer communities, but these are found among others also, both in the border areas and away from the border areas. For instance, tribes like the Nagas, the Gonds and castes like the Adi-Andhras, Adi-Dravidas etc. are secondary social entities. The component units may be related to one another as dominant communities, satellite communities, ritually associated communities and non-dominated allied communities. Among the Nagas of the Kohima district, for instance, the Angamis constitute the dominant community, and the Zeliangs constitute a satellite community; the Lohtas are not dominated by the Angamis but are allied to them, in the sense that both are considered

to belong to the Naga group of tribes. If Nagaland as a whole is taken into consideration, the Angamis, Aos, Konyaks etc. constitute non-dominated allied communities. In the Mizo Hills, the Lushai clans constitute the dominant community and the Lakhers constitute a non-dominated allied community. As regards ritually associated community, a well-known illustration would be the Pradhans of the Gond area who are ritually associated with the Gonds as their minstrels, but are considered to be separate from the Gonds.

Relevant ethnographic data are not however available in order to classify all the tribes and sub-tribes of the border areas including the buffer communities like the Kukis according to the above model. More focussed study would be necessary in this connexion.

# AN EXPERIMENT IN DEVELOPMENT RURAL INDIA

P. ALSTON WARING

( *Received on 19 October 1964* )

**Abstract :** The author gives an account of his experiences in trying to bring about change in farming practices in a group of villages in Orissa. He compares it with what he observed in Puerto Rico.

**I**N the year 1952 my wife and I began an experience in rural India out of which we learned some lessons about the process of change in the modern world which may have some significance. This was the year that the great Community Development Project of the Government of India was initiated. It was likewise the year when a small rural development project was begun at Barpali in Orissa with the co-operation of the government of that state, which over the succeeding ten years proved to be of some value, a pilot undertaking in the discovery of how work of this character can avoid pitfalls and help in the process of social change and development.

That ten-year experience is now over and I would like to look at it to-day with some objectivity. We were involved personally during the first years of the project. But we remained in close touch thereafter and could consequently bring some further judgement to bear upon the work at Barpali, because by contrast and comparison we came in contact with the quite remarkable community development work being done in Puerto Rico under the direction of Fred and Carmen Wale who conduct the island's government program within the Department of Education.

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The first lesson we learned, or what is perhaps more true, the first lesson we came to know that we must learn, was that rural development is chiefly a matter of human relations, and only to a lesser degree technical assistance. Anyone committed to change and improvement in society will inevitably, I am sure, be maddened at times by the back-filing of people in a community which had declared itself ready to go forward in a public project. Inertia in others is certainly hard to take and to understand. Moreover, commitment to change and improvement as one sees it lies at the foundation of all technical assistance in areas moving out of underdevelopment into a more advanced technology. For that reason it is particularly important, we found, that we understand village inertia. In the first place, it seemed out of character in revolutionary Asia, and thus a kind of denial of an over-all fact. The revolution was, to be sure, definitely on right there in Barpali and all the villages around about. Inertia and revolution were, in fact, side by side in every village where we lived and worked—in each person, I am sure. For here are fifteenth century men, as it were, on the threshold of the twentieth.

It was not patience we needed, but understanding. Patience could be blind; it also could be condescending. What we wanted to know soon after we arrived was how those villages had survived through all the centuries of Indian turmoil, authoritarian rule, colonialism, and dependence on the whims of the monsoon. What made them so tough, so downright hardy? What was the strength of these people and their genius? We were struck by the capacity of men and women to be gay, to decorate life with the lovely colours and designs of their home-made *saris*, to amuse themselves by dancing swift rhythmic dances to the music of cymbals and drums, to sing and to memorize long passages from the Mahabharata and Ramayana, India's epic poems, and thus to produce dramas under the flaring light of dung-cake torches on the village streets, though only two persons in the village might be literate.

We knew also all too well how crowded life is, for we had been in many homes and realize that each village is bursting at its seams, so great is the pressure of population for housing. We knew, too, how little privacy there is, and comprehend the need of man for privacy. In India one finds privacy only in the fields at work, along the road as one walks to market, or in the temple before God. There are tremendous material lacks and they are centuries old. And I found myself wondering: Can there be some strength that comes from a fewness of needs? Is such a society less vulnerable to pressures, more able to hold to its understood values? I asked an Indian friend, just returned from America, what stuck him most about my country. He said: 'The poverty of the people! Each one wants more than he has and feels poor if he cannot have it.' He set me thinking. What about these values of stability in the face of the vast pressures of modern life? What society will best survive all the change of the atomic age? Do these village communities have something that more technologically developed communities lack—some fortitude that will help them to endure?

But when I saw women of the Harijan quarter of the villages walk two miles or more in the fierce heat of summer to the sandy bed of the Jera river and there scoop out a hollow until they came to water and could fill their jars, because their village pools had dried up—when I saw this and realized that they and their forebears had been doing this same thing for years, perhaps centuries, then I came to understand that what had built strength had also created stagnation. Will the modern world put up with stagnation? I think not. Certainly this is comprehended in India, and the vast community project undertakings in rural development is the Government's chief answer to this question. It has no intention of putting up with stagnation. But whether it is going about the matter wisely or well is another matter. For so much has to be discovered by experience, and the sum of experience in this kind of work is yet small even after twelve years.

To get at the root cause of poverty, we came to understand, was as important a function of rural development work as to

comprehend the conflicting forces of inertia and revolution. We grappled with this problem on our project, not only as lay-men in the field of social studies, but with the guidance of social anthropology. We asked ourselves: Is it simply the ignorance of people isolated from the great stream of world thought? And of course we came to the conclusion that this was but a generalization. Certainly for the great numbers of village people it is this, but much more. And we found ourselves asking: As change comes what will the character of that change be? What will be held on to, and what discarded? These are critical questions, and we felt the need for answers. Perhaps the challenge to us and to all those working in community development was to help shape and guide the process of alteration, so that rural people would be able better to rationalize their traditional beliefs and ways of living and bring them into line with the current need for security, food, and prestige. Perhaps the over-all goal was for people to learn to feel at home in the modern world and not be crushed by its impact.

When it came to the way technical knowledge is imparted we learned much through experience at Barpali. It became obvious soon that new ideas or tools had to be wanted before they would be accepted. And since the new technology was the agent of transformation, pumps in wells instead of buckets, improved seeds, and the endless array of scientific instead of customary ways of doing things, it was necessary that people feel their need if they were to be adopted. Moreover, at Barpali, we based our work squarely on social anthropology with a rural-life analyst field-man and behind him a member of the department of anthropology of the University of Calcutta. For you cannot guess at social change. You cannot proceed simply on what seems good. It is too delicate a matter. Moreover, some things have to happen to people before there can be any growth of self-confidence. For one thing, people have to be believed in. They have to be liked, and they have to feel the warmth of that liking.

In Puerto Rico, the Division of Community Education, which has now an international reputation for its methods of

working in rural community development and education, offers some basic ideas about how community education can best be achieved by rural people who are moving out of the past into the present. Central to the methods used in Puerto Rico is the idea that the people of any community must in fact first discover that they constitute a community. They must arrive at a consensus on what the community needs, and they must make an effort to find answers to their felt needs.

What then is the function of Government or the agent of Government? In Puerto Rico the agent is called a community organizer, a field leader trained under the Division of Community Education. After a fashion he bears some relation to India's village level workers, but he is actually quite different. He is not trained in agricultural skills or animal husbandry or craft methods or in any special technical knowledge. He is not in reality an extension agent. He is something quite different indeed, and bears the unique imprint of the training of Puerto Rico's community education. He has been schooled not to tell people in a community what to do or what Government would like them to do. He serves as an instrument for the members of the community to gather together, to talk and think together, and to discover their nature as a community. He has learned the art of waiting, of patience, of not injecting his ideas until he is asked. His waiting may sometimes take months, and he is trained not to be discouraged.

When the people, in time, have agreed on what they most need, let us say it is a school or an access road from a highway or a bridge over which children must walk to get to school, he can and does at that point offer suggestions as to how they may find technical and special answers from one or more branches of Government. He does not explore these avenues of aid or advice—they do. They do so usually by means of a delegation of villagers appointed by the community.

The community organizer is, thus, the agent by which the self-discovered community explores the ways by which it can get answers to its problems. But he never allows the community to depend on him. This is, perhaps, the greatest

art of the community organizer. For he could easily become indispensable, and community self-confidence would be destroyed.

Second in interest to the unique nature of the Puerto Rican community organizer, is the plan set up by government by which the departments of government can and do enter the situation opened up by the communities' initiative, and the government's method of making funds available on an aid basis.

When a community has, in its thinking and group discussion, arrived at a decision on what kind of project it wishes to undertake, its delegation to the Department of Government (let us say the Department of Education if the project is a school) asks for an estimate of building costs. When it has this, it figures up usually with much discussion, what contribution in the form of labour and materials etc. it can contribute. If this amounts to 40% of the estimated cost, government will contribute the remaining 60% out of a special fund set up each year in the budget. The central government and the community co-operate in fulfilling the community's needs, and the people feel that they have jointly improved their life.

In Barpali, India, aspects of this procedure were followed, but never so well worked out. The principle of 'felt needs' and 'self-help' was understood, to be sure. But in my experience the Puerto Rican achievement in this method of community development is pre-eminent in the world.

Only a decade ago there was relatively little accumulated experience to guide those societies which wished to bring their rural and technologically underdeveloped communities into the modern world. In many parts of the world to-day, however, a great deal of experience has been had, and the work at Barpali and in Puerto Rico are aspects of this now extensive experience.

# CHRISTIAN MISSIONS AND THEIR PROGRAMME OF TRAINING WORKERS

JYOTI SEN

*(Received on 11 October 1964)*

THE topic for to-day is philosophy, principles and methods of social work adopted by Christian missions and their programme for training workers. I shall try to place before you my own observations on the subject as gathered in the course of field-work in Chotanagpur. For more than a century Christian missions have been at work in this forest-clad hilly region, and they have succeeded considerably in changing the life of their tribal converts.

As Kroeber has said, Christianity like Buddhism or Islam is a world religion not because it encompasses the earth, but it aims to do so. It is exclusive in nature in the sense that it carries a conviction that it is the only true religion which can give mankind freedom from all bondage, physical, mental or spiritual. The missions are founded on Christ's command to his disciples, 'Go ye unto all nations and preach the gospel'. Therefore the primary aim of the missions is to deliver the message of Christ to those who are not Christians, and try to save their souls by bringing them to Christ. The Roman Catholics believe that if a man receives baptism even just before his death, he is saved. It must be remembered that in spite of their concern for the soul they do not look upon it as an entity separate from the body, rather their consideration is for the individual as a whole. Missionaries are keenly aware that a hungry man has no time for higher thoughts. One who is steeped in poverty, ignorance and misery can hardly spare any thought for his soul. His material needs must be looked after first. Thus arises the need for social work. Christ's

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teaching, 'In as much as ye have done it unto the least of my brother ye have done it unto me', finds expression in their work among suffering humanity.

The leading principles of missionary work is to try to realize the problems of the people among whom they are to work, with true sympathy and understanding. They try to identify themselves with the people as best they can. I have known Roman Catholic fathers, founders of institutions, who have learnt to speak several tribal languages. I have seen them in course of their visits to villages when they have lived in huts with the people. It is only after an understanding of local problems that they carefully adopt means of solving them.

For example, the land problem has been a major problem among the Adibasis of Chotanagpur, as well as indebtedness. The pioneers of the Roman Catholic Church in Ranchi noticed that the Adibasi peasants were gradually becoming landless labourers. They were simple illiterate people who followed an uneconomic system of cultivation and had thriftless habits. Whenever in need of any extra money they ran into debt, and the only source of loan open to them was the village money-lender who charged high rates of interest, nearly 75%, against the security of their agricultural land. Very often they failed to repay the loan or the fast accumulating interest and lost their land as a consequence. In this way, owner peasants became more and more dependent on labour in the fields which were now owned by money-lenders. The rate of migration also increased. In the census report of 1911, we find that 8% of the total tribal population migrated to the tea plantations of Assam and North Bengal.

The Roman Catholic Mission tried to solve this problem in two ways. Firstly, by taking up the cause of the Adibasis with the Government, they substantially helped in the promulgation of the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act. Legal assistance was also given to Adibasi converts who were involved in litigation regarding land. Secondly, the Chotanagpur Catholic Mission Co-operative Credit Society was opened to furnish loans to Catholic converts. The characteristic feature of this credit society is that it is a single large-sized one which covers the

entire archdiocese, with rural units in the villages. Loans are given not against property but personal security of guarantors who stand responsible for repayment.

In the case of even a single default, the entire rural unit is closed down until all dues are cleared. It becomes a joint responsibility of the members to get the unit re-opened. Each rural unit has a managing committee chosen by its members. In actual practice, it is mostly the Catholic panchayat who are elected, with slight additions and alterations. Thus the existing community organization which wields social control is made use of in the selection of members and repayment of loans. Personal security of guarantors engenders a sense of responsibility and co-operation between the members. Even though such executive functions are entrusted to the people, the central directive and control lies largely with the clergy who are dedicated men and are expected to be devoid of personal interests. Besides, they are experts in co-operation and have experience. This is the 52nd year of the C.C.M.C.C.S. The balance sheet shows that profits are on a steep rise.

Speaking of missionary methods, it has been observed that missionaries attach great importance to personal problems; for it is individuals who make up a community. For example, the Roman Catholic Mission has 38 mission stations. A mission station is further divided into circles consisting of several villages. A catechist who is in the pay of the Mission is in charge of each circle. He is in constant touch with each and every Catholic family within his jurisdiction and has first-hand knowledge of their personal problems. It is his duty to help and advise them. When the problem is too big for him, he places it before the father in charge of the mission station in the monthly meetings held on the first Tuesdays. He gives all possible help and guidance to the person concerned.

Secondly, when it comes to the question of introducing any social change, the emphasis is on the younger generation rather than on the old. For instance, the residential schools of the mission stations try to shape young lives in a way that they imbibe cleaner and improved methods of practising their daily chores. When these boys and girls grow up and set up

homes of their own, they introduce innovations learnt in their early days. Gradually the mode of life changes. I have witnessed the success of this method in many a Christian home.

Thirdly, the institutions of the missions have a small beginning. Existing means are well utilized and all possible care is taken to make it a success and then it is allowed to grow like an organism. A village school is started in the existing church building or even under a tree, with just a few children by a father or nun or a missionary in the case of a Protestant Church. A local person of known character with responsibility is entrusted with teaching. His academic qualifications may not be much. As these children get used to school and make some progress, new admissions are taken. Gradually, qualified teachers are engaged and last of all comes up the school building. Each institution has to show successful working in order to justify fresh grants from missionary or private sources.

Fourthly, there is constant supervision and follow-up in practically all lines of activity. A Catholic student leaving a training institution is given all possible help through the Catholic Employment Agency.

So far I have spoken on the philosophy, principles and methods ; I shall now try to say something about the programme for training workers.

Workers in the Roman Catholic Mission are either religious or lay-men. In the Anglican Mission it is missionaries and *Karamcharis*.

Since Chotanagpur is a Jesuit Province, the majority of the priests belong to the Society of Jesus. It takes 15 years of training to become a priest. Quite often, young schoolboys aspiring to become priests are taken in the apostolic schools where they study in the general line till matriculation or even till the end of college education along with specialized religious training. At the end of this period, the candidates considered fit for the Order are sent with letters of recommendation by the Director to the House of Training.

In the House of Training the first two years are known as noviciate. After two weeks of probation, when he receives private instruction, a novice puts on the Jesuit gown. During these two years he attends classes in modern Indian languages and pedagogy as well as theoretical and practical classes in agriculture, dairy, fruit gardening, poultry, animal husbandry, automobile engineering, bakery, tailoring, laundry, cooking, first-aid, masonry, etc. He has to perform 30 days' retreat in the first year. He also participates in all hard menial and dirty work. Quite often 1/15 give up at this period. Those who stay on take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

The next two years are spent in the study of classical languages, history, science, art and modern languages. The scholastic is given opportunities of developing his talents in speaking, writing, music and dramatics, etc.

The following three years are spent in the study of philosophy. Besides an extensive study of Christian philosophy, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist philosophy, ethics, cosmology are also studied as well as Marxism. Training in methods of education is also given at this stage.

After this period, he is sent to a Jesuit high school or college for two to three years where he can put into practice all that he has learnt. Then are the four quiet years of theology. Initiation to priesthood takes place at the end of the third year. The last year is known as tertianship which is similar to noviceship. This completes the fifteen years.

The nuns have three years of training; six months of postulance and 2½ years of noviciate, which is very similar to that of the novices. At the end of noviciate, the nuns take their vows which is renewed every year till final vows are taken at the end of the sixth year.

The catechists are lay village level workers. The primary factors taken into consideration in selecting them are honesty and trustworthiness as potential leaders. They must be married. They must work on probation for some time. If satisfactory, they are sent for training along with their wives to Tongo in the Ranchi district. The period of training is for 2½ years. Besides religion the course includes :

1. Principles and application of co-operation.
2. The Grain *golās*, how to organize and run them.
3. The Chotanagpur Tenancy Act.
4. First-aid, nursing, the use of cheap indigenous remedies.
5. Methods of settling disputes.
6. They are acquainted with the powers and functions of the panchayat as well as the relevant legislation in outline.

At the end of two years of training, the catechist is posted in some mission station for six months. He is asked to conduct meetings, settle disputes, meet existing problems of the place while he is closely watched by the father-in-charge. After this he is employed and posted by the Mission. In the meanwhile, his wife is taught religion, nursing, child-care, hygiene, needle-work, mending, etc. by the nuns. At the end of the training, she accompanies her husband to his post.

In the Anglican Mission, women missionaries are trained in Selly Oak in Birmingham. Training is open to

1. Doctors,
2. Nurses,
3. Teachers,
4. Qualified Church workers.

The age limit is between 25-40 years ; in some cases the rule is relaxed. The applicant has to furnish the following details : name, age, educational qualification, previous ten years of experience and names of six persons for reference, out of whom 2 must be priests, 2 who can vouch for the candidate, and 2 women friends who are to say how she reacts in an emergency and how she gets on with people.

A medical examination form is filled up by her own physician followed by a medical examination at the College of Ascension, Selly Oak, by an expert in tropical diseases.

The period of training is for one year. It consists of lectures on

1. Prayers, meditations and an intensive study of the Bible, prayer book and the Christian doctrines.
2. Preparation for confirmation, planning conferences, getting together people, training in giving talks.

3. A study of the growth of Missions.

4. Social Anthropology.

5. Lectures on the country one is going to, if known. In the case of India, history, religion, religious literature, epics, lower levels of Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Parsi religion, the Mission in India.

6. There are optional courses in Marxism, book-keeping, etc.

Every category of worker, whether teacher or social worker, is given a weeks' lecture on midwifery and also how to lay out a dead body.

There are practical classes in visiting the sick, running a youth club, organizing mothers' meetings and house-to-house visiting.

Apart from all this, great emphasis is laid on other personal qualities. For example, the discipline which will find expression in a spirit of dedication and self-sacrifice. She must possess capacity of making friends with people of another race and appreciate their heritage. There must be equal readiness to take positions of authority or work under native leadership according to the state of development of the latter.

I have tried to tell you in brief the training background of the missionary work. It is this background that helps them to succeed to a great extent where ordinary voluntary or official agencies fail.

# OPINION LEADERS IN A VILLAGE IN WESTERN RAJASTHAN

A. B. BOSE

P. C. SAXENA

( *Received on 12 December 1965* )

**Abstract :** The authors have tried to find out who the opinion leaders are in a village in Rajasthan and how they function in the diffusion of innovations. They have also described how communication has actually taken place in this village in regard to improved agricultural practices.

## *Introduction*

THE important role played by opinion leaders in the communication process has been stressed by different workers (Coleman *et al.*, 1957 ; Katz, 1957 ; Rahudkar, 1958 ; Beal and Rogers, 1957). Even in a society exposed to mass communication, opinion leaders have been found to aid the flow of information (Lazarsfeld *et al.*, 1944). The socio-economic characteristics of opinion leaders in American studies reviewed by Rogers (1962) indicate that they differ from the average member in their source of information, social status, extent of social participation, degree of innovativeness and conformity to social norms. The present paper attempts to study these factors in a village in the arid zone of Rajasthan.

## *Method of study*

Field work was carried out in a rural community about 12 miles from the town of Balotra in western Rajasthan. The total number of households in the village is 236, out of which

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only 85 have irrigated land-holdings. This study was confined to all the 60 farming households who have adopted the cultivation of *jeera* (*Cuminum cyminum*). The data presented here have been obtained from schedules filled in during the latter part of 1963 and beginning of 1964.

### Communication channels

Sixty farmers who have adopted *jeera* cultivation were asked to give the names of persons from whom they seek information and advice. Excluding one farmer residing in an adjacent village who was mentioned by 23 respondents,

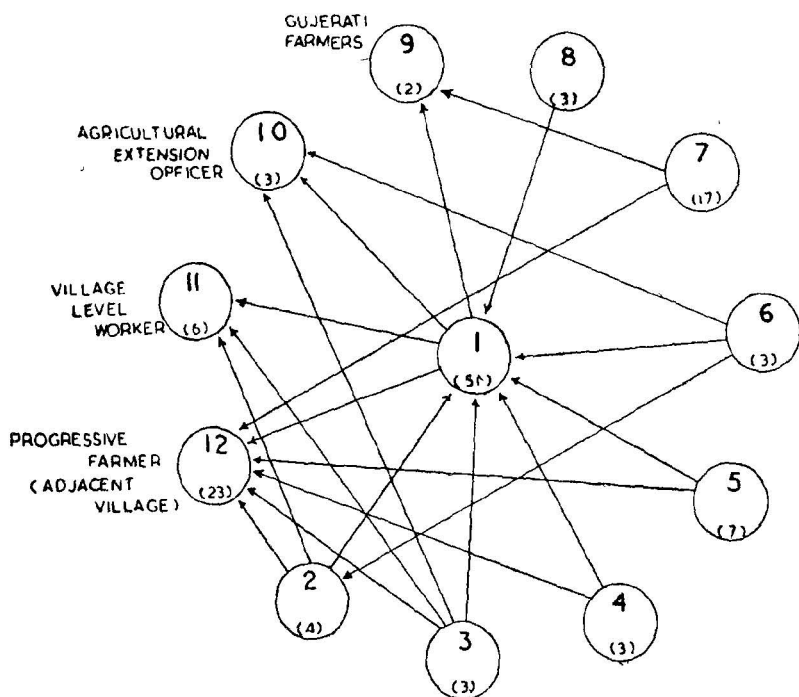


FIG. 1. SOCIOGRAM OF INFORMATION SEEKING RELATIONSHIPS AMONG OPINION LEADERS

(FIGURES IN BRACKETS GIVE THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PERSONS WHO SEEK INFORMATION AND ADVICE FROM THE OPINION LEADERS. FIGURES WITHOUT BRACKETS GIVE THE SERIAL NUMBERS OF THE OPINION LEADERS)

8 farmers were mentioned by 51, 17, 7, 4, 3, 3, 3 and 3, respectively. These have been taken to be the opinion leaders. The considerable variation in the number of persons who seek advice and information from each of these opinion leaders shows centralization of leadership in farm matters.

The sources of information and advice of farmers is given in the adjoining sociogram (Fig. 1). Opinion leaders of the village seek information and advice from an opinion leader in an adjacent village as well as through direct contact with formal agencies like the Gram Sevak and the Agricultural Extension Officer (A. E. O.). Interpersonal communication through informal channels are more common among other farmers; for instance, only 3 of them seek information and advice from formal sources like the Gram Sevak and Gujarati<sup>1</sup> farmers, but these are in addition to the informal sources. Mass communications play no role because of the widespread illiteracy and rather limited exposure to mass communication media.

It is also evident that even among opinion leaders there is a considerable amount of centralization and very little information is sought from each other, although there are hardly any social or economic barriers among them. This centralization seems to be due to the larger experience which opinion leader No. 1 has in *jeera* cultivation. It is possible also that since social relationships are more intense within the caste, most opinion leaders of the same caste as No. 1 seek information and advice from him rather than from No. 7 who has only a year's less experience and is a very progressive farmer but is of a different caste and has recently settled in this village from outside. Personal qualities are also, no doubt, important. It is interesting to note that persons most sought after by opinion leaders are also most sought after by others. In other words, all opinion leaders do not participate equally in the multiple steps through which communication flows.

### *Adopter categories*

The adopter distribution for *jeera* cultivation was found to be normal. The two parameters, namely, the mean and the

standard deviation were used to divide the distribution into four parts on the basis of the time of adoption of innovations. The proportion of adopters falling between mean year of adoption minus one standard deviation ( $\bar{x} - \sigma$ ) and minus infinity ( $-\infty$ ) is classified as innovator, between mean year of adoption ( $\bar{x}$ ) and mean minus one standard deviation ( $\bar{x} - \sigma$ ) as early adopter, between mean year of adoption ( $\bar{x}$ ) and mean plus one standard deviation ( $\bar{x} + \sigma$ ) as late adopter and between mean year of adoption plus one standard deviation ( $\bar{x} + \sigma$ ) and plus infinity ( $+\infty$ ) as laggard.

The distribution of adopter categories among opinion leaders and others (Table 1) shows that not all the opinion

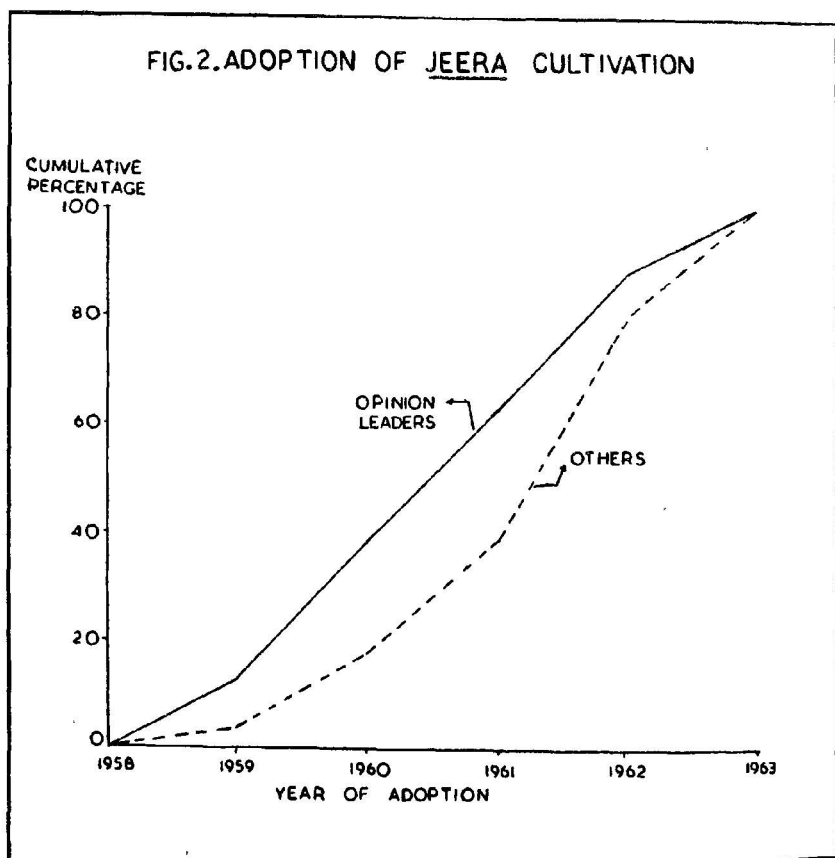


TABLE 1

*Adopter categories of opinion leaders and others*

Adopter categories	Opinion leader		Others	
	No.	%	No.	%
Innovator	3	37.5	9	17.4
Early adopter	2	25.0	11	21.1
Late adopter	2	25.0	21	40.4
Laggard	1	12.5	11	21.1

leaders are innovators. However, only one-third of them are in the category of late adopters and laggards as compared to two-thirds among others. The enclosed graph (Fig. 2) also shows that the rate of adoption of *jeera* cultivation among opinion leaders is higher than among other farmers.

The pattern of information seeking relationships by adopter categories given in table 2 shows that almost all such relationships by innovators seeking information is directed towards

TABLE 2

*Information seeking relationships by adopter categories*

Information seekers	Innovators	Information givers		Laggards
		Early adopters	Late adopters	
Innovators	14	3	2	—
Early adopters	15	3	—	—
Late adopters	29	4	2	—
Laggards	13	1	2	3

innovators giving it. Among other adopter categories, too, the information seeking relationships are directed towards innovators. Only 5 information seeking relationships out of 91 are from a lower category. In other words, the adopter category of information seekers has little association with the adopter category of information givers (opinion leaders), since all prefer innovators who are considered the persons most suited to give the information.

### *Socio-economic characteristics*

The comparative socio-economic characteristics of opinion leaders and others are given in table 3. The data show that opinion leaders have a larger size of irrigated holding, own more livestock, practise commercial farming to a greater extent as evidenced from the sale of agricultural and livestock produce, have tried and adopted more innovations, have higher literacy, greater social participation and cosmopolitanism and come from castes whose main source of livelihood is agriculture. The results thus support the generalizations made by other research workers (Lionberger, 1953; Fliegel, 1957; Rahudkar, 1960 and Rogers, 1962). There is hardly any difference, however, in the diversification of the sources of livelihood or in the age of the farmers.

TABLE 3

*Socio-economic characteristics of opinion leaders and others*

Item	Mean per household	
	Opinion leaders	Others
1. Size of irrigated holding (ha.)	7.31	5.18
2. Size of unirrigated holding (ha.)	8.97	10.18
3. No. of cattle owned	21.37	10.98
4. No. of other livestock owned	22.12	2.58
5. Sale value of agricultural and livestock produce sold last year	Rs. 2,541	Rs. 1,133
6. Sources of livelihood other than cultivation and animal husbandry	Only 1 hh. out of 8	Only 3 hh. out of 52
7. Trial score <sup>2</sup>	18.8	12.5
8. Adoption score <sup>3</sup>	15.1	7.4
9. Participation score <sup>4</sup>	14.9	9.4
10. Cosmopolitanism score <sup>5</sup>	4.8	3.5
11. Age (in years)	34.5	35.9
12. Literacy	75.0 per cent.	28.8 per cent.
13. Caste	Agricultural castes only	All castes

*Rural leadership*

The extent to which leadership in farm matters overlapped with leadership in other spheres of life was also studied (Table 4). The data show that there is generally no such

TABLE 4

*Leadership positions of opinion leaders in different spheres of rural life*

Opinion leaders	No. of information seekers from each	Office-bearer of		
		Gram panchayat	caste panchayat	Co-operative society
1	51	—	—	Yes
2	4	—	—	Yes
3	3	—	—	—
4	3	Yes	—	Yes
5	7	—	—	—
6	3	—	—	—
7	17	—	—	—
8	3	—	—	—

overlap in the non-agricultural sphere but in organizations connected with agriculture, as for instance, co-operative societies, there is some degree of overlap. The findings thus confirm similar results of other studies (Emery and Oeser, 1958 ; Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955 and Ryan, 1942). Caste or village *panches* are not sought after for information and advice in farm matters since information seeking is generally directed to persons most suited for the purpose (Bose and Saxena, 1965).

*Summary*

1. There is centralization of leadership in farm matters. Even among opinion leaders there is very little of information seeking from each other.

2. All opinion leaders do not participate equally in the multiple steps through which communication flows.

3. Informal inter-personal communication is more important among other farmers than opinion leaders. Mass communication has little influence.

4. All opinion leaders are not innovators. However, the rate of adoption is higher among opinion leaders than among others.

5. Almost all information seeking relationships are directed towards innovators.

6. Opinion leaders have a larger size of irrigated holding, own more livestock, practise commercial farming to a greater extent, have tried and adopted more innovations, have higher literacy, greater social participation and cosmopolitanism and come from castes having agriculture as their caste occupation. However, there is hardly any difference in the diversification of the sources of livelihood or in the age of the farmer.

7. Very little overlapping exists between leadership in farm matters and leadership in other spheres of life (non-agricultural).

### *Acknowledgements*

Thanks are due to the Director for his guidance and for providing research facilities. The authors are grateful to Shri M. B. Jain, Statistician and Shri H. H. Trivedi, Senior Scientific Assistant, for help in statistical analysis.

### N O T E S

1. Adoption of *jeera* by villagers here has been largely due to farmers from Gujarat who come to these parts for growing this crop with the help of share-croppers. The local farmer ploughs the land and supplies manure and water for irrigation while the Gujarati farmer gives the technical know-how and bears the cost of additional labour required, for which he usually claims two-fifths of the produce.

2. The trial score was obtained by adding up the number of innovations tried by the farmers.

3. The adoption score was obtained by adding up the number of innovations adopted by the farmers.

4. The participation score was calculated by adding up the number of organizations or other communication media in which the farmer participated.

5. The cosmopolitaness score was calculated by scoring the frequency of visit to the city, camps, fairs, exhibitions, etc. outside the village.

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# ATTITUDE OF MINAS TOWARDS IMPROVED AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

R. S. MANN

( Received on 5 May 1965 )

**Abstract :** The author has tried to analyse the attitude of Mina tribesmen regarding improved agricultural practices in a village in Rajasthan.

## *Introduction*

THE village of Barapal, chosen for this study, is situated at a distance of fifteen miles from the city of Udaipur. The habitations are scattered on both sides of the National Highway connecting Delhi and Ahmedabad via Udaipur. The nearest marketing centre is Udaipur. The village lies in the jurisdiction of the Community Development Block of Girwa. The block started functioning in October, 1954, and includes 162 villages. Though Girwa is not a tribal block, the village under study is dominated by tribal people. The village has 478 families (1961) with a total population of 2,390. The Mina tribe is dominant with a total population of 2,205. Other castes like Mahajan, Kalal, Bhangi, etc., also reside in the village. There are twelve sub-divisions (*phala*) in the village and that is why it is named as Barapal.

The houses are all scattered ; some situated on slopes and some on level land. A house is usually built near the fields for facility of watching the crops and this is one of the reasons why the homesteads are not clustered together. The village has its own statutory panchayat. The Sarpanch or Headman is a Kalal, but the majority of the elected members are Minas. A primary school and a co-operative society have also been functioning in the village for a long time.

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In most of cultural traits the Minas resemble the Bhils, a very widespread tribe in Rajasthan. But the former claim superiority in social status because of descent from Rajput ancestors.

### *Method of study*

The material used in this paper is the result of investigation carried out by the author in Girwa Block. The questions were simple, unloaded and easily understandable. The preliminary schedule was thoroughly discussed with the local B.D.O. and A.E.O. Before finalization, the field situation was also understood by visiting the village and talking at length about the contents of the schedule with the Sarpanch and some cultivators. The completion of the schedule took about a week.

A random selection of forty families was made and their heads or other responsible male members were interviewed. However, care was taken to include tribal cultivators almost from all the sections (*phalas*) of the village. The informants were interviewed individually, but group discussions were also occasionally held. Such interviews were not merely limited to the questionnaire, but covered a broader field, and many social aspects relating to agricultural production were also discussed. Besides preliminary visits to the village, intensive field work was conducted from the 11th to the 19th of 1965. During the analysis and interpretation of the data, care was taken to correlate the various aspects of the study.

The author expresses his gratitude to all the inhabitants of the village who extended co-operation in the study. Thanks are also due to the officials of the C. D. Block who supplied necessary information.

### *Awareness and attitude*

Twenty-six out of 40 had heard about improved agricultural practices. Three of them came to know from relatives, friends and the village level workers (V. L. W.) Nineteen heard of it exclusively from the V. L. W. Four acquired knowledge through the Block Development Officer (B. D. O.), panchayat,

radio, and outside visitors from different organizations. Inspite of various agencies propagating new practices relating to agriculture, 14 respondents showed complete ignorance. They neither knew about the agencies and functionaries nor about new practices. Some of these people lived very near the residence of the V. L. W. and the panchayat office, but still they were unaware of it. They seemed to be prejudiced against the V. L. W. and panchayat functionaries and have possibly given false information.

### *Regarding improved techniques*

The new practices taken into account include fertilizers, seeds, pesticides and implements.

Fourteen cultivators feel that chemical fertilizers enhance the yield. They are quite convinced about it because they have seen it in demonstration plots and in the fields of their neighbours. One of them, however, points out that the next crop in the field where fertilizer was added in the previous season, is weak. The reply of 26 is that they do not know whether fertilizers increase the yield or not. Out of these, 21 have never used any fertilizer. The other 5 have not even heard that fertilizers increase production. As many as 26 tribals are aware of the improved practices, but 21 have not used fertilizers at all.

As regards improved seeds (maize, wheat and paddy), the reaction of 10 informants is favourable and they have stated that improved seeds definitely lead to more production. The other 30 stated that they do not know whether improved seeds affect the yield or not. Twenty-four out of 30 have never used or tried improved seeds. Four have not even heard of it and the remaining have never seen its effects.

The majority have given a very favourable view about pesticides. As many as 19 are of opinion that pesticides help in increasing production. Twenty-one have stated that they do not know whether pesticides increase or decrease the yield. Fifteen have no experience of using pesticides and so cannot comment. The remaining 6 are ignorant of pesticides.

Thirty-nine out of 40 have stated that they do not know whether improved implements increase production or not.

The reasons given by 30 informants is that they have never used improved implements. The remaining 9 have neither heard of improved implements nor have they ever seen any.

One has used an iron plough and his impression is that it does not increase yield, because it hardly affects the fertility of the soil.

### *Conclusion*

Nearly 65.0 % of the tribal cultivators have heard of one or other practice, but there is hardly any cultivator who has adopted all the practices and operations. Villagers feel that the extension functionaries have not made proper contacts and have not played their role. It is being suggested by the Minas that, apart from mass meetings (which should be organized at regular intervals), the proposals for improvement should be conveyed to cultivators through personal contact.

The faith of the villagers, especially of the tribals, is quite firm in their traditional ways and techniques ; which would tend to prove that 'extension work' has been neither extensive nor intensive enough to overcome the reliance of the people on traditional practices.

# PANCHAYAT ELECTIONS OF 1959 & 1963

K. D. GANGRADE

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**Abstract.** The author has compared the elections of 1959 and 1963 in a village near Delhi. His purpose was to find out how kinship, caste and factions have operated in connexion with the elections. He has traced the changing character of local interests, and the formation of factions or unities in a specific situation. Then he has expressed the opinion that these also affect the fate of developmental programmes in the village either directly or indirectly.

**T**HE institutions of Panchayati Raj are not only aimed at transforming the villages, but also to act as agencies for carrying out village development programmes. These institutions are constituted and expected to function on democratic lines and not traditional ones. But traditions die hard. Where elections are held, more often than not, caste, wealth and kinship considerations play an important role. This has given rise to a number of rival groups and factions. These rival groups in their turn hinder development programmes in the village.

In a multi-caste village the members of dominant castes still play a very important part in the power structure of the village as well as in the statutory panchayats. But rivalries and factions among members of the dominant caste have weakened their position. The power of exercising vote has made the lower castes important. They unite to get a share of political power in the village.

The independent nature of economic activities and a number of legislative measures have enabled them to act as

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equal partners in the power-structure of the village. This has posed a great challenge to the dominant caste. Some of the members of the latter find it difficult to adjust themselves to the new situation. However, the shrewd members of the dominant caste have begun to see the strength of the vote. They secure the support for their group to either win the elections or to play a vital part in the power-politics of the village.

In a number of villages statutory panchayats have not been able to take up effective development programmes on account of the hostility of opposing groups. The villagers have not shed their caste and ritual differences. The panchayats are regulated by certain rules which are not easily acceptable to all the villagers. It is also a fact that so long as traditional leaders dominate the panchayats, the latter are bound to remain weak.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss, on the basis of personal observation, two elections in a Delhi village as to: (a) how in the 1959 election the members of the dominant caste united to get their nominee elected to the statutory panchayat; (b) how this unity helped them to take up various development programmes and make their village a model one that year in the whole block; (c) how disunity in the 1963 election among the members of the dominant caste disrupted the solidarity of the village and consequently affected development programmes.

The Delhi Panchayat Raj Act was passed in the year 1954; but elections could not be held immediately. The first panchayat election took place in 1959 and the second one in 1963.

I was able to observe the process of preparation and actual conduct of elections in a few villages. For the purpose of this paper I shall draw material from a village where intensive field work was done. Village A is a multi-caste village situated at a distance of 15 miles from Delhi. The total number of 105 households containing 697 people are divided into various castes. The caste-wise break-up of the population is given below;

TABLE 1

*Castewise distribution of population*

Name of caste	Traditional calling	No. of households	Male	Female	Total	Percentage of total (approx.)
Jat	Peasant	45	168	133	301	43.18
Chamar	Shoemaker	19	56	59	115	16.18
Bhangi	Sweeper	14	39	30	69	9.89
Kumhar	Potter	4	25	21	46	6.59
Lohar	Blacksmith	6	17	25	42	6.20
Bania	Shopkeeper and trader	3	21	17	38	5.44
Brahman	Priest and scholar	5	15	13	28	4.01
Dhobi	Washerman	4	16	10	26	3.71
Sunar	Goldsmith	2	9	8	17	3.43
Nai	Barber	2	5	7	12	1.72
Chipi	Tailor	1	2	1	3	0.43
		105	373	324	697	100.00

The Jats form the dominant caste in the village. Some of the elements of dominance of the Jats are discussed in the following pages.

### *Numerical strength*

It is evident from the table that the Jats form a very significant proportion, forming 43.18% of the total population. Next come the Chamars who constitute 16.18% of the population.

### *Economic status*

The Jats are peasants. They own 94% of the land of the village. The remaining 6% is shared by the Banias and the Brahmans. Four per cent. of the total land is owned by Banias and 2 per cent. by the Brahmans. One of the Jats owns a tractor. He also owns the highest amount of land. Almost all

the Jat houses are pukka. About 19 Jats in the age range of 21 to 40 are in services in the city. The Chamars have abandoned their traditional occupation and have taken to tailoring. The Bhangis have given up cleaning the village streets and removing cow-dung and most of them do scavenging in the city. The Kumhars consider making of pottery a secondary occupation and have primarily taken to the transport of bricks or earth by means of donkeys. Some of the Banias have shops in the village. They sell provisions on credit and loan money on interest. Most of the Chamar and other castes are in debt to them. The artisans serve the peasant castes and receive payment in kind during harvest. The Brahmans, Nais and Chipis are dependent upon the Jats.

### *Ritual status*

The Brahmans are at the apex of the hierarchy. The other castes who fall in the first layer of the hierarchy are the Banias and the Jats. In the middle layer there are the Sunar, Chipi, Lohar, Kumhar, Nai and Dhobi. In the third or the bottom layer are found the Chamar and Bhangi.

### *Western education and occupation*

The village has only four graduates and all of them belong to the Jat caste. Two Jat girls have passed the matriculation examination. Other castes have not taken interest in girls' education. The Chamars have begun to take interest in education and about eleven of them have passed the higher secondary examination. Most of them are employed in the city.

### *Political power*

After the abolition of the office of Lambardar (revenue collector and village headman) the hold of the Jats on the people has weakened considerably. The Lambardar as a headman used to wield great influence. In most of the villages he was considered like a king at the village level.

All the elements of dominance taken together show that the Jats are numerically, economically, ritually and politically

dominant in the village. But it will be wrong to assume that it is a solid caste group.

### *Social base of group formation*

The groups in the village are generally based on caste, kinship and territorial ties. A knowledge of the formation of these groups and of inter-group relations is essential for analysing the process of election in the village. The distribution of groups along caste lines is given in the following table. These groups draw their names from the names of the heads of lineages or of their leaders.

TABLE 2

*Distribution of groups by caste*

Caste	Main group	Sub-group (pannas)	Leader of the sub-group	Leader of the main group	
Jat	Roop Singh	Sukhbir Singh	Ram Singh	Nanak Singh	
		Roop Singh	Nanak Singh		
		Phool Singh	Chand Singh		
		Narain Singh	Charan Singh		Charan Singh
		Balbir Singh	Balbir Singh		
	Bhopal Singh	Bhopal Singh	Chandan Singh	Chandan Singh	
		Prem Singh	Chattar Singh		
Chamar	Mitthan	—	—	Mitthan	
	Bhagwan	—	—	Bhagwan	
Bhangi	Kirpa	—	—	Kirpa	
Lohar	Dalip	—	—	Dalip	
Brahman	Bhola Ram	—	—	Bhola Ram	
Kumhar	Khema	—	—	Khema	
Dhobi	Ahmed	—	—	Ahmed	

A detailed description of the formation of these groups is discussed below.

### *The Jats*

The 45 households of Jats are divided into 43 households of the Serawat *gotra* and two of the Doggar *gotra*. The Jat families of Serawat *gotra* claim that their ancestors were the first settlers in the village and the Doggars who were neighbours

were invited by their ancestors to help in agricultural operations. Older informants of the Serawat *gotra* say that one of their ancestors had two sons, and as their families expanded the members began to build houses separately, and the present two *pannas*, Gopal Singh and Ganpat Singh, of the Serawat *gotra* derive their names from these two sons. The 23 and 20 households of these *pannas* are further sub-divided into three and four lineage sub-groups respectively.

The three lineages of Sukhbir Singh, Roop Singh and Phool Singh of the Gopal Singh *panna* have 10, 8 and 5 households. The present leader of the lineage of Sukhbir Singh was Lambardar (revenue collector) of this *panna* until the abolition of this system recently. He has now become inactive and has lost interest in village work and in the lineage group. Nanak Singh and Chand Singh are leaders of the lineages of Roop Singh and Phool Singh. Nanak Singh is the leader of his lineage because he is educated and is very good in settling family disputes and other problems faced by the lineage group. According to traditional practice, his elder brother should have been the leader of the lineage. But as the elder brother is busy in religious devotional music and has moreover no son he is not inclined to be the head of the group and has passed on this post to his younger brother. Nevertheless, he is consulted and his advice is respected by all the members of the lineage as well as *panna*.

Chand Singh, leader of the Phool Singh lineage, has served on the Burma frontier as a soldier. As he is the eldest member in the lineage and is widely travelled, he was made the head and leader of the lineage on his return. He has a strong physique and pleasant manners. The heads of all the three lineages accept Nanak Singh as the leader of the whole kin-group to represent it either in the caste panchayat or village meetings.

The members of the *panna* of Ganpat Singh are grouped into four lineages having five households each of Narain Singh, Bhopal Singh, Prem Singh and Balbir Singh. The leaders of these lineage groups are Charan Singh, Chandan Singh, Chattar Singh and Balbir Singh. In the first two cases, elder

brothers, though living in the household, are neither the heads of the families nor the leader of the lineages. The reason why Charan Singh is the head of the family is that his elder brother was in service in the city, and used to come to the village only on holidays once or twice a year. Now that he has come back after retirement, he assists his brother instead of being his competitor. Chandan Singh, head of the Bhopal Singh lineage, was Lambardar of his *panna*. His elder brother is a shy and retiring person and does not take interest in any work except farming and as such has given all responsibility to his younger brother. He is neither consulted by anybody nor is his opinion considered valuable for the family or the lineage. Chandan Singh is very effective and represents the village in the caste panchayat. He was nominated chairman of the *ad hoc* Village Development Council by the block authorities. The leaders of the other two lineages of Prem Singh and Balbir Singh are Chattar Singh and Balbir Singh. They are elderly and are heads of their respective families. The lineage group of Chattar Singh has closer ties with the lineage group of Charan Singh and that of Balbir Singh with the lineage group of Chandan Singh. All the four lineage groups as a *panna* accept the leadership of Charan Singh and Chandan Singh.

The two households of Doggar *gotra* remain mostly neutral. But on crucial occasions they support Chandan Singh on account of their territorial ties with the members of this group.

In short, there are three main groups and seven sub-groups among the Jats. The main groups are : (a) the Nanak Singh group, (b) the Charan Singh group and (c) the Chandan Singh group. The seven sub-groups are (i) Sukhbir Singh group, (ii) the Nanak Singh group, (iii) the Chand Singh group (iv) the Charan Singh group, (v) the Chandan Singh group, (vi) the Chattar Singh group and (vii) the Balbir Singh group. The first three groups are found in the Gopal Singh *panna* and the remaining four are in the Ganpat Singh *panna*.

The relations of the three different main groups in the two *pannas* are not cordial and on any pretext each wants to prove

its supremacy over the other. For example, once on the question of the caste of Balmiki (author of the Ramayana) a controversy ensued between Nanak Singh and Charan Singh, leaders of the two *pannas*, and members of their lineage groups betted on this question. The Nanak Singh group said that he was of the Brahman caste and the Charan Singh group, that he belonged to the Harijan caste. Both groups invited learned pandits and agreed to abide by their verdict. The pandits pronounced that Balmiki did not belong to the Brahman caste and the Nanak Singh group lost Rs. 1,000 as part of the condition of betting and this was used for feasting the villagers. This created very hostile relations between the two *pannas*.

### *The Chamars*

Next to the Jats the Chamars are the highest in numerical strength in the village. The 19 households of Chamars are divided into two groups, though they draw their descent from a common ancestor and claim to be resident of the village from the time the original Jat family settled here. All the Chamars have given up their traditional occupation of leather-work and have taken to tailoring. The Chamars were divided into two groups when one of them formed a weavers' co-operative society and did not include the rest of the 9 families of second degree kin. This led to bitterness and estrangement in social relations among the Chamar households. The heads of the houses who are members of the co-operative society are led by Mitthan and the other by Bhagwan. Both are members of the local Congress Committee and wear hand-spun and hand-woven cloth (*khadi*). A marriage in the home of Bhagwan has again brought the households together as he gave Mitthan, an elder member of the lineage, complete responsibility of the ceremony. All the 19 households participated in the feast and this helped to bridge the gulf between the two groups. Mitthan being old and not able to pay much attention to the work of the co-operative society made his eldest son, Mamchand, president of the society. His son became leader of the lineage group as well.

### *The Banias*

The three households of Banias are descended from a common ancestor but do not function as a group. The heads of two households are brothers. The head of the third household is their nephew. The members of this household are the sons and daughters of their younger brother. He died leaving behind a widow, four sons and two daughters. The eldest brother and his sons have a shop in the village. He also trades in the near-by market. He spends most of his time there. The village shop is looked after by his two sons. The second brother is a teacher and has no son. He has adopted Krishna Chander, one of the sons of his younger brother. Krishna Chander runs a flour mill in the village. The names of the heads of the three households are Hari Ram, Daya Ram and Narain. All the brothers of Narain except one who is blind are in service in the city and live there. This household is relatively poor and some of the brothers including Narain could not marry on account of poverty.

### *The Brahmans*

The five households of Brahmans form a group and accept the leadership of the eldest member who is the head of the lineage.

### *The Dhobis*

The Dhobis in this village are Muslim and the heads of all the four families are brothers and accept the eldest as their leader. They mostly remain neutral in the affairs and politics of the village.

### *The Bhangis, Kumhars and Lohars*

The Bhangis, Kumhars and Lohars have their own caste groups. The Bhangis and Kumhars have no patron-and-client relationship with other castes as they have given up operating in the village economy. The Bhangis serve as scavengers in the city. The Kumhars have taken to the transport of earth or bricks.

The Lohars continue to give their traditional services to the peasant and other castes in the village.

### *The Sunars, Nais and Chipis*

The households of Sunars, Nais and Chipis align themselves with the peasant castes according to patron-and-client relationship. The Sunars have almost lost their business as villagers, except a very few of those who can afford, get their ornaments made in the city.

### *Inter-group relations*

#### **Nanak Singh group**

The group of Nanak Singh gets the support of the Brahman lineage group, as its head is a member of their playing-card group. Both of them had also once gone together on foot on a pilgrimage. The group also gets the support of Daya Ram Bania. Daya Ram was able to extract himself from the false allegations of misappropriating funds made against him by Chandan Singh, the Chairman of the Development Council, with the help of Nanak Singh and his group. The Lohars, due to their territorial ties with this group, generally support members of the Nanak Singh group. The other sub-groups of Jats of this *panna* accept the leadership of Nanak Singh and support him or his nominee.

#### **Charan Singh group**

The group of Charan Singh is supported by most of the neutral groups in the village, as its leader is considered to be a judicious and helpful person and is not involved in any of their quarrels. All the younger male members of the family are university graduates and well placed in life. This has helped him to marry them in high families thereby extending his kinship to some of the Jat families whose heads occupy high positions in official and non-official circles at the district level. He does not concern himself much in village politics and keeps to his own work and leads a peaceful life. He is actively supported by his Bania neighbour, Narain, who is also interested in maintaining good

relations with all the villagers, and it helps him to run his business smoothly.

#### **Chandan Singh group**

The relations of Chandan Singh and members of his group with others are not good. As a Lambardar he extracted free labour from a number of low caste villagers. Sometime ago he gave a hard beating to a Chamar boy for hitting his buffalo. This has enraged all the Chamars and they very much hate him. The Chamars had to swallow the insult as any dispute between a Jat and a Chamar would bring the whole Jat caste together, who might then prevent the Chamars from grazing their cattle on waste land.

The group has good relations with Hari Ram Bania as he advanced Chandan Singh Rs. 10,000 at a time when he had to complete a transaction of land-deed taken over from a third degree cousin who had fled from the village in very early childhood and returned only when he became very old.

The other two Jat groups of the *panna* are neutral and sometimes accept the leadership of Chandan Singh or at other times of Chattar Singh.

#### **Other alignments**

The Chamars who are numerically second to the Jats and interested in village politics supported the Banias from whom they borrow money and take household provisions on credit. They also support the Banias to reduce the dominance of the Jats in the village. The Mitthan group and the Bhagwan group support Hari Ram and Daya Ram respectively. This support is based on the patron-and-client relationship of each group with the respective Bania family.

Thus it is seen that the Jats, the Banias and the Chamars are the three important castes which are interested in the power structure of the village.

#### *Choosing contestants in the 1959 election*

The interest of the Jats and Chamars in the current election was stimulated by the fact that the statutory village pauchayat was to be vested with the right of distribution of

waste land. The law required that the villagers should elect (a) two persons to be represented on the circle panchayat (inter-village council), (b) one Pradhan (chairman) of the village panchayat and (c) six *panches* (members of the village council). It appears that in the beginning there was no interest in the panchayat election and all were quiet in the village. But the pressure from the panchayat office increased as the date of the election drew nearer.

Among the Jats, Chandan Singh was very ambitious and had a desire to stand for the office of the Pradhan but he found Nanak Singh, who had already announced his name for the said office, a big challenge. He was also not sure of winning as he had annoyed a number of villagers and had lost his earlier status. He was moreover afraid that if there were more than one candidate from among the Jats for the office of Pradhan they would run the risk of losing the election. He gave serious thought to this problem and wanted to come to some compromise with Nanak Singh. As they were not on speaking terms, it was difficult to negotiate this issue. Chandan Singh requested Charan Singh with whom he had good relations to persuade Nanak Singh to come to the parlour of Charan Singh's cousin, Ishwar Singh. This house was on the border of the two *pannas* and Ishwar Singh was a good friend of both the leaders. His land touched the boundary of Nanak Singh's land and Charan Singh belonged to his smoking group.

Meanwhile, Hari Ram Bania who was assured of the support of his brother Daya Ram and members of the Bhagwan Chamar group, announced his intention of standing for the office of the Pradhan.

The Chamars among themselves reconciled group differences and decided that Bhagwan, one of their two leaders, be put up for the circle panchayat and Mamchand, leader of the Mitthan group, should stand for the post of one of the members of the panchayat.

The Chamars had to reconcile themselves to a person of a high caste as Pradhan as their own status was low even when they had left their traditional calling of leather-work. The

united support of the Chamars to a Bania candidate made the Jats reconsider the election issue. In one of the informal meetings at the parlour of Ishwar Singh they decided that the challenge posed by Chamars must be faced. They decided to forget their differences and unite for the purpose of election. This was possible as all the Jat members agreed that Nanak Singh, who was educated and who understood legal matters better, should be sent to the circle panchayat. He also accepted the decision of the leaders of the caste and withdrew from the contest for the office of the Pradhan. The next question before the Jats was to sponsor a candidate who would stand for election in opposition to Hari Ram. Most of the possible candidates among the Jats thought it below their dignity to fight for the chairmanship of the statutory panchayat as the leadership of the village was traditionally theirs because of their numerical preponderance, economic dominance, and ritual position next only to the Brahmans and equal to the Banias.

Chandan Singh suggested that another Bania who would agree and be their puppet be sponsored to fight the election. He suggested the name of Narain, the nephew of the heads of the other two families. His name was seconded by Charan Singh who was Narain's next-door neighbour. He was regarded as honest, straightforward and having sympathy for the village as he used to charge a very low rate of interest on loans. On the contrary his uncle had the reputation of a litigious person who used to drag the villagers and specially the poor amongst the Jats to court. All the Jat leaders considered Narain as a good nominee and assured him of their support. Narain also accepted the suggestion of the Jats and announced that he would stand for the office of Pradhan. When the brothers of Narain came to know about this, they scolded him and asked him not to allow his name to be sponsored in opposition to their uncle. Narain thought over the matter but did not immediately agree to withdraw from the contest. This might mean estranged relations with his brothers and uncle. It could also mean loss of business as his opponents might not like to buy from his shop. Ultimately, however, he

decided to decline the offer of the Jats and kept himself aloof from the contest.

The withdrawal of Narain caused a great concern to the Jats. The leaders again started thinking about the problem and to find an agreed candidate. As the Jats were debating, Daya Ram came with a complaint that Hari Ram had drawn a wall opposite his house which had blocked the entrance to the street. He wanted that the traditional village panchayat should decide the case and ask him to demolish the wall. The Jats were not interested in the case and suggested to him to take legal action against his brother. Daya Ram told Nanak Singh with whom he was on friendly terms that he would take the case to court but would like his adopted son to fight the election against his brother. Nanak Singh welcomed the idea. But the other leaders of the Jat groups kept quiet. They did not think Daya Ram's son was a match for Hari Ram. Daya Ram, inspite of the passive response from the Jats, filed the nomination paper of his son. He got the support of the Mitthan group of the Chamars led by Mamchand. They supported him because they thought Hari Ram may not allow them to live in peace, being a habitual litigant.

The Jat leaders discussed the election issue in the parlour of Ishwar Singh again and gave up the idea of sponsoring a candidate from any other caste. They decided to put up some one from among themselves. But there was no agreement on any candidate by the leaders of the two *pannas*, specially between Nanak Singh and Chandan Singh. To consolidate the Jats, Ishwar Singh suggested the name of Charan Singh. He was accepted by both the leaders. Charan Singh reluctantly agreed and requested that all the Jats should assure him of support.

### *Ensuring victory*

To further strengthen his chances, Chandan Singh invoked the age-old custom of taking an oath at midnight on the boundary of a well wherein a pot containing salt water was to be buried, to remind the members of the Jat caste that if they did not cast their vote in favour of Charan Singh a curse

would fall on them and their family or lineage would also be buried as the pot. This was accepted by all the Jat leaders and on the appointed day they assembled in the field and took the oath.

To consolidate his position further Charan Singh approached the Chamars of the Mitthan group and suggested that he would make their leader Mamchand the vice-president of the village panchayat if they supported him.

The Chamars did not give any assurance, but began to deliberate among themselves and felt that if there were two candidates from the Baniyas the votes would be divided and it would help the Jats to win the election. They made vain attempts to persuade the Baniyas to sponsor only one candidate from among themselves. When the Chamars knew that there would be two candidates from the Baniyas and only one from the Jats, they decided to support Charan Singh as he also offered the post of vice-president of the panchayat to Mamchand, the leader of the Mitthan group. There was no struggle for the offices of *panches* and all the seats were uncontested, giving representation to all the major groups of the Jat caste and to the head of the Brahman group.

In all, 262 votes were cast on the day of polling out of which 20 were declared invalid. The votes polled by the three candidates for the office of Pradhan were Hari Ram 64, Krishna Chander 93 and Charan Singh 105. The Jat candidate, Charan Singh, won the election and was declared Pradhan. Thus the Jats were able to retain their dominance in the statutory panchayat.

### *Development programmes of the panchayat*

Most of the villagers expressed happiness at the victory of Charan Singh and assured him of their co-operation in the development work of the village. With the help of leaders of various groups he was able to mobilize the villagers and got their active participation in a number of developmental activities. His village won the coveted prize of being a model village in whole of the block.

But his honesty was doubted by the villagers at the time of distribution of common land. Most of the Jats of the Gopal Singh *panna* felt that he had not been fair to them and allotted good and more land to his kins and members of his *panna*. The Banias were also dissatisfied with him as they got a smaller amount of land than they had before. The Chamars also did not get good sites for building houses. All the aggrieved persons lodged complaints and succeeded in getting a stay order on the distribution of land till the case was decided by the higher authorities. The Pradhan blamed the Patwari for all the manipulation. But this did not satisfy the villagers. Consequently, his position in the village became somewhat shaky. He was not sure of getting elected in the second election. He, therefore, began to say that he would not stand for the next election. However, his supporters wanted him to stand for one more term to consolidate the gains of common land.

### *Choosing candidates for the 1963 election*

Charan Singh's low position in the eyes of the villagers encouraged Nanak Singh to announce his intention of standing for the office of the Pradhan in the 1963 election. The villagers who had forgotten all the differences and worked unitedly in the 1959 election wanted to select a person who would be acceptable to all in order to maintain village unity and solidarity. The leaders of all the castes deliberated over the issue. They decided that a meeting of all the heads of households should be called for selecting a candidate.

### *Village meeting to select a candidate*

A meeting to select a candidate was called in the village. A Jat friend of the villagers from a neighbouring village was specially requested to preside over the meeting and to judge the issues impartially. A great deal of discussion took place in the meeting to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of various candidates. Ultimately the villagers selected Dev Singh, a person of the Gaupant Singh *panna*. He was known for his

honesty, sincerity and integrity. He stood up and thanked all the villagers for expressing their confidence in him. He said that not to obey the *panch* (members) assembled here would be like disobeying God. He would only like the members to consider his personal difficulties. He had no adult male member to help him in his work ; as such he would not be able to devote much time to the panchayat. He requested them to excuse him. The villagers agreed, but asked him to nominate someone for the office of Pradhan. He seemed to be very nervous and began to perspire. With folded hands he told the villagers to nominate anybody whom all of them liked. The villagers with one voice insisted that they would approve of the candidate of his choice. He was so overwhelmed by the confidence of the villagers that tears began to roll down his eyes. His body began to shake with emotion and he touched Charan Singh. All the villagers seemed to approve of his choice. Charan Singh then was asked to select his panel. He retained all the members of the 1959 panchayat. Hari Ram Bania was also included in the list to fill the vacancy caused by the death of a member of the 1959 panchayat. Nanak Singh dropped out from the circle panchayat and instead suggested the name of another villager, a friend of his from the Ganpat Singh *panna*. This was also approved of by all the villagers.

It was thought that the elections of 1963 would be smoother than in 1959 as the whole panel had been approved by all the village. But unlike 1959, the Jats as a caste could not remain united and became divided in 1963. The reason for division was the announcement that Nanak Singh would stand for the office of village Pradhan, contrary to the wishes of the whole village.

### *Contest for the office of the village Pradhan*

Nanak Singh was not very happy about the nomination of Charan Singh. He and other members of his group expected Charan Singh to retire and practise self-denial. This idea got currency and many villagers began to say that Charan Singh should not have accepted the offer. He should

have requested the villagers to select someone else in his place. Some of the villagers who were strongly led by this idea decided to sponsor Nanak Singh much against the wishes of Devi Singh whose choice had fallen on Charan Singh. Devi Singh's choice, according to these villagers, fell on Charan Singh in order to prove his non-partisan attitude. He did not select Nanak Singh because the latter was agnatically related and had territorial ties with him. It was the turn of Charan Singh to live up to the traditional norm of self-denial as he had done in the last election. But Charan Singh did not withdraw his name inspite of growing opposition from Nanak Singh and other villagers. The differences became so acute that no compromise was possible.

Both Charan Singh and Nanak Singh thus became candidates for the office of Pradhan of the panchayat. The 1963 elections thus became a fight of strength between the Jats. Charan Singh got the support of all the Jat members of his *panna* with the exception of one family whose head was selected as a circle panchayat member at the instance of Nanak Singh. The Dhobis and Bhangis and the group of Mitthan also supported him. As a Pradhan, he had given Dhobis and Bhangis good sites for building houses. The members of the Mitthan group were under his obligation because, last time, he had made Mamchand the vice-president of the village panchayat. The Brahmans, the family of Daya Ram Bania, the group of Bhagwan Chamar and some others supported Nanak Singh. The contest was a keen and close one. Charan Singh won the election with a narrow margin of only five votes. Nanak Singh and the members of his group attributed their defeat by such a narrow margin to their inability to win over Devi Singh and a few others.

The election of 1963 divided the Jats. The village solidarity was shattered. Consequently, most of the developmental activities received a set back. The 1963 election also showed a break in the traditional norm of the village. Charan Singh, contrary to

expectation, became attached to power. Nanak Singh also did not adhere to the traditional practice of accepting the verdict of the villagers.

### *Conclusion*

The material presented above leads to the following conclusions regarding elections at the panchayat level :

1. The fact that at the initial stage when the traditional dominance of the Jats was not threatened they were not much interested in the elections.

2. The moment land came into the picture of elections the Jats took keen interest and began to sponsor their own candidate.

3. The Jats felt it below their dignity to fight the election themselves against candidates of other castes even though they were equal in ritual status.

4. The Jats of the neutral groups acted as agents for bridging the gulf between the two rival groups.

5. The Jat groups when challenged by the combined strength of other castes united and won the election, while the Banias remained divided and lost the election.

6. The Jats sought the support of the lower castes to increase their strength.

7. The patron-and-client relationship helped at the time of election in securing votes.

8. The ritual status of a caste plays an important part in elections and this compelled the Chamars to sponsor a Bania candidate as they themselves were considered to be too low.

9. The villagers do not like a litigant or quarrelsome person.

10. A person with some education stands a better chance of being sponsored for the statutory panchayat, as it deals with the written and not the oral word, to which alone traditional leaders are accustomed.

11. Rivalries of groups within the dominant caste act as a set-back in the developmental activities of the village. The unity of the dominant caste accelerates development work in the village.

12. Caste, kinship and territorial ties still play an important part in election.

# CASTE COUNCIL OF THE BHANDARI OF DAPOLI

S. G. MORAB

**Abstract.** The present paper attempts to describe the reorganization of the regional<sup>1</sup> caste council of the Bhandari, a toddy-tapping caste of Dapoli Taluka in Ratnagiri district in Maharashtra. The process of reorganization of the regional caste council which had become defunct about 1940, is described here through the proceedings of an annual conference of the Bhandari caste held in January 1962 at Ladghar village. It was observed that caste members made efforts through such conferences to consolidate and maintain unity and solidarity in the caste.

## *Traditional caste organization*

ON the traditional pattern, there were caste panchayats at the village level in all the 18 villages of Dapoli Taluka (including Mandangad Petha) of Ratnagiri where the Bhandari are numerous. Each village had a caste headman called Khot who convened panchayats and managed the internal affairs of the caste. Disputed matters which remained unsettled at the village level were referred to the *Jati Baithak* (caste council), comprising three neighbouring villages and, if required, further to the *Jati Samudaya* (larger caste council) consisting of six villages, and finally to the *Jati Sabha* (caste conference) at the Taluka level. The *Jati Sabha* is also popularly known as *Taluka*. The *Taluka* organization was vested with full authority to deal with matters concerning caste members. It functioned as an effective instrument of social control till 1940, but remained almost defunct thereafter for about twenty years when it was reorganized in the year 1960.

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### *Reorganization of the Jati Sabha*

Following an incident, the members of the Bhandari caste of six villages, viz. Anjarle, Ade, Padle, Kelsi, Velas and Veshwi proposed a revival of their *Jati Sabha* or *Taluka* of Dapoli and to give authority to it to deal with caste matters within their Taluka. This was done because a caste member of Anjarle had flouted the verdict given by the caste panchayat of Anjarle and also of the *Jati Baithak* and *Jati Samudaya* which had been invited to sit in judgment in a case. Briefly, the case was that a caste-man of Anjarle was alleged to have seduced a girl of his own caste who had become pregnant; but the accused disowned responsibility. The man belonged to a wealthy family. He challenged the verdict of the panchayat of Anjarle which had imposed a social boycott on him. Caste members of Anjarle thereupon invited the *Jati Baithak*, and later the larger council of *Jati Samudaya*; but none of these was successful in punishing the accused. It was, therefore, considered necessary to reorganize the *Taluka* which was then defunct, so that cases of infringement might be dealt with firmly. The first annual conference of the *Jati Sabha* was organized in 1960 in the village of Anjarle where the representatives of all the 18 villages of the Bhandari participated. The social boycott imposed by the caste council on the accused was confirmed by the *Taluka*.

It was also decided in the conference to hold the next annual conference on 21 January 1962 at Ladghar. Accordingly, the conference took place on the appointed day at Ladghar in which the author was present. A summary of the proceedings and discussions held in the conference is reported here in order to describe the nature and purpose of the conference.

### *Preparation of the conference*

A few days before the conference, written invitations to caste headmen of the villages in the Dapoli Taluka were sent. A sample of a letter is given here :

Date 4-1-1962                      Shree Datta Prasanna                      Ladghar

To the caste headmen of the Lower Mohalla of Dabhol : With the best compliments of the caste headman of Ladghar.

It is hereby informed that according to the advice of the *Taluka*, an annual general conference (*Varshik Sarva sadharana sabha*) of the caste will be held on 21-1-62 at night exactly at ten in the outer pavilion of the house of Shri Gajanan More, Lower Mohalla. It is, therefore, requested that persons concerned, of other mohallas (of your village), if any, may be informed accordingly (and you are to make it convenient) to attend the conference on the specified day by six in the evening.

Yours faithfully,  
Pandurang More, Khot

#### *Place and arrangements of the conference*

At about 9-30 in the night, caste-men and representatives of different villages numbering about 400 assembled at the house of the Khot. A big pandal constructed for the purpose accommodated the gathering. The representatives (*Pratinidhi*) including the caste headmen of 18 villages who attended were :

<i>Name of village</i>	<i>Number of representatives</i>
Velas, Kelsi, Ade, Padle,	Three from each village
Anjarle, Saladure, Murud,	
Karde, Ladghar, Karajgaon,	
Burondi, Kolthare, Panchanadi	
Tivre, Bhivbandar, Veshwi,	Two from each village
Harnai-palande	
Dabhol (Lower Mohalla)	One

*Invitee* : The Secretary, Bhandari Seva Samaj, Dapoli, Bombay.

A fee of Rs. 5 was collected from the representative of each village by the convener, Shri More, to meet the miscellaneous expenses of the conference. The representatives were served with a simple meal consisting of rice and vegetables by the convener,

According to tradition, before commencement of the deliberations, a *chouranga* (wooden desk) was kept and a lighted *samay* (oil lamp on brass stand) was placed on its left side. The articles placed along with it were betel leaves and cut pieces of betel nut. The *chouranga* was considered as the 'Caste Seat', as holy as the sacred river Ganga (*Dnyatganga*).

### *Proceedings of the conference*

The deliberations began at ten in the night. Shri Shetye of Karajgaon was proposed by Shri Sankulkar of Ladghar for the presidentship, which was accepted by caste members unani- mously by raising their hands. The President (*Adhyaksha*) sat by the side of the *chouranga* and initiated the deliberations in Marathi.

The first important question discussed was whether the conference was in accordance with the traditional type of caste organization (*Jati Sabha*) or the caste association (*Jati Sangha*), run on modern democratic lines, and also whether or not the records of the conference were to be maintained. These points were raised by Shri Murkar of Dabhol. The President allowed the points for discussion. Shri Todankar of Karde suggested that the conference was on the lines of the traditional caste council of the Taluka and favoured maintenance of records. Shri Borkar of Padle proposed an amendment on the question of the maintenance of record and wanted that matters like imposition of fines, social boycott or cases of adultery should be dropped from the records of the conference in the interest of the caste. The view of Shri Parakar of Bombay was that proceedings of conferences should be written for reference and destroyed after preserving them for a few years. Shri Kalaskar of Burondi insisted that the conference be regarded as being that of the caste association and advocated maintenance of records on a permanent basis. On this point, there were heated arguments.

Shri Todankar argued that Shri Kalaskar's move defeated the very purpose of reviving the traditional caste organization at the Taluka level and if another association of the caste was to be organized, it was mere duplication, as there was

already one such association, namely, the Bhandari Seva Samaj, functioning for the Taluka. He emphasized that if caste traditions (*parampara*) were not restored, the situation might prove detrimental to the caste (*samaj*). Shri Murkar spoke of the advantages of the *Taluka* in solving caste disputes.

While arguing in favour of maintenance of records, Shri Sankulkar pointed out that there was nothing serious about maintaining records, as even the imposition of social boycott was not an offence, according to the verdict of the Supreme Court.<sup>2</sup> Shri More of Ladghar voiced his opposition to making references to decisions of official law-courts and pleaded for furthering the cause of the caste tradition.

The President put the issue to vote and Shri Todankar's proposal to treat the conference as the activity of the *Taluka* was accepted. However, the suggestion of maintenance of records was defeated when it was put to vote.

Two cases came up for consideration before the conference. One case related to the failure of remittance of the fine imposed on a caste-member for an alleged offence and the other questioned the powers of the village caste panchayats and *Jati Baithak*. These cases are described below.

The caste panchayat of Padle had imposed a fine of Rs. 300 on Shri Mayakar of the same village as the latter had established social contacts with a boycotted person in violation of the decision of the caste panchayat. The accused had paid so far Rs. 100 in part-payment of the fine, but had produced a surety (*Jamin*) in Shri Borkar for the balance. Shri Borkar pleaded on behalf of his caste fellow (*Samaj bandhu*) to the *Taluka*, for writing off the balance as the offender had bowed low to the caste. While participating in the discussion, Shri Todankar said that members should not be carried away by emotion and should work for enforcing caste decisions rigidly, irrespective of monetary or other considerations. The President put the issue to vote when it was rejected by majority. Therefore, Shri Mayakar was directed to pay the balance of the fine.

Shri Devkar of Anjarle presented his case and stated that he had been boycotted by the *Taluka* in the previous session for alleged association with a boycotted person of his village. Later he had approached the caste council of three villages, viz., Ade, Padle and Anjarle, for redress and he was exonerated of the charge which he had not committed. He appealed to the *Taluka* now to exonerate him. On this point, the discussion centred round the question whether the caste councils of three villages were competent to give any decision without consulting the *Taluka* when the latter had given its final decision in the matter. Shri Todankar was of the opinion that such matters should be left to the panchayats of the respective villages. Shri Borkar reminded the members that it was customary (*Purovapar rudhi*) to refer such cases to the *Jati Baithak* and *Jati Samudaya*. Shri Sankulkar's view was that caste matters should be discussed in the various caste councils but the final decision should rest with their *Taluka*. Shri Sankulkar's suggestion was welcomed by many members who finally voted in its favour. The representatives of the villages concerned then pleaded for confirmation of their action of exonerating Shri Devkar which was accepted by majority.

A written complaint regarding a domestic affair was then submitted for consideration. The document read in the conference is given below.

Date 18-1-1962 Shree Datta Prasanna Ladghar

The Kite Bhandari Caste Seat and the Headman of the Caste of Ade.

Salutations from the Kite Bhandari Caste Seat of Ladghar.

Smt. Tarabai Shankar More, cousin of Shri Dattatraya Govind More of our village, was married to Shri Krishna Mahadev Hedukar of your village. He lived with his wife for several years after the marriage, but he has not taken her to his house for the last two years, and left her in her parent's home. This information was given to us by Shri

Dattatraya More. We have decided to submit this case before the conference to be held on 21-1-62. We wish, therefore, that this information be passed on to the husband of the woman concerned. In case he is unable to attend, he may send his parents or guardian (to represent him) to attend the conference.

Yours faithfully,  
 Pandurang Gajanan More,  
 Khot, and two others.

The President called for explanation from the concerned parties. As none was present to represent the respondent, the President authorized the caste panchayat of Ade to dispose of the matter within a month's time. The President wrote the decision on the document.

Some prominent leaders of Karajgaon wanted the right of caste headmanship independently for their mohalla (a division of a village). They presented their petition in writing, the text of which was as follows.

Shree

Date 21-1-62

To the Caste Seat and Castemen (of the Taluka) with salutations from caste-members of Ladghar.

We humbly submit that we are residents of Karajgaon and caste matters (of our mohalla) were being dealt with by the Lower Mohalla (caste headman) of Ladghar for a long time. Two years ago, we requested the caste panchayat of Ladghar to grant us a separate *Mohalla* so that we can look after our social activities (*samajik karya*). Our request for an independent (*swatantra*) *Mohalla* was granted; but we were told that we had no right of correspondence or receiving messages from outside (places) directly. Therefore, we were unable to receive intimations from outside and also invitations for attending conferences of the *Taluka*. Hence we request that the conference being held to-day may grant us an independent headmanship and representation,

Signatories  
 Dhondu Mahadev More and  
 eleven other persons

Caste headmanship being hereditary, was not granted to the new members, and the demand was considered undesirable. However, Shri More of Ladghar suggested it for favourable consideration, in view of circumstances stated in the petition. But Shri Todankar spoke of his apprehension regarding granting headmanship which might adversely affect the unity (*Sanghatan*) within the caste and break up of the traditional practices. After discussion, when none raised any objection and the general trend was favourable to the applicants, the President called for the vote by the members. The issue was passed by majority. Shri Namdev More was nominated as headman of Karajgaon.

Shri Murkar took up the case of Shri Paduval of Murud. According to him, the latter had established social contacts with the accused of Anjarle whom the *Taluka* had boycotted. The representatives of Murud, however, tried to justify the action of the accused on the ground of poverty. But there were disagreements against such defence. Shri Todankar opposed the contention of the representatives of Murud and said that the caste panchayats of villages should always deal severely with such cases of violation, otherwise there will be no caste binding (*Samaj bandhan*). But, then, the President intervened and directed the panchayat of Murud to try the case in question once again before presenting it to the *Taluka*. When two more cases of such violation came up in the conference, members severely criticised the actions of the caste panchayats. Nevertheless, there was unanimity among the members on the question of referring such cases to the *Taluka* after conducting proper trials by the various caste units.

At the end of the conference, an amount of Rs.725 was collected by the caste panchayats of different villages by way of fines, cesses during marriages, etc. This was presented to the President. After a lengthy discussion on the method of proper utilization of the above amount, it was unanimously decided to disburse it to the headmen of all the villages for meeting their expenses. Accordingly, Rs.36.25 each was given to 20 caste headmen of 18 villages.

Another decision taken before concluding the deliberations, was that such annual conferences of the *Taluka* should be held every year at places decided by members in each conference. The conference concluded at six in the morning, after a formal vote of thanks by Shri Sankulkar.

#### OBSERVATIONS

The foregoing account of the conference reveal the following important features :—

1. The revival of the traditional caste organization in question is gradually taking place.
2. The caste-men are more concerned with the traditions of their caste and are caste-conscious.
3. The caste-men are aware of some members' adverse reactions and their deviation from tradition ; but they are making efforts to combat such attitudes effectively by organizing caste councils into territorial units and strengthening internal ties.

It will be observed that caste solidarity is being re-emphasized as is evident from the emotional speeches of prominent men like Shetye, Todankar, Sankulkar, More, Murkar and others. They used such significant terms as 'caste unity' (*Samaj sanghatan*), 'caste tradition' (*Jati parampara*), 'caste binding' (*Samaj bandhan*). It may be noted that caste members were reacting favourably to issues such as enforcing caste authority in cases of infringement of caste rules, in imposing fines and punishing offenders severely, etc. And thus they were trying to re-inforce the rigidity of the caste structure.

#### NOTES

1. 'Region' is used for grouping of caste councils over a specific geographical area, like the *Taluka*, an administrative division of a district.

2. Reference was made by the member to the Supreme Court's ruling invalidating the Bombay Prevention of Ex-communication Act on religious grounds as reported in newspapers dated 10 January 1962. But the case was of a different nature and did not apply here.

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# THE BHOT OF NORTHERN SIKKIM

SARADINDU BOSE

*(Received on 14 September 1965)*

**Abstract.** The Bhot are one of the original inhabitants of Sikkim. The author describes their agricultural practices. He also shows how their economy has been disrupted, in recent times, by the Chinese occupation of Tibet.

## *Introduction*

**F**ROM the village of Chungthang onwards, northern Sikkim is inhabited almost exclusively by the Bhot population ; though Chungthang itself has got a mixed population of Bhot, Lepcha and Nepali. Chungthang is situated at the junction of the Tista and the Lachung rivers.

Physically the area occupies the highest region of Sikkim and there is no place below the height of 5,000 ft. within this region. The whole region is enclosed on all sides by lofty ranges and spurs of the Great Himalayas with varying heights, roughly between 17,000 ft. and 28,000 ft., the only opening being on the south. This has been created by of the Tista. In fact this region is the upper catchment basin of the Tista within the Himalayas.

Due to the opening in the south, monsoon clouds penetrate into the far northern region and cause comparatively high rainfall, which is not common in other parts of the Himalayas.

Rainfall is highest in a place where there is no bar to the penetration of monsoon clouds as in Chungthang and to some extent in Lachen (average 50" annually). But there are dry places also where the monsoon clouds cannot reach easily, as in the Lhonak valley. The monsoon clouds become feebler and feebler as one approaches the high northern region.

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Temperature is also not uniform throughout the region and varies with altitude, rainfall, nearness to the perpetual snowline, etc.

This region forms almost 50% of the total area of Sikkim, but a large part of it is at present unsuitable for economic use. High ranges with mighty peaks like the Kanchenjunga (28,168'), The Twins (24,114'), Nepal Peak (23,519'), Tent Peak (24,165'), Pyramid (23,370'), Jonsang (24,416'), Lhonak (22,015'), Khangchengyao (22,608'), Pahunri (23,385'), etc. and glaciers like Zemu, Changsang, Lhonak, Jonsang, Tista, Changme, etc. cover a formidable portion of the region.

The Tista with its tributaries, namely, the Lachung, Zemu, Lhonak, Sebozung etc. has sculptured and divided the region into separate units. Favourable portion for human habitation is restricted to a height of almost 12,000 ft., and that is also along the Lachen or the Tista valley. Concentration of population is mainly restricted to the two valleys of the Tista and the Lachung. In fact, the villages of Lachen and Lachung are the headquarters of their respective valleys.

Villages are situated on glacial terraces which are now a few hundred feet above the river bed, as in Khedum, Lema etc. in the Lachung valley. In the higher region of Yathang or Kalem of the Tista, where the valley is still U-shaped and the river has not yet cut down gorges, villages are situated in the flat valley bottom near the stream.

The settlement pattern is controlled by physiography. Where there is ample space as in Yathang, the settlement is scattered ; where there is a small circular basin, as in Lachen, the settlement is compact, and where there is a strip of land formed by a glacier, as in Khedum, the pattern is linear.

Though the main occupations of the people are agriculture, pastoralism and trade, if we look into details, some differences are observed between the economic activities of the people of the two valleys of Lachen and Lachung.

## Agriculture

Agriculture is not of the same type in the two valleys. Two types of agricultural fields are prepared, namely, (i) *Gosing* in Lachen or *Phasing* in Lachung—a permanent field for every year's cultivation; and (ii) *Cheram* in Lachen or *Resing* in Lachung—a temporary field captured from the jungle for only one year or at the most two years and then vacated for regeneration of forest for 8 to 10 years. The cycle of regeneration varies with the climate and altitude of the place. Near Lachung the cycle is said to be of 10 years, but in Khedum, which is only 2,000 ft. lower than Lachung, the cycle is said to be of 8 years. It may be due to the fact that Khedum enjoys a proportionately higher temperature and higher rainfall than Lachung, and this helps in the quick growth of vegetation.

Crops are also not similar in the two valleys even at the same altitude. For example, maize, barley or buckwheat are of restricted growth in Lachen (8,950'), but they grow well in Lachung (8,610'). On the contrary, potato or root crops like radish are cultivated above 12,000 ft. in summer in the Lachen valley, but their cultivation is restricted in the Lachung valley to about 10,000 ft. (Dombang).

Even the season for each crop varies with altitude, soil, temperature, rainfall. For example, potato is harvested in September in the high zone of the Lachen valley, while it is harvested in Lachung in the month of July only. Crop rotation is also another important feature in the Lachung valley, but this is absent in Lachen. In winter, the Lachen valley practically has no agricultural production. In Lachung, maize is followed by barley and buckwheat as winter crops. But due to the low temperature, both the crops cannot be harvested within a complete year. It takes more than 15 months to produce, and after two crops the land is kept fallow for a few months.

A list of agricultural products is given in the appendix.

### System of cultivation

The method is almost the same in both the valleys. They use the plough, which is called *thunguk*, in the permanent fields and

the hoe (*tokche*) in the shifting fields. Ploughing is done by men with the help of cattle or sometimes with the *zaw*, which is a cross between yak and cow. Ploughing with the *zaw* requires an additional person who guides the animal in the proper direction by pulling a long rope tied to its nose. This system is also in vogue in other high Himalayan valleys, such as in Lahul-Spiti district in Punjab, in Chamba in Himachal and in the Pithoragarh district in U. P.\*

*Cheram* or temporary fields are cultivated in a different way. After selection of the site by the village council, the land is distributed to each family according to its need. After distribution, land is treated as individual property till harvesting.

Forests are cleared in the month of September or before harvesting the permanent fields. This is specially true of high altitudes. The season varies with the changing height : the lower the region, the earlier is the harvesting season.

After clearing the forest, the fields are kept ready for the deposition of snow. In the meantime, the cut trees are allowed to dry. Some of the logs are separated before firing and are used for making embankments in the highly sloping fields for checking soil erosion. In this region, there are fields where the slope may rise to 40°, and there is always danger of soil erosion. Farmers build embankments temporarily with these wooden logs as steps, which also support them while working in the fields. In the month of April when snow melts and when the trees are dried, firing takes place. Sometimes one firing is not sufficient to reduce the logs to ashes. Sowing starts in the month of May and after that the peasant has no work in the fields except weeding it twice. Harvesting is done in the month of October. In the upper region, *phaper* or millet is in some places the only crop, otherwise potatoes are also sown.

Besides cultivation, both the villages have some orchard, and they earn a little by selling apples in the months of September and October.

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\*1. Bose S., *The Gaddi of Chamba*, *Man in India* Vol. 43, No. 3.

2. Pant S. D., *Social Economy of the Himalayas*. pp. 44.

### *Seasonal migration*

Seasonal migration is resorted to by the people of Lachen, but the Lachung people stay in one place throughout the year. In the Lachen valley, Lachen is regarded as the winter residence for all the people of the valley. But every family has a few agricultural fields and huts in the higher region for use in summer.

In the month of April, only young men and women migrate to the higher villages of Zemu, Talam, Samong, Yathang, Kalep, Thanggu, etc. to sow potatoes. It may be mentioned in this connexion that potato is considered as the chief food as well as cash crop in the Lachen valley. As this month is not so warm and suitable for migration, they keep their children or old members in the winter residence. After the first sowing, they again come back to Lachen and then the whole village people of Lachen migrate to the higher summer residence in late May.

From May to September they stay in the higher region and engage in different kinds of activities like agriculture, pasturing, trade and the like. Again in early October, after the completion of harvesting in the upper region, they come down to Lachen to stay for the remaining months.

But in the Lachung valley, cultivation is restricted only to within 10,000 ft. near Dombang, a place only 5 miles from Lachung. As there is no scope for agriculture in the higher region beyond, seasonal migration towards that region is very restricted and some members migrate downwards in winter to villages like Lema, Luiteng, Khedum, etc. for agriculture.

### *Other occupations*

Besides agriculture, the people also depend on pastoralism and trade. Before the Chinese invasion, they used to make a good income from pasturing as well as from trade with Tibet. They say that about a third of their demand was met by agriculture while the remaining needs were met by pasturing and trade.

**Pasturing :** Grazing of sheep, goats and yaks were the most important occupations of these people before the border trouble. It is now very difficult to assess the correct number of animals maintained by them. Before the disturbance, they used to send their sheep and goats during the monsoon to Tibet and bring them back to lower altitudes in Sikkim before the onset of winter.

In the month of May, instead of going personally, they used to hand over their flocks to hired Tibetan shepherds for grazing in Tibet during monsoon. On the way to Tibet, they used to pass 1½ to 2 months in the higher and drier parts of northern Sikkim. During the two months of May and June they used to stay in *gots* or grazing centres like Dankung, Phaklung, Yumthang, Samdong, Cholamo region, Muguthang, Goma, etc. and during June-September, they used to stay in the pastures of Tibet, crossing on their way the high ranges through Kongrala (16,840') etc. Even during the first migration to northern Sikkim, they had to cross several mighty passes within Sikkim, like Sebula (17,560'), Dongkyala (19,030'), Khorala (17,100') etc.

The border was sealed just when the Tibetan shepherds along with sheep and goats and some yaks of the Bhot people had migrated to Tibet, and as such the majority of their flocks were lost to Tibet.

Now they have some yaks and a very limited number of sheep and goats which are grazed in northern Sikkim in the summer months, specially in the pastures of Lhonak-Cholamo region or Yumthang-Yume-Samdong area. The present limited number of sheep and goats is negligible in comparison with their past stock.

Yaks were of two kinds, namely, *Pheyonoh* and *Lhonoh*. *Pheyonoh* is the Tibetan yak, smaller in size with heavy fur and the other is the Sikkimese variety, bigger in size with less fur.

Monsoon is the main season for manufacturing butter either from the milk of sheep, goats or yaks. It is said that for produc-

ing one kg. of butter 6 kg. sheep's milk or 8 kg. yak's milk or 12 kg. cow's milk is required. Normally, one yak in the monsoon yields 2-3 kg. of milk per day. Even now they maintain yaks, and some members of each family graze their yaks in the northern high zone of Sikkim, keeping with them portable tents made of yak's skin as shelter in the high and cold region of Lhonak-Cholamo.

**Trade and Industry :** The Bhot people are hardy, brave, bold and adventurous, and previously they used to trade with Tibet. Manufactured articles were carried from the plains to Tibet and during the return journey they brought articles like salt, dried meat, wool and foodstuffs. But as trade with Tibet has now been closed, some of their industries have also been closed. Woollen goods, which they produced previously from local as well as imported wool, are now not produced by them. If raw wool is not supplied to them immediately they will suffer even from the shortage of personal clothing.

Though they used to go to Tibet with articles of trade, yet they were not wholly the owners. In fact, they were largely carriers, and there were big merchants who used to employ them with their ponies for transport of goods. Yet there were individuals among the Bhot people who did independent business. Ponies and to some extent yaks were used for transportation.

### *Conclusion*

As almost two out of three occupations have been suspended, they must have to find out a new way to cope with their present situation. For the present, a temporary arrangement has been found out. Ponies, which were used by the traders, are now being engaged by different Government departments to transport goods from place to place. People also have been working as hired labourers in the Government's development projects.

A P P E N D I X

**List of agricultural products of the Bhot region**

1. Potato (*Kiu*), February to July in Lachung ; May to October in Yathang.
2. Buckwheat (*Na* or *Thok*), October to June.
3. Barley (*Ooa* or *Oues*), October to June.
4. Millet (*Phaper*), June to October, only in *Resing* land.
5. Radish (*Labuk*), March to July in Lachung.
6. Turnip (*Yungdu*), March to July in Lachung.
7. Beans (*Tibbi*), March to July-August in Lachung.
8. Vegetables (*Paicha*), March to June.
9. Peas (*Temuh*) March to July.
10. Maize (*Kenchoog*), March to August-September.
11. Cabbage, March to August in Lachung.
12. Cauliflower, March to August in Lachung.

Besides the agricultural products they have some orchards where they produce apples (*Lei*), berries (*Rambhira*) etc.

# CLASS AND CASTE : A REJOINDER

ANDRE BETRILLE

## I

I would like to offer some comments on Professor Bose's paper on 'Class and Caste'<sup>1</sup> since he has been kind enough to mention that the paper was based on remarks made by him during a lecture which I delivered in Calcutta last year. My comments will refer to a particular aspect of Professor Bose's paper, which is admittedly not its principal theme. But the aspect which I shall comment on was of central importance to my lecture and it is an important subject on its own right ; therefore I shall pursue the argument a little beyond my comments on Professor Bose's paper.

There are two comparisons made by Professor Bose in his paper. The first (and probably the more important one) is between Marx and Manu. This comparison is an ingenious one, but I am not competent to comment on it, since I am not a Sanskrit scholar which I assume Professor Bose is. But there is a second comparison, between Marx and Weber, and it is here that I would like to join issue with the author.

The general tenor of Bose's argument is that whereas Marx was essentially a man of action (for whom intellectual preoccupations were of secondary importance), Weber was a detached scholar, a kind of ivory tower intellectual. While the first proposition is true (though one-sided), the second is false.

I have said that the first proposition is true but one-sided ; it is so one-sided that one may indeed question whether it is true. In a well-known essay, 'Qu'est-ce que le marxisme

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<sup>1</sup> Nirmal Kumar Bose, 'Class and Caste', *Man in India*, Vol. 45, No. 4, October-December 1965, pp. 265-274.

orthodoxe ?"<sup>2</sup> Georg Lukacs, one of the most distinguished of contemporary Marxists, argued that the linch-pin of the Marxian system was the proposition affirming the unity of theory and practice. It would not be difficult to demonstrate that Marx argued, unremittingly, that theories were valid only in relation to practice, and practice could be sound only when guided by theory. In other words, theory had to be logically consistent not *inspite* of its relevance to practice, but *because* of it. In his own scheme, as Marx saw it, theory and practice had *equal* importance. It would be a distortion of the Marxian scheme to suggest that practice had in it a greater importance than theory. One has not merely to change the world, but also to achieve a scientific understanding of it; the one cannot be done without the other.

Much has been made of Marx's statement (in the *Theses on Feuerbach*) that 'philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in different ways; the point is to change it'. It is dangerous in any event to rely too much on slogans, and this slogan has proved to be particularly misleading. A perusal of even the few pages of the *Theses on Feuerbach* will show how deeply Marx was concerned not simply with 'revolutionary practice', but also with the need for it to be 'rationally understood'.

Marx's critique against the Hegelian system lay precisely in this, that it was, in the end, *not* logically consistent; it lacked the character of science because it was not sufficiently integrated with experience, with *praxis*.<sup>3</sup> Certainly, one of Marx's central preoccupations was to build up a *science* of society which could adequately integrate practice and experience. (Whether or not he succeeded in doing this, and whether or not such a thing can be done are altogether different questions.) It would be a waste of time now, after

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<sup>2</sup> Georg Lukacs, "Qu'est-ce que le marxisme orthodoxe ?", *Histoire et Conscience de Classe* (tr. K. Axelos et J. Bois), Paris, Les Editions de Minuit, 1960, pp. 17-45.

<sup>3</sup> Professor Bauman, who was kind enough to read this Note, pointed out (rightly in my view) the need to distinguish between experience and *praxis*; I do not enter into this refinement here as it would divert me from my principal argument.

more than a hundred years, to labour the point that Marx was almost obsessed with the idea of building up a *scientific* theory of society. In the very second paragraph of the Preface to the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* he declares :

It is hardly necessary to assure the reader conversant with political economy that my results have been won by means of a wholly empirical analysis based on a conscientious critical study of political economy.<sup>4</sup>

As a minor figure in the world of Indian sociology, I hardly need to point out that Marx was an intellectual and a scholar of prodigious erudition. As such, I fail completely to understand why Professor Bose feels that it would be 'not fair to say that Marx now and then contradicted himself in his use of the term class'. Although he was much more than that, Marx was a scholar, and he has a right to be judged by the standards of scholarship. If there are inconsistencies in Marx's writings, why should it be unfair to point them out? Either Professor Bose has missed the central point of the Marxian scheme, which is unfortunate; or he is being condescending, which is even more unfortunate.

## II

I shall discuss Weber a little more in detail, because Weber's case is more complex, and, hence, perhaps more interesting; and also because it is not very well known outside the circle of professional sociologists. Professor Bose suggests that we should apply different standards while judging the works of Marx and Weber, and the implication is clear that we should do this because, unlike Marx, Weber was some kind of a detached scholar, 'interested in classifying social phenomena'. The contrast, as it has been drawn by Bose, gives a totally misleading picture of Weber.

Weber was by no means an ivory tower intellectual. If anything, he was even more close to the storm centre of

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<sup>4</sup> Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, n.d., pp. 15-16.

political life than Marx himself. It is true that after the death of Marx, his system of thought became the official doctrine of a number of states. Weberism never achieved the kind of official status which Marxism did. But it must not be forgotten that in his own lifetime Weber played an active and noteworthy part in German politics, including the drafting of the Weimar Constitution in 1918-1919.

Weber was born in a political family and lived throughout his life in an atmosphere steeped in political culture. His father was a member of the National Liberal party which he represented in the German Reichstag. In his father's house, which was visited by some of the leading political figures of Germany, he grew up to see the gradual collapse of the National Liberal party. Later he joined the *Verein für Sozialpolitik*<sup>5</sup> of which he remained a member for life. It was for this association (which had explicit political aims) that he undertook to survey the condition of agricultural workers in East-Elbian Germany; not perhaps in an entirely 'detached' frame of mind.

There is no question whatever that Weber's early interest in the Junkers and the immigrant Polish and Russian workers was very closely connected with his political concerns. As J. P. Mayer writes of him,

Max Weber was not a typical German bookworm. Theoretical work had a meaning to him only when it tended to become practical in application. The conflict which we have seen at work here, determined also his relation to politics. Here too he was constantly torn between political analysis and political action.<sup>6</sup>

Towards the end of his life Weber gave two public lectures: *Science as Calling* and *Politics as Calling*. All through, he had been fascinated by these two kinds of endeavour; not unlike Marx, although, of course, there were differences.

Max Weber's analysis of the class structure of Germany developed as an integral part of his political preoccupations.

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<sup>5</sup> Association for Social Policy.

<sup>6</sup> J. P. Mayer, *Max Weber and German Politics*, London, Faber and Faber, Second edition, 1956, pp. 29-30.

To say this is not to imply that his analysis was right or wrong ; it is merely to suggest a parallel with the source and origin of the categories developed by Marx. Weber was alarmed by the influx of Polish and Russian agricultural workers into Eastern Germany, and the movement away from Prussia of German labourers. He was intensely concerned over the political state of Prussia under the domination of the Junkers whom he considered (rightly or wrongly) to be a decadent stratum. It was, I believe, this preoccupation with the Junkers (the roots of which were at least partly political) that led Weber to hit upon the concepts of status groups and styles of life, which became crucial elements in his theory of stratification.

I think it is misleading to argue that Weber's definition of class as different from that of Marx. Where the two differed was not in the *definition* of class but in the *significance* which they ascribed to it in social life. For Weber saw that people who belonged to the same class (in the Marxian and Weberian sense) might yet behave differently. How was this difference to be explained ? Obviously, not in terms of class, for that was constant. Weber's contribution to the solution of this problem was to suggest that an additional concept, that of the status group, might account for certain variations which could not be explained in terms of class. Thus, he did not reject the Marxian scheme of classification, but refined it. It is perfectly true that Weber was 'interested in classifying social phenomena', but so was Marx ; and so indeed should anyone be who is interested in a systematic study of society, whatever the ultimate objective.

Too much is made of the differences between the approaches of Marx and Weber. It is undeniable that differences did exist, in both theoretical formulations and ideological positions. But the fact remains that Marx and Weber were the two principal figures within a *single* sociological tradition whose unity becomes at once apparent when we compare it with the antiseptic products of Anglo-American social anthropology.

Differences between Marx and Weber are overplayed by social anthropologists partly out of ideological motives, but often through ignorance. Weber was all through conscious of his debt to Marx, although, happily, he did not take this to mean an unquestioning acceptance of all that the master had said. It may be worth remembering that Weber once said of a particular work of Marx, that it was 'a *scientific* achievement of the first order'<sup>7</sup> ; the work in question was the *Communist Manifesto*.

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<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Mayer, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

## BOOK REVIEWS

**The Relevance of Models for Social Anthropology.** *A.S.A. Monographs I.* London, Tavistock Publications; New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1965. 35 shillings,

**Political Systems and the Distribution of Power.** *A. S. A. Monographs 2.* 30 shillings.

The materials for these two volumes are derived from the papers presented and discussion arising from them at a conference on 'New Approaches to Social Anthropology' sponsored by the Association of Social Anthropologists of the Commonwealth and held at Jesus College, Cambridge, in June 1963. The original sponsor of this conference was Professor Raymond Firth who sought to bring together the younger generation of British and American social anthropologists on a common platform to find out what was common to anthropologists on both sides of the Atlantic and where they differed.

A study of the essays in these two volumes shows that social anthropologists have almost come to form a separate discipline. Two main trends are evident. Certain old concepts have now become out of date; they have to be refined. More work should be done to pool together in a comparative framework observations that are discrete in terms of subject matter or of ethnographic setting. A number of new ideas have been suggested, but an altogether new theoretical approach is not clearly observable. The basic fact which still has general support is that human behaviour exhibits certain regularities whose forms are mutually interdependent, over and above their interdependence in the personality behaviour systems of each individual. A social system is however not seen as an organic whole, nor is there an acceptance of Malinowski's idea of the function of institutions in relation to a hierarchy of needs. The nature of social systems and structure of social fields is not basic to the analysis of any problem facing the contributors to these volumes. The evolutionary approach has again raised its head under the inspiration of Leslie White.

All the essays reveal a tendency among anthropologists to turn to any discipline for solving a particular problem. British anthro-

pologists however confine themselves to a narrower range of other disciplines as compared to their American colleagues who are ready to move out of the limited range of social sciences. Whether an anthropologist studies a single society or covers several, there is a meticulous analysis of limited social fields accompanied by a comparative approach.

These volumes are extremely useful and illuminating so far as the latest trends in social anthropology are concerned.

Sachchidananda

**The Life History in Anthropological Science.** *L. L. Langness. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1965.*

The scope of social anthropology is being steadily enlarged. The fact that anthropologists have to go to unfamiliar areas and explore unfamiliar ways of life have made them vary their techniques in accordance with the demands of the situation. The methods of data collection are now becoming more explicit.

This small book is one in a series of 'Studies in Anthropological Method'. Since the publication of Clyde Kluckhohn's book 'The Personal Document in Anthropological Science' published two decades ago, this is the only integrative and systematic publication on the subject. The author begins by reviewing the relevant literature from the nineteenth century to the present day. He then analyses the theoretical context in which life histories and other biographical materials are used. He indicates the various fields of anthropology in which biographical data can be fruitfully used. The motivation for any action must be assessed through studying individuals in depth.

Langness also discusses the problems involved in the collection of data for life histories such as the creation of rapport, language, technique of interviewing and finally methods for ensuring reliability of the data collected. He has also made a plea for starting an inter-disciplinary companion file of personal histories like the Human Relations Area Files. Since life history is a common denominator of behavioural sciences, the data can be used not only by anthropologists but also by medical practitioners, psychologists, sociologists, social workers, criminologists, historians and others.

Sachchidananda

**Mauritius : Problems of a Plural Society.** *Burton Benedict. Institute for Race Relations, London. 8 sh. 6d.*

Mauritius is a small island east of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean. It has a population density of one thousand persons per square mile. History has made the island as ethnically heterogeneous as Malaya. Coupled with this are the problems of economic development. Thus Mauritius presents in a microcosm the problems facing new nations.

In this small book, Burton Benedict describes the setting of the island, its multi-ethnic or plural society and the different alignments in the political area. The most important constituents of Mauritian society are the French, English, Creole or Mauritian of mixed African or Indian and European descent, the slaves brought from Madagascar or the African mainland, Indians and Chinese. These various categories of emigrants maintain their separate cultural identity even though there is great territorial interspersion. The latter fact is a unifying feature. When disputes or factions arise in a village, people may align themselves on a territorial basis rather than on other factors. In certain occupations people of one ethnic group predominate. But within each group, class differences based on wealth and occupation exist. The role of kinship is not even in all the ethnic groups. Each ethnic group is generally endogamous. Religious categories may cut across ethnic or linguistic categories. In the political sphere, religion, language and ethnic origin are potential rallying points, even though they do not form corporate groups based on these factors.

In the last chapter, the author discusses the governance of the island and the role of the different ethnic groups at various levels. The struggle for political power is becoming more intense. This is stimulated by approaching independence. There is fierce competition in the economic field and the danger of communal conflict is increasing every day.

Sachchidananda

**Family and Kinship : A Study of the Pandits of Rural Kashmir.** *T. N. Madan. Asia Publishing House, Bombay. Rs. 25.*

This study of family and kinship was made in the village of Uttarsu Umanagiri in the Kashmir valley in 1957. It is based on

intensive and extensive observation of all the Brahman families in the village. The author has the advantage of being a Kashmiri Brahman himself. Although Muslims and Brahmans live in the same village and engage in a number of economic transactions, they do not constitute a single society and each community leads a social and religious life distinctly apart from the other.

Dr. Madan has analysed the data in a structural frame and has succeeded in drawing a vivid picture of the working of the family system among the Brahmans of rural Kashmir. Although structural analysis assumes a static picture of society, it is recognized that changes are taking place and concepts like the developmental cycle of domestic groups have been employed to take care of the diachronic data.

The author distinguishes between the house and the household and then goes on to discuss its composition and methods of recruitment to the household. The economic aspects of the family and the partition of the household are analysed. The wide kinship circle in which the non-agnatic kin play a vital part has been given due attention. The three important kin groups among the Pandits of Kashmir, the *Chulan*, *Kotamb* and *Kol* have been described in detail. It is through the first two of these groups which have varifications in jural, ritual, economic and moral fields that the Pandits live their domestic life.

In the appendix the author gives a number of proverbs which express in an effective manner various aspects of kinship such as birth and childhood, marriage and interpersonal relations between kin and affines.

Professor Barnes' view that 'it is a good analysis of social life and adds to our understanding of social behaviour in general without restriction of region or epoch' is very apt.

Sachchidananda

**Rebellious Prophets : A Study of Messianic Movements in Indian Religions.** *Stephen Fuchs.* Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1965. Rs. 25.00.

In almost all cultures, the saviour is expected to emerge in times of great turmoil when the values in a particular culture are put to severe strain. Dr. Stephen Fuchs has collected all the available

data on such movements in different parts of India. Each region has received attention and tribal, Muslim as well as Hindu messianic movements have been presented with relevant details.

In the beginning, Dr. Fuchs attempts to formulate the characteristic features of the messianic, nativistic or revitalization movements. Important features are extreme dissatisfaction with existing conditions producing emotional unrest, appearance of a charismatic leader demanding the unquestioned allegiance of his followers, revolt against established authority, attempt to revive traditional values and a return to the golden past, while at the same time borrowing alien culture traits, expectation of world renewal through great upheaval and hope of a paradise or a millenium etc. It may, however, be noted that there is no indiscriminate borrowing of a superior culture by the messianic leader as envisaged by Dr. Fuchs. The author has, however, rightly shown that the messianic movements were not just the result of the impact of Western culture and Christianity but also due to the impact of Hindu and Muslim cultures on the common people.

A study of the movements included in the book reveals that many of them were not really messianic in character, if we analyse them with reference to the characteristics mentioned earlier. In fact all reform movements and revolts against British rule have been included in the book. There was nothing messianic about Sidu and Kanhu, leaders of the Santal insurrection of 1855 or about Buddhu Bhagat of the Kol insurrection of 1832, or about Ganga Narayan's movement of the same year. They led their flocks against injustice and exploitation. The Kabirpanthi cult, the different Bhagat cults, with the exception of the Tana Bhagat and the Satnami movement in Madhya Pradesh, were reform movements, pure and simple, instead of being messianic in the sense used by the author.

There are some factual inaccuracies due perhaps to the author's inadequate acquaintance with the different regions covered. The great majority of the tribals of Bihar do not supplement their livelihood even to-day largely with the collection of jungle produce (p. 21). Hindu missionaries have not been active among the tribals of Bihar. Birsa did not escape arrest for two years but only for two months. The open rising was fixed for Christmas eve of 1899]

and not of 1897. Birsa died not on 2nd June 1900 but on 9th June 1900. *Birda* (p. 32) in Mundari means jungle-water and not hero water. The Tana Bhagats abstain from all meat. They do not make any exception regarding goats sacrificed to Hindu gods (p. 42).

Sometimes the book rings in our ear the language of historians of the British empire. An instance in point is—'Finally the British troops themselves grew tired of killing badly armed or defenceless people and of burning the villages of many Santals' (p. 52). There is a fair sprinkling of misprints.

Notwithstanding these minor lapses, which do not affect the argument or the narrative, the book does fill up an important gap in our knowledge.

Sachchidananda

*Bulletin de L'école Française D'extreme Orient. Tome LII. Paris. 1965. Fasc. 2. Pp. 315-598.*

The present volume opens with a fairly detailed study by Gabrielle Martel of various aspects of rice cultivation among the Santals of the Burdwan region in W. Bengal: kinds of fields and tools, methods of cultivation and of storing the produce, the economic condition of the Santal population; all this with copious graphs and photographs and pen drawings, giving the Santali vocabulary of things and operations. Quite a competent study. Among the other articles, I might mention a long description by Jean Boulbet of the *Modes and Techniques* of the Cau Maa' population in Viet-Nam: an ethnological study of some aspects of their culture, especially their peculiar craft skills and art expressions, with a wealth of photos to illustrate the article.

In the book review section, there is a recension of Alice Boner's *Principles of Composition in Hindu Sculpture: Cave Temple Period*, the conclusions of which the reviewer, Madeleine Giteau, finds inconclusive.

F. E.

*The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin: An Autobiography. Oxford University Press. 1964. Pp. 335, numerous illustrations.*

After publishing a series of tribal monographs, Verrier Elwin thought of writing a monograph about himself which could not be unfortunately published before his sudden death. A critical reading of this autobiography clarifies many of the perplexing and

paradoxical events of Elwin's life : his change over from Catholicism to Hindu mysticism and then to Buddhism ; his enthusiastic support of India's independence movement, his close association with Gandhi, his migration from an Anglo-Catholic Ashram to Savarmati Ashram and then to the 'tribal world' of Middle and North-Eastern India, his divorce in England and subsequent marriages in India, and so on.

Writing in a mood of frank confession, Elwin describes his 'angel infancy', his youth of delight, in England, his association in India with 'Saints and Satyagrahis', 'Bishops and Bayonets' and finally with the tribal world. He gives us a glimpse of his happy family life and the attainment of a philosophical attitude towards life and his love for Mother India. Taken as a whole, the book provides an excellent and frank picture of a man who has been so good and dynamic, so friendly to the tribals, so sincere and honest to the cause of Indian nationalism and so dedicated to the cause of what he termed phil-anthropology.

While space does not allow a critical review of the points emerging out of Elwin's experience in India and Indian tribals described in the book, I like to refer to his basic attitude to love—sexual love, spiritual love, love as a substitute for quarrelling and war, love as the dearest quest of the home and solution to all problems. Elwin, as he puts it, had all his life been in love with something, a cause, a tribe, a person. Perhaps this passionate and dedicated love for the tribals illuminated his closer association with and intimate knowledge of tribals and then inspired him to develop a romantic and aesthetic approach to tribal problems.

Elwin was greatly influenced by the essential values of the life and culture of the tribal people of India, and in the following words he ably describes the impact of tribal culture on his own ideas. 'Most of the essential values of my life have grown and developed out of my contact with the tribal people.'

Elwin was, doubtlessly, a great friend of the tribal people of India, a great author on the tribal culture of India, and a greater philosopher of love. These points are prominently brought out in his autobiography under review.

L. P. Vidyarthi

**Saints and Fireworks : Religion and Politics in Rural Malta.** *Jeremy Boissevain. London School of Economics Monographs on Social Anthropology, No. 30. The Athlone Press. New York. 1965. Pp. 154.*

The author of the book under review makes an important contribution to the little developed field of political anthropology. Dr. Boissevain lived for more than two years in Malta and studied the conflicting groups—Socialists, Nationalists and the Church—in the villages of Malta. In the light of his field researches, as well supplementary library work, the author also brings out the fact that a parish church is not just a central place or workshop, but is the centre of most of the social life of a village and the repository of its collective wealth. He then analyses the factional and power alliances in the village and brings out very clearly that, though internally all are divided by cleavages which cut across the community at various levels, all villages try to present a tightly united front to the outside world. He further furnishes us with facts to indicate that village politics, which is essentially based on a struggle for power between political parties and the Church, have a closer relationship with national politics. The author presents a set of convincing sociological explanations as to why the professionals, white-collar workers and farmers give support to the Church whose authority is almost mediaeval, but present a united opposition to the Labour Party. The clash of the Church and Labour Club within the villages and the difficult role of the parish priests are analysed in the framework of Maltese ecclesiastical and secular politics.

The book provides us with a new model in political anthropology and obviously explores a new field for research to be taken up in different areas of the world.

L. P. Vidyarthi

**The Art of Buddhism.** *Dietrich Seckel. Pp 331, with a large number of plates in colour and otherwise, bibliography, index and maps. Methuen. London. 50 sh.*

This is a deluxe publication in the series, *Art of the World*. In Part I, Prof. Seckel has traced the spread of Buddhist art through India, Ceylon, Indonesia, Indo-China, Central Asia, China, Korea, and Japan. In Part II, he has dwelt on types and forms and has

discussed the evolution from the Stupa to the pagoda and dwelt on the monasteries and temples, the Buddha image, the hierarchy of sacred figures, narrative works and symbolism, and ornamentation. There are nine maps showing the spread of Buddhism in different countries. Apart from the excellent coloured pictures there are as many as 73 figures which enhance the worth of the book. The subject has been treated in an exhaustive and scholarly manner.

This is a book which should satisfy both the student and scholar and even the most fastidious librarian.

P. C. Roy Chaudhury

**The Dusun ; a North Borneo Society.** *Thomas Rhys Williams. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York.*

This is another book in the series of Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology published from the Stanford University. This treatment on the Dusuns should serve as a model for professional anthropologists in India showing how, within 100 pages, there can be a superb and penetrating presentation of one of the most interesting societies. The study was spread over years in different Dusun villages in North Borneo. Anyone can understand the difference of a book of this type with a background and the extremely superficial anthropological studies as a result of a hurried two months' work or even less in a particular village or community. The chapters are :

1. The Background of Dusun Customary Behaviour ;
2. Conceptions of the Natural World ;
3. Religious Belief and Behaviour ;
4. Omens, Luck and Chance ;
5. Sickness and Death ;
6. Social Relations ;
7. Property, Order and Authority ;
8. Subsistence and Economy ;
9. Life Experience and World View.

There is a helpful bibliography.

P. C. Roy Chaudhury

**Manual for Kinship Analysis.** *Ernest L. Schusky. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York.*

This book by Professor Schusky forms one of the valued publications in the series of Studies in Anthropological Methods published by the Stanford University. It is a scholarly treatment of the essential features of the study of kinship and contains a very helpful glossary and bibliography.

P. C. Roy Chaudhury

**The Igbo of South-east Nigeria.** *Victor C. Uchendu. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York.*

This is another book in the series of Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology published by the Stanford University. It is a book on the Igbos of South-East Nigeria written by an Igbo who has had a good training for making a specialized study. Mr. Uchendu does not try to gloss over facts and features, and in eleven sections running to 111 pages he has been able to give the reader an excellent account of his own people. The quaint customs and manners, conceptions of kinship, ways of government, status placement, gods and oracles have been presented in a disciplined manner. The only chapter that could have been elaborated is the last one which is about 'Igbo and culture contact'. Mr. Uchendu, it is hoped, would follow up this study by a more elaborate treatment of the culture contacts of the Igbo. There is a helpful bibliography.

P. C. Roy Chaudhury

**Changing Japan.** *Edward Norbeck. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York.*

This book running to only 82 pages by the Professor of Anthropology at Rice University and published as one of the series in Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology by the Stanford University is an excellent presentation of the rapid changes that have come over Japan. The pre-modern social structure and values and the modernization of Japan has been made through a study of families, both in the rural and urban areas. The presentation is colourful, penetrating and comprehensive. Moreover, the book gives ample suggestions for more specialized studies in the line.

P. C. Roy Chaudhury

**Caste and Ritual in a Malwa Village.** *K. S. Mathur. Pp. 215, Asia Publishing House.*

Dr. K. S. Mathur of the Lucknow University has presented a careful case study of the ritual aspects of caste in a Malwa village. He has started with a discussion of the physiographical and historical background and has then indicated the social structure and the Hindu belief system in existence among the rural folk. The changes in the pattern of beliefs and values have been carefully analysed.

The book is the result of intensive field work, and the presentation is somewhat far too detailed. Research workers should study the book as a model.

P. C. Roy Chaudhury

**Towards a Sociology of Culture in India.** Edited by S. K. N. Unnithan and two others of the University of Rajasthan, Jaipur. Pp. 441, Prentice-Hall of India (Private) Ltd. New Delhi. Rs. 18.

Prof. D. P. Mukherji of the Lucknow University was a pioneer in the field of the sociology of culture. In this volume, 38 articles have been presented in commemoration of the great work of Prof. Mukherji. Most of the writers are well known for their scholarship and contribution. The articles are divided into five groups, namely, (1) Towards a Sociology of Culture in India, (2) Sociology of Culture and Civilization, (3) Culture Change and Elite in India, (4) Socio-Cultural Planning and Development: Theoretical Perspective and (5) Socio-Cultural Planning and Development: Processes and Problems in India.

An anthology of this type has certain disadvantages. Some of the articles pose questions, discuss them, but do not come to any definite conclusion. A few are somewhat pedantic and suffer from name-dropping. But quite a few of them like Dr. Ramkrishna Mukherjee's 'Indian Tradition and Social Change', Prof. S. C. Dube's 'The Study of Complex Culture', Prof. Radhakamal Mukherjee's 'A Philosophical View of Civilization' are very valuable. The joint article of the three scholars 'Towards a Sociology of Culture in India' is useful and indicates a number of problems. Readers will profit by the study of some of the articles, although many controversial points have been raised in quite a few of them.

P. C. Roy Chaudhury

**Understanding an African Kingdom. Bunyoro.** John Beattie. Holt Rinehart & Winston, New York, 1965. Pp. xii-61.

This is the result of a twenty-two months' investigation in the social and cultural life of the Nyoro, a Bantu people of Uganda.

The author furnishes the reader with his methodological involvements in a straightforward manner. In the same spirit he

admits his failures too. It is a commendable piece of work and the author and the publishers both deserve congratulation.

Awadesh Coomar Sinha

**Maori Youth : A Psycho-ethnological Study of Cultural Deprivation,** David P. Ausubel. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., New York, 1965. Pp. 221.

The author has tried to understand the stages of Maori acculturation in its historical setting. Since he lacks authentic data relating to the past, his findings regarding different historical stages are likely to slide close to subjectivity. Mr. Ausubel not only delineates the present state of affairs, but also recommends about a dozen courses for future development. It reveals that many of the problems of the Maori youth are due to their social demoralization (p. 67) leading to a type of adolescent cultism. Secondly, inspite of the self-congratulatory attitude of the Government, many factors underlying colour prejudice tend to perpetuate. The book is a welcome one.

Awadesh Coomar Sinha

**Gazetteer of India : Bihar : Saharsa.** P. C. Roy Chaudhury : *The Supdt., Secretariat Press, Patna, Bihar. 1965 ; pp. iii + 521 + ix + 9 plates. Rs. 10.*

This is the fourteenth district gazetteer compiled by the author and the first one for the district of the name. Besides collecting relevant materials from different available sources, facts and figures have also been gathered by means of independent field investigation. The author gives due attention to the impact of the river Kosi on the people's life in the past, and the rapidly changing face of the district as well.

Though it serves its purpose well as a book of reference, its descriptions are at times sketchy from the ethnographic point of view (p. 82, 'Religious Beliefs the Muslims').

A map of the district and a few sketches of the Kosi catchment area would have enhanced the utility of the book. It is a mine of information regarding the district.

Awadesh Coomar Sinha

**Decision-Makers In A Gramdan Village : a Case Study in Rural Leadership.** *Raghuraj Gupta, Rural Life Analysis Section, Planning Research and Action Institute, Kalakankar House, Lucknow, U. P., 1965, mimeograph. Pp. 137.*

This book contains seven chapters, apart from a foreword by Anand Swarup, Director of P.R.A.I., preface, two appendices dealing with the questionnaire applied and an exhaustive bibliography.

A *gramdan* village known as Raipur was selected for study with a view to making a systematic study of the decision-making process and decision-makers and finding out whether and in what fundamental respects these differed from other Indian villages. In other words, what new types of leadership have been thrown up by the *gramdan* institutions ?

Chapter Two entitled 'Raipur decides for Gramdan' is the description of the setting, location, population and occupational structure, land distribution, decision for *gramdan* experiment with joint farming, causes of fiasco and retreat to individual farming.

To-day the problem with C. D. workers is to select and use the 'right type' of leaders who have the maximum following and who can work for the people and the village.

This book will help C. D. personnel in understanding the social fabric and locating the right type of leaders who can do good to the people in general and take up the cause of C. D. in particular. It should also be read by students of social science in general.

We hope that the book will be printed soon.

B. N. Sahay

**Indian Pandits in the Land of Snow.** *Sarat Chandra Das. With an introduction by Nirmal Chandra Sinha M.A. Pp. XXIV + 101 + 33. Calcutta, 1965. Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay.*

Sarat Chandra Das's *Indian Pandits in the Land of Snow* was first published in 1893. He was an explorer and scholar of repute, and was one of the first to open up studies in Tibetology in a systematic manner. Mr. N. C. Sinha who is Director of the

Namgyal Institute of Tibetology in Gangtok has done a great service by once more making the book available to the scholarly world. In his introduction, he has tried to point out where corrections are needed in the views expressed more there seventy years ago by Sarat Chandra Das in the light of later researches.

We hope that the Namgyal Institute will continue to follow this up with similar reprints, and make Indian readers familiar with the land and problems of our northern neighbour, namely, Tibet.

Nirmal Kumar Bose

### ERRATA

1. We are very sorry that the name of the author of the first article in the present issue has been printed as Rev. Fr. Sngli Lyngdoh S.D.B. in place of Rev. Fr. Sngi Lyngdoh S.D.B.  
Readers will kindly note this correction.
2. Corrections to be made in the article 'The Brahmans of India : An Anthropometric Study' by Hirendra K. Rakshit in Vol. 46, No. 1.
  - (i) P. 38, Table 5, East Bengal :  
for N 476 please read 876.
  - (ii) P. 40, Table 9, Mesocephalic :  
for Range 76.0 - 75.9 please read 76.0 - 77.9.
  - (iii) P. 52, Appendix TABLE A, serial no. 2 :  
for N. I. 71.3 please read 71.9.
  - (iv) P. 55, On Kashmir Brahman, Pandits of Martand :  
for N 16 please read 86.