

Census of India, 1961
West Bengal & Sikkim

HANDICRAFTS SURVEY MONOGRAPH ON **STONEWARES**



Investigation, Tabulation & First Draft

DIPANKAR SEN, M. A.,

Investigator

Editing & Final Draft,
Supervision & Guidance

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*of the West Bengal Civil Service
Officer on Special Duty,
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STONE WARES

A HANDICRAFTS SURVEY MONOGRAPH

CENSUS OF INDIA, 1961
WEST BENGAL & SIKKIM
Volume XVI Part VIIA (iii)



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STONEWARES



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FOREWORD

One of the first steps to be taken in the First Five Year Plan was the establishment of six Boards for the promotion of handicrafts, village and small industries :

- (1) The Khadi and Village Industries Board ;
- (2) The All-India Handicrafts Board ;
- (3) The All-India Handloom Board ;
- (4) The Central Silk Board ;
- (5) The Coir Board ; and
- (6) The Small Industries Board.

The rapid expansion of the activities of these Boards which concentrated not only on production and techniques, but also on organisation, extension, credit, marketing, and export, consolidated and enlarged the position that the household industries sector had so long enjoyed in the nation's economic life. It was this fact that forced itself upon the preparations for the 1961 Census and demanded that household industry should be separately investigated for a proper accounting of the nation's manpower, resources and its specific contribution to the national income. The 1961 Census, therefore, asked a special series of questions on household industry, input of family and hired labour, and the periods over which household industry is conducted. It was felt, however, that an enumeration of the total number of establishments and their industrial classification would be incomplete without a proper description of what they produce and how they produce. It was important to make an assessment of the limits of rigidity within which traditional skill operates. This could be obtained by studying the caste, occupational, social and economic stratifications, the limitations of credit and marketing facilities, the dominance of custom over contract, the persistence of traditional tools and design forms, the physical limitations of transport, communication and mobility, the inability to adopt new lines or adapt to changing circumstances. It was important also to make an assessment of the limits

of flexibility that traditional skill is capable of, because the transformation of traditional skills to modern skills is easier said than done and a thorough study may well reveal that it is perhaps cheaper from the social point of view to develop industrial skills from scratch than to try to graft traditional skill on alien soil. A rather tragic case of failure to make what would on the face of it seem a minor adjustment cast its heavy shadow on the nation when it was discovered that goldsmiths used to working on 22-carat gold all their lives felt sadly helpless when asked to work on 14-carat, so narrow and unadaptable were the limits of their skill and proficiency and so rudimentary the tools and equipment with which they and their forefathers had worked. This fiscal accident revealed that tools are even more important than skills.

An early opportunity was, therefore, taken in February, 1960 to suggest to State Census Superintendents, that the Census provided a unique opportunity for conducting and documenting a survey of this kind. As such a survey was quite outside the usual terms of reference of Census work, it was thought prudent cautiously to feel one's way with the thin end of the wedge of what would, it was hoped, prove to be an exciting pursuit. It was, therefore, considered the wiser course to wait until the State Census Offices felt so interested that they would no longer take the inquiry as an imposition but rather want to do it on their own and ask for the necessary staff and equipment. This Office, too, in its turn, could make use of the interval to organise and elaborate the design of inquiry in order to feed the appetite that work in progress would serve to whet. Because it was a labour of love, sought to be unobtrusively thrust on one's colleagues and because the inquiry itself was so vast that normally it would demand in any country as big a set up, if separately established as the Census Organisation itself and that over a much longer period, and because it was almost a pioneer venture, nothing like it having been undertaken since the 1880's, it was decided to move towards a build-up by stages, to let the inquiry unfold itself only as fast as my colleagues chose to ask for more.

Thus in the first circular of 18 February, 1960, it was suggested that the inquiry might be conducted through the agency of the Development Department, the State Director of Industries, the Director of Tribal Welfare, the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, and other organisations concerned with the promotion of household industry. A draft questionnaire containing 30 questions in three parts was recommended for canvassing. It was suggested that information on this questionnaire, village by village and area by area, might either be obtained through the regular departmental channels of the State Government, or through the newly set up Census Organisation or through the hierarchy of the newly-created Panchayats. Stress was laid on the need of photographic documentation and illustration of designs, shapes and forms not only by photographs but with the help of line drawings or sketches together with

a full description of the materials used.

Almost the whole of 1960 and the first half of 1961 were spent in organising and taking the Census count, although several States even during this period had not allowed the grass to grow under their feet but made exploratory studies and decided in their minds how the inquiry should be organised. A series of Regional Conferences held in Trivandrum, Darjeeling and Srinagar in May and June, 1961 revealed much enthusiasm among State Superintendents to proceed with the survey, but the need of separate staff and equipment was felt at the same time as the realization dawned that this was much too serious an inquiry to be treated casually and left to be achieved through the usual administrative channels and State Census Superintendents proceeded to augment their staff with qualified research and investigating officers, technical persons, photographers, artists, draughtsmen and other trained personnel.

This was followed by rapid progress in coordination between the Central and State Census Offices in the matter of exchange and processing of information, documentation and investigation, of assisting each other with trained investigators and in editing and finalizing drafts, layouts, presentations.

Mention has been made of a questionnaire in three parts and thirty questions. The idea was to make a beginning with empirical, analytical studies based on a structured questionnaire which would replace general descriptive accounts that had obtained so far. The primary aim was to obtain a picture as much of the artisan himself as of his craft, to obtain a perspective of the artisan and his craft in his social and economic setting, the extent to which tradition bound him and the winds of change ruffled him, the extent of his mobility and immobility, the conditions of market, credit, new contacts and designs in which he operated, the frame of new as well as traditional producer-customer relationships in which he still worked, and how far he was ready to pierce his own caste-tribe socio-economic cocoon and make a breakthrough to new opportunities promised by the Five Year Plans. The aim was to hold up the mirror to hereditary skills struggling with the dialectics of tradition and change.

Thus the first part of the questionnaire, purporting to be a village schedule, sought to take account of the size and population of the village, its remoteness from or proximity to centres of trade and commerce, in short, the degree of isolation in which the artisan worked, and the relative strengths of various communities in the village which would afford clues to social interdependence and the prevalence of the 'jajmani' system. The second part was devoted to artisan communities in the village: the several castes of artisans, the number of families in each, the total number of workers, males and females, the extent of co-operative activity among them, the extent of dependence upon employers and of wage or contract labour. There were questions on the raw materials used, the means of their procurement, the possible extent of

dependence on others for raw materials, the extent of the material that artisans can handle within the limits of their skill. There were other questions on the exchange and flow of designs, the use of colours, the ancientness of the craft and legends associated, the colonization of the craftsman, on patrons and customers and on social and economic contact with the world inside and outside the village. There were specific questions on the workshop itself and particularly the tools and the source of supply of these tools, because it was felt that tools decide everything and are the surest index of inertness or flexibility. Separate blocks of questions were designed to bring out the ramifications of artisan castes throughout the country and the ways they sustained themselves, the type of clientele they catered for, the extent to which they operated on money or barter or service, how specialized their craft was, how wide the market, how dependent they were on their socially preordained clientele and how restricted the latter was by the seemingly unalterable laws of social custom; the extent to which they could operate in the open market, the range of their wares and the sizes to which these were ordinarily restricted either by the limits of their own skill or the length of their customers' pursestrings. Inquiries were to be made about the operation of middlemen and of co-operative societies, the people who gave new designs and demanded new products. Finally the several stages of production of the articles themselves were to be fully described including final and finishing stage and a list of very skilled craftsmen of each community was to be furnished. The third part was devoted specially to tribal communities and designed to find out how self-sufficient or dependent they were on the production and supply of manufactured goods, the extent to which they produced themselves or depended on others, their contacts with other communities and the specific forms of production and commerce through which these contacts were maintained.

Particular emphasis was laid on the need of obtaining as full an account as possible of unique regional design differentiations as they reflect not only the very culture pattern of the country but the persistent inventive faculties of the craftsmen. The importance was emphasised of giving full attention to articles of domestic use as it is in their shapes, designs and forms that the culture patterns and traditional skills persist most tenaciously.

Simultaneously with the investigation of specific crafts, State Superintendents proceeded to compile a comprehensive list of all types of handicrafts obtaining in their State. As for the specific crafts to be investigated several tables were devised from the structured questionnaire in order to guide investigators towards pointed observation and analysis to enable them to write, not just general descriptions, but with their eye on the object and on facts.

Investigations conducted between September 1961 and May 1962, including study group of all States and Social Studies Division in December 1961 at Delhi, stimulated

many of the States into going in for a much enlarged schedule. The revised village schedule itself, the counterpart of the first part of the February 1960 schedule, contained 19 large sections containing elaborate and probing questions. The family Schedule for practising artisan families similarly contained 19 main questions each subdivided into many questions. The Family Schedule for non-practising artisan families contained 21 questions. There were schedules for the study of co-operative societies, of production-cum-training centres, and of consumer's preference. This enlarged schedule of investigation, in the formulation of which the States themselves actively assisted, was greatly welcomed. The surveys that will appear in this series will therefore consist of two main types :

- (a) those based on the original short schedule and
- (b) those based on the much enlarged schedule.

In some cases Census Superintendents felt enthused enough to scrap the work based on the original short schedule and do it over again on the enlarged schedule. In the meantime much experience was gained on the analysis of facts and figures to clothe each observation with plenty of authentic information so that the reader could make his own judgement instead of being expected to see all the time through another pair of eyes.

This Programme of survey of handicrafts and household industries has been fortified by several ancillary surveys, each one of which would deserve major attention. Along with the survey a compilation has been made of all handicraft centres in each State and an inventory prepared of skilled craftsmen. Photographic and other documentation has been built up to constitute what may now be regarded as the most considerable repository in the country. Elaborate and accurate maps of craft centres in taluks, tehsils and districts are either ready or under preparation. A full census of all fairs and festivals, weekly hats and markets, throughout India, has been taken and is being published for the first time. Andhra Pradesh has embarked upon a project of chronicling the social and religious antiquity and uniqueness of every fair and festival. A separate volume will be devoted to each district which promises to be of the utmost value to sociologists and orientalists. A full and complete inventory, replete with sketches and measurements of every object, has been prepared of exhibits in museums of tribal crafts in India. There has been a fairly satisfactory survey of houses and buildings, indigenous architectural designs and use of local building material of the whole country. All this has been entirely a labour of love, patiently organised and executed under great strain and in disregard of health and comfort, for which I take this opportunity of expressing my appreciation and grateful thanks to my colleagues.

New Delhi
July 30, 1964

ASOK MITRA
Registrar General, India

STONY THOUGHTS,
AVANT PROPOS

*‘ . . . men the workers, ever reaping something new :
That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do.’*

And the tragedy begins, after the Monograph ends in my concluding line, ‘in trembling hope repose’. Not ‘finished by a death,’ decline or decay nor by the imploring agony of a ‘beauty in distress’, it is a tragedy not of a craft, of the craftsmen and of the consumers only, but a tragedy also for me. Staged unseen, the tragedy concerns a deed without a name, of people born in a cellar, living in a garret and working all their life to strive, to seek and to find no bubble reputation, and in the end of a strange eventful life dying as portions and parcels of dumb forgetfulness without a grave, uncoffined and unknown and hushed in grim repose. The short and simple annal of the poor artisans, daily struggling in their long walk from the quarry to the workshop at home and carrying the heavy burden of stony weight to nourish their craft with their sore labour’s bath, otherwise portrays a healthy and prosperous craft with past unsighed for and future assured. And it is because of the health, a blessing that money cannot buy, that a happy prologue is called for. But the irony, a paradox too, is that even though the craft has lived with so large a number of pursuer artisans for so long a past in so many craft-centres in places so near, it has none to speak and spell its fame and it has left no name that has not perished in dust. How can then one leave melancholy out of the blank verse or blanker prose about a craft for which memory holds no seat, when all that one ‘knows about it is that nothing is known’ ? If the preface is but elegiac, it is not only because of the craft living *incognito* behind the veil of obscurity but also because so many patron traders look with so little concern on the artisans, struggling for life and survival without either sighs, tears, or groans. How can one in hope-

ful joy compose a halleluiah to a craft, however long its past, however healthy its present, and however bright its future may be, when one is faced with the woeful presence of the despicable, invisible hands of rank exploitation of a multitude of toiling craftsmen by a large number of merciless unscrupulous traders? What hope of answer or redress can one give to console the readers, when one painfully finds innumerable consumers, in spite of their indirect encouragement to and patronage of the products of other States, being unaware of the existence of the same craft in their own State? What indifference can be more blatant than the one cited? The injustice perpetuated in the present craft finds echo in Shaw's moanful remark that the "worst sin towards our fellow-creatures is not to hate them, but to be indifferent to them; that's the essence of inhumanity". This subtle pathos of poignant depth, confined though to the opening account of this Monograph and not explicit in the life of the craftsmen, sets the tune of a tragedy, enacted by the same artisans in ignorance. One cannot wrench oneself off from this tragedy which is based on an inescapable conclusion of certain facts written in the present Monograph.

One may, however, escape the ordeal by recourse to the fiction or fantasy of the legends of the mythological age of India to explain the immobility of stonewares. Hills and hillocks were winged in the *Ramayana*. The conversation between *Mainaka*, the offspring of the Himalayas and the Divine Damsel *Menaka* and *Hanumana*, the son of *Pavana*, the Lord of the Winds, narrates the myth, accounting for the immobility of hills and mountains (*vide Sundarakanda, Ramayana* by *Krittivasa*, pp. 207).

পূৰ্বে যাবতীয় গিৰি ছিল পক্ষবান।
উড়িয়া করিত তারা সৰ্বত্র প্রয়াণ ॥
তবে তাহাদের হুই বুদ্ধি উপজিল।
পড়িয়া নগরগ্রাম ভাঙিতে লাগিল ॥

How *Mainaka* escaped the wrath of Lord *Indra*, who, on being entreated by Mother Earth, clipped off the wings of all hills and mountains, a terror to all worldly people for their tyrannies, is altogether a different story. But, *Mainaka* too with his uninjured pair of wings became immobile in his self-determined exile in the hideout of the sea. The flight of hills is also alluded to in a hyperbolic description of the sanguinary aerial combat between *Jatayu*, the Lord of Vultures, and *Ravana*, the Lord of *Raksasas* (Demons) as a battle between two *Malyavan* hills supplied with wings : *Sapaksayormalyovatormahaparvatayoriva* (*vide Jatayau Ravana Yuddham in Aranyakandam in Srimadvalmiki Ramayanam*, 51 : 4, edited by K. Chinna-swami Sastrigal, Madras, 1958, pp. 374).

If the sleepy mountains, now immobile and bereft of feel or touch or motion,

hibernate in eternal slumber, the wares and objects of stone, the petrous progeny of the stationary hills, are not so luckless at present. The stonewares of India move about today, and thanks to the tradesmen, they are kept moving from place to place, from the quarry-site to the artisans' workshops, from the workshops to the markets and shops, and lastly from the shops to the cupboards or kitchens of the households or to the sacrosanct precincts of holy temples, private or public. But even though the wrath of *Indra* has pacified for the stonewares of India in general, it has not waned in particular for the stonewares of West Bengal. In fact, many people of the State of West Bengal, excluding some few ardent promoters and lovers of the handicrafts of the State, are distinguished for their sedate ignorance of the fact that the artisans practising the craft of stone-carving have been silently eating the bread of banishment without any elan for many years in several craft-centres in the police station Binpur in a remote corner of the district of Midnapore in the State of West Bengal. Some stray references in one or two Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India or in the old District Gazetteer of Midnapore or in the Census Handbook of 1951 on the district of Midnapore could hardly close the shades of the prison-house of the craft or could justify the length of days, the craft lived, or could publish to the people at large the use, they could make of the products. Yet, the craft of Simulpal and of other craft-centres nearby lived in a sequestered world of its own, beyond the noisy tenor of the public life outside. And the products of Agra, Balasore, Gaya, Jaipur and Varanasi captivated the consumers of West Bengal all over and ruled the market as capriciously as they could.

And that explains why so faint, so dull and so dead were the looks of so many eloquent tradesmen of Chitpur and Burrabazar in Calcutta, all dealing in stonewares of places far and near, when I enquired, "Do you keep any stonewares of West Bengal, say of Simulpal or of any other place of the State? If so, will you please show me some specimens?" I was startled, rather taken aback, by the instantaneity of the effect of my innocuous question on the salesmen and owners of a motley of shops selling wares of stone, as 'half a trade and half an art'. Petrified in extreme perplexity, the traders looked questioningly, as if to ask me, "You're joking not, sir, are you"? A repertory of the source of valuable goods of beauty and utility, any one would have delighted at the opportunity to ride over the crafty but cautious tradesmen of seasoned experience. But, most of them restily baffled my resilient questions, directed to divulge the secret of their trade, by a carefully concealed look of ignorance of the place Simulpal or of the stonewares, produced there or elsewhere in West Bengal. One or two persons rose to the occasion to blunt my effort by rhetoric questions, "Are you sure that you're not misinformed? Our experience in the trade for several decades doesn't make us aware of any such craft in West Bengal. You must be in the wrong." But, these counteractive efforts to controvert me in my probe

proved abortive and had a boomerang effect at long last, when one of the shop-keepers bewrayed unwittingly that stonewares of Simulpal and its neighbourhood in Midnapore district were inferior to the products of the craft-centres of other States. Even though vanquished, he argued still in counterfeited glee to set at naught his truthful answer and to retrieve the damage, done by his unwilful disclosure. The unwary trader muttered not any answer, when I asked him, "But, who is there to hall-mark the quality? Can the customers ordinarily mark the chaff from the grain? Are they really so much a don?" And silence provided the golden answer to my question as a clue cutting the puzzling knot that stonewares of West Bengal were masqueraded as wares of better known places.

The simulation, practised with dexterity, does hoodwink countless purchasers for no risk practically, but promises enough return of wide profit. 'Not the most useless things', as Ruskin would view the most beautiful things in the world, the stone utensils of West Bengal, even despite all artful deceits, remain the most useful things of utility and graceful beauty, not soiled by daily use. This marriage of beauty and utility has not precluded the utensils from being used for ritualistic purposes.

The quintessence of the whole story about the present craft is a long tale of exploitation of the artisans by a group of wholesalers flocking in the market at Silda every Friday to swoop on and mop up whatever products are brought there for sale by the primary producers and to purchase the articles in bulk, so that no artisan ever feels the need to grope his ways to outside markets. But, the irony of the exploitation is immanent in the situation itself, for the smokescreen of anonymity, engulfing the craftsmen, keeps them blissfully ignorant of the consumers outside. The tentacled economic operations of the wholesalers also provide a ready opportunity to the wholesalers to let the craft-centres of West Bengal remain in hideouts of their recluse and never to allow the retail consumers to have a full view of the products or a knowledge of the places of their origin. This 'let them know not what should not be known' policy of the *Paikars* has localised the market of the craftsmen to the narrow confines of Silda *Hat*, where 29 households of 61 craftsmen of Simulpal alone earned an income of about Rs.22,000/- in 1964-65. The pattern of weekly production suggests that a household of two artisans on an average earns Rs.13/- to Rs.15/- per week in Simulpal. Likewise the annual income of 123 households consisting of 248 artisans in the ten craft-centres, selected at random around Simulpal and surveyed extensively, annually produce stonewares worth a little less than ninety thousand rupees in the minimum. Strikingly enough, Silda happens to locate the singlemost mart for sale of the wares of the craft-centres, referred to. Even allowing a part of the wares apportioned for sale to the local customers, wares worth well over a lac of rupees are annually purchased by wholesalers from far-away

places of the districts of Midnapore and Bankura for sale to retailers outside. It beats one's imagination and logic to explain why a part of the wares do not reach the market at Calcutta, even by accident. Difficult as it is to accept at its face value the admission of one refractory trader in Calcutta, though made under the constraint of a barrage of incisive leading questions, that stonewares of West Bengal are inferior to those of Gaya or Balasore, it is worthwhile to examine the trader's cryptic insinuation at the products of West Bengal. It is true that *Phyllitic* wares carry with them the inherent weakness of the rock itself (schistosity being the plane of weakness of the rock, as pointed out in page 181 by Dr. P. K. Gangopadhyay) and that the articles may crack or split along the plane of weakness, more so when treated with water which by its seepy action may further heighten the possibility of damage; but the use of lac and gum as an adhesive, nevertheless, guards the articles against damage and gives them a protective cover. Though *Potstone* and *Soapstone* (*Steatite*) indicate varieties of *Talcose* rocks and constitute an ideal raw material for the stonewares of Gaya and Chandil in Bihar and of Balasore in Orissa, baser raw materials of decomposed basic rocks go in the name of *Potstone* and often as a misnomer. And this failure to identify the ideal material is due neither to wilful premeditated actions nor to *malafide* motivations of the craftsmen. Taking into account the basic nature of the craft as a small-scale household industry and the socio-economic characteristics of the craftsmen, whether in Bihar or in Orissa, one cannot rule out altogether the possibility of the vitiation of the sterling qualities of the articles of ideal raw material by the instreaming of products from baser rocks due to maladroitness of the illiterate and non-technical craftsmen. Besides, defects of deliberate use of spurious raw material can well be camouflaged under the polish of lacquer, making it practically impossible for even a discerning eye to detect the mischief without spoiling the article by breakage for petrographic examination.

The question of inferiority, therefore, in the case of the wares of West Bengal, boils down on analysis ultimately to an unabashed subterfuge, designed solely to cloud the real picture. What else can be the presumption, when one fails to have from the metropolitan market at Calcutta any univocal guarantee of standardisation and uniform quality-marking for all the stonewares of Bihar and Orissa? One is thus left with an incontrovertible and inescapable inference that Silda cannot but provide a sure escape-valve for the stonewares of the region to enjoy better markets in Calcutta and elsewhere in West Bengal, even though the producer artisans, unawares of the track of escapade, rest contented with whatever paltry price they get in exchange, and that the congregating *Paikars* enjoy the marginal utility of exploitation of the producers' ignorance of other markets. The huge annual turnover of sale of stonewares at Silda, involving transactions worth more than hundred thousand rupees (astronomical figures indeed in the comprehension of the little

artisans), widens the bounds of the craftsmen's knowledge of neither the market nor the world, beyond the pale of Silda. It gives them neither any inkling of the exploitation of their innocence by the resourceful *Paikars*. Avarice has not spurred on the craft, because the indigene craftsmen look upon themselves as a fortunate band, not goaded by accentuated wants of life or by necessity's sharp pinches, but capable of meeting their modest needs with little margin of profit from the sale of their products to the *Paikars*. This spirit of satiety at modest earnings has been shaped out by historical and economic forces and geographical environs. In an infertile region the income earned by their compatriots in other livelihoods,—landed and landless cultivators, agricultural labourers or daily wage-earners,—is less enviable than that of the artisans. The ecological compulsion of a forced choice and acceptance of any alternative profession with better remunerative returns have sealed the fate of the craftsmen and stunted the entrepreneur's skill and enterprise to maximise the profit. The unpaid wage thus getting lost while accounting the cost price of an article, an average artisan elates at the profit of 0.80 *paise*, 0.57 *paise*, 0.35 *paise* and 0.12 *paise* respectively from sale to a *Paikar* of one piece each of *Thala*, *Rekab*, *Plate* and *Bati*, priced at Re.1.00 *paise*, 0.75 *paise*, 0.50 *paise*, and 0.25 *paise* respectively.

The stone utensils, after being sold to the *Paikars*, set the stage ready for the wholesalers to make the most of their spoliation by their artful exploiting trade, first undercutting the primary producers at the source-place and then at the cost of the not too fastidious consumers, who purchase the wares at a different place, far too distant from the craft-centres, and who far too oftener do not know that the wares are manufactured in West Bengal itself. Though not feasible to detect where, how and by whom the deceit is practised, none can deny the play of trickery on the consumers. Or how else can one reconcile the disproportionately large-scale production in numerous small-sized household workshops in a good number of craft-centres of a region and the swiftness of the operations of quite a fair number of *Paikars* swarming at one place to purchase the articles wholesale to the indisputable fact that existence of the craft in West Bengal is unknown to the majority of her people?

Once one accepts the premises of fraudulent practice at some stage or other (of the transaction between intermediaries before reaching the final destination of the consumer's home) as granted, it will further one's interest to size up the extent of profit accruing from this questionable means. Whereas the sale price of a *Thala* of Gaya brand varies from Rs.4.00 *paise* in the minimum to Rs.10.00 *paise* in the maximum, partly also depending on its size, and whereas the same article of Balasore make sells at Rs. 1.75 *paise*, one may conjure up the upper ceiling of profit by simple arithmetical guess-work on the eventuality of a *Thala*, purchased at Silda for Re.1.00 *paise* by

a *Paikar*, passing for the same article of either Gaya or Balasore. A *Rekab* purchased at 0.75 *paise* at Silda makes it not difficult to earn a net profit of Rs.2.00 *paise*, if it is counterfeited as an article of Balasore, the latter in Calcutta market selling at Rs.2.75 *paise* a piece. A *Bati* of Silda selling at 0.25 *paise* a piece does not compare unfavourably with that of Balasore, of big, medium and small varieties, selling at Rs.3.50 *paise*, 0.94 *paise* and 0.75 *paise* a piece respectively. The total amount of profit stands the chance of involving several lacs of rupees from a craft in places of solitary confinement.

The mark of inferiority, labelled on the products of West Bengal rather uncharitably and hastily by the lonesome trader in Calcutta, makes the *inter se* comparison of the wares of the State of West Bengal with those of other States an indispensable part of the present discussion. The indictment would have sustained the ground of inferiority of raw material, were it not known that the application of the term *Potstone* to any rock from which household utensils are carved, is made rather loosely in different parts of India (*vide* Dr. P. K. Gangopadhyay's article in page 187) and is not commensurate with the actual practices. Ignorant of whether the most assured supply of the rock conforms to the ideal raw material, known as *Potstone* including *Soapstone*, and often using the wrong material under the misconception of *Potstone*, stonecarver artisans even in places of Orissa and Bihar cannot vouchsafe the superiority of any product of theirs as solely emerging from use of the right rock. Beyond the reach of the march of intellect, the artisans of West Bengal likewise use *Phyllite* in an identical impression of the rock *Potstone*, thus unwillingly confounding a trader to argument on a wrong premise. It is interesting that even in West Bengal and incidentally in the region of the craft-centres of the present study there are deposits of the very *Talco* rocks, which prejudice the Calcutta trader in favour of a supposed superiority of the wares of Bihar and Orissa and that in some places of the region under study (*vide* Dr. P. K. Gangopadhyay's article in page 181) these very rocks are quarried for use by the local craftsmen. Superiority or inferiority is, therefore, a coinage of the traders, delectably made to suit their convenience and used to serve the exigencies of problematic situations, which they face in course of dealing with their customers, and is not coterminous with how a Geologist uses the term to imbue an article with qualifying attributes, thus adding to its value, on technical examination of the basic raw material. Quite in keeping with common experience, the trader's lack of critical judgement as an assayer ends in a wrongful appraisal of what the stonewares of West Bengal are really worth of, and ultimately consequences in foisting mostly an inferior article as a superior one on the purchaser. This finding appears quite logically to nullify the misconceived inferiority gibe at the stonewares of West Bengal, on grounds of use of bad raw material. No goods are ever found to be always made of the right material. Besides, it is an important revelation that

Potstone utensils are also produced in West Bengal and are, therefore, not the monopolistic wares of a few craft-centres outside the State.

The products of West Bengal are singled out from the stonewares of other States by the simplicity of form and design of the utilitarian utensils of functional values as well as by the use of decorative motifs as aesthetic expressions of the innate artistic senses of the unsophisticated craftsmen in a rural interior. The stonewares of West Bengal, on comparison with those of other States, stand on equal footing and have the same artistic value, as the products of experienced workers in a handicraft do normally have. On the element of form, the artistic productivity and skill of the Bengali craftsmen do not score less than those of their counterparts elsewhere, on account of the regularity of form and surface pattern of the articles. But the use of decorative motifs gives Bengal's products an edge over the same from other States. The patterns emerging in the stone utensils here from use of the concentric circles and zigzag lines, with an inherent arrangement as the essential element, bespeak the ability of perfect, artistic execution to express the artist's imagination, on the representation of which he sets himself ready with motif elements. And that occasions the aesthetic sense of the artist to satisfy his virtuosity. The simple geometrical motifs produce a rhythmic repetition of complex patterns. The application of the techniques of ornamentation, characteristic of decorative arts, in an economic craft of utilitarian goods, even by use of simple motifs, suggests the operation of an innate sense of artistry of the craftsmen producing the wares. Other interpretation, in the light of the economics of the craft, will not help one explain why so many mandays and so much labour are spent on effecting the decorative patterns on the articles, once the desired form is attained, without heightening even slightly their functional utility. In an economic craft that much of perfection in form and finish is indispensable as much will infuse in the products their utilitarian characteristics. Once an article attains the state, which will make it fit for use to serve a particular purpose for which it is produced, any more labour spent on it, at whatever stage of production, is uneconomic. The same is true for the stone utensils of West Bengal. In the absence of any myths or legends, proffered by the artisans about the decorative motifs and designs used on the articles, one cannot hold the force of ritualism or symbolism to have motivated the craftsmen. Neither is any explanation adduced by the craftsmen, the wholesalers or by the consumers that the designs are traditionally necessitated, before the utensils are put to household or ritualistic uses. Therefore, the craftsmen act not under any compulsion of the choice of the clientele in using the designs. But, it is indisputable that the designs have invested the utensils with a rare distinction, marking them different from other wares. The distinction, achieved in an artistic urge for self-expression at the cost of profit, because of the artisans' ignorance of the complex economics of the craft and of the commerce of the market,

elevates the status of the craft of West Bengal to a class of its own, without any parallel among its counterparts in other States. Yet, the craft of West Bengal earns the vitriolic epithet of inferiority and is pushed back into internment. And the candle of exploitation runs steadily in more than ten craft-centres in a region sucking the poor artisans silently, while the exploiters gain and wallow in pleasure.

With its honour, rooted in dishonour, the craft has lived to entreat to the world outside with no voice of the living but with the voice of the dead that ' 'tis better to have loved and lost, Than never to have loved at all.' Still, the craft lives, as it has ever lived in the past and will ever live in future, as one 'born to blush unseen, And waste its sweetness in the desert air.' The richest gain only the traders count, but the craftsmen only 'dream everyday of the Friday market at Silda and in trembling hope repose'.

II

The present Monograph is third in the series of the Handicrafts Survey Monographs, as part of 1961 Census Programme, on twelve crafts selected for Survey, the objectives of which have been detailed out by Sri Asok Mitra, I.C.S., Registrar General, India, in his Foreword. The investigation into the present craft was conducted in different phases at different periods (April, 1965 to June, 1965 ; September, 1965 ; August, 1966 and June 1967) on detailed questionnaires and schedules, the specimen of which has been appended to the first Monograph of the present series, published on Conch Shell Products [Vol. XVI, Part VII-A(i)]. Published books and journals, group-discussions and participant observation also provided data for the present Monograph. The study was designed as a comprehensive probe into the craft and, therefore, objectivity was the guiding principle. Yet, 'to clothe each observation with plenty of authentic information', 'to provide adequate statistical support to empirical feel' and 'to invest dry bones of village statistics with flesh and blood accounts', objectivity has been tinged with subjectivity. But, the subjectivity at no cost has been divorced from reality. Omissions and mistakes, if any, are entirely because of my faults. Opinions too, here or hereinafter, are made by me in my personal capacity and they do neither represent nor reflect the policy or the views of the Government.

Dated, Calcutta,
The 15th September, 1967,
The 24th Bhadra, 1889 Sakabda.

Sukumar Sinha

AVE ATQUE VALE !

*‘O ! let my books... ...
 . . plead for love and look for recompense,
 More than that tongue that more hath more express’d.’*

The memory of the artisans, ‘the dead which are already dead’, the retired who have fallen into their anecdotage since retirement, with no urge for sweet return, and the living which are yet alive—be they non-practising craftsmen or practising artisans, whom still the most just earth brings forth from beneath the soil an easy living—I remember with ceaseless praisings which make the remembrance all the more dear. To the anonymous makers who carve out articles better than they know and to the stroke of whose axe and hammer, mild or hard, ‘conscious stone to beauty’ grow, original yet strange, frail and fragile yet past any change, I pay my silent tribute because tribute is their due, and I honour them because I owe them honour, even though little and too lately they be known in my unpolished, rugged prose. Decliner of honours and titles, these artisans of Simulpal and other craft-centres in Binpur police station of the district of Midnapore in West Bengal do neither want glory nor hope for greatness, but offer long day’s labour, sweat and toil at last to defray the cost of their living for the day dying in sleep. *Bene qui latuit bene vixit*—may be true or it may not be. But, *bene orasse est bene studuisse*. Their thoughts breed in me perpetual benediction.

The signal opportunity, kindly given to me by Sri Asok Mitra, I.C.S., Secretary to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India & *Ex-Officio* Registrar General, India, to know, to think and to write has made my indebtedness to him too great to be repaid by verbose gratitude. I look at him in wonder, awe and respect and have made a gospel of his dictum, ‘so much should have been done in so many directions by so few in so short a time with such devotion and dedication’.

The profoundest respect that I can pay to Sri J. C. Sen Gupta, I.A.S., formerly Superintendent of Census Operations, West Bengal and Sikkim and now the Secretary to the Department of Panchayats, Govt. of West Bengal, who had picked and chosen me for the Social Studies Projects of 1961 Census, will be expressed best through justice to my work, the present Monograph being only a part of it.

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Dr. B. K. Roy Burman, M. Sc. (Cal.), D. Phil. (Cal.), Officer On Special Duty (Handicrafts and Social Studies), Office of the Registrar General, India, gave me the perspective and widened the horizon of my outlook in a scientific way, so that the enquiries could be probative of an empiric study. The article on the 'Craft of the Tribal Population', included in Appendix III of the present Monograph is based on scholarship and experience and is hoped to be an invaluable contribution by Dr. Roy Burman, to whom I remain grateful for the kind help, constructive suggestions and scholarly guidance, that I always received from him.

Dr. Pradip Kumar Gangopadhyay, M. Sc. (Cal.), Ph. D. (Edin.), Assistant Professor of Geology, Presidency College, Calcutta, my batchmate and friend since the days in the same College, evinced a very keen interest in the present work. Two contributions, 'Geological Report On *Phyllites* Around Simulpal, Midnapore District, West Bengal', and 'Note On Some *Potstone* Occurrences In India', included in Appendices I and II of the present Monograph evidence but friendly help, scholarly collaboration and a labour of love. I recall with a sense of gratitude not only the services rendered with humility but also the hardship and inconveniences shared with a polite smile during his trip to Simulpal and his pedestrian visit to Sankhabhanga in disregard of any personal comfort.

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Sri Arunabha Datta, Artist-cum-Photographer, worked with an eye on perfection, knowing that the artistic mind revealed in strokes of brushes or in snap-shots of the camera, will not be allowed to be lost in the pages to follow. To him I remain grateful.

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Dated, Calcutta,
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The 24th Bhadra, 1889 Sakabda

Sukumar Sinha

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INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY OF THE CRAFT AND THE CRAFTSMEN

INTRODUCTION

*“The dusty old coolie who breaks the stone,
From morn to eve, by the way,
He always sits hammering there alone,
All dusty, the livelong day.” —Dobson*

The art of breaking the stone, which the old man practises now with the young is, in fact, the first art practised by man in his primeval effort to exist, to survive and to live.

The history of the ages gone by is marked by his fight against nature, red in tooth and claw, and by his struggle against the savage beasts, from whose level he struggled upwards. The knives and spearheads of flint were his weapons and in making the tools and weapons the early man initiated the art of hewing and shaping stones. Thus, the art of carving stone not only ushered in the dawn of human civilisation, but began the history of stone also, the craft of which has lasted down to this day.

Stone was associated with man not only in his material life to be used as a weapon against a marauder or as a fence for his hunt, but also in his religion, art and culture either as an object of worship or as a material for decoration and embellishment. The beliefs and practices of man associated with stone are as interesting as its history.

The past of stones and its association with human civilisation will be brought out in a rapid survey of the available materials collected from different sources, published and unpublished, historical and literary. Loes have also been taken into account. But, to link up the loose annals and the excavation reports and other written accounts chronologically in a systematic way is a historiographer's job. The present discussion will touch the landmarks of history in the remote past from the point of use of stones. The attempt will be rather sketchy and not truly scientific in matters of historicity.

HISTORICAL AND LITERARY REFERENCES

PREHISTORIC AND PROTOHISTORIC INDIA

The prehistory of man is replete with tools of stone found in different parts of India. Antiquity of stonewares in the neolithic context remained largely unknown. Neolithic industries of stone axes, chisels, scrapers, pounders, potters' dabbers have been found in many sites in Eastern India.

Sankalia¹ has referred to various tool assemblage or industries in different tracts in this subcontinent.

1. Prehistory and Protohistory of India and Pakistan by H. D. Sankalia, 1962.

Jar-stands

No. 33 (vs-2939) is an alabaster jar-stand, that was broken into two pieces. Nos. 34 and 35 (DK-2798) are shallow dishes of alabaster. Both were badly broken, but enough remained of each to draw them.

Grinders

The interior of the dishes appear to have been hollowed out by means of a hard stone grinder, such as that illustrated in PL.-CXXX, 35. At first sight this grinder appears to be a kind of battle axe, but one side is slightly concave and the other convex, and the two edge-like ends are rounded. A forked stick was probably used to grip this tool, which was rotated by means of another stick at right angles at its upper end.

Stone boxes

Plate CXXXI, 36 and 37. The first (vs-2881) of the two vessels, illustrated in PL.-CXXXI, 36 and 37 is a badly carved box with undecorated sides.

Palettes¹²

Stone palettes of good workmanship are not often found at Mohenjodaro. Four examples in slate of especial interest are described by Marshall.

Dish borer¹³

This is the only stone drill (vs-256) that has been found at Mohenjodaro. From its shape it appears to have been used to fashion the interiors of stone bowls and dishes. The implements are made out of a hard, greyish black stone, resembling a fine-grained basalt.

Stone marbles¹⁴

A number of small balls (HR-337) were made of agate, slate, veined onyx, and some kind of red and white breccia.

Further excavations in Mohenjodaro brought into limelight many other objects of household

12. *Ibid.* p. 457
13. *Ibid.* p. 459
14. *Ibid.* p. 553

use, referred to by Mackay.¹⁵ They include cups, jar-cover, jar-lid, vessel of limestone, jar of alabaster, shallow dish, shallow bowl, feeding cup, toilet-stand, mortar sets.¹⁶

HISTORIC

VEDIC PERIOD

In the early era of the Aryan civilisation in India marked by the age of the *RgVedas* when the saints in their pastoral abodes worshipped the deities of Nature with various offerings, *Śoma*-juice, extracted by stone-pressers, held an important place in their life.

RgVeda I.XV.7 refers to *Śoma*-pressers being used to bruise *Śoma* plants.¹⁷

Again, it is mentioned that the *Śoma* plants were crushed with mortar of stone.¹⁸

Śoma-juice was extracted from the plant by the crushing of the plant with mortar and pestle.¹⁹

That mill-stones were used in crushing and grinding grains for household use finds frequent mention in the *Atharva Veda*.²⁰

The destruction of worms by the mill-stone of *Indra* is compared with the crushing of *Khalva* grains with a mill-stone.²¹

LATER VEDIC PERIOD

Metallic utensils, earthen wares and stone vessels find frequent mention in the *Sūtras*. The common man generally depended upon earthen wares, wooden wares and stone vessels.²² Though the *Sūtras* do not yield much information about worker in stone, they often refer to mortar and pestle, mill-stone and vessels of stone.

15. Further Excavation at Mohenjodaro by E. J. Mackay
16. *Ibid.* p. 320-324
17. The Hymns of the *RgVeda* by R. T. H. Griffith, 1905
18. *RgVeda* I.XXVII.1
19. *RgVeda* I.XXVIII.2
20. *Atharva Veda Samhita* by W. D. Whitney, 1905
21. *Ibid.* II.5.31.1 and V.V.23.8
22. *India of Vedic Kalpasutra* by Ram Gopal, 1959, p. 164.

The *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra* forbids a Brahman to trade in stone and it shows that some people were then engaged in trade of stone.²³ In the *Rāmāyāna* one finds reference to drinking cups of crystal.²⁴

In the Vedic period one also gets references of a class of stone-carver, known as *Prakaritṛ* and carvers as *Peśitṛ*.²⁵

A legend associated with the alms-bowl of Gautama Buddha is referred to by Hardy.²⁶ It is said that the alms-bowl given by *Mahā Brahmā* having vanished (about the time that Gautama became Buddha), each of the four guardian deities brought him an alms-bowl of emerald, but he did not accept them. They then brought four bowls, made of stone, of the colour of mung fruit; and when each entreated that his own bowl might be accepted, Buddha caused them to appear as if to form into a single bowl, appearing at the upper rim, as if placed one within the other.²⁷

MAURYAN PERIOD

That the craft of stoneware production existed in the time of the Mauryas is referred to in the *Arthāśāstra* by Kautilya. The Superintendent of Mines was entrusted with administration of mines which yield such minerals as are made use of in preparing vessels (*Bhāṇḍa*) and was known as *Ākarādhyakṣaḥ*. The Superintendent of Metals (*Lohādhyakṣaḥ*) saw to the manufacture of various commodities including *Bhāṇḍa* from the minerals excavated.²⁸

POST MAURYAN PERIOD

Fa-Hien in course of his travel observed

23. *Ibid.* p. 138
24. *Ramayana* by Narendra Chandra Vedanta Tirtha, Vol. V, No. II, XV. 47.
25. *Economic Life and Progress in Ancient India* by Narayan Chandra Banerjee, 1945, p. 164.
26. *Manual of Buddhism* by Spence Hardy
27. *Ibid.* p. 183
28. *Kautilya's Arthashastra* by Dr. R. Shamasastri, p. 86

in the great quinquennial assembly or *Pancha-parishad* a spittoon, which belonged to Buddha, made of stone and in colour like his alms-bowl.²⁹ Fa-Hien also observed Buddha's alms-bowl of stone in Purusapura.³⁰

That stone utensils were used even in the Moghul period is mentioned by Abul Fazal while describing the imperial kitchen, where victuals were served in dishes of gold and silver, stone and earthen-ware (Ain. 23).³¹

EXCAVATION REPORTS

The excavation reports support the use of stone utensils in ancient India. Stone balls and other finds, reported to have belonged to chalcolithic period, are found at Nagda in the district of Ujjain.³²

³³Highly polished stone discs were also found in the same site along with stone pestles and mortars, reported to have belonged to the 2nd Century B. C.

At Nevasa in the district of Ahmadnagar objects of material culture including beads of stones, four legged querns and millers of stone, reported to have belonged to early historic or Satavahana period, were excavated.³⁴

Excavation at Pataliputra found stone vessels (Circa 600 B.C.-150 B.C.).³⁵

Steatite bowls were found at Lothal in the district of Ahmedabad.³⁶

Grinding stone, pestle and mortar (prior to the 2nd Century B.C.) were found at Ujjain.³⁷

29. A Record of Buddhist Kingdom being an Account of the Chinese Monk Fa-Hien of His Travel through India and Ceylon (A.D.399-414) in Search of Buddhist Monk of Discipline by James Legge, 1886, p. 23.
30. *Ibid.* p. 35
31. *Ain-I-Akbari*, by H. Blockman, p. 60
32. *Indian Archaeology*, 1955-56, p. 14
33. *Ibid.* p. 10
34. *Ibid.* p. 8
35. *Ibid.* p. 22
36. *Indian Archaeology*, 1954-55, p. 12
37. *Indian Archaeology*, 1956-57, p. 27

STONEWARES

Glazed stonewares with floral designs, found at Andhra Pradesh, are presumed to be the objects of the Moghul Period.³⁸

Objects of stone including rings, mace heads, saddle querns, hammer stone, round balls were found in Madhya Pradesh.³⁹

All these evidences prove that articles of stone were used in different periods of history in India.

BELIEFS AND PRACTICES CONNECTED WITH STONE-UTENSILS

Widows in West Bengal use stone-utensils in preparation of food and also in its service. Stone-utensils are also used in temples in the worship of deities to contain offerings of fruits and flowers.

The precise *Sāstric* injunctions are hard to find. But, some texts confer sanctity on the articles of stone by certain prescriptions.

Stone-utensils have the same status as those of metals.⁴⁰ The stone-utensils should be cleaned in the same way as the metallic ones.⁴¹ Articles of stone should be purified by burying them underground for seven nights.⁴² Objects, made of stone, or sacrificial vessels and ladles should be purified by water.⁴³ But, some sages ordain that objects, made of stone, are to be cleansed with ashes, earth and water,⁴⁴ though it is accepted that articles of stone become pure with water alone.⁴⁵ Besides these scriptural sanctions it is believed that an article of stone, even if broken partially from the centre, may be

used in *Pitṛkarma* (oblations to the deceased).⁴⁶ According to popular custom stone-utensils may be used in taking vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes. The effect of taking vegetarian dishes will be that of non-vegetarian items and if non-vegetarian items are taken on the same utensils, the eater will earn the virtue of self-purification by the process of fasting.

During marriage ceremonies the bride is made to stand on a stone, which is sacred. According to Vedic ritual, rice, which is put in the basket, is taken up and the stone is placed before the bride, who treads upon it over the point of her right foot, while the groom recites the prayer,⁴⁷ "Ascend the stone, be firm like the stone, distress my foes and be not subservient to my enemies." This practice is known as *Āsmārohaṇa*.⁴⁸ This practice (*Śilākramaṇa*)⁴⁹ is still observed by Bengali Hindus in their marriage ceremonies.

On the same principle a Brahman boy at initiation is made to stand on the right foot on a stone, while the words are repeated, "Tread on this stone, like a stone be firm."⁵⁰

In the *Puṇṣavana* ceremony a sheath of a fresh *Vātā* bud is pounded with a piece of stone by a *Brahmacārī*.⁵¹

The beliefs and practices are many, as shown in the preceding discussion.

MYTH, LEGEND AND HISTORY OF THE CRAFTSMEN COMMUNITY

Stoneware-making is an ancient craft in India, as evidenced from the stray historical materials. In the district of Midnapore in West Bengal, in Chotonagpur in Bihar and in Orissa, where suitable rocks are available for mining,

Where the civilisation dawns

Archaeologist's spade unearthed stone-tools of the protohistoric period at Deulpota in 24-Parganas and preserved them in the Archaeological Gallery of the Government of West Bengal



Not a dust-heap, called history
—relics are faithful witnesses

Excavation at Rajbadidanga in Murshidabad district by Dr. S. R. Das of the University of Calcutta recovered the decorated plate of slate-stone, adorned with floral design of lotus

38. *Ibid.* p. 83

39. *Indian Archaeology*, 1957-58, p. 32

40. *Gautama Dharmasutra*, 1. 29

41. *Baudhayana Dharmasutra*, 1.8.39

42. *Visnu Smṛti*, 23.3

43. *Ibid.* 23.8

44. *Manu Smṛti*, 5.111

45. *Ibid.* 5.112 and *Yajñavalkya Smṛti*, 1.182

46. *Institute of the Hindu Religion* by Raghunandan, Vol. I.

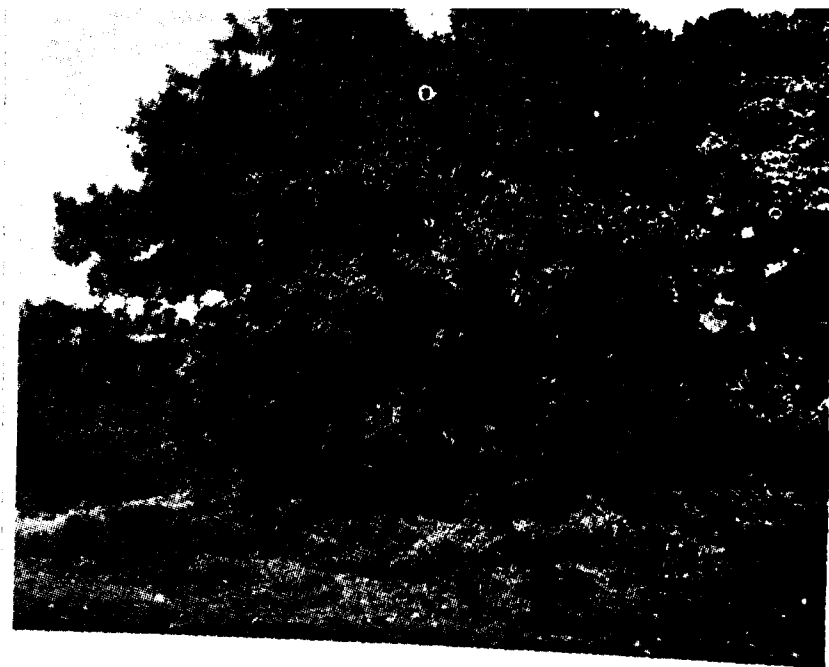
47. *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* by James Hasting, Vol. II, p. 71-76.

48. *Gobhila Grihya Sutra*, II, 2.1-4

49. *History of Bengal* by R. C. Mazumdar, Vol. I, p. 604

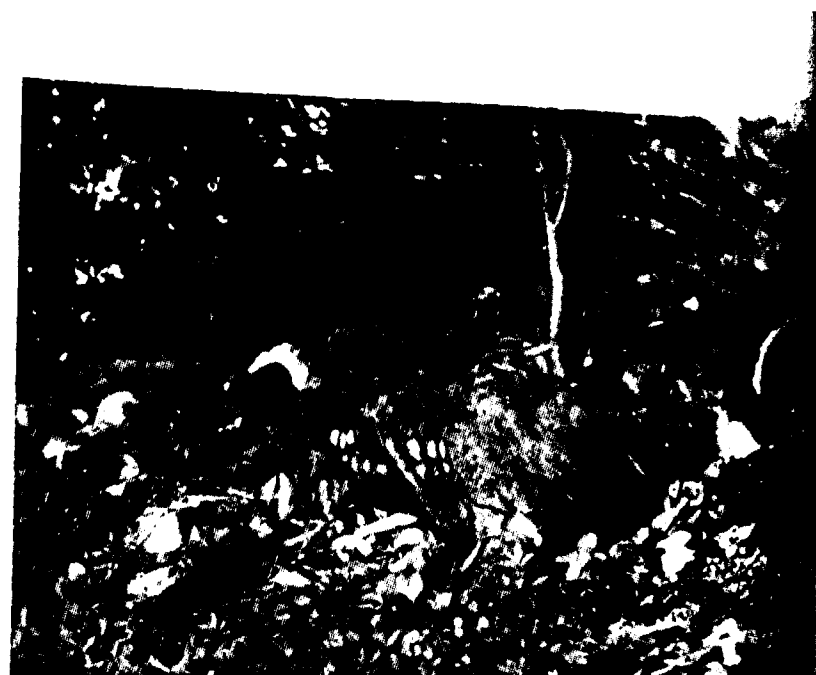
50. *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* by James Hasting, II, p. 71-76.

51. *History of Bengal* by R. C. Mazumdar, Vol. I, p. 595



They turn to this god to praise and pray

Under the shade of a banyan tree is the abode of *Dhabal Pat* or *Siva*, the god of the practising stone-carvers of Simulpal in Midnapore district



God that rules the craft
A close-up view of the phallic deity of *Siva* or *Dhabal Pat*, represented by three stones

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY OF THE CRAFT AND THE CRAFTSMEN

the craft is very old, though exact support of antiquarian testimony is lacking.

At Simulpal in the police station of Binpur in the district of Midnapore the Kargas, the Bhumij and the Karmakars have been associated with the craft of stoneware production for a very long time.

The Kargas, predominant in number, are the dominant community, engaged in the craft in the production-centre of study.

Risley describes the Karangas, Kargas, Korangas, as "a small Dravidian Caste of Western Bengal, who make baskets, dig tanks, and work as carpenters. Their special business is the making of cart wheels and wooden articles, such as *pailas* or *seers* of standard measure. In Singhbhum they are also stone-cutters."⁵²

In the Backward Class Commission Report (Vol-II), 1955, the occupation of the Korangas has been stated as carpentry in the State of Bihar.

No authentic information is available from the members of the Karga community or from any historical document or record about the history of their migration to West Bengal. ⁵³Mitra suggests that they probably migrated to Bengal from South India by sea long ago. The craftsmen claim to have belonged to Manbhum. Easy availability of raw material and water and also cheap land attracted their ancestors to this place for settlement.

The name Bhumij means the 'children of the soil'. It is an aboriginal community in Western part of Bengal, predominant in Midnapore district.

⁵⁴Risley refers to the Bhumij as "a non-Aryan tribe of Manbhum, Singhbhum and Western Bengal".

52. Tribes and Castes of Bengal by H. H. Risley, 1891, Vol.I, p. 426.

53. The Tribes and Castes of West Bengal by A. Mitra, I.C.S., 1951, p. 301.

54. *Ibid.* p. 248

The Bhumij of the craft-centre under study fail to cite any myth or legend of the origin of their own community.

Mitra has also pointed out that the Bhumij were probably the "Vajra Bhumi" (the terrible indigenes) who are described as abusing, beating, shooting arrows at the baiting with dogs, the great saint Vira, the twentyfourth Jina or Tirthankara of the Jains.⁵⁵ The history of their settlement in Simulpal is unknown.

Lastly come the artisans belonging to the Karmakar community. Popularly the Karmakars are blacksmiths. *Kāmāra* or *Karmakār*, probably meant originally an artisan, generally and only later came to denote a blacksmith. The word *Karmakāra* is a created Sanskrit form of the Bengali *Kāmār*.⁵⁶ According to *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa* this caste is born of an illicit intercourse between *Viśvakarmā*, the Celestial Architect, and a Sudra maiden *Ghṛtāci*, a Celestial Nymph, who was born as a Gopa girl by *Indra's* curse.⁵⁷ The Karmakars of Simulpal endorse this legend of origin.

MAGICAL AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Lord *Viśvakarmā*, the Celestial Artificer or Engineer God, and Lord *Śiva* (of the Holy Trinity of the Hindu pantheon) are the gods, who are worshipped among other deities by the craftsmen. Though *Viśvakarmā* is regarded as the God of any craft, his devotees are drawn from the Kargas and the Karmakars only. Lord *Śiva* is worshipped by all.

The Karga artisans worship *Viśvakarmā* on the last day of *Bhadra* (August-September). No image is worshipped. The tools and implements of the Kargas are worshipped in the name of the deity, in the belief that the abode of Lord *Viśvakarmā* is in their tools.

55. *Ibid.* p. 219

56. *Ibid.* p. 329

57. *Ibid.* p. 51

STONEWARES

Viśvakarmā Pūjā or the worship of *Viśvakarmā* is held in the open compound of the house of a Karga master-craftsman on a community basis.

Early in the morning the artisans wash their tools and implements and keep them at the place of worship. A priest, a Brahman by caste with the title of Chakravorty and the resident of a neighbouring village, comes to perform the *Pūjā*, uttering incantations and hymns in Bengali. The devotees offer fruits, sweets, honey, milk and sun-dried rice individually. The priest takes away the offered rice after the ceremony. He also gets a remuneration of 0.50 paise to 0.75 paise. The Karga craftsmen stop their work this day and on the day following. Only the practising craftsmen of the Karga community participate in this worship. Other communities hold aloof.

The Bhumij craftsmen do not worship Lord *Viśvakarmā* and it is not known why they do not. They do neither secede from their work on this day.

The Karmakar craftsmen worship Lord *Viśvakarmā* on the last day of *Bhadra*. They hold the worship in their own households individually. No image is worshipped nor is any Brahman priest called in. The tools and implements of the craft are worshipped in the name of the God *Viśvakarmā*, who is supposed to be their tutelary deity. The seniormost member of the household performs the functions of the priest with offerings of sweets, fruits, honey and milk. Work is stopped for the day and the day next.

Lord *Śiva*, represented by three stones under an old banyan tree, is worshipped on the last day of the month of *Chaitra* (March-April). The stones looked white long ago, but now they look black, because of being weather-beaten. They are known as *Dhabal Pāt*, symbolizing Lord *Śiva*. As the craftsmen are stone-workers, they feel that they are under an obligation to

worship the deity. Needless to point out, Lord *Śiva* is worshipped by all the practising craftsmen, irrespective of their community. The deity was installed by an unknown Bhumij long ago. The worship is held on a community basis, when three seniormost craftsmen, two from the Bhumij and one from the Kargas, perform the functions of the priest voluntarily without any remuneration. The Karmakars acquiesce in the arrangement and do not nominate their person separately as a priest.

On the day of the worship goats are sacrificed near the altar of the deity and offerings of fruits and flowers are given to the deity by the priest. The craftsmen, belonging to all communities, participate in the worship. Nobody does any work, connected with the craft, on the day of worship and on the day following.

The Karga practising artisan families subscribe Rs. 2.50 paise each for the community festival of *Viśvakarmā*, which they hold separately. There is no question of subscription being raised from other communities, which do not join in their festival.

In the worship of *Śiva* the rate of subscription is fixed at Rs. 2.50 paise per practising artisan household. No subscription is raised from the non-practising artisan households or from other communities in the village.

While in the worship of *Viśvakarmā* the Kargas take the initiative, as because the festival is theirs, both from the points of organisation and participation, the Bhumij take leadership in organising the worship of *Śiva*. But, it is not suggested that enthusiasm is less marked among the Kargas and the Karmakars in the festival of *Śiva*.

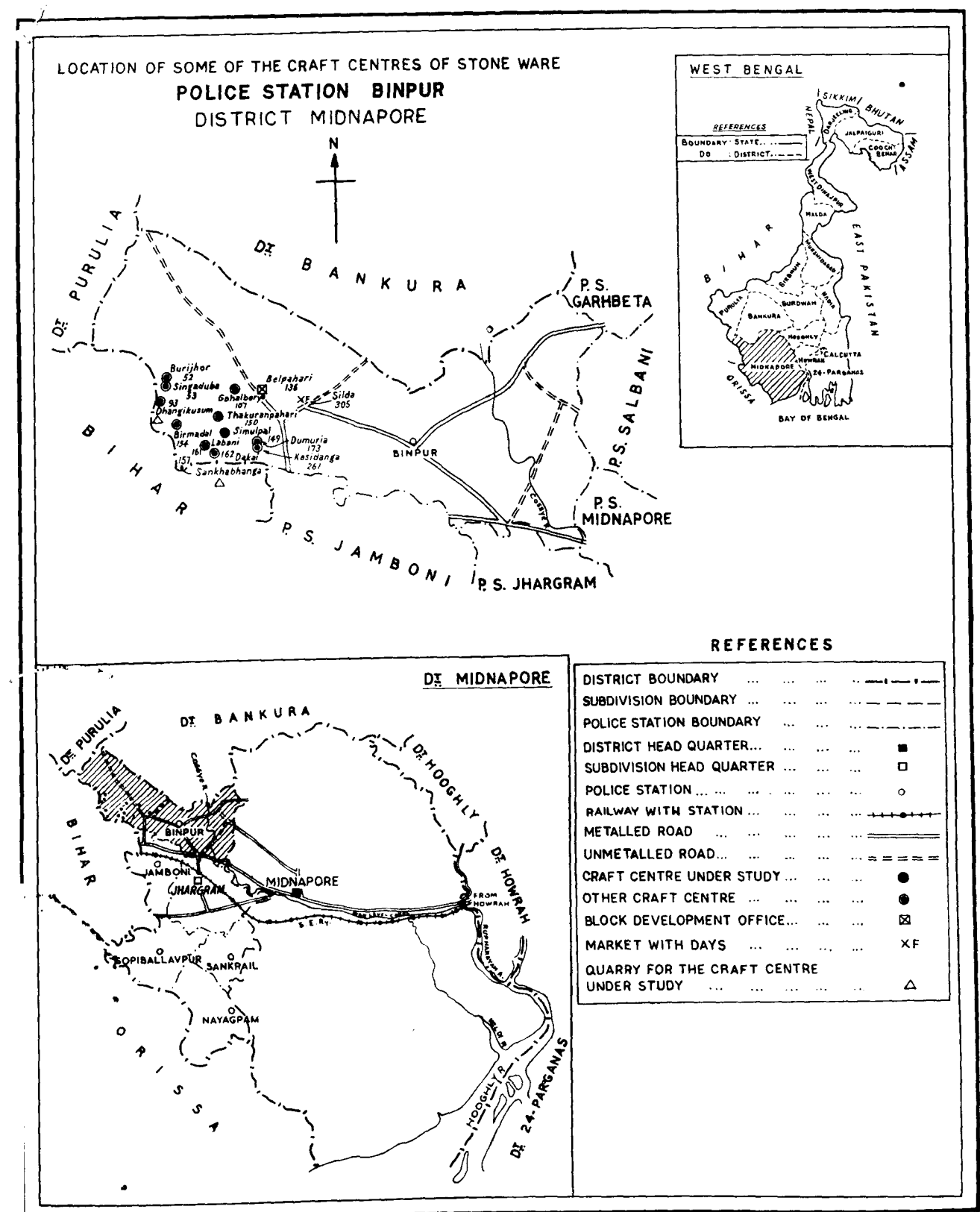
The two old festivals are the only means of establishing a rapport with the two deities, one holding sway over tools and equipments and another having his domain over the raw material, on which the craftsmen work.

2

THE CRAFT, THE CRAFT-CENTRE AND THE CRAFTSMEN

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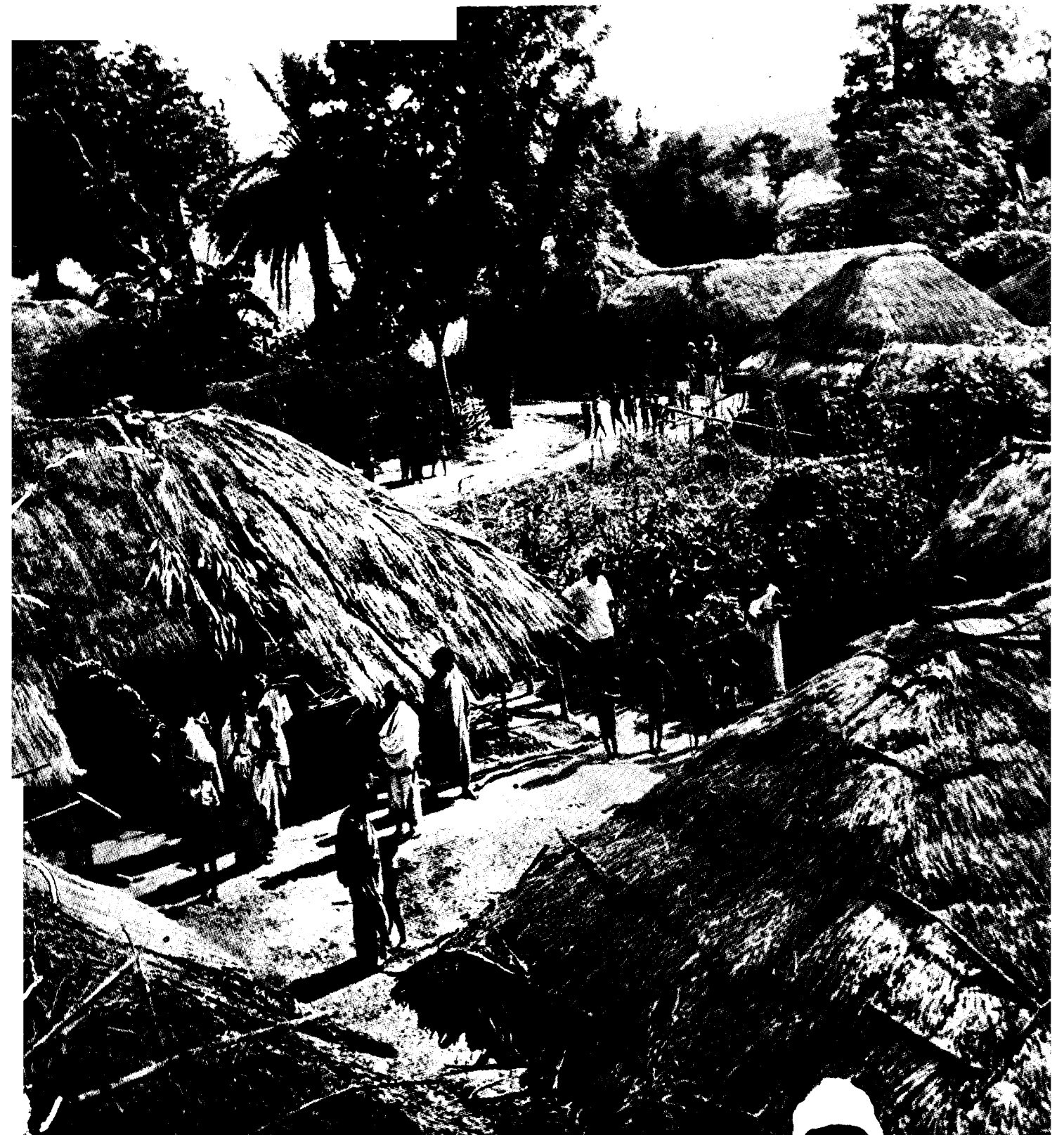
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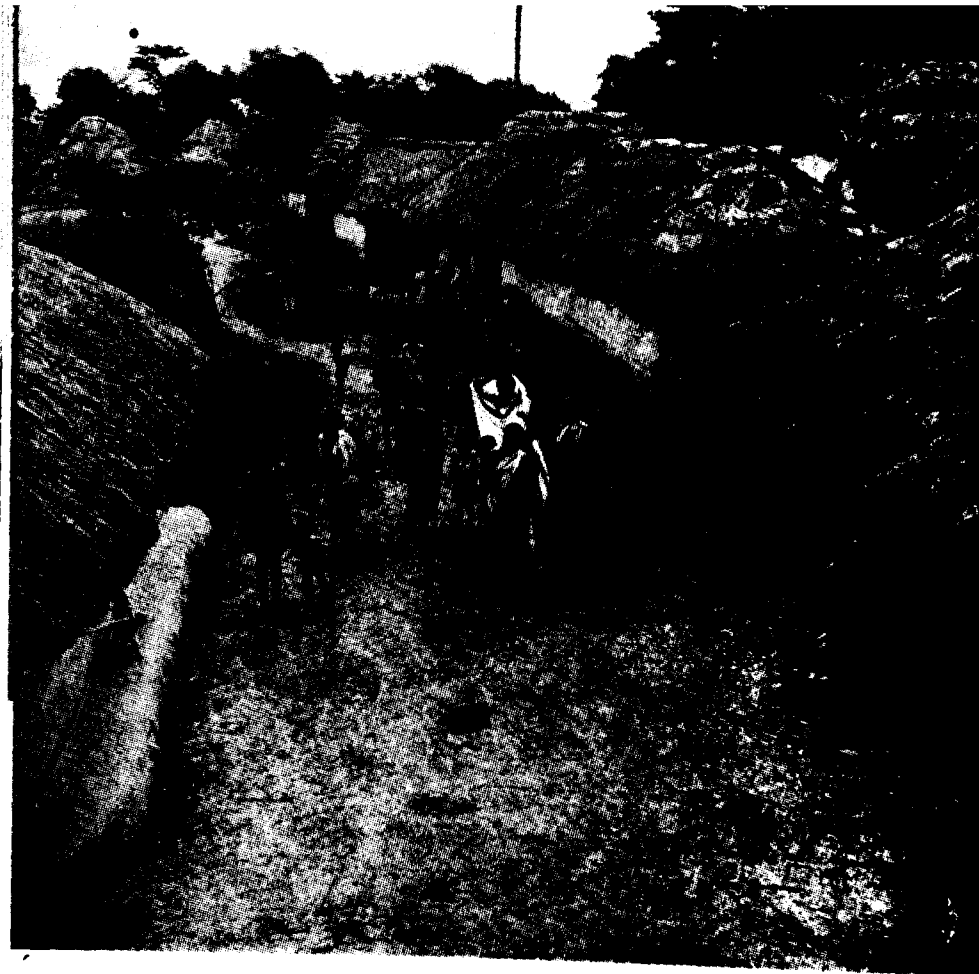
On the lonesome path
the stone-carvers' villi

Approach-road is a *Kute*
country-path that leads th. wa
to Simulpal, the village of
stone-carvers



In the heart of Simulpal

Cluster of huts in *Karg'pan*
Simulpal, where the *Karg'pan*
one of the practising craft-
communities, reside and pur
the ch



Inside of Simulpal presents the residential pattern

A linear residential settlement of the huts of the Karga artisans along the village-alley

With the contentment of a potentate

Hut of a poor Bhumij artisan with roof, badly in need of thatching afresh, and with walls of mud—the person seated on the *Charpoy* is not the owner but a chance visitor, interested in being photographed



Alma mater of the villagers
Children at play during recess in the compound of their Primary School at Simulpal



Indicator of rural prosperity

The two-storeyed straw-roofed and mud-walled hut of a well-to-do Karga artisan is an exception to the general run—the artisan's wife and daughter are amused spectators



Man doth not live by bread only

The foot of a *Sal* tree marks the abode of the village-deity *Garam*, symbolised by terracotta horses and elephants

One of the "few whom genius gave to shine"

The youth, "to fortune and fame unknown", is a master-craftsman, also the Secretary of the Co-operative Society of the artisans



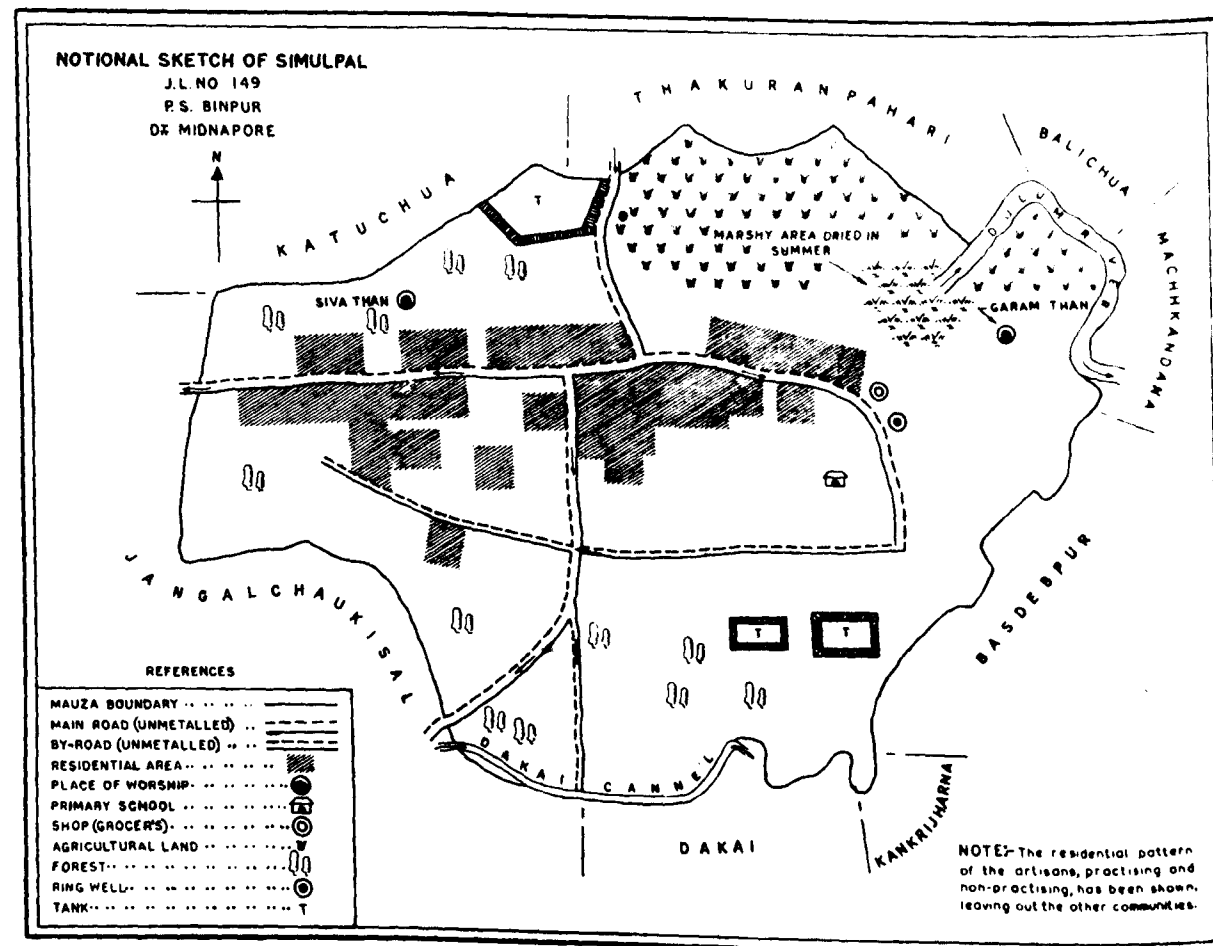
To make the bread
Village-grocery is only shop of its kind to meet the daily needs of the consumers of Simulpai



Women, who grant respite to husbands

Housewives in the artisan families are craftsmen too

THE CRAFT, THE CRAFT-CENTRE AND THE CRAFTSMEN



INTRODUCING THE CRAFT-CENTRE AND THE CRAFT

Midnapore is one of the districts in West Bengal, where the craft of stonewares' production has been pursued for quite a long time. It will be evident from the Director's Report in Memoir I (1859, p.278) of the Geological Survey of India that the craft existed in the western tracts of Midnapore more than hundred years back from now. In Silda Pargana of Jhargram subdivision this craft is practised in many households from days of yore. The principal seat of this craft is at Simulpal, a village within the jurisdiction of Binpur police station in the district of Midnapore. The stonewares, manufactured in this place, are household articles of utilitarian value. The places of production elsewhere in the same police station have been discussed in the last chapter.

TOPOGRAPHY

The area around Simulpal is covered by hillocks and jungles and it resembles in its physical features and climate the Chotanagpur plateau. The village being situated at the western frontier tract of West Bengal, the neighbouring district of Singhbhum in the State of Bihar has influenced the socio-economic life of the local people in many aspects.

The rivulet known as Dakai flows at the southern fringe of the village and the river Dulum

flows past its eastern side. The rivulet has sprung from Jungleshal to the western side of the village and after flowing through different areas have fallen at Dulum river, which on the other hand rises in the hills in the north-west corner of the district of Midnapore and falls into the Subarnarekha, a little south of Gopiballavpur. That portion of the river which flows by the village remains dry during most part of the year.

Simulpal, the venue of the present study being situated in the extreme interior of the district, is not easily accessible. The nearest tarmacadamed road may be availed of at Belpahari, six miles to the east of this village which is connected to that road by an unmetalled *Kutch* pathway, strewn with small pebbles and stone-chips. This solitary pathway, winding round villages on the way and undulating through the hills, dales and forests, leads to Belpahari.

LOCATION

Six miles to the west of Belpahari which is the headquarters of Binpur II National Extension Service Block and 12 miles further to the west of Binpur police station, Simulpal is an unostentatious village. The location map on page 16 will enable the readers to make an idea of the places of administrative and commercial importance. The nearest Post

STONEWARES

Office is located at Thakuranpahari, a village within a stone's throw from Simulpal. Midnapore, the district headquarters is 56 miles away and Jhargram the subdivisional headquarters is located at a distance of 31 miles. The nearest Railway Station is at Gidni in Bihar, a place situated 22 miles off this village.

The Offices of the Agricultural Marketing Officer and of the Assistant Registrar of Co-operative Societies, the Subdivisional Court are all situated at Jhargram. The main marketing centre of the craftsmen is at Silda. The weekly *Hat* (country-market) sits at Belpahari every Friday. Though the villagers visit the *Hat* for the purchase of their daily necessities of life generally, the artisans prefer the weekly *Hat* at Silda on account of the fact that the artisans dispose of their finished products there, where the main selling centre of their products is also located. A grocery is the only shop worth of its name in the village.

REASONS FOR SELECTION

This particular production-centre produces varieties of articles. It has also an organised Co-operative Society of the craftsmen of the neighbourhood. The number of artisans here is quite large in comparison with other craft-centres of the region. The artisans come from different ethnic groups. Besides, Simulpal is famous for stonewares, manufactured traditionally by the different craftsmen of this area.

All these characteristics of the place weighed in favour of its being selected for an intensive study on the craft and on the people engaged therein.

SIZE AND POPULATION

Simulpal covers an area of 598.64 acres according to 1951 Census. There were 128 households comprising 687 persons. According to 1961 Census there are 143 households consisting of 796 persons including 365 males and 431 females.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The village Simulpal is bound on the north by the villages Thakuranpahari, Balichua and Katachua, on the east by the village Basudebpur and by the river Dulum. On the west it is bounded by jungle Choukishan, a dense forest of *Sal* trees. The rivulet Dakai flows by the northern fringe of the village.

The soil of this area is mostly lateritic and podsolic. It is arid and a considerable part of the area is unproductive and uninhabited. The surface consists of alternate ridges and depressions. Due to rocky nature, the soil is quite hard. The weathering process is still in work in many cases of high lands. Vast waste lands are found in different parts of this locality.

The land is undulated and has a sloping tendency towards the east. The major part of the area is high land or *Danga* land, best suited for the cultivation of only *Aman* paddy. Water-soaking capacity of the land is substantial. The terrain is hilly and the soil is an admixture of gravel and sand. In this area quartzite, gneiss and phyllites, scattered here and there may occasionally be seen.

CLIMATE

The climate of this area is of extreme nature. From the beginning of the month of February to the end of June summer prevails. The period from July onwards to September is marked by rainy season and winter lasts from October to the end of February.

During summer mercury rises to 112°F and the rains are intensive only in July. The annual rainfall of this area varies between 50"-60" on an average. But, it is not the standard figure, because the amount of rainfall is not always fixed every year.

FLORA AND FAUNA

Sal and *Simul* (Silk-cotton) are the most important trees of the area. Tamarind, margosa and *Mahua* trees are also seen in plenty.

Moreover, there are trees like mango, jack-fruit, *Kend*, which abound in some parts of this village.

In the jungle rabbits, bears, panthers and wild fowls are found. In the village proper one may come across jackals and snakes. The birds are of the common variety. Herons, *Chandana*, pigeons and *Chari Bonoi* are some of them.

SOURCES OF WATER

In spite of its rocky nature the village does not suffer from scarcity of water. The river Dulum provides water to the villagers. Besides, there are four big tanks and two public ringwells within this village. The well-to-do households have ringwells in their houses also. There is no tubewell anywhere in the village.

The villagers in general and the artisans in particular use the tanks and the rivulet mainly for bathing and washing. The ringwells are used for drinking purpose. The river Dulum runs dry during most part of the year and is seldom used by the villagers.

WELFARE INSTITUTIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE CENTRES

In Simulpal there is a Primary School, where there are facilities for free primary education to the children upto Class IV. It was established in 1947 on a plot of land donated by a villager. There are at present 95 students and two teachers. It is run by the Midnapore District School Board. The nearest Higher Secondary School is located at Belpahari, where education is given on a co-educational basis. There is also a Girls' School at Belpahari, where girls attend the School upto Class VIII.

The nearest Health Centre is located at Belpahari. The villagers as well as the craftsmen of Simulpal visit the Centre for treatment of their diseases. In the village proper there is a Charitable Dispensary owned by a Homeopathic practitioner who holds a diploma. The Office of the Simulpal *Archal Panchayat* is

located at Simulpal. A Co-operative Society of the stone-carvers is situated in this village.

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION

A solitary mud road, covered with pebbles, is the only link with outside world. The interior of the village is served by a *Kutch* road and by narrow lanes and by-lanes.

The *Kutch* road in the village is used by bullock carts and cycles and occasionally by lorries or jeeps. Cycles are used as means of transport by the male members belonging to the well-to-do families and by some school-going children for their journey to Belpahari. Buses do not ply along this road. The existing facilities for communication cannot be considered adequate.

PUBLIC PLACES

PUBLIC PLACE OF COMMUNITY WORSHIP

The villagers including the craftsmen worship the village deity *Garām* every year at the eastern corner of the village. *Garām* is not represented by any image but symbolised by terracotta horses and elephants. The place of worship is situated under a *Sal* tree.

There is another public place of community worship, situated in the northern corner of the village, where the practising artisans worship the deity *Śiva* or *Dhabal Pāt* every year. The deity is represented by black stones under a banyan tree.

The artisans belonging to the Karga caste hold a community worship of *Viśvakarmā*, the Celestial Architect, every year at a place, located in the compound of one master craftsman, who is incidentally the Secretary of the Co-operative Society.

PUBLIC PLACE OF RECREATION

The artisans get together and sing devotional

songs in the house of the Secretary of the Co-operative Society.

In fact, there is no recognised place of recreation, which may strictly be regarded as a public one.

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The practising artisans belong to three distinct ethnic groups, namely Karga or Karenga, Bhumij and Karmakar. Karenga or Koranga is a Scheduled Caste in West Bengal except in the Purulia district and in the territories transferred from the Purnea district of Bihar.

Risley¹ has noted the titles of *Bishoi*, *Dalui*, *Kaur* and *Khan* among the Karangas. He also mentions four subcastes among them, e.g., *Dhalua*, *Malua*, *Sikharia* and *Tunga*. The two sections in the same community are said to be *Salmach* and *Kachchap*.

The Kargas of the present village return *Mistri* as their title. Their original home is said to be in Manbhum (now known as Purulia district of West Bengal) district. They belong to *Sal Gotra* (presumably *Salmach*). The traditional occupation of the community is said to be either carpentry or stone-carving. The occupation of the Kargas has been more or less influenced by environmental factors and the resources of nature, available locally. In the forest-areas they have turned carpenters, whereas in hilly terrains they have specialised in stone-carving. Here, at Simulpal, all the households except one are stone-cutters, who have been pursuing their traditional occupation althrough. The household, deviating from the traditional occupation, is now a carpenter, turning out wooden articles, the most important of which are measures of weight like *Kuni* (one fourth measure of a *Seer*) and *Pai* (equivalent to the measure of a *Seer*). The wooden articles of weight resemble the *Pailas*, mentioned by Risley. This carpenter household, again, was a stone-carver a year ago.

1. Tribes and Castes of Bengal, H. H. Risley, 1891, Vol. II, p. 71 (Ethnographic Glossary)

It has been observed that the relatives of the Kargas of this village, staying in the surrounding villages or in the neighbouring district of Singhbhum, also are either stone-cutters or carpenters. The changes in occupation are very rare and even when there is any, it is from stone-cutting to wood-carving or *vice versa*.

The Kargas return them as both Karga and Karanga. In their view the two names denote the same caste. They return themselves likewise to outsiders as among themselves. Other communities of the village and outsiders as well as the local officials of administration, such as the Block Development Officer, have known the community in the same name. For purposes of certain privileges extended to the members of the Scheduled Castes by the Government of West Bengal the Kargas or Karangas of this village have been identified by the local administration with the Karengas and granted all facilities as are admissible under the rules of the Government (stipends for students in High Schools).

Apart from the identity established by the villagers and the administration between Kargas and Karangas, Risley has mentioned the two as synonyms of the same community, Koranga. If that be so, there is little doubt that Kargas of the village are none else but Karengas, as in the List of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in West Bengal, modified by President's Order in 1956, where the Karengas have been shown as a synonym of Koranga.

The Bhumij are members of the Scheduled Tribe throughout the State of West Bengal except in the territories transferred from the Purnea district of Bihar, where they belong to the Scheduled Caste. All the practising artisans do not live clustered in a locality of their own, but they live in different parts of the village along with the members of other communities, the names of which are given below :

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 1 Santal | A Scheduled Tribe throughout West Bengal |
| 2 Munda | Do |

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 3 Napit | |
| 4 Bairagi | |
| 5 Sutradhar | |
| 6 Teli (Ekadasi) | |
| 7 Mahisya | |
| 8 Mahato | |
| 9 Kheria | A Scheduled Tribe throughout West Bengal |

The Santals, Mundas, Kherias and the Bhumij live in different corners of the village, whereas the persons of other communities live in the central part. The village is divided into eight *Paras* or localities :

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 Kargapara | 5 Vaishnabpara or Bairagipara |
| 2 Karmakarpara | 6 Santalpara |
| 3 Bhumijpara | 7 Mahatopara |
| 4 Napitpara | 8 Kheriapara |

The names of the localities point out clearly that considerations of occupation have not shaped the residential pattern of the households.

SETTLEMENT PATTERN OF THE PRACTISING CRAFTSMEN

The practising artisan households are distributed in different parts of the village not entirely on occupational considerations but also on caste considerations. The settlement is, therefore, guided by both the considerations. The practising artisan households live in separate localities, namely *Kargapara*, *Bhumijpara* and *Karmakarpara*. *Kargapara* is inhabited by 19 Karga families and one Bhumij household. Five households live in *Bhumijpara* and all of them belong to the Bhumij community. The remaining four artisan households consisting of two Karga and two Karmakar families reside at *Karmakarpara*. It is, therefore, evident that all the Karga and Bhumij artisan families do not live together at one place. In the case of the two Karmakar artisan households this question does not arise, because they live in their own locality.

To go to the houses of the practising artisans at Simulpal one will have to walk along the approach road from Thakuranpahari, a village

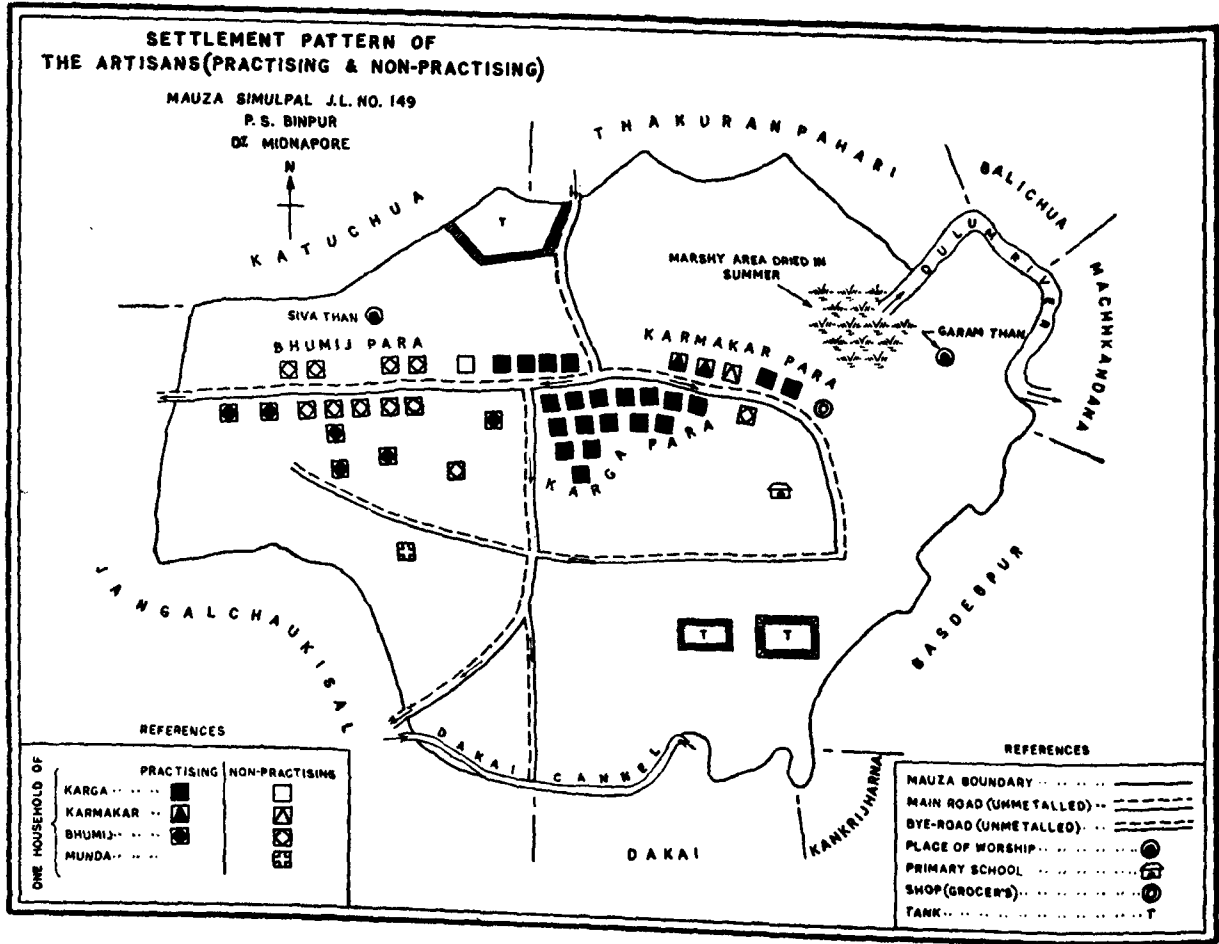
located at the northern side of Simulpal. This road is met by the village-path running in the east-west direction of Simulpal. Some of the artisan households are located on both sides of the road. The approach road then turns southward. On the left side of this road live a couple of artisan households and on its right side a solitary artisan household resides. On the other hand, if anybody proceeds along the village-road from its junction in the eastern direction, some more artisan households will be found scattered here and there. These households are, in fact, isolated from one another. Some more isolated craftsmen households live on the left side of the village-road running in the western direction of the village.

RESIDENTIAL PATTERN OF THE CRAFTSMEN

It has already been stated that all the practising artisan households reside in three separate but distinct localities, each of which is situated at some distance from one another. The residential pattern of the craftsmen living at *Kargapara* shows a linear form of settlement. The artisan households residing both at *Bhumijpara* and *Karmakarpara* show an isolated pattern of settlement.

The *Kutcha* houses of all the practising households are identical in nature. The walls are made of mud and the roofs are thatched with straw upon a bamboo frame. The low doors are mostly made of wood. There are very few windows in very few houses. The windows in the houses, which have them, look more like small holes than like windows. The houses, therefore, look dark and are stuffy. The ceilings are also not quite high above the floor.

The ground plan is generally rectangular and the roofs are with four slopes generally. Most of the houses are single-storeyed. The house, that makes the exception, has two storeys, the first floor being under construction. This particular house belongs to one of the master-craftsmen.



The habitation of the local craftsmen is more or less unplanned and the houses have been built in a haphazard manner without any forethought.

HISTORY OF RESIDENTIAL SETTLEMENT OF THE CRAFTSMEN FAMILIES

The history of the village people is also the history of the village. But, no written account is available to help one in reconstructing the history of the village or of the people. The material for writing the village-history has been supplied by the people themselves, but not by way of advancing any historical document or other evidence. The craftsmen families were interrogated with leading questions, two of which are :

“(1) Since how many generations and for how many years are you living in this area and (2) if immigrant, migrated from which area and when ?”

The answers obtained are not always helpful nor do they have equal historical value. In the absence of any other better material, the verbal statements made by the respective heads of households have to be depended on, though this dependance is beset with many difficulties. Most of the heads of the artisan households are

ignorant of and unconcerned about time and space. Moreover, the residential settlement history in regard to the young head of a household will not have the same implication as in the case of an aged head, because there is always the difference in age and also in the length of settlement. The age of the head is the most important factor, which shapes the seniority of the families *inter se*.

In order to make these figures more scientific, a method to smooth the returns (relating to years) has been adopted. Accepting that a generation generally implies the passage of 25 years, the years returned by the heads are computed in generations.

First, the issue is tackled from generation side. For this purpose the number of generations (including the present), stated by the head of the household, is added to the computed generation of the present age of the interviewee, and one generation is deducted from it (as because in the number of generations stated by the interviewee his own generation has also been included).

The settlement table of the various craftsmen families, prepared on the basis of the method stated above, is presented below :

TABLE 1
History of Settlement (Generations)

Caste/Tribe	Total no. of practising artisan households	Number of households that settled here for generations								
		0-1.0	1.1-2.0	2.1-3.0	3.1-4.0	4.1-5.0	5.1-6.0	6.1-7.0	7.1-8.0	8.1-9.0
Karga	21	Nil	Nil	5	5	Nil	Nil	1	9	1
Bhumij	6	Nil	Nil	Nil	4	2	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Karmakar	2	Nil	1	Nil	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Total	29	Nil	1	5	10	2	Nil	1	9	1

From the above table it is apparent that of the practising artisan households, an isolated Karga household is the earliest settler. This family has been a resident here for nine generations. The Bhumij and the Karmakar artisan households have come here later. One Karma-

kar household has settled here very recently and lived for only two generations.

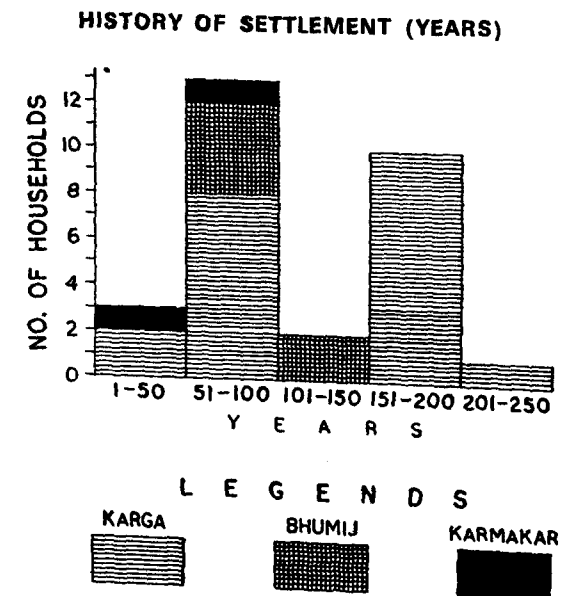
The settlement history of the craftsmen families may be examined year-wise also. The table is given overleaf.

STONEWARES

TABLE 2
History of settlement (Years)

Caste/Tribe	Total no. of practising artisan households	No. of households which lived for				
		1-50 years	51-100 years	101-150 years	151-200 years	201-250 years
Karga	21	2	8	..	10	1
Bhumij	6	..	4	2	..	..
Karmakar	2	1	1	..	..	..
Total	29	3	13	2	10	1

A solitary Karga household is the earliest settler. This family is living in this place for more than two hundred years. The three households comprising two Kargas and one Karmakar have settled in this area in course of the last fifty years. Karga households have stated that



their ancestors immigrated to this place from Manbhum district in Bihar and one Karga household states that his ancestors came from some village in Bankura district. The other Karga is a man of the district, for his forefathers hailed from a place in the same police station within this district.

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VILLAGE

Simulpal, the venue of the present survey, is not renowned as a commercial centre. It is a quiet haunt of the unsophisticated tribal people, who look enquiringly at the visitors, be they from Census Office or from the Deptt. of Anthropology of the University of Calcutta. The mineral deposits, in and around, have made the village hum with some activity, for geologists and ore-exporters find the place interesting to them. Tourists seldom visit the village, though water and climate of the place are both good for health. So, it is a village visited neither by tourists nor by pilgrims. The people, dealing in stonewares, come here sometimes to collect their merchandise.

Simulpal has been noted for her stonewares for a very long time. It is reported by the artisans that Simulpal has been famous for her stonewares for 250-300 years. The products of the place so long did not become popular because of the inaccessible nature of the place. But, after the establishment of Binpur National Extension Service Block II at Belpahari, the articles were publicised through the good services and interest of the Block Development Officer and the members of his staff. In 1964 an Exhibition organised in Midnapur town by the Cottage and Small-Scale Industries of West Bengal hit the news in bringing the articles of Simulpal into public view from the cocoon of oblivion. The craftsmen have every reason to be hyperbolic in stating the period,

THE CRAFT, THE CRAFT-CENTRE AND THE CRAFTSMEN

as the centre existed in the place for long. This craft has bestowed on it a tradition, of which it has reasons to be proud. This village developed as a craft-centre due to the close proximity of the different stone-quarries.

Both at the quarries and at home the artisans carry on different operations of the craft. The cranking sound of stone-cutting in the quarries is heard from a long distance. The village vibrates with the rattling sound of polishing and designing.

SIGNIFICANT HISTORY OF THE PLACE

This place is known as Simulpal due to the abundance of *Simul* (Silk-cotton) trees in this region. This is the only etymology available for this place from the local source. It is not supported by any written document, on which one can lay one's hands.

The village is embraced by the cultural zone of the tribal people of the Singhbhum region. It is generally believed that in the past this place was a part of *Saoutblumi*, an area covered with dense forests and inhabited by nomadic people. Evidences of early customs in the form of stone tools and microliths of upper paleolithic period are found in this area. The land was once ruled by the feudal chiefs, most probably of tribal origin. The feudal chief of the Silda-Jhatban Pargana might be of Bhumij extraction. In its neighbouring areas the *Chuar* (tribal) revolt took place (April, 1798)².

According to informations available locally, in 1861 Robert-Watson Company settled in this area in connection with indigo plantation. This Company was then the owner of this place. This time conflict arose between this Company and the peasants in the matter of indigo plantation. During 1906, the Midnapore Zamindary Company took over the ownership of this area by purchasing it from the aforesaid Company. During their ownership conflicts arose between the

Zamindary Company with the inhabitants of this area in regard to collection of jungle wood, imposition of taxes and ousting of the *Mandals* (local land-lords) from their hereditary rights on land. Till the abolition of the Zamindary system this Zamindary Company, run by Europeans, were the owners of this area. At present the Govt. of West Bengal is the owner of this area.³

"In Midnapore the name still survives, it is applied to the western and northern portion of the district comprised in thanas—Binpur, Garhbeta, Gopiballavpur, Jhargram and Salboni. This tract is divided among several large land-owners among whom may be mentioned the *Midnapore Zamindary Company* in Garhbeta, Salboni and the large *Pargana of Silda*.

"The tract along the western border known as *Jungle Mohal* which is still covered with the remains of the forest was the home of nomadic tribes who lived on jungle products and the spoils of the chase."⁴

It is reported by certain key persons of the village that the village is approximately 300 years old. A single family each belonging to the Bhumij, Karga, Mahato and Bairagi communities immigrated and settled here, attracted by easy availability of water in this place. Afterwards, the Bhumij and the Karga households began to practise the stoneware craft, as raw materials were abundant in this region.

The names of the heads of the households, the ancestors of which first settled in this place, are given below :

1 Karga	Haru Mistri
2 Bhumij	Kusum Singh
3 Bairagi	Tarachand Das
4 Mahato	Srinath Mahato

The settlers then invited their relatives and friends to settle in this area and with the settle-

2. Midnapore District Gazetteer, 1911, p. 40.

3. Cultural Research Institute Bulletin, West Bengal, Vol. 3. No. 1, 1964, p. 53.

4. *Ibid.* p. 53

ment of their relatives, the village began taking a definite shape.

Some non-practising Bhumij households of the village point out that in the past almost all the Bhumij households were engaged in the craft. But curiously enough, the majority of them have severed their connection with it now and in their place almost all Karga households are now practising it.

The Bhumij artisans had in the beginning of the craft's early days evinced keen interest in its pursuit. But, hard labour and painstaking job, which the craft warrants, did not suit many Bhumij craftsmen. They changed their occupation to agriculture either as cultivators or as agricultural labourers. As most of them had land, this occupational mobility did not create any problem for them.

Of the artisan communities, the Kargas and the Bhumij claim to be the sons of the soil. This claim is supported by the information regarding settlement history. It is claimed by the artisans that the craft is very old, but they cannot say how old it is.

OTHER CRAFTS IN THIS PLACE

Blacksmithy and carpentry are the two other household crafts practised in the village. Aged persons of the village point out that these two crafts are also old. Some Sutradhar, Karga and Bairagi households are engaged in the manufacture of wooden agricultural implements and some measures of weight. A few Karmakar families manufacture knives, ploughs, scythes, sickles etc.

In a village, large in size and inhabited by a large number of people of various ethnic groups and occupations, the craftsmen of these two crafts have ready customers for the sale of their products. The craft of stone-carving also requires some implements, which are produced in the village blacksmithy and carpentry shop.

INSTITUTION OF THE CRAFTSMEN

There is neither any Training-cum-Production Centre nor any Design Centre for the stone-carver craftsmen here. But, there is a Co-operative Society of the stone-cutters functioning here since 1958. It has exerted considerable influence over the craftsmen of the neighbouring craft-centres and has attracted a large number of members. It functions on an organised basis for the local craftsmen and for the craftsmen of the neighbouring craft-centres as well. A detailed account of the institution will be given later.

NUMBER OF PRACTISING AND NON-PRACTISING CRAFTSMEN FAMILIES

Craftsmen Community, hereinafter used, will mean the communities, connected with the craft in the past but not so at present and also those which are practising the craft at present. Obviously, this includes the practising and the non-practising artisan households. Here, at Simulpal the Kargas, the Bhumij, the Karmakars and the Mundas are the members of the craftsmen community, though all are not pursuing the craft at present.

ARTISAN HOUSEHOLDS AND POPULATION

TABLE 3
Population in the craftsmen community

Caste/Tribe	No. of households	Practising and non-practising		
		Males	Females	Persons
Karga	22	51	61	112
Bhumij	17	51	44	95
Karmakar	3	9	9	18
Munda	1	2	3	5
Total	43	113	117	230

There are 22 Karga artisan households with 112 persons, composed of 51 males and 61 females. Seventeen Bhumij craftsmen's households have 95 persons including 51 males and 44 females. Three Karmakar artisan families consist

of 18 persons comprising nine males and nine females. Lastly, there is one Munda artisan family with five persons, composed of two males and three females.

SEX-RATIO

Females outnumber males in the Karga artisan households, but the case is just the reverse in the Bhumij and the Munda artisan families. In the Karmakar households the sex-ratio is balanced. Thus, 230 persons in the 43 artisan households include 113 males and 117 females. The sex-ratio is almost balanced in the artisan households, taken as a whole.

Out of the 43 artisan households, only 29 families are actively connected with the craft at present. These 29 households can, therefore, be regarded as practising artisan households, while the rest are non-practising, signifying that the latter households in the past had pursued the craft. The fourteen non-practising families had severed their connection with the craft for some reason or other. Discussion about them will be made in a subsequent chapter.

PRACTISING ARTISAN HOUSEHOLDS

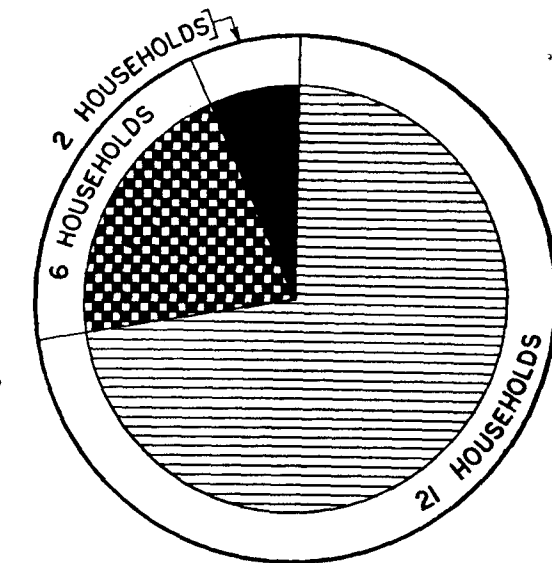
To give an idea of the composition of the practising households both ethnically and demographically a table is given below.

TABLE 4
Population of the practising artisan households

Caste/Tribe	No. of households	Males	Females	Persons
Karga	21	48	57	105
Bhumij	6	16	12	28
Karmakar	2	6	8	14
Total	29	70	77	147

Females are larger in number in the Karga and Karmakar families. Taken as a whole, the average sex-ratio for the practising artisan households is 1100.

PRACTISING ARTISAN HOUSEHOLDS



LEGENDS



Practising artisans

As all the persons in the practising households do not participate in the pursuit of the craft, it is necessary to present a table on the practising artisans. The table is given below.

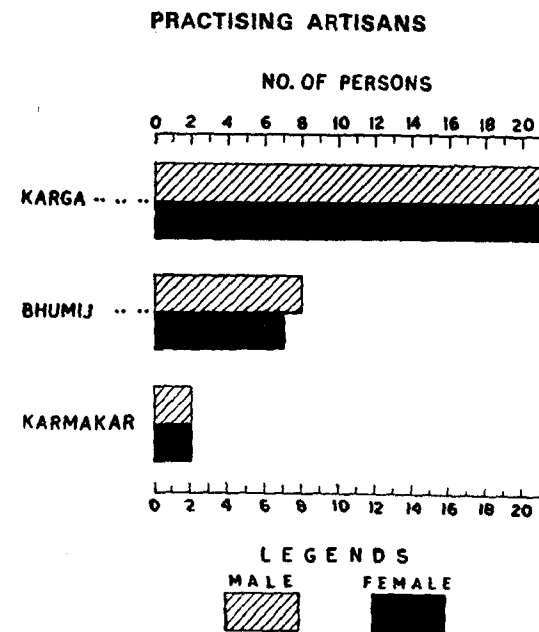
TABLE 5

Practising artisans

Caste/Tribe	No. of households	Males	Females	Total no. of persons
Karga	21	21	21	42
Bhumij	6	8	7	15
Karmakar	2	2	2	4
Total	29	31	30	61

From a glance at the table one will be impressed by the fact that among all the communities the males and the females participate in the craft in more or less equal proportions. In most cases, though not in all, the heads of the households as well as their wives take part in the craft's productive operations.

STONEWARES



per cent of the total number of persons are active participants in the craft. The participation-rate among the males is 21.1 per cent and among the females it is 20.4 per cent. The participation-rate is the largest among the Bhumiij and the lowest among the Karmakars. About 53.6 per cent of the persons in the Bhumiij households are active artisans and only 28.6 per cent of the Karmakars in the practising households are active craftsmen.

In the practising artisan households persons in the age-group 0-14, constituting the children, account for 50.3 per cent of the population. The persons in the age-group 15-59, forming the core of active labour-force, constitute 46.9 per cent of the population.

If one examines the table on the practising artisans, one finds that the participation-rate among the children is negligible, for only 2.7 per cent of the children are active artisans. The absence of child-labour in large number is explained by

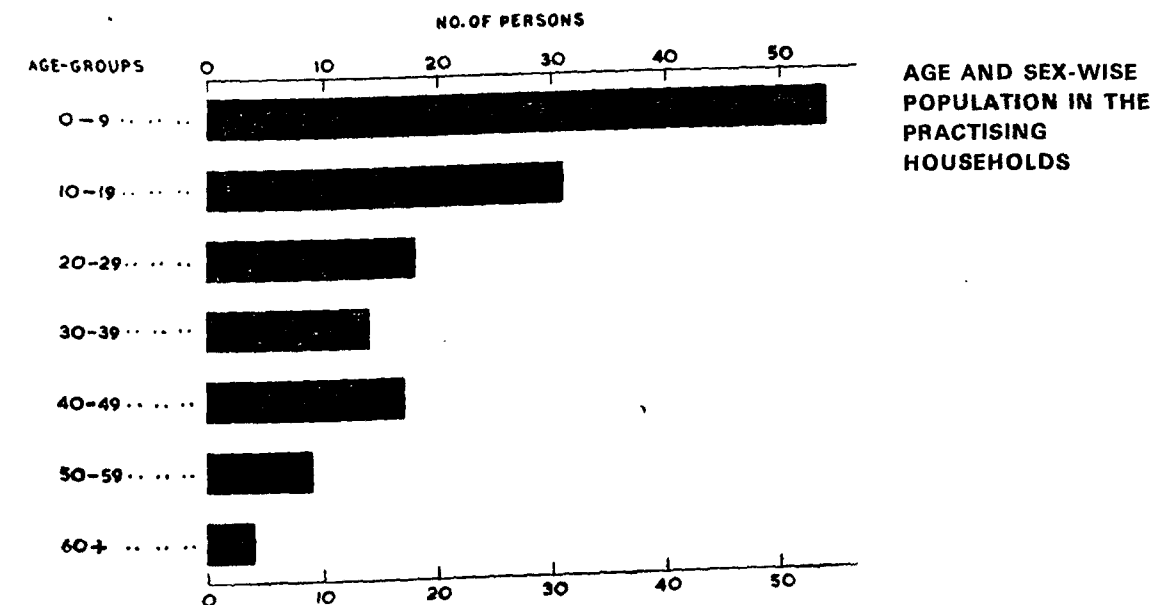
Participation-rate

Of the total number of 147 persons in the 29 practising households, as many as 61 or 41.5

TABLE 6
Age and sex-wise distribution of the persons

Age-group	Population			No. of craftsmen engaged in the craft		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
0-4	10	16	26	Nil	Nil	Nil
5-9	10	18	28	Nil	Nil	Nil
10-14	10	10	20	Nil	2	2
15-19	5	6	11	Nil	5	5
20-24	6	5	11	4	5	9
25-29	2	5	7	2	5	7
30-34	6	3	9	6	3	9
35-39	2	3	5	2	2	4
40-44	4	5	9	4	5	9
45-49	5	3	8	5	3	8
50-54	5	1	6	4	Nil	4
55-59	3	Nil	3	3	Nil	3
60+	2	2	4	1	Nil	1
Total	70	77	147	31	30	61

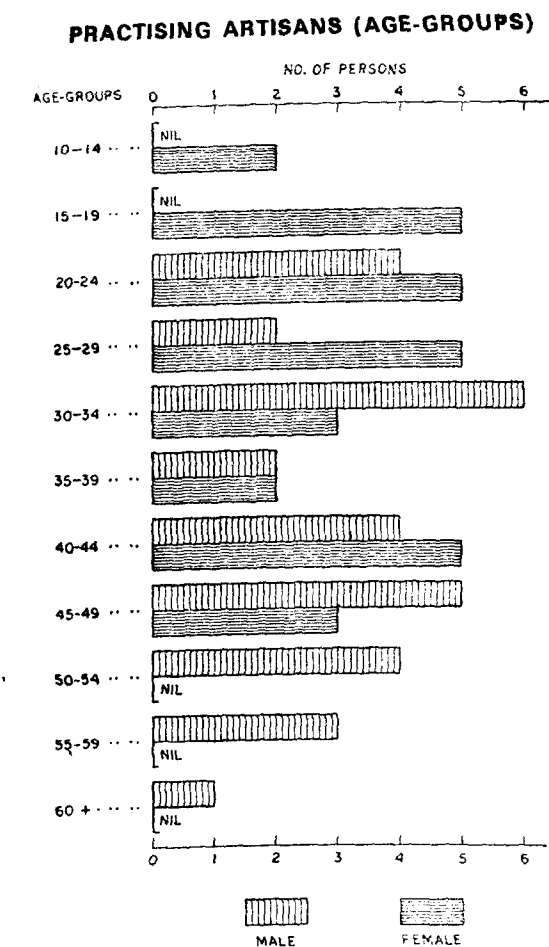
THE CRAFT, THE CRAFT-CENTRE AND THE CRAFTSMEN



the fact that the main operations of the craft can be handled only by grown-up men. It is no mean task to cut stones in the quarries, to move boulders and to chisel them out into shapely articles. The two girls in the age-group 10-14 actually help the head artisans in their work.

Now, the artisans in the age-group 15-59 explain 95.1 per cent of all the working artisans. The labour-force of the same age-group, constituted by persons in the artisan households, contributes 84.1 per cent of their potentiality to be of use in the craft. This is a remarkable feature indeed and it speaks of the prospects that this household-craft holds out to other members, who find it more profitable to carve out their fortune at home rather than work in other occupations elsewhere.

The participation-rate of the males is more or less equal to that of the females. The craft invites both the husband and his wife as co-workers. Exclusively five males belong to the age-group 45-59. Four males in the age-group 50-54, three males in the age-group 55-59 and an isolated male in the age-group 60 years and above are active participants. Of these artisans,



STONEWARES

the youngest one is only 12 years old and the seniormost among them is 60 years old. It also appears from the analysis that the majority of the artisans are young ; it is so because this craft requires a great deal of physical strength.

Marital status

The marital status of the craftsmen reveals that the majority of the craftsmen are married. Fifty seven artisans including 28 males and 29 females are married. The relation between the majority of the craftsmen is that of husband and wife. One of the artisans is not yet married and the three others are widowed including two widowers and one widow.

Viewed community-wise, the marital status of the practising artisans discloses that 20 males and 20 females among the Kargas are married, one being a widow and another a widower. Among the practising Bhumij artisans, the married persons are composed of six males and seven females. One Bhumij male is yet to marry, while another Bhumij artisan is a widower. The practising Karmakar artisans are composed of two married couples.

It is a happy picture that there is no separated or divorced person among the working artisans in any of the three communities.

Age at marriage

It is gathered that the artisans belonging to the Bhumij community marry at an early age. The males generally marry between 17 to 23 and the females between 10 to 16. The Karmakar artisans have also married early. It is a practice among them to marry their daughters as infants. The male artisans have married at an age of 17 or 18 years and the females were married between 7-8 years. In the Karga artisan community the age of marriage of the females and males varies between 8 to 15 years and 20-30 years.

Training and composition of working-group

The Karga artisans have learnt the craft

from their family members and have inherited the traditional skill. None of them owes the skill to any outsider or to any organisation or institution. Formal training is, therefore, absent. The Bhumij artisans have learnt the techniques of the craft as home-apprentice, watching the elders to perform them. All of them have inherited traditional skill and have no outside *Guru* (preceptor) to initiate them in the operations of the craft.

But, among the Karmakars a male artisan is found to have learnt the craft from a person, who is not a member of the family. He has obtained training in this craft from the Karga artisans. But, the three other artisans have had their schooling in the craft at home.

Every artisan works independently at his or her own place of work. There is no paid worker nor any hired employee here. There is again no artisan, who works as a paid employee of an organisation or institution.

The head of the artisan household conducts the operations of the craft assisted by the other members of the household. The family-workers are the helping hands of the artisan head of the family. In case any helping member in the family is indisposed, the head employs casual labour from the Bhumij villagers.

The craft is conducted by the husband and wife together. The husband does all the jobs, which necessitate hard labour and his wife performs light work as an able partner. The proprietor of the production-unit is an entrepreneur-cum-craftsman.

Out of 42 Karga artisans, 21 craftsmen are independent workers. There is also an identical number of family workers. Among the Bhumij, there are six independent workers, who are assisted by the rest of the family-workers. The number of family-workers is nine. There are two independent workers and two family-workers in the Karmakar households.

Independent workers are in all cases the heads of the households. The family-workers consist of wife, mother and children.

Place of birth

In regard to the places of birth of the practising artisans, it is found that 31 Karga artisans were born outside Simulpal and of those born outside, 11 persons are females. The places of birth of these artisans are located within a radius of 24 miles. The places of birth of five Bhumij artisans are located at places within a radius of 10 miles with Simulpal as the centre. Of the Karmakars, two artisans including a male and a female are not sons of the soil, as they were born outside this village within a radius of six miles.

Education

Out of 62 practising artisans, only six are literates, of whom one is a Bhumij male and another a Karga female without any formal education. Four Karga male artisans have read upto the primary stage. Their educational qualification varies between Class I and Class IV. Thus, only 4.9 per cent of the artisans are literates in this production-centre.

Family structure of the craftsmen

The type and size of the various families are the two facets of the family structure of the craftsmen. In order to form an idea about the nature of the different craftsmen families, these two aspects are discussed in details. A clear picture about the type of the different craftsmen families is presented below in a tabular form.

TABLE 7

Type of the craftsmen families

Community	Simple	Intermediate	Joint	Other
Karenga	16	4	..	1
Bhumij	4	..	2	..
Karmakar	1	..	1	..
Total	21	4	3	1

From the above table it is evident that out of the 29 practising artisan families as many as

21 are of simple type, the predominance of which may be explained by the fact that this craft is generally practised by the husband and the wife together. Whenever a person is married, he breaks away from his parents to start a separate production unit. These nucleated families generally consist of the husband, wife and children.

An idea about the size of the different craftsmen families may be given with the help of the table below :

TABLE 8

Families engaged in the craft according to size

Size of the family	No. of families	Total no. of members
1 member	1	1
2 members	2	4
3 members	4	12
4 members	7	28
5 members	2	10
6 members	6	36
7 members	3	21
8 members	2	16
9 members	1	9
10 members	1	10
Total	29	147

A scrutiny of the above table shows that the average size of the craftsmen families is five, while six membered households are numerically in the majority ; single membered families and families with nine and ten members are smaller in number.

It will not be out of place here to discuss another table to show the distribution of families engaged in the craft according to the number of persons engaged in the craft.

From the table it will be evident that the maximum number of persons resides in the six membered households, but they do not possess the maximum number of practising artisans. The maximum number of practising artisans, on the other hand, resides in the four membered households.

TABLE 9

Craftsmen families and practising craftsmen

Size of families	No. of members in the craft	Total no. of persons
1 member	1	1
2 members	4	4
3 members	8	12
4 members	15	28
5 members	4	10
6 members	12	36
7 members	7	21
8 members	4	16
9 members	4	9
10 members	2	10
Total	61	147

The participation-rate of the families according to members may also be shown below in a tabular form.

TABLE 10

Participation rate

Size of the families	No. of families	No. of the members in the families	No. of craftsmen	Percentage participation-rate
1 member	1	1	1	100.0
2 members	2	4	4	100.0
3 members	4	12	8	66.6
4 members	7	28	15	53.5
5 members	2	10	4	40.0
6 members	6	36	12	33.3
7 members	3	21	7	33.3
8 members	2	16	4	25.0
9 members	1	9	4	44.4
10 members	1	10	2	20.0
Total	29	147	61	41.5

It is apparent from the above table that the participation-rate of the craftsmen is highest both in the single and double membered households and the lowest in households with ten members.

*CRAFTSMEN FAMILIES IN VARIOUS CAPACITIES**Manufacture of tools*

Though the tools and implements required by the craft are generally purchased from outside markets, some tools, such as axe and chisel, are manufactured by a particular craftsman of the

Karmakar community. He manufactures the tools as an ancillary work in addition to his primary function as a craftsman, engaged in making stone vessels. Moreover, there is one blacksmith, a Karmakar resident of Simulpal, who manufactures tools for the stoneware craft, although he is not a stoneware-craftsman. Some implements are again manufactured by a carpenter belonging to the Bairagi community, a resident of this village.

Production of raw materials

The main or basic raw material of the craft is provided by *Phyllite*, found in plenty in this area. It is deposited inside the earth in stratified form. The raw material is, therefore, obtained from nature and no processing is necessary to collect the raw material in crude form. Subsidiary raw materials are produced by people, who are neither artisans nor residents of this village. Their avocations are different and they are not connected with the craft in any way. The materials, they produce, are not exclusively meant for the craft of stonewares. Discussion about them will be made later in details.

Collection of raw materials

The *Phyllite*, found in plenty in the neighbourhood, are extracted by open quarry method by the artisans themselves. When necessary, the artisan households procure the stone from the quarries. In this operation they do not take the help of any non-artisan family. None of the craftsmen families is exclusively engaged in the collection of raw materials, basic or subsidiary.

Sale of raw materials

As the main and subsidiary raw materials are procured by the artisan households themselves, the question of purchase and sale of main or subsidiary raw materials by the craftsmen to others does not arise. Subsidiary raw materials are purchased by the producer craftsmen themselves direct from the traders in the *Hat*.

Owner of workshop

All the artisan households work in their own dwelling-cum-workshops and they are the owners of their own workshops in all cases. No workshop here is rented.

Owner craftsman

As stated earlier, all the craftsmen families are the owners of their workshops. Each craftsman family works independently and none works on hired or contract basis against payments in wage.

Financier

The craftsmen families themselves finance the craft by their family income in most cases. Sometime, they also procure loan from the Government through the Block Development Office or take loan from the well-to-do local persons of the Bairagi and Teli communities.

Skilled craftsmen

The different operations of the craft need some specialised training and experience. Moreover, considerable skill, as the *sine qua non* of good craftsmanship, is essential from start to finish to produce the stonewares. All the households have at least one skilled craftsman, if not more.

Unskilled labourers

The heads of the households are skilled craftsmen. No unskilled labourer is employed, for that would not help the craftsman conduct the operations of the craft.

Craft supervisor

The production-units are owned by the artisan households themselves. So, the head of the household or the seniormost artisan in each household supervises the different operations of the craft for proper co-ordination. There is no factory or large workshop in this area, necessitating the employment of job-supervisors to watch the work of the skilled and unskilled workers.

Traders

All the practising artisan households take the responsibility of selling their finished products themselves. No middleman exists here in regard to this function. The artisans themselves take the burden of carrying and selling their wares in the centres of sale.

Salesman

Out of the 61 artisans, only two artisans belonging to the Karga community sell their products in a retail form by hawking from house to house, inside and outside Simulpal.

Manager

There is neither a factory nor a large workshop, owned by any *Mahajan* or a financier. Naturally, therefore, the question of appointing a manager in a small production-centre does not arise. The head of the household manages all the business of the craft as well as that of the trade.

Accounts personnel

The heads of the households look after the financial aspect of the craft. Though they are mostly illiterate, they show keen acumen in calculating the profit and loss account of their craft. They do never feel the need of any accountant or for that matter even for that of a man acquainted with the simpler rules of arithmetic.

Transport

Use of transport is very much restricted, because the raw materials and the finished products are carried on the shoulders of the artisans. They take the help of transport only to purchase their tools and that also for travel and not for transportation.

Packing

The stonewares do not necessitate any packing, as the products are sold to the customers, as soon as they are produced. In case some of the products are left over after sale, they are kept as they are. No household has been found to pack the wares.

NUMBER AND TYPE OF PRODUCTION-UNITS

It is interesting to note that all the local production-units are of uniform type. All the places of work are dwelling-cum-workshops, run by the craftsmen with the family members. As such, the craft is a household industry.

No workshop here is run by a craftsman with the help of all family members and also with paid apprentices. Apprentices there are, but they are family members and not paid in any case. There is no large-scale factory or workshop in this craft-centre run by labour, employed by any big employer or a *Mahajan*, in the local term.

Although there is a Co-operative Society here, it does not run any workshop with the help of paid labourers. There are 29 units of production of the same type, each of which is a dwelling-cum-workshop, owned by the head of the practising household.

The production-units here have both advantages and disadvantages. The advantages of such a system are indicated below :

(1) The units are controlled and managed by a single person, capable of taking quick decision and prompt action.

(2) He possesses the necessary freedom and opportunity to produce articles to suit the individual tastes of his customers.

(3) He can devote himself to the production of articles of his own choice.

(4) He is the proprietor, who takes a personal interest in his work and tries to be efficient in the best possible way.

On the other hand, this system of production is also fraught with many disadvantages :

(1) As the owner takes the entire responsibility of the various functions of the craft, he faces much difficulty in securing large capital. Lack of funds is an eternal problem to him.

(2) In spite of his best efforts, he cannot increase the rate of production and make the workshop a large-scale production-unit.

(3) His articles are sold to a selected number of customers, whom he is obliged to satisfy. Experiment with forms and designs is not possible.

(4) He cannot take great risks in regard to the production of articles, as both funds and customers are limited.

3

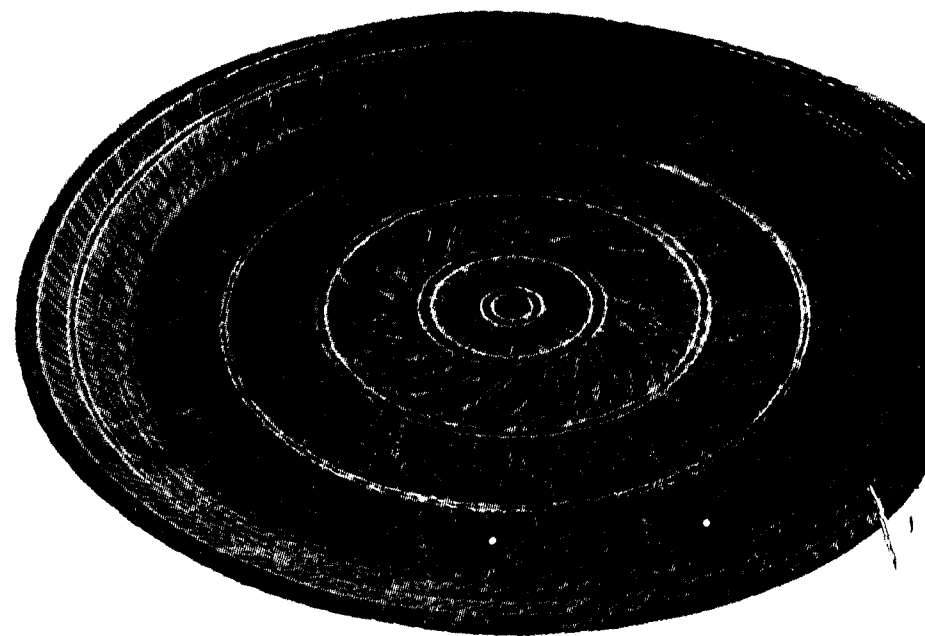
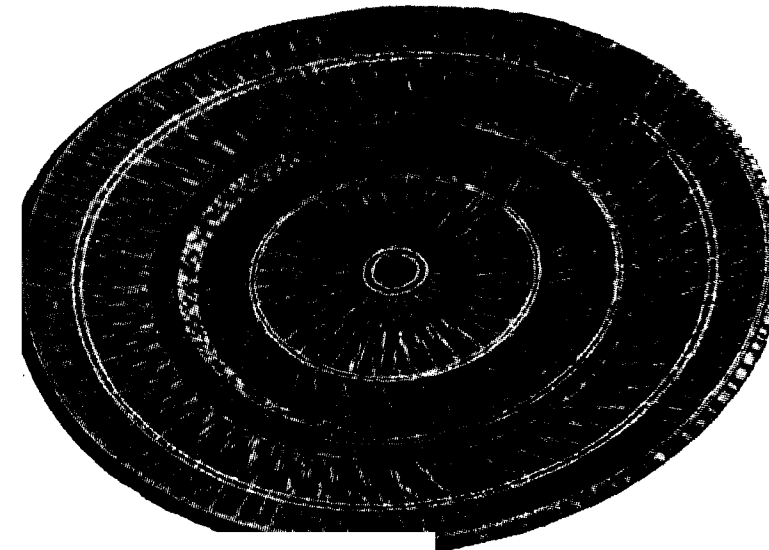
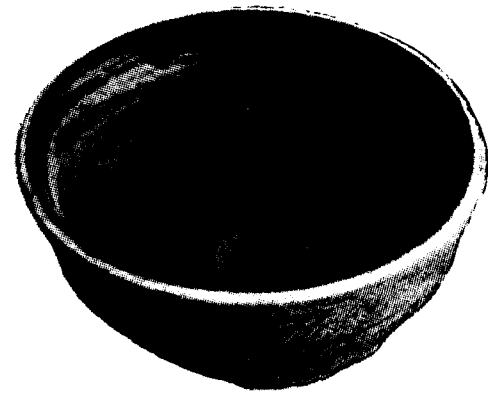
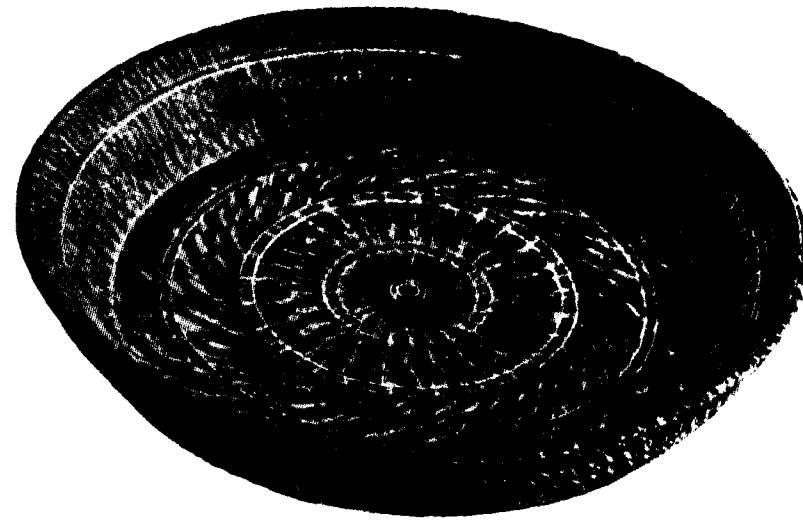
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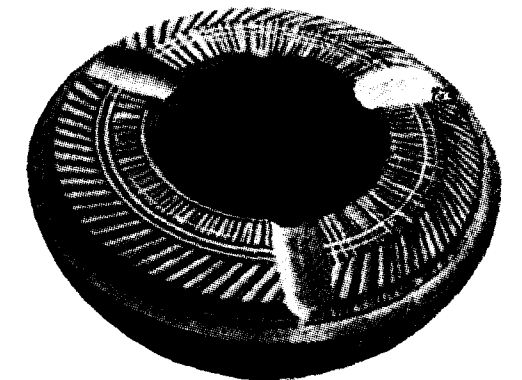
PRODUCTS OF THE CRAFT
OF WEST BENGAL
ARE GIFTS OF ANONYMITY
TO MOST OF HER PEOPLE

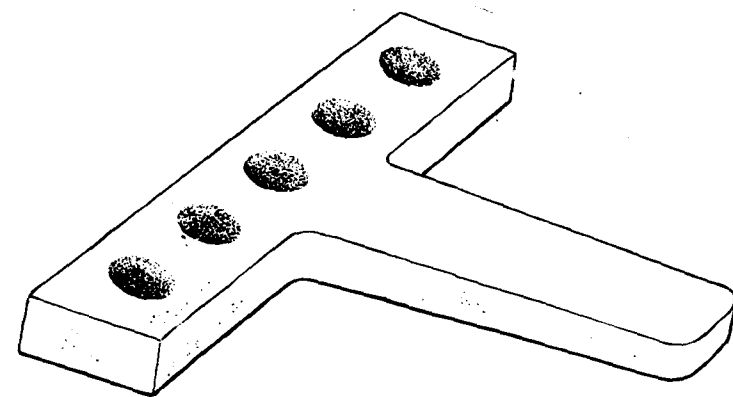


Close-up view of
Thala, a flat round
plate or dish with
slightly raised brim,
is an important
product of the craft,
much in popular
demand
by customers



1. *Rekab*, a medium-sized circular plate with raised brim, is a product, commonly produced by all the artisans
2. *Bati*, a round bowl with raised brim, is one of the products
3. *Plate*, a saucer-like flat dish with brim slightly raised and slanted, has no local name and is popular under the assumed English name
4. *Thala*, as seen from a different angle
5. *Ash-tray* needs no description—in itself it connotes the changes in the craft-centre by forces of acculturation

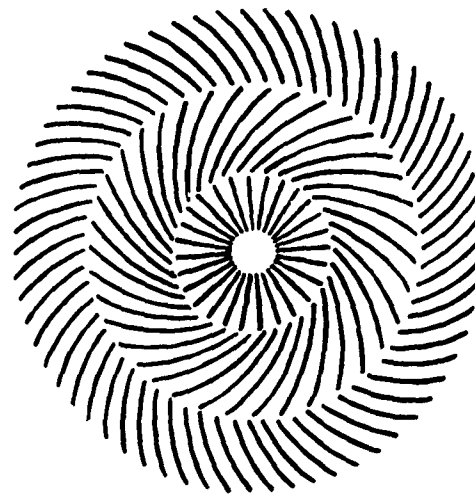
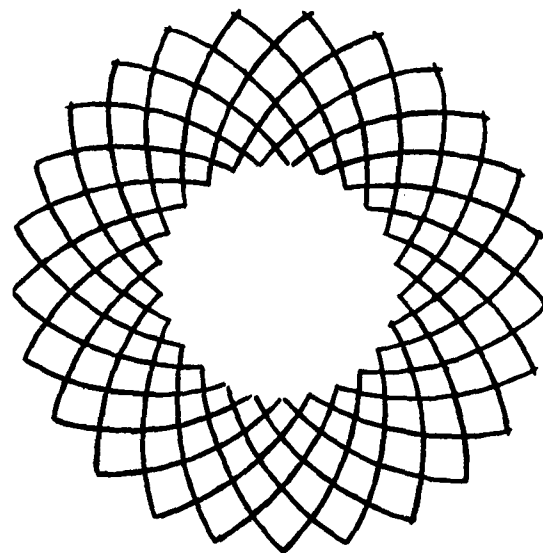




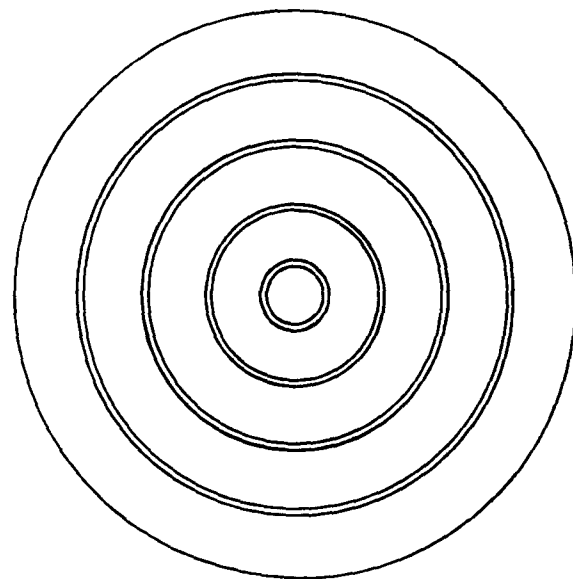
Pradip, a quintuple lamp, as drawn from imagination after a discussion with the artisans—no specimen was available

Variety is not the keynote of the designs and decorative motifs used in the craft-centre at Simulpal

Tana Buta, a design consisting of irregular curves of the nature of zigzag lines, as given in the left, wherein the total effect of the same design used in combination on a stone article is shown, is reproduced in isolation from the relief of the article



Jata Buta, the design to the right above, consisting of straight lines converging to a centre and slant lines placed at symmetric distance from each other, when engraved on an article, makes the slant lines appear like a whirl and the convergent straight lines star-like



Ank (Aank) is a design being the resultant effect of several decorative motifs of concentric circles

INTRODUCTION

Simulpal is an old centre for the production of various stone articles. The artisans claim this place to be well-renowned among the people of Jhargram subdivision for its products. There is a reference to this craft and also to the articles in the District Gazetteer of Midnapore by O'malley (1911, Page 123), though the place in particular was not mentioned. In making a review of the articles of the past all the practising artisans were contacted. The artisans, who had left the craft long ago and who had migrated from the place, were not interviewed. A talk with the old people in the practising households and with the persons well-conversant with the history of the area and its people will attest to the fact that the craft is enriched with the traditional skill of expert and experienced craftsmen of today. They have the pride to have learnt the techniques and designs of the craft from the artisans of yesterday and have now become very adept in their work. The products like *Thala*, *Bati* and *Rekab* bear the touch of their deft hands. These are the articles which have been produced here from days long past.

Before looking back into the past of this craft to examine the articles produced, a passing reference is made to various articles of stone produced in Gaya, Singhbhum and Chotanagpur

about sixty years ago. Plain vases, cups, bowls, dishes, ornamented vases, figures of gods, human beings and of animals were produced in the district of Gaya (*vide* Gaya District Gazetteer, 1906). Plates, bowls, tumblers and images were produced in Singhbhum (*vide* Singhbhum District Gazetteer, 1901), while in Chotanagpur cheap stone utensils were carved out (*vide* Monograph on Stone Carving in Bengal by Havel, 1906). Compared to the variety of these articles in other areas, the stonewares of the past, carved out here, were very simple articles of household use and utilitarian value.

To form a comprehensive and systematic idea about the articles produced locally, a period-wise analysis is required. It is hoped that such an analysis will help the reader make a comparative study of the articles produced in the past and at present in this centre.

ARTICLES OF THE PAST

The past has been divided into two separate periods. (i) The period before the 2nd World War denotes the past upto the year 1939 and (ii) the period before the Independence of India covers the years from 1939 to 1947. These two landmarks in the history of India have momentous effects on different spheres of her life and culture.

UPTO THE 2ND WORLD WAR

During the first period only 18 households comprising 13 Kargas, four Bhumij and one Karmakar are reported to have been engaged in the production of stonewares. *Thala*, *Rekab* and *Bati* were carved out by four Bhumij and three Karga households. *Thala* and *Rekab* were manufactured in eight Karga and one Karmakar households. *Thala* and *Bati* were produced by one Karga household and one Karga family carved out *Bati* exclusively.

It is evident that *Thala* and *Rekab* were the most important articles produced then. Seventeen households manufactured *Thala* and 16 households produced *Rekab*. *Bati* was carved out by only nine families.

BEFORE 1947

In the period from the outbreak of the Second World War to the Independence of India 21 artisan households, comprising the 18 households already engaged in the craft and three new households, practised the craft. The three neophyte artisan households consisted of two Bhumij and one Karmakar families. All these newcomers produced *Thala*, *Rekab* and *Bati*. The articles produced by the 18 old households remained the same as before.

One may thus observe that among the old households the trend of production and the variety of articles did not show any change. The new entrants followed the path of the more experienced craftsmen with the difference that the former produced all the three articles.

ARTICLES OF THE PRESENT

The present is marked by the interregnum between Independence and the time of the present survey (April, 1965). Now, 29 artisan households are connected with the production of the articles of stone. The present period witnessed the entrance of eight more households into the craft to earn their livelihood. The new households, the offshoots of the practising artisan

families, are born of disintegration of the old households. In the past they lived in different joint families of the Karga community.

The twentyone practising artisan households of the second period except two Kargas have been producing all the three articles, they had produced in the past. The Karga household, which is now turning out *Thala*, *Bati*, *Rekab* and *Plate*, produced only *Thala* and *Rekab* in the past. Again, the other Karga household is producing *Thala* and *Rekab*, whereas in the past it manufactured all the three articles. This is the only change discerned in the pattern of production among the old hands.

Of the eight households, which started the craft in the present period, two households produce *Thala* and *Rekab*. *Thala*, *Rekab*, *Bati* and *Plate* are turned out by one household. One household carves out articles like *Thala*, *Bati*, *Plate*, *Ash-tray* and *Lamp*. *Thala*, *Rekab*, *Plate*, *Ash-tray* and *Lamp* are manufactured in one more household. *Thala*, *Bati* and *Plate* are articles of production in three families.

On a resume, one comes across two new articles which are produced by the artisans of this craft-centre. *Ash-tray* and *Lamp* are the two new items in the list of articles. The Divisional Forest Officer, Govt. of West Bengal, posted at Jhargram, imbued the craftsmen with the novel idea of *Ash-tray* for production, having presented a specimen of an *Ash-tray* to the master-craftsman, Sri Bhusan Mistri. But, the idea of producing *Lamp* struck the master-craftsman. The techniques of processing were invented by the artisan himself. Now, these two articles are produced by two artisans including the master craftsman against job-order from customers. Varieties are the keynote of the current production. One may also be impressed by the fact that some of the present varieties bear testimony to the contact of the craftsmen with urban tastes and modern demands.

One may note that articles like *Thala*

and *Rekab* are being produced in all the 29 artisan households. These two products have the largest number of patrons and an assured market. Both these articles have had steady demand for a considerable period of time. From the artisans' point of view, these two articles fetch a large amount of money.

DESCRIPTION

A systematic discussion about the nature, form and size of the articles, produced in this craft-centre, is essential to give an idea of what actually the local craftsmen produce.

Thala

A flattened round plate or dish with a diameter of sixteen inches, the utensil is circular in shape with slightly raised brim and a flat base. It is the most important product, much in popular demand.

Rekab

A medium-sized plate, it is circular in shape with a diameter varying between eight to twelve inches, with a flat base and a raised brim with slant slope towards the base.

Plate

A small dish with saucer-like appearance, circular in shape with a diameter of about eight inches and a flat base, its brim has a gradual slope away from its base.

Bati

A round bowl with a circular flat base with a diameter of three inches, its brim is raised to a height of five inches with its circumference almost double that of the base.

Ash-tray

It is a container, resembling a circular massive spheroid, halved in the middle, with an opening at the top, circumference of which is smaller than that of the circular flat bottom with a diameter of three inches or so. The height from bottom to the top is about two and half inches.

Pradip (Lamp)

It is a quintuple T-shaped lamp, with five depressions on the top bar, fixed to another bar being used as a handle. The handle is six inches long, one and half inches broad and one inch thick, while the lamp has a length of seven inches, breadth of two inches and a thickness of one inch.

USE

The dissertation here is based on impressions formed from group-discussion with the local artisans, the consumers and also with the wholesale purchasers and it is necessarily a discussion of a very general nature.

Thala

Locally it is used as a domestic utensil for taking cooked food mainly. It has also ceremonial use during socio-religious observances, when offerings of fruits and flowers, sweetmeats and other articles are offered on these *Thalas* to the deities.

Outside the craft-centre, the article, apart from being used in the way mentioned above, is used mainly by the Hindu widows belonging to the higher castes as one of the most important utensils of domestic utility. Cooked food is served on these *Thalas*.

Rekab

Locally this article is mainly confined to ceremonial uses, social and religious. Outside the craft-centre the uses do not vary.

Plate

It is used by the common people of the area as an ordinary domestic utensil for serving and taking food. The well-to-do people with some contacts with urban areas use it as a plate while taking fruits or serving choicest delicacies to some respectable guests in the household.

The article does not differ much in its use outside the village, except that it also serves the

STONEWARES

purpose of a plate or a dish. Some men of tastes also use the plate for holding flower-vases.

Bati

The local people use the article as an utensil for taking cereal-soup, curry and other liquid preparations. Fish curry is especially served in this bowl. The local users find from experience that the articles do not stink off the fishy odour after washing, as the metal utensils usually do. The article is best suited for taking acid preparations and pickles. The ideal quality of this ware as a container for all sour preparations is appreciated very much by the local consumers. The opinion is likewise supported by outside consumers, as will be evident from the particular purpose for which the bowls are purchased.

Ash-tray

Its indigenous use is practically nil. This is an article of utility, restricted to a limited number of people outside, mainly in the urban areas. The very name of the article, for which the artisans did not coin any local term and preferred to use the English word, suggests the use, to which it is put. Therefore, its uses are not described, but it is simply mentioned that it is made to specific order only.

Pradip (Lamp)

Both locally and outside, the article is used on ceremonial occasions. During the worship of any deity, whether in the household or in the temples, the article is used in offering oblation to the deity by the worshipping priest. But, it should be clearly pointed out that this article has a very limited number of users and its production is conditional upon a specific order from a customer.

PRICE

The price of the articles is estimated on the basis of observations and interrogations. While the wholesale price is found to be more or less stable, the retail price often varies. It is often a

tussle of wit and bargaining power between the artisan and the customer and the superior only wins the game. The lowest price, below which the artisan does not undersell, is given in the following.

Thala

It sells at Rs.1.25 paise per piece, when sold in retail. But, the wholesale price of the article is Rs.12/- per dozen.

Rekab

It sells at 0.87 paise per piece. The wholesale price of a dozen of articles is charged at Rs.9/-.

Plate

A piece is sold at 0.62 paise. A dozen of articles is charged Rs.6/- in the wholesale market.

Bati

0.37 paise will be the price charged for a piece, when sold to a retailer. But, a wholesaler will purchase a dozen of articles for Rs.3/-.

Ash-tray

A piece will sell at 0.37 paise. But, the price soars up, if the artisan's salesmanship gets the better of the customer's bargaining skill. It has been found that an article was sold even at 0.50 paise. The price may be fixed, more or less depending on the circumstances of sale. As it has no wholesale market, the price is not given.

Pradip (Lamp)

A piece of lamp sells at 0.50 paise. No other price, higher than the one recorded, has been found to have been charged from any customer. Wholesalers have no demand for the article and as such, the wholesale price is not given.

DESIGNS, COLOUR-SCHEMES AND DECORATIVE MOTIFS

The articles produced at present, though varied in nature, do not display the use of many

ARTICLES PRODUCED

designs. In the use of designs the artisans are very much conservative and tradition-oriented. The designs engraved on some of the products are time-old and do not show much variety. Moreover, they are carved out on a few selected articles and not on all. The form and shape as also the get-up of the articles, produced at present, bear the impress of skilled craftsmanship, the keynote of which lies in the dexterous use of crude but simple designs.

Name and description

Tana Buta

This design consists of irregular curves of the nature of zigzag lines, placed at symmetrical distance from each other.

Jata Buta

The essence of this design lies in the drawing of lines, straight or slant. The slant lines are used in symmetric distance, whereas the straight lines are used to converge to a centre.

Aank

This design (not specifically treated as a design, but given a name by the artisans) consists of a circular line. To be precise, the design is effected by several concentric circles.

Uses

It has been observed that the artisans carve the three designs in combination, whenever they produce articles like *Thala*, *Rekab* and *Plate*. But, in the production of an *Ash-tray*, two designs, i.e., *Jata Buta* and *Aank*, are used in combination. The artisans are found to carve out the design of *Aank* in *Bati* only. *Pradip* or lamp does not bear any design on its surface.

It will be discussed in the following how the designs are used on the body of the articles and what exact pattern emerges out of the finished article.

Thala

On the surface of the article, that is, on its

base and on its raised rim, five pairs of *Aank* are engraved in a concentric way, so that the circles in the pair lie at a distance of one eighth of an inch and the pairs remain at a distance varying between one inch to three inches. One more *Aank* is engraved on the extreme edge of the rim.

At the central core no design is marked. In the next outer space the design of *Jata Buta* is used with straight lines converging towards the centre to give a star-like impression. In the space between the second and the third pairs of *Aank*, *Jata Buta* design is used in which slant lines are engraved in one direction giving the impression of a whirl. The space between the third and the fourth pairs of *Aank* is used for engraving the design of *Tana Buta*. The space between the fourth pair of *Aank* and the edge of the flat base of the article also bears the same design. The surface between the edge of the flat base and the fifth pair of *Aank* as also the space between the fifth pair of *Aank* and the *Aank* on the extreme rim contain the design of *Jata Buta*.

Rekab

This article also has five pairs of *Aank* on the surface of its flat base and on its raised brim. The distance within the pair of *Aank* is the same, but that between the pairs varies from one inch to three inches.

The two designs of *Tana Buta* and *Jata Buta* are used in this article in the same manner as in *Thala*.

Plate

There are five pairs of *Aank* on its surface. The use of the two designs here in this article follows the same pattern as in the two other articles.

Bati

The *Aank* is used in a concentric way both inside and outside the surface of the article. The number varies from article to article and depends on the mood of the artisan.

Ash-tray

On the upper circular plain surface of the article the design of *Jata Buta* is used along with a pair of *Aank*.

From the above discussion one point is quite clear that the artisans engrave designs on such products as are circular in shape. No colour is used nor is there any decorative motif except those described earlier. The artisans have no particular motif or scheme in mind in patterning out the designs. The designs are, in fact, the total effect of some particular standard motifs, not known to them.

The use of the designs has been the same all along from the past without any renovation. The designs carry no association of any legend or myth.

All the households use the same designs without any variation. The knowledge of the designs has been imparted to all except one Karmakar by their fathers through training. The Karmakar, who has taken up the craft in the present generation after his settlement in this place during his life-time, learnt the technique of using the designs from a Karga artisan. The training was free and the knowledge was acquired through close watch and association.

The designs have no symbolic meaning, but have only an artistic value, even appreciated by the artisans. The designs are used on all the articles except *Pradip* or lamp, as discussed earlier. Only *Pradip* is the sole exception, where the deft hands do not carve out any design.

4

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AND
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INTRODUCTION

Before a discussion is opened on the basic ingredients for the articles, produced by the craftsmen, it may be pointed out that it is provided by Earth and that Earth affords or grows by kind the stone, the main raw material required for turning out the varied wares. It is a bounty which Nature around has inexhaustibly supplied to the artisans from many years past. In exploring nature's gift it should be remembered that for her bounty "there was no winter in't; an autumn 't was that grew the more by reaping."

By stone, as the artisans call it, they mean small fragment of rock or small portions of weathered rock. A detailed report on the nature, quality and occurrence of the rock, on which the artisans work, is provided by the Geological Report by Dr. P. K. Gangopadhyay included in the Appendix. In the discussion hereinafter the general aspects of the topic relating to raw material of stone are brought out.

MAIN RAW MATERIAL

SOURCE AND OCCURRENCE

The type of soft stone used by all the craftsmen here is erroneously referred to by outsiders as *Potstone* and sometimes as *Soapstone*, though the artisans prefer to call it stone simply. But, in fact, this is a metamorphosed rock, which the

Geologists identify as *Phyllite*. *Phyllite* occurs in plenty in the adjoining areas of the craft-centre. Artisans describe this area to be deposited with vertical strata of this stone and they make use of this natural resource in getting their main raw material and in feeding their craft with it. The two places, which carry large deposits of *Phyllite* and which are visited by the artisans of Simulpal to quarry the deposits, are located at Dhangikusum and Sankhabhanga, situated about six miles north-west and four miles south-west of Simulpal, in the ridges of Chotanagpur plateau. Sankhabhanga is less popular than Dhangikusum, so far as frequency of visit is concerned. A household spends four days a week on an average in a quarry. Twenty nine households are found generally to send a person each to the quarry to excavate the raw material. The two places are visited by this household or that, without any definite plan or programme. It has been found that a household visits both the quarries, though not on the same day or in the same week. Still, Dhangikusum is preferred to Sankhabhanga, not for better quality but for reasons described later. On an average 116 mandays a week are spent in both the places and about 80 per cent of the artisans visit Dhangikusum.

DESCRIPTION, QUALITY AND PREFERENCE

Phyllite, obtained from Dhangikusum, is both greenish and reddish in colour. On the other

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hand, *Phyllite* from Sankhabhanga is greyish and blackish in colour. *Phyllite* at Dhangikusum is found to be brittle and liable to damage by salt or the weathering action of atmosphere and rain. This defect, however, does not dissuade the artisan from using the material. They know that it is bad; but still they use it, as it can be easily worked upon and shaped out for its soft nature. Sankhabhanga yields a somewhat better variety of stone, harder than that found at Dhangikusum.

It is highly paradoxical that a bad raw material is preferred to a good one. Sankhabhanga stone is admitted by the artisans themselves to be better than the one found at Dhangikusum. But, they have to compromise with the existing conditions even at the cost of quality of raw material. The stone at Dhangikusum being soft, the artisans find it less hard and toilsome to quarry the stone, to size it into shapely articles and to carve out designs on it. It consumes less energy and produces less fatigue. Conservation of human energy apart, the life of the tools is no less lengthened by working on Dhangikusum stone than on Sankhabhanga variety. The wear and tear is also less in former case. Besides, the stones are easily available at the surface of the earth, because of its outcropping in the surface. Less digging is required to collect them. The position is just the reverse in the case of Sankhabhanga.

COLLECTION

The selection of a site to open a new quarry is a question of vital importance. It often happens that the artisans attach some sort of uncertainty to their venture in digging a new site. The success of an artisan depends on his sense of judgment. But, the element of uncertainty is always there and no artisan ever precludes it in exploring the site of a quarry. The artisan has in all cases to start from a scratch and has to remove the earth-layer on the surface of the earth, without knowing if the effort will be fruitful or not. This exploration is guided neither by experience nor by intuition. It may be termed as an uncertain groping into the bowel of the earth. It

is only when the artisan comes across a stratum of rock, bearing *Phyllite*, that the moment comes to apply his judgment as to the direction in which he is to strike. As pointed out by Dr. Ganguly, the rock is struck in its plane of schistosity by the digging artisans; but their knowledge is not sophisticated by awareness of geology of the rocks. Rather, it is the quintessence of experience that is applied to the site of work.

Once a quarry is opened, the collection of stone from it continues for some time, the period of which depends on the availability of stone, advantages of digging, the quality and the optimum quantity of stone, dug there. If a quarry is abandoned for some reason or other, another is opened at a new site, a few cubits or a few yards away in the same area.

As soon as the digger finds it inconvenient to dig, he ceases to work in the same quarry. The maximum vertical depth is about 15 feet from the surface, but on many occasions the digging is given up long before the digger attains the maximum depth, partly on account of the difficulty in lifting the stone from the quarry to the work-site and partly also due to the apprehension of rock falling from the overhanging part. It is believed that the best stone is always found in the lower layer. But, the stone in lower depths cannot be excavated for reasons, already stated.

TERMS, CONDITIONS AND PRICE

Under Section 2(4b) (iv) of the Indian Forest Act, 1927, and under Section 8b (iii) of the West Bengal Private Forests Act, 1948, forest produce includes peat, surface soil, rock and minerals (including limestone, laterite, mineral oils and all products of mines or quarries).

The stones quarried by the craftsmen are required to be obtained under license from the Forest Department. But, the powers of the Forest Department to grant or issue permit to quarry stones were vested in the Mines and Minerals Directorate of the Commerce and Industries Department of the State Government under

delegated authority, after the enactment of the Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act in 1957, under Section 3(c) of which minor minerals mean building stones, gravel, ordinary clay, ordinary sand other than sand used for prescribed purposes, and any other mineral which the Central Government may by ratification in the Official Gazette declare to be a minor mineral. Again, Section 13(2i) (iii) of the same Act envisages that the fixing and collection of dead rent, fines, fees or other charges and the collection of royalties in respect of minerals, mined, quarried, excavated or collected, are within the scope of the rules under the Act.

Under the provisions of the Acts, stated before, the quarrying of stones falls within the jurisdiction of the Mines and Minerals Directorate of the State Government. But, it has been found that in actual practice the Forest Department still exercises some control on the utilisation of the stones etc., which are included in the minor forest produce, by issuing permits or licences to the artisans to quarry stones in the afforested hills in its possession against a prescribed fee.

As already discussed, the artisans collect stones from Dhangikusum and Sankhabhanga on payment of some prescribed fee (discussed later), which is to be paid by every individual artisan to the Forest Department to get the permission for work in the hills. The permit or a common pass, as it is locally called, issued in West Bengal Form No. 1716 by the local Beat Officer, in whose jurisdiction the hill is situated, is valid for four days only. The fees and the Offices of the Beat Officers are different for the two hills. To work in Dhangikusum an artisan is required to pay a fee of 0.27 paise to the Beat Officer at Balichua, after walking a distance of about three miles from Simulpal, whereas he is to pay a fee of 0.32 paise to the Beat Officer at Machkanda, the neighbouring village, to get the permission to work at Sankhabhanga. The difference in the fee is not on account of the difference in the quality of the stones of the two places. The fee

for Sankhabhanga was till also the same as that for Dhangikusum a few years back. But, the artisans were once detected by the Forest Guards to have been working at Sankhabhanga without payment of the requisite fee and thenceforward the penalty of .05 paise has been surcharged from every artisan working there. Artisans pay the fee to the Beat Officers on Sunday and get a receipt, which they treat as a permit. The artisans work in the hills from Sunday to Wednesday at a stretch. Though an individual artisan is entitled to quarrying stone by virtue of the permit issued to him, it is found that the artisans open a quarry in a small working group of more than two persons. This they do to expedite the quarrying work by joint labour and also because of the paucity of digging tools, about which a discussion will follow later.

It is an important feature of this craft that quarrying is an integral part of production, though this aspect, strictly speaking, should relate to the collection of raw materials. All the craftsmen collect raw materials themselves. Therefore, quarrying is done by all of them, no matter how they arrange the working group. There has not been any possible occasion for the artisans to get the supply of the required quantity of stone from others, thus making themselves free to concentrate in manufacture. This drawback, a resultant of the lack of division of labour, has forced every craftsman to bother about the raw materials, for the purchase of which they find no market, as because quarrying has not developed as a distinctively different occupation among either any artisans or any traders.

As *Phyllite* is the main raw material for all the articles produced here, an article-wise discussion on raw material is not necessary. It is quite evident that the fee, paid by the artisan, is so negligible an amount that the price for the raw material is practically nil. Still then, the cost of main raw material for each piece of article is discussed in the economics of production. It

may only be stated here that the artisans get the free gifts of nature at an unusually cheap price and they admit so. The only difficulty, they face, is in the transport of the material home, as they have to help themselves in its transportation. In the collection of the main raw material their toil is infinite and it will be elaborated in connection with the discussion on tools and equipments.

SUBSIDIARY RAW MATERIALS

USES AND DESCRIPTION

The subsidiary raw materials, used in this craft, are limited to *Lac* and *Gum*. For the production of all the stone utensils only these two subsidiary materials are required and their use is universal in the artisan households.

(a) *Lac* or more specifically *Seed lac* is required by the artisans for adjusting or fixing the unfinished stone utensils to the *Kund*, the improvised rotating wheel, at the time of polishing-cum-designing operation. *Seed lac* serves the purpose of glue. Occasionally, this material is also used for colouring some of the products.

Lac is the thick incrustation of a resinous substance, formed round the body of lac-insect by its own secretions. These insects live on the twigs of the trees, on which they are cultured. The lac, collected from the lac-bearing trees, is crude. As it contains twigs and branches of the tree, it is also known as *Stick lac*. Dusts and other foreign materials are removed from it by sieving, sifting and crushing. The red dye is removed by washing it thoroughly in cold water. The sun-dried clean lac is known as *Seed lac*, as the particles appear like purple-coloured seeds.

(b) *Gum*, used in the craft, is the dried secretion of a juice, collected from the bark of some trees like *Bel* (wood-apple), banyan and peepul. *Gum* is used by the artisans to repair any damage or to camouflage any crack which they detect on the body of the product.

SOURCE

In regard to both the subsidiary raw materials, the artisans purchase them from the weekly *Hat*, held at Silda, which is incidentally their marketing centre also. The traders, who sell either *Lac* or *Gum*, collect the materials from the trees, they own.

Lac is cultivated in the district in brood form on *Palash* (*Butea frondosa*) and then propagated, reared and cultured on *Ber* or *Kul* (country plum) trees by the people, residing in the neighbouring areas of Silda. *Gum* is obtained from the bark of the trees, mentioned before, by collecting the dried juice, exuded by the trees on scratching or shaving by the residents of the neighbouring villages of Silda. The same persons do not deal in *Lac* and *Gum* simultaneously.

TERMS, CONDITIONS AND PRICE

The subsidiary raw materials are purchased against cash-payment. Purchase on credit has not been observed. The artisans purchase at a time one k.g. of *Lac* and one k.g. of *Gum* to meet their requirement for seven days. Sometime, they also purchase these materials in small quantity, say worth 0.12 paise or 0.25 paise. It is found that the purchases, whether in bulk or in small quantity, are made in retail form. No transport cost is incurred by the artisans for the purchase of these materials. The artisans visit Silda for the sale of their wares, to purchase materials for the craft and for their households. They walk the way to Silda.

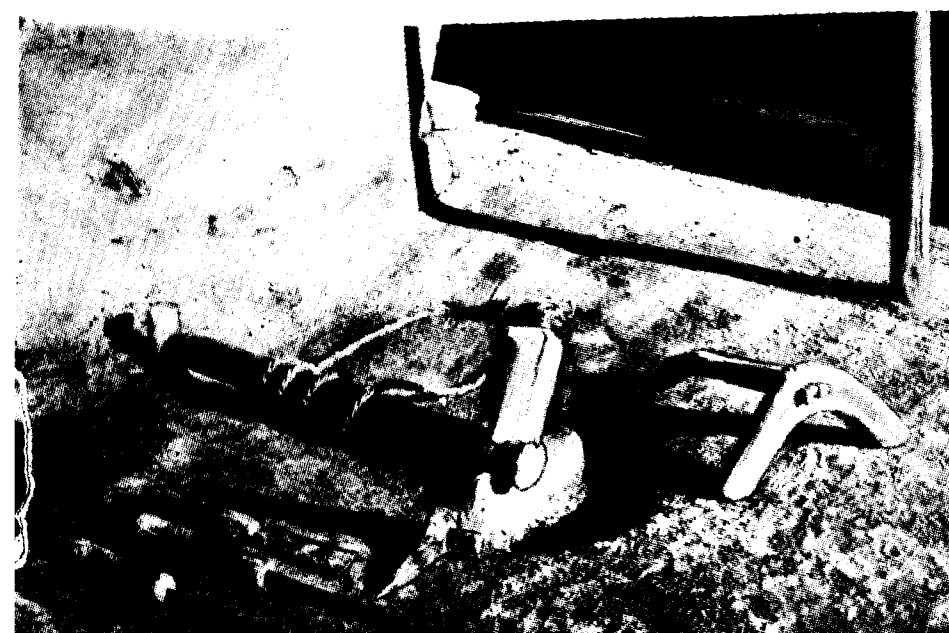
The price of *Seed lac* per k.g. varies between Rs. 2/- to Rs. 4/-. The price of *Gum* per k.g. is Rs. 1.50 paise.

TOOLS

In the District Handbook of Midnapore, Census 1951 (pp-xcii) Shri A. Mitra, I.C.S., comments on the tools employed in the manufacture of plates, bowls, basins etc., saying that they are of the rudest kind. The same may be said of the tools, used today by the artisans of

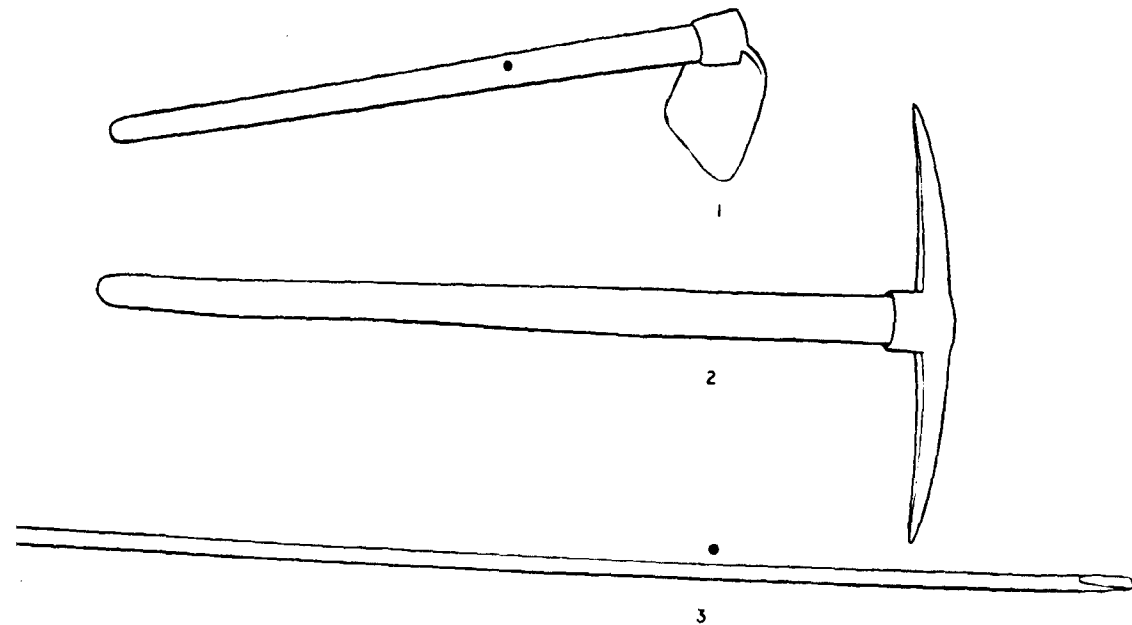
In search of raw material, hidden in the bowels of the earth—workshop in nature's open

The quarry-site at Dhangikusum, six miles north-west of Simulpal, is one of the many sites in the region located in the ridges of the Chotanagpur plateau, carrying large deposits of *Phyllite* rock, the main raw material



Workshop, that wins the bread and is located at home, is now in recess

In the sunny verandah of the hut is the workshop of the stone-carver, bestrewn with most of the tools and equipments, necessitated in shaping the wares

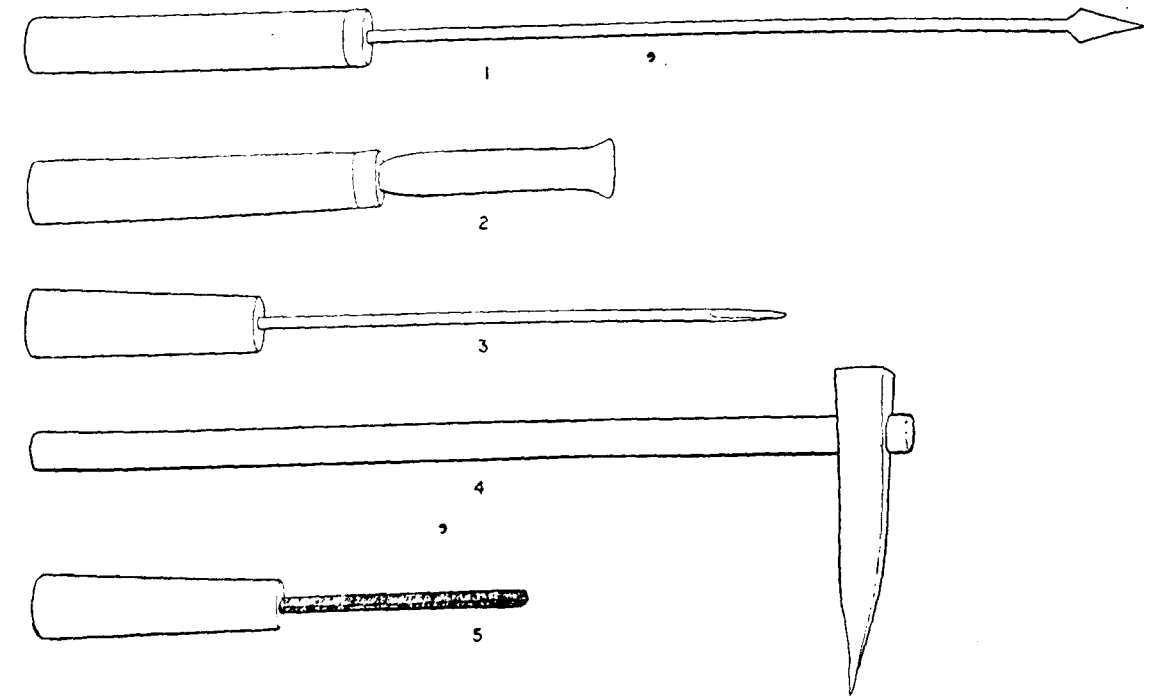
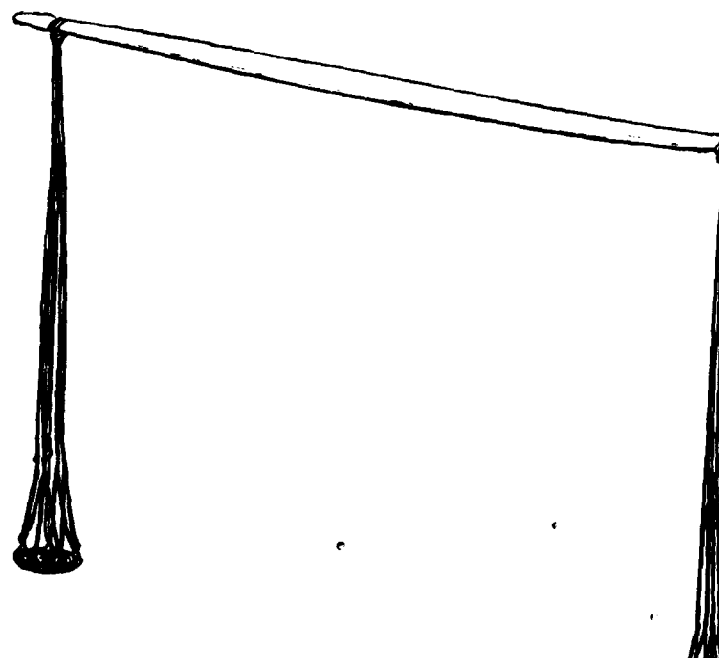


Quarrying tools, that unearth the earthly stone (Phyllite)

1. *Kodal* (Spade)—A sharp-edged iron blade, set to a 3 ft. long wooden handle, is used in digging the earth and removing the debris from the exposed stone in the quarry
2. *Gainti* (Pick)—An iron bar with two sharp-pointed ends, set to a 3 ft. long wooden handle, is used in breaking the surface of the earth to create fissures
3. *Sabal* (Crowbar)—A 6 ft. long iron bar with a beak-like end is used in striking and lifting stone-slabs and also in separating the slab along the crack in the rock through its plane of schistosity

Carries weight (of stone) athwart the artisan's shoulders

Baank (Shoulder-yoke) of bamboo, 4 ft. to 5 ft. long, with two nodes, is in horizontally placed—*Sik* (Rope) is the net of indigenous rope, (of *Saboi* grass) about 4 ft. long, suspended vertically from each node of the *Baank* to contain stone-slabs and articles during transportation, borne on the shoulders of an artisans

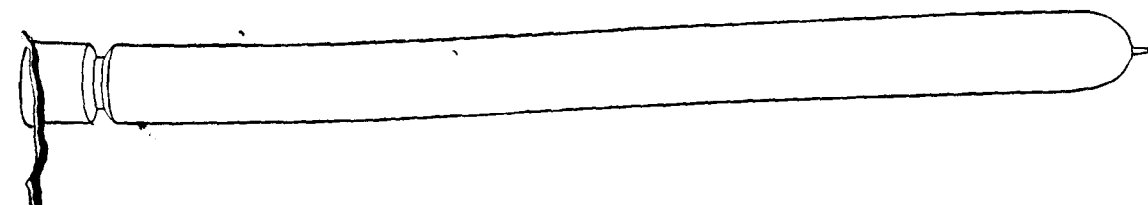


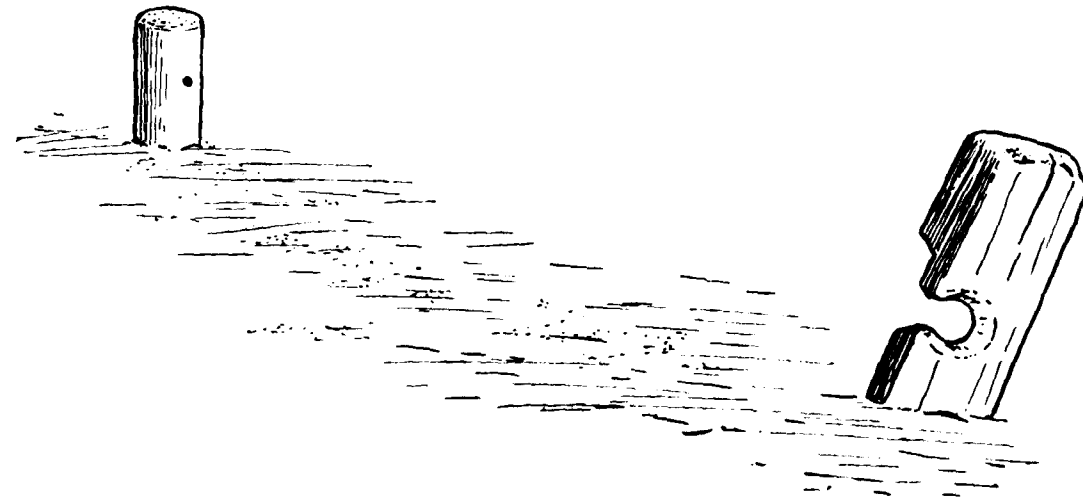
Tools that shape the articles from crude stone-slab

1. *Patamkiri*—A long chisel with one end looking like the blade of an arrow is used in polishing and designing articles
2. *Majni*—A tool looking like a cobbler's chisel is used in polishing and designing operations
3. *Saru Batali*—A thin cylindrical iron rod with one sharp-pointed end, a bit flattened, it is a chisel with the same function as the other two tools
4. *Kurul* (Axe)—A hammer-like tool with one end tapering and the other end flat, set to a 1½ ft. long wooden handle, it is used in shaping a piece of stone-slab into the crude shape of the desired article
5. *File*—A serrated iron tool, 6 inches long, set to a wooden handle, it has a rasping action and is used in polishing the edges of an *Ash-tray*

An equipment, rather than a tool

Kund (Country-lathe)—A 3 ft. long wooden stump with an iron nail attached to one end and the other end flat disc-shaped, with a depression, two inches above the flat end, the equipment serves the purpose of a rotating country-lathe, when set between two fixed stakes





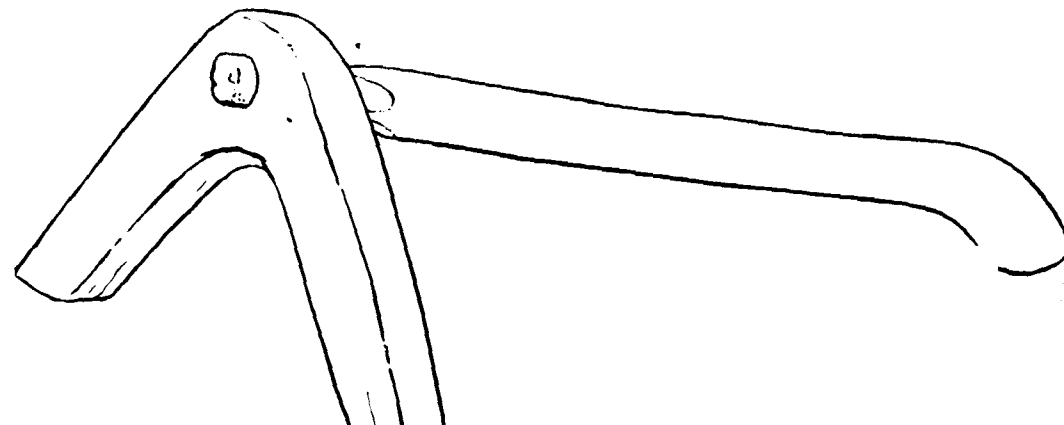
The two equipments hold the Kund

Pargos—A 2½ ft. wooden block with a hole in the middle, the equipment, on the left above, with a portion measuring 2 ft. grounded in the earth, holds the Kund

Khap—A piece of 3 ft. long wood with a groove alongside its length, the equipment with 2 ft. buried in the ground serves as a stake for the Kund

Also an equipment

Phalati—A wooden stand with two short legs, shaped like an inverted V projected from an apex, it is used to hold the chisel during polishing and designing operations



Simulpal. Their tools are perhaps as old as the craft itself. Wind of change does not appear to have ever blown over the tools, as evident from their use. The most striking feature about the tools is their simple design, crude shape, and stereotyped nature. That stone is hard and that to cut it one requires a tool of a harder material, preferably steel, are not fully appreciated by the artisans. That the design of a tool is functional and that the material of a tool should be that which serves the artisans best are lost upon the artisans or that the idea never strikes them. That steel would have been a better substitute for iron, of which the tools are now made, to minimise loss of energy and to maximise productivity of the craft is equally a missed point. Iron, that has been used for generations by the artisans as the material for the tools, wears out easily on *Phyllite* during shaping or cutting operations.

In the discussion on tools these features will be brought out gradually. But, before it is opened, certain basic features of the craft are detailed to pinpoint the readers' attention on the fact that the fortune of the craft has revolved round the tool for ages past and will continue to do so for years to come. The tools, all manipulated by hands, are traditional both in the sense of hereditary use as well as in the sense of attachment for the same design and form. The conservatism of the artisans coupled with their lack of means sometimes explains why they do not venture to deviate from a set track, even though they feel the necessity. All the tools are country-made and indigenous in nature. Mechanised tools are practically absent, except of course, a hand-driven improvised country-lathe, serving the purpose of a rotating wheel. Except in the manufacture of *Ash-tray* all the tools are identically used by the households. File is used only in the manufacture of *Ash-tray*.

DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION

Gainti (Pick)

An iron-bar with two sharp-pointed ends, set to a wooden handle, through a hole in the

middle of the bar, it is 1 ft. 6 inches in length and its wooden handle is 3 ft. long. It is used in breaking the surface of the earth or in digging the earth to collect the stone.

Kodal (Spade)

A sharp-edged iron blade, 1 ft. 3 inches long, set to a 3 ft. long wooden handle, it is used for digging and cutting earth, but its main use is limited to removal of earth from the exposed stones in the quarry.

Sabal (Crowbar)

A 6 ft. long bar of iron with a beak-like end, it is used as lever. The other side of the iron bar is tapering. It is used for striking and lifting slabs of stone and also for separating one slab along a crack from the other.

Kurul (Axe)

A hammer-like iron tool with one end tapering and the other end flat, set to a 1½ ft. wooden handle, it measures 7 inches from end to end.

Batali (Chisel)

It is an iron tool with sharp edges of different shapes, fixed upon a short wooden stump. The length of the tool varies from 6 inches to 12 inches. The tool is used for polishing-cum-designing purpose.

(a) *Saru Batali*—This chisel is a thin cylindrical iron rod with one sharp-pointed end, a bit flattened.

(b) *Majni*—It looks like the cobbler's chisel.

(c) *Patamkiri*—It is a long chisel with one end looking like the blade of an arrow.

All the three chisels are used for the same purpose.

File

An iron tool, with no Bengali equivalent in the artisan's vocabulary, it is 6 inches long. The serrated tool has a rasping action. The tool is

set to a wooden handle and is used in polishing the edges of the *Ash-tray*.

All the tools from first to fourth are used by the artisans at the quarries and the two remaining tools are used on their dwelling-cum-workshop. As the first three tools are heavy, they are kept at the site of the quarries, but the tool no. 4 is carried back, as it is handy. Tools at nos. 5 and 6 are always kept at the dwelling of the artisans.

OWNERSHIP

The different tools, mentioned above, are procured by the artisans on their own initiative. When necessary, they purchase the tools against cash-payment. The tools are not generally obtained on loan from others. Some of the tools, now used in the craft-centre, are self-owned and the designs of all the tools are inherited from the artisan's father.

It may be pointed out that all the tools are not owned by all the households, as none has all the tools. Only one Karga artisan, incidentally the master-craftsman, who has all the tools except crowbar, ranks as an important artisan with the maximum number of tools, though not all. Of the two Karga households having the three sets of tools, one has only crowbar, axe and the chisel (three varieties), while the other family owns axe, chisel (three varieties) and the file. The other 18 Karga households possess only axe and chisel. Four Bhumij households have all the tools except file. One Bhumij has only the axe and the chisel, while another possesses spade, pick, axe and chisel. One Karmakar has all the tools except file, while another has only spade, axe and chisel.

On a resume, it is evident that seven picks, eight spades, six crowbars, two files, 29 axes and 87 chisels (three varieties) serve the requirement of the craft and of its followers, even though none of them owns or possesses all the tools. This aspect may prompt one to ask several questions, pertinent to the lack of some vital tools by

all the craftsmen and its effect on production. Of the six sets of tools, file is meant for giving finishing touch to a specific product like *Ash-tray*, which is manufactured exactly by those two households, which own this specific tool. Axe and chisel are necessary tools no doubt, but they are required at a later stage of processing. All the craftsmen have these two tools, the importance of which remains unchanged because of their indispensable nature. But, the most important implements are perhaps the pick, the spade and the crowbar, without any of which the artisans cannot work in the quarry. Now, these tools are in the possession of only five households, four Bhumij and one Karmakar, and obviously their owners are the V.I.P.s of the craft-centre. But, it is gratifying to note that these artisans do not exploit their fellow-men, making a capital of the situation in any way through their unique position of being the owners of the three most vital, or rather the *open sesame*, tools to work in the quarries. Here, a singular instance of neighbourliness *par excellence* is demonstrated. The artisans make their tools available not only to the craftsmen of their own community but to others also. This gesture has emanated from a simple heart and abundant good-will. Not only the owners do not charge anything in cash or kind for the privilege of use of their tools for days on end, but they pay all recurring expenses on the repair of these tools also. It should also be pointed out that willingness to help a colleague is not confined to these craftsmen only, who have shared their capital-earning tools, though the prerogatives of individual owners remain unaffected. But, it is observed that each and all, irrespective of community or economic status, has this spirit. Otherwise, one cannot explain why common tools like chisel and axe are lent for use to the household in need, because its tool has become blunt and awaits repair. The loanee household has not to pay any rental for this voluntary help. The household, taking the aid, only reciprocates it, when the lender is equally in need at some other time.

The reciprocal aid and common use of the three vital tools have helped the craftsmen to pursue their occupation peacefully for many years. To the question as to how all the people work in both Dhangikusum and Sankhabhanga with so limited set of quarrying tools the answer is that they do so, being helped not only by the craftsmen of this village but also by those of other centres.

Some of the craft-centres in Binpur Police Station, described in the last Chapter, also draw their raw material from the same source, i.e., Sankhabhanga and Dhangikusum. The craftsmen from other places quarry stones in the same hills cheek by jowl with the artisans of Simulpal. It has been observed that their tools are also allowed to be used by the owner-artisans without any precondition. The spirit of co-operation has cut across narrow compartments of regionalism and has held at bay the forces of community-feeling. The owners of the tools are helped by the users in quarrying the raw material and in lifting the slabs to the work-site beside the quarry.

Though the working arrangement appears very simple outwardly, this issue should not be over-simplified by losing sight of the effect of this arrangement on the productivity of the tools and on the production-aspects of the craft. First, the tools, even though used by all the households, cannot gainfully employ all the persons of this centre, not to speak of others, about whom the information is limited to certain broad points. The persons, working in the quarry, are not always obliged to go slow and bide their time till the tools are free in so far as their use is concerned, because tools like pick and spade are not required all the days except for opening a quarry. Generally, a quarry, once opened, supplies stone to the artisans for a couple of months. Besides, the function of a crowbar has been supplanted by an axe, a tool owned by all the artisans. The sizing operation is done by an axe too. So, the availability of the tool is not

always a problem to the artisans nor it is a question of help to assist an artisan to lift the stone. In 1959 and once more in 1965 a loan of Rs. 50/- was given to each household by the Government of West Bengal to help the artisans purchase the tools, but on both the occasions none utilised the loan in the purchase of the set of tools, required for the craft.

Apparently paradoxical though it may appear, the artisans badly need stone-quarrying to be done by other people for meeting the needs of the craftsmen; but they have not taken any step, which may help quarrying emerge out as a distinct occupation of some other people. The stone-carvers do not favour division of labour, neither does any artisan specialise in the art of quarrying alone. In their opinion such division will not impart any tangible benefit to them. They look upon the craft of stone-carving as an integrated work, right from quarrying to the finishing stage and so they entrench themselves in the work in all the stages without striking a division in any stage. As a result, the artisans are to bear the responsibility of collecting raw material from the quarries themselves. Here, no distinction has been observed between an owner and a non-owner and as such, in the use of the tools the owners volunteer to pose as non-owners and place themselves on an equal footing with the non-owners.

The artisans are observed to be arranged in a working group of persons, varying between two and four, before opening a quarry. Now, once it is opened, the stone-slab is collected by the crowbar. The tool changes hands, as each gets a slab to work upon. It is obvious that an artisan has to wait for his turn to get the slab. The information as to the time taken for collecting a slab could not be ascertained, because it often varies from person to person and from site to site. Still then, simple rules of arithmetic prove beyond question that five sets of tools, fully controlled and utilised for four days a week, may provide work for the twenty-

nine artisans but cannot fully employ them. It has been further observed that lack of these tools enables the artisans to go slow in processing the articles, for they know that a quicker outturn will not help them get the tools, which are otherwise engaged.

Ownership of tools has not, however, adversely affected the artisans, because they can work with the tools, even though they do not own them. But, the production would have stepped up, if all the artisans, or at least a substantial section, had owned the tools ; even then ownership of all tools cannot rule out partial utilisation of the tools. The artisans now work for four days in the quarries and for one day at home. The work at home does not employ them full time even on the day, which they spend on finishing the half-turned goods. One day is spent at the *Hat* and another day is dubbed as the day of rest. The phasing of this programme has necessarily been an outcome of the lack of tools.

If the tools were exclusively owned, they could have changed the production-trend and oriented the life of the craftsmen towards a better direction. The income aspects in this light have been discussed in the chapter on the economy of the craftsmen.

Co-operative Society has played no role in supplying the tools to the artisans nor in their purchase. All the artisans had obtained a grant from the State Government for the purchase of the necessary tools three or four years back. The amount was not spent on tools, but it was utilised to meet domestic expenses. The inertness, grown out of usage, by which some necessary tools are communized, is hard to go, as it has not affected the artisans in getting the bare necessities of life from this craft. But, the economic aspects of the craft cannot be ignored, simply because some social usage or individual's goodwill has allowed for many years so many people a privilege, undoubtedly a very important privilege.

Price factor explains why the artisans do not

own and possess all the tools in their set. But, this contention holds water only for spade, crowbar and pick, the cost of which is higher than that of the axe and the chisels. The axe and the chisels being essential tools for carving out a utensil from a stone-slab, the artisans wisely purchase these. But, a complete set will undoubtedly make the artisans more self-reliant and enable them to enhance their income appreciably. It is not, however, suggested that the artisans do not own the complete set because of operational problems. Rather, they do not always have the surplus income for the purchase of the missing tools. The present practice of mutual help has also enabled them not to be seriously aware of this aspect of the problem.

LIFE OF THE TOOLS

In a discussion on tools the question of durability is not a matter of topical interest only. It gives one a rough idea about the investment requirements of a craft on account of tools as also the time-interval, at which each tool has to be substituted after it outlives its necessity. The life of a tool depends partly on how it is used, meaning thereby the purpose it serves and the material it is used on. The factor that determines a tool's length of life is its material and its upkeep. The third and the most important determinant, influencing the longevity of a tool, is the number of hours of its use.

About the first point the observation is that tools like pick, spade and crowbar are used for quarrying the stone and their use as such is more general i.e., to collect the raw material. The axe is used to size and shape the articles and the chisel to polish and design them. File has a limited function of polishing only a particular product, the *Ash-tray*. So far as the raw material is concerned, all the tools are used on the identical material, that is, *Phyllite*.

Two full days' work by an artisan opens a quarry after digging. To take out a stone-slab of the desired size, an artisan takes 15-20 minutes

time. Sometimes, the period varies to 16-22 minutes. An artisan generally takes 10-15 minutes and even 16-20 minutes in shaping operation ; the time depends much upon the quality of the stone. The digging operations, therefore, take a longer time than the shaping operation. Even though the present complementary arrangement of investment by rotation has helped the artisan to continue the work, it is no happy arrangement. Besides, the loss of time is obvious from the work-study, cited above. Pick and spade are necessary for some days of the week and not for all the days at a stretch.

About the second point the information is that all the tools are made of iron. Now, in the *Moh's Scale* iron's hardness is denoted by 4.5. Obviously, hard stones, processed by these tools, are less hard than iron ; otherwise, iron tools would have been useless. The hardness of a rock cannot be determined in any scale, as it is a combination of several minerals, the softest of which is Talc (hardness denoted by 1 in *Moh's Scale* and can be scratched by finger-nails hardness of which is slightly above 1). *Phyllite*, not a very hard rock like granite, is argillaceous in nature, being a product of clay in the metamorphosed state. Still then, the wear and tear of the iron tools is considerable. Iron is not an ideal material for cutting, for which work lathe-steel is ideal. So, the tools very often get blunt and require repair, though all the craftsmen do not undertake it timely to prevent cessation of work. The blunt tools are used till such time, when the artisans get them repaired. Blunt tools cannot necessarily give the same service as the sharp ones and thus they affect the pace of production. Though the figures are very hard to get on the point, the inference is very logical and it follows from the statement of the artisans. The timely repair of tools are deferred, because the artisans do not have any alternate set to keep the work going.

Lastfy, the number of hours, for which an artisan uses each tool, is an important factor,

lengthening or curtailing the life-span of a tool. The hours of work with each tool could not be stated by them, but they did not hesitate to spell out the number of days during which the tools were busy. The information, though not very pointed on hours, is very specific about days and will be helpful on its own merits.

The table on the tools given below relates to their vital statistics.

TABLE 11
Particulars of tools

Name of the tool	Period of use (minimum) of tools	No. of repairs required	Period after which tools get unserviceable
Pick	Two days in a week	Once in a month	Two years
Spade	Four days in a week	Ditto	Ditto
Crowbar	Ditto	Ditto	Two and half years
Axe	Ditto	Once in a week	One year
Chisel	One day in a week	Ditto	Six months
Saru Batali			
Majni			
Patamkiri	One day in a week	Ditto	One year
File			

The crowbar has the maximum length of life and working capacity, whereas the chisel is the weakest member, lasting and working minimum.

The repair work is stated by the artisans to be confined to *Palish*, which literally means polishing. But, actually it means sharpening and tempering. Repair work is done by one of the artisans of the Karmakar community occasionally without any fee from the fellow-craftsmen of the village. Another blacksmith of the village, also of the Karmakar community, does all the manufacturing and repairing work of the stone-cutter's tools. An amount of 0.25 *paise* is charged for the *Palish* of a tool, whatever its nature.

STONEWARES

SOURCE AND MANUFACTURER

As evident from the table on the life of tools, no artisan can bequeathe to his successor any tool, with which he starts work in the prime of his life. Tools are mortals as any other object on earth and are rejected as scrap, once the serviceability comes to an end and once it is felt that even timely repairs cannot make them workable. So, an artisan necessarily inherits from his father or grandfather only those tools, which are purchased or manufactured in the later part of their life and which remain serviceable even after their retirement or death. The artisan inherits only the design of the tools and the techniques of manipulation, if not the tools themselves.

Some of the tools are made to order according to the design of the tools, used in the household, and some are purchased from the market. The sources, from which the tools are obtained, and the makers of these tools are stated below.

TABLE 12
Sources of tools

Name of the tool	Place at which obtained and how	Maker
Pick	Purchased at the <i>Hats</i> at (i) Mochabandh, P.S. Chakulia, Dist. Singhbhum, Bihar. (ii) Chakulia, P.S. Chakulia, Dist. Singhbhum, Bihar.	Manufactured indigenously by the blacksmiths
Spade	Purchased at the <i>Hat</i> at Silda, P.S. Binpur, Dist. Midnapore, West Bengal.	Manufactured by the blacksmiths
Crowbar	Purchased at Chakulia, P.S. Chakulia, Dist. Singhbhum, Bihar.	Ditto
Axe	Manufactured at Simulpal from the material supplied by the stone-cutter artisans on job order basis.	Blacksmiths of the Karmakar community
Chisel	Ditto	Ditto
File	Purchased from shops at Jhargram in the district of Midnapore.	Factory-made and made in India

Of all the tools required, only the axe and the chisel are indigenous products in a very limited sense. Iron for the tools is purchased at Jhargram and supplied to the blacksmiths of the place. The tools are manufactured according to the artisan's specifications. The charge of the blacksmith, not fixed, varies according to the size of the tools. It should not, however, be inferred that the designs of these tools vary much. The only variance observed is in the size of the tools and it is deliberate in order of the artisan's choice and ability to handle the tool with ease. The wooden handles for axe and chisel are made by the Bairagi carpenter of Simulpal from the wooden stumps, supplied by the carpenter himself. The artisan pays him a price, mutually agreed upon. It has been found that the handles of the old rejected tools, instead of being thrown away, are utilised to fit in the new tools.

PRICE (PAST AND PRESENT)

The cost price of the tools, whether locally manufactured or purchased outside, is the most important part of the study on the tools of the artisans. The craft-centre, though situated far away from the district and subdivisional headquarters, is not unaffected by the price-trends there or in the whole of the State. The raw material for the tools, not being the product of the place, is well under the influence of any inflationary trend in the economic scene of the State. The observation will be strengthened from the comparative table on price of the tools given below :

TABLE 13

Price of tools

Name of the tools	Past market price (approximate) before Independence	Present market price in 1964-65	Price-rise (percentage)
	Rs. paise	Rs. paise	
Pick	3 00	8 00	166.7
Spade	3 50	5 00	42.9
Crowbar	5 00	8 00	60.0
Axe	4 00	6 00	50.0

RAW MATERIALS, TOOLS AND EQUIPMENTS

Name of the tools	Past market price (approximate) before Independence	Present market price in 1964-65	Price-rise (percentage)
	Rs. paise	Rs. paise	
Chisel			
<i>Saru Batali</i>	2 50	5 00	100.0
<i>Majni</i>	2 50	5 00	100.0
<i>Patamkiri</i>	2 50	5 00	100.0
File	5 00	15 00	200.0

A mere look at the table will make one aware of the phenomenal rise in the price of the tools. The price of pick, chisel and file has been more than cent per cent. The explanation may be found in the changed price structure of iron. The above table is illuminating in another respect. It enables one to have an idea of the investment requirements of the tools for an

artisan to start with a new set. Whereas before Independence or in the language of the artisan "in his father's generation", an artisan required Rs. 23/- to purchase all the tools except the file, if he was to start an independent establishment with an idea to produce all the wares except *Ash-tray* (which was not produced earlier), his son now requires Rs. 42/- for an identical set of tools. The capital on account of tools is now double the previous amount.

REPAIR AND REPLACEMENT

Though the artisans simply state that the tools are liable to wear and tear and repairs are occasionally necessitated to make them serviceable, an idea about the estimated cost of repair and replacement may be formed from the table below :

TABLE 14

Estimated cost of repair and replacement of tools

Name of the tools	Life of the tools	Cost price	Annual incidental cost on repair, processing etc., if any	Total outlay on the tools	Salvage price	Estimated annual cost of repair and replacement
		Rs. paise	Rs. paise	Rs. paise	Rs. paise	Rs. paise
Pick	2 years	8 00	3 00	14 00	..	7 00
Spade	2 years	5 00	3 00	11 00	..	5 00
Crowbar	2½ years	8 00	3 00	14 00	..	7 00
Axe	1 year	6 00	13 00	19 00	..	19 00
Chisel						
<i>Saru Batali</i>	6 months	5 00	*6 50	*11 50	..	23 00
<i>Majni</i>	6 months	5 00	*6 50	*11 50	..	23 00
<i>Patamkiri</i>	6 months	5 00	*6 50	*11 50	..	23 00
File	1 year	15 00		15 00	..	15 00

*Half yearly—Editor.

It is interesting that from none of the tools the artisan gets any salvage price. The tools live their term only to be rejected as scrap at the end. The wooden handle, recovered from an old axe or a chisel, is not sold and the price of a new tool of this variety does not vary appreciably on

account of its handle. The second interesting point is that the maintenance cost or the incidental cost on axe and chisel is more than its cost price. Thirdly, the annual cost of depreciation is estimated on the basis of the statement of the artisan and necessarily implies the recurring

cost, an artisan is involved in for his tools. In practice, the system of reciprocal aid has kept down the depreciation cost to some extent, though its exactness could not be ascertained. But, even then, the tools run the greater risk of being unserviceable at an earlier date, because of its use by a larger number of artisans, who do not undertake the necessary repairs. The artisan has then to purchase the tools earlier than the life of the tools usually warrants and the cost of depreciation comes to the same, even though he avoids or defers the timely routine-servicing for the time-being. It may be mentioned here that in case an artisan does not get the tool serviced by the blacksmith, he gets it going by whetting the tool on an indigenous sand-stone, collected from the hills free and kept at home. The total estimated cost of depreciation on account of all the tools comes to Rs. 122.50 *paise* per year, if an artisan possesses all the tools.

ATTITUDE OF THE ARTISANS

All the artisans utilise their tools to the fullest capacity, as described earlier about the period of use. With the design of the tools all the households except two Kargas and one Bhumij are satisfied and they have no complaint to make against any tool of their craft. Of the two excepted Kargas, one desires the design of the tool to be changed to make it more sharp-pointed and cites as instances tools like pick and crowbar, which are manufactured outside the village and are purchased in the same form as they are available. This household does not, however, search for the tools of the desired design anywhere. The other Karga wants only the file, which he does not have at present. He wishes to include *Ash-trays* in his list of wares. The Bhumij wants the material of the tool to be substituted by a better one, but he fails to mention any specific material. The substitution is necessary, as suggested by him, to prevent wear and tear of the tools at the present rate.

The attitude of the majority of the artisans is one of complacency and satisfaction. No one

wants either any new tool or any new design for it. They have accepted what their fathers had adopted and do not give much thought on any change, so far as tools are concerned.

EQUIPMENTS

Tools alone do not suffice to produce the articles. Some equipments are equally necessary in their production. The equipments, like the tools, are traditional and age-old in design, simple and crude in their appearance and indigenous in their make. The equipments are manually operated.

DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION

Kund

A 3 ft. long wooden stick, it resembles the stump of the game of cricket, with a sharp pointed iron nail attached to one end and with the other end disc-shaped with a depression, two inches above the fiat end. Fixed between two stakes, permanently grounded, it is the principal equipment of the craft serving the purpose of a lathe, on which the unfinished stone article is fixed at one end and rotated for polishing and designing the article.

Khap

A piece of wood with a groove in the middle along its length-wise end, 3 ft. long with 2 ft. permanently implanted in the ground, the equipment serves as a stake.

Pargos

A 2 ft. 6 inches long wooden block with a hole in the middle, the equipment is placed opposite the *Khap* at a distance of about 3 ft., with a portion measuring 2 ft. grounded in the earth permanently.

Phalati

A wooden stand with two short legs, shaped like an inverted *V* projected from an apex, in the middle of which a long wooden stick is inserted through a hole, this equipment is used to support

the chisel during its operation in the processes of polishing and designing.

Al

This is not an equipment by itself but a part of the *Kund*. Three inches long, this is an iron nail with 2 inches inserted inside one end of the *Kund*. It fits the *Kund* into the *Pargos*.

Jhuri (Basket)

Made of split bamboo, this container has a height of 6 inches and a base with a diameter of 18 inches. It is used to carry loose earth from the quarry and to throw the rubbish outside.

Dori (Rope)

Indigenous rope of *Saboi* grass with a length of 6 ft., it is used to wind round the *Kund*, which is rotated by pulling the rope from one end to the other.

Baank

A shoulder-yoke of bamboo of the length of 4 ft. to 5 ft. with two nodes at its two ends, it is used to carry the articles from the quarry-site to the workshop in an unfinished stage and from the workshop to the *Hat* in the finished form.

Sik

A net of rope with a length of about 4 ft., it is fixed to the node of the *Baank* to contain the articles during their transportation.

OWNERSHIP

All the practising households own and possess the eight equipments, described earlier. Some of the equipments are inherited from their fathers and others are purchased. Most of the equipments are substituted by purchase or manufacture. No equipment is obtained from any outside agency or from the Co-operative Society, nor is it obtained from any household on a rental. Loan of equipment against a charge in cash or kind is not practised here, though reciprocal aid is the motivating spirit of the craft-centre, where need of one is looked after by others even in

the supply of equipments. Purchase of equipments is always against cash-payment and the artisan takes the decision and initiative to own the necessary equipment.

LIFE OF THE EQUIPMENTS

The equipments, used here, do not last eternally. They are subject to the normal rules of infirmity and constant use makes them useless after a certain period of time. The life of the equipments suggests the period of serviceableness, at the end of which the equipments are no better than some useless junks, required to be substituted by new ones. The life of the equipments also enables one to have an idea about the time, after which an artisan is required to spend some money on their purchase. The table on the term of life of the equipments is given below :

TABLE 15

Life of the equipments		
Name of the equipment	Frequency of use	Period after which un-serviceable
Kund	One day in a week	Two years
Kap	Ditto	Six months
Phargos	Ditto	Ditto
Phalati	Ditto	Three years
Al	Ditto	One year
Jhuri	Two days in a week	Five months
Dori	One day in a week	One week
Sik	Five day in a week	Six months
Baank	Ditto	Two years

The frequency of use, described above, gives the period, for which the equipments are used in the minimum. But, it does not negative the possibility of their use beyond the given period. The life of the equipments, suggested in the above table, gives one an impression about the time, beyond which the equipments, even if used, will not be serviceable to the same extent as the new ones. Secondly, the period may be stretched by a few days or by a few weeks, but in no case an equipment will last as long as the life of the artisan. An artisan will have to change his equipments many a time in his life despite his attachment for the old ones and for their designs. It

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is interesting that though *Al* is a part of the *Kund*, it becomes worn out earlier than the main equipment itself. It is on the *Al* that the *Kund* rotates and so it is susceptible to greater frictional force and rapid wearing. The *Dori* or the rope which pulls the *Kund* is the weakest equipment or gadget, replaced every week by a new one. Incidentally, it is a local product and not a very costly one, the price of which will be given shortly in connection with the discussion on the price of the equipments. *Phalati* has the longest day of use, followed by the *Kund* from the point of length of life.

SOURCE AND MANUFACTURER

All the equipments are products, either of the place or of the same police station. The equipments excepting the *Sik* and the *Baank*, which are made by the artisans themselves, are purchased from the craftsmen producing the equipments. The table below will give an idea of the source of these equipments, about how they are obtained and from whom.

TABLE 16

Source and manufacturer of the equipments

Name of the equipment	Place at which obtained and how	Particulars of the manufacturer
<i>Kund</i>	Purchased at Simulpal from the producer's house on payment of the price in cash	Produced by a carpenter of the Bairagi community of Simulpal, who manufactures the equipment on order from the stone-cutter according to the latter's specification from the wood, supplied by the carpenter himself
<i>Khap</i>	Ditto	Ditto
<i>Pargos</i>	Ditto	Ditto
<i>Phalati</i>	Ditto	Ditto

Name of the equipment	Place at which obtained and how	Particulars of the manufacturer
<i>Al</i>	Purchased from the producer's house at Simulpal on payment of the price in cash	Manufactured by a blacksmith of the Karmakar caste, a resident of Simulpal, from the iron-piece in his blacksmithy on the order of the stone-cutter according to the latter's specification
<i>Jhuri</i>	Purchased at the <i>Hat</i> at Silda P.S. Binpur, Dist. Midnapore from the basket-makers	Manufactured by the basket-makers of the Mahali community of the villages around Silda, from bamboo purchased locally or outside
<i>Dori</i>	Purchased from the producer's houses at Simulpal on payment of the price in cash	Manufactured by the rope-makers of the Kheria tribe residing at Simulpal from the <i>Saboi</i> grass, locally grown
<i>Sik</i>	Produced by the artisans themselves from the rope purchased from the Kherias of the village	Rope is manufactured by the Kherias, but the equipment is produced by further processing from the rope purchased by the artisans. The processing consists of interwinning and knotting together two or three ropes
<i>Baank</i>	Produced by the artisans themselves from bamboo, obtained in the village free of cost (obviously neighbourly gifts)	The bamboo is split into four or eight pieces lengthwise and the node is grooved by scraping the split bamboo with a <i>Daon</i> or sharp iron blade

The artisans are spared the distress of further walking to purchase the equipments, as most of them are locally produced. *Jhuri* is the solitary exception, but it is purchased along with other articles including the subsidiary raw materials and the domestic goods of consumption

RAW MATERIALS, TOOLS AND EQUIPMENTS

during the weekly visit to the *Hat*. The purchase of *Dori* or rope is made in a bulk, so that the pull-string and the *Sik* may both be obtained at a time. The nature of the equipments is such that the raw materials are locally available and produced by the local people. The craft has helped a section of the local people like the Kherias, the solitary Bairagi carpenter and another Karmakar blacksmith to earn their livelihood, at least in part, from the manufacture of some of the equipments required by the craftsmen.

PRICE (PAST AND PRESENT)

The price of the equipments is also as important as that of the tools. In calculating the investment on equipments the price will be a factor to be taken into account. The price-structure will also enable one to know what amount an artisan has to spend on the purchase of a new set of equipments, in case a new establishment is opened. The price of the equipments in the past will point out the extent of rise in price at present without, however, any corresponding improvement in the nature or quality of the equipments. The table is given in the next column on the cost of equipments in the past and on that at present :

TABLE 17

Cost of equipments

Name of the equipment	Past market price (approximate) before Independence (Paise)	Present market price (Paise)	Percentage rise in price
<i>Kund</i>	50	100	100.0
<i>Khap</i>	25	37	48.0
<i>Pargos</i>	25	37	48.0
<i>Phalati</i>	37	50	35.2
<i>Al</i>	25	37	48.0
<i>Jhuri</i>	25	37	48.0
<i>Dori</i>	25	37	48.0
<i>Sik</i>	50	75	50.0
<i>Baank</i>	Unspecified	Unspecified	Unspecified

Except for *Kund*, price-rise has not been more than 50 per cent. The price-rise has not been as steep as that for the tools, because most of the equipments are made of locally-grown forest-produce or farm-produce. The increased price is the result of the increased wage-rate and the higher price index. In the past an artisan was required to spend Rs. 2.62 *paise* for the purchase of all the necessary equipments, which would now call for an amount of Rs. 4.10 *paise*.

TABLE 18

Depreciation of equipments

Name of the equipment	Life of the equipment	Cost price Rs. paise	Total outlay on the equipment Rs. paise	Salvage price (Paise)	Estimated annual cost of repair and replacement Rs. paise
<i>Kund</i>	2 years	1 00	1 00	..	0 50
<i>Khap</i>	6 months	0 37	0 37	..	0 74
<i>Pargos</i>	6 months	0 37	0 37	..	0 74
<i>Phalati</i>	3 years	0 50	0 50	..	0 17
<i>Al</i>	1 year	0 37	0 37	..	0 37
<i>Jhuri</i>	6 months	0 37	0 37	..	0 74
<i>Dori</i>	1 week	0 37	0 37	..	19 24
<i>Sik</i>	6 months	0 75	0 75	..	1 50
<i>Baank</i>	2 years	0 00	0 00	..	

REPAIR AND REPLACEMENT

Though it is conventional to calculate the cost of depreciation only on tools, the table has been prepared on the depreciation of the equipments also, simply because the artisan admits that equipments and tools alike are liable to the gradual wearing-out process and necessitate substitution. A scrutiny of the table will apprise one that equipments in the craft-centre have to be substituted wholly at the end of their period of serviceableness. No repair is undertaken, because it does not make the equipments work and because the repairing cost comes equal to, if not greater than, the cost-price. The cost of depreciation will also enlighten one about the involved estimated expenditure of an artisan on account of the purchase of his equipments afresh.

The annual cost of depreciation on account of all the equipments comes to Rs. 24.00 *paise* and it is doubtful if the artisans can avoid the

expenses altogether. They have to spend a part of the amount, if not the whole, in substituting the equipments. The cost of depreciation is the highest for *Dori*. None of the equipments fetches any salvage price and gives any relief to the artisan.

ATTITUDE OF THE CRAFTSMEN

The households without any exception show an attitude of contentment with their equipments. They have seen the equipments to have been used by their fathers and they are using the same equipments without any change in form or design. They do not state if they require any new set of equipments, which may help them in the production nor do they give any thought on the problems of the functional aspects of the equipments. They also fail to suggest any step for improvement. The *Kund* or country-lathe revolves in the same old fashion on its *Al* with the helper pulling the string, as it did at the inception of the craft.

5

PROCESSES OF PRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

Free gifts of Nature provided in bounteous supplies of *Phyllite* require very careful handling during the processes of production. The processed articles bear testimony to the careful and deft touch of experienced hands. The raw materials are simple, the processing is hard, but the articles are not complex. The utilitarian values infused in the stone utensils are the product of hard labour and sincere efforts to bring a change in the form and shape of the crude stone slabs in order to make them usable and attractive.

But, the drama, that is enacted behind the scene of the market in open quarries and thatched huts, in rain and sunshine, in anxious hours of the day and in restful shadows of the afternoon, is a fascinating one. The story of production will now be told in the discussion to follow, to bring one nearer the artisan's production-centre, to let one know all about the physical structure, environment and hygienic conditions of the workshop, to enumerate the hours of work and to unfold the processes of production.

PHYSICAL STRUCTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND HYGIENIC CONDITIONS OF THE WORKSHOP

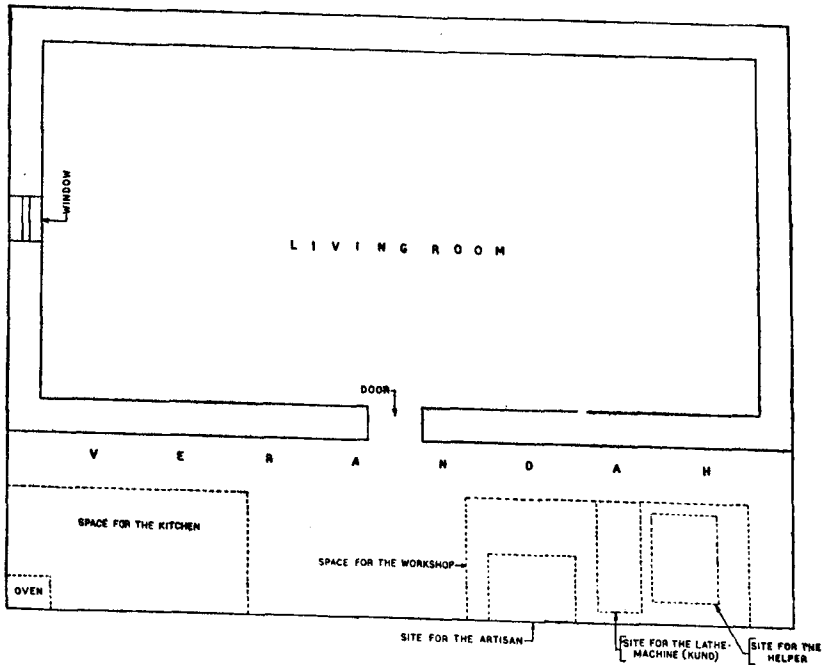
To call the artisan's place of work a workshop is a travesty of truth. The workshop is but a dwelling or to be more technical, a

dwelling-cum-workshop. All the 29 production units are located in the owners' homesteads. These units have no separate worksheds. An extended verandah of the thatched hut is the site of the workshop. In all cases but one the place of work of the artisan is located in the verandahs. A single household prefers to locate his workshop in the *Uthan* or the open compound of the dwelling. It is rather interesting that these workshops serve the artisans only in the later stages of processing, the earlier part of the production being carried on in the hills.

The verandahs, housing the main workshops, are open on three sides and closed only at the back side by the thick mud wall of the craftsman's living room. The plinth is a little raised above the ground level. The floor is earthen and the roof overhead is thatched with straw. The roof is repaired annually, but is thatched anew every five or six years. The floor of the verandah is swept daily by broomstick, but not given a face-lift by daily swabs. The area of the verandah varies from 40 sq.ft. (8 ft. x 5 ft.) to 72 sq.ft. (12 ft. x 6 ft.).

The workshop is devoid of any complex mechanical contrivances. The verandah is apt to beguile an outsider as a place of dwelling but for the two wooden stakes, known as *Khap*

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NOTIONAL GROUND PLAN OF A WORKSHOP-CUM-DWELLING

and *Pargos*, permanently grounded in the earth, a gaping hollow at the foot of the *Khap*, and a stone-slab half-sunk in the open courtyard, close to the verandah. With the *Kund* or the country lathe, well-set between the *Khap* and the *Pargos*, the artisan and his partner sit facing each other on two sides of it.

The workshops are generally well-ventilated. Natural light makes the sites bright and warm. They are not stuffy, articles and gadgets therein being few. The workshops are more or less clean.

The place of work in the artisan's house is not solely occupied by the craft. It serves other purposes as well. The verandah functions as the drawing room of the family for an evening gossip, leisurely rest during holidays and as reception corner for guests, visitors and friends. The *Uthan* or the open compound is used for endless domestic purposes, the specification of which will be platitudinous.

HOURS OF WORK

The craft under study calls for painstaking labour, strenuous work and savage strength from

its pursuers. The earth yields stone to the strong artisans alone but not to the weak or the feeble. Hence, the routine of an artisan's life and the nature of his work are the most important aspects of production. This will tell one the period of the day, during which an artisan works, and also the period of his work.

The discussion about the hours of work of an artisan will be meaningless without a look at the phasing of his weekly programme, an arrangement born of the cumulative experience and wisdom of generations. The weekly programme of the local artisans is a unique feature of this craft. Hours of work are divided in the quarry and in the workshop at home every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. During these days an artisan primarily works at the quarries for about seven hours and secondarily at home for an hour or so, depending on how much care and attention the half-finished articles demand of him. Sunday is the day of rest for all, but not so for the artisans. They spend the Sabbath-day at the quarries. But, on Thursday though he remains at home and does not visit

PROCESSES OF PRODUCTION

the quarry, the day does not give him any respite. He keeps himself busy in processing the half-done articles. Friday, the day of all days, is the *Hat*-day, when he visits the *Hat* at Silda to sell out what he has produced. Usually he does not work on this day, but if required, he works for a small period. Saturday is the day of rest, when the limbs, strained by work and long walk, cease to do any laborious job. The routined weekly programme is altered and adjusted on occasions. But, such changes are few and far between.

The artisans are very early risers. Work commences in the morning, evening drawing the shutter upon work. The work is carried on, so long as the natural light aids the artisan in his work. On Sunday the artisan rises early in the morning, takes the breakfast, visits the Forest Beat Office to pay the Royalty-cum-Tax, and to get the permit in lieu and then, goes to the quarry to start his work. He withdraws from work before sunset and returns home. He does not do any further work at home on return. On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday the routine follows the same pattern except that he does not have to visit the Forest Office. Thursday is the workday at home from morning till dusk. Friday, marking the market-day of the artisans, is spent outside the village till evening.

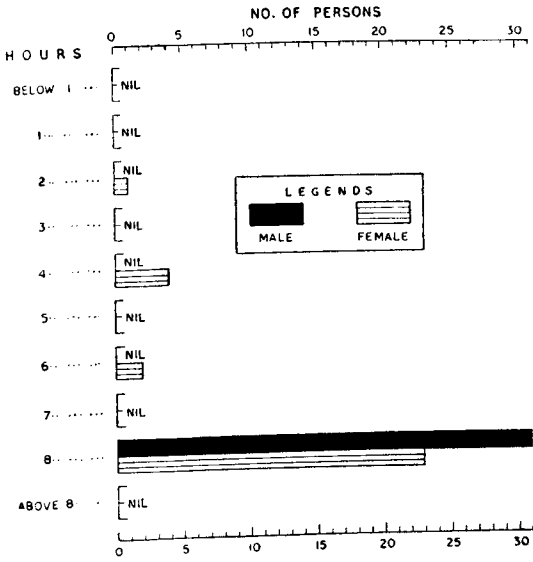
The table on the number of artisans by hours of work is given below :

TABLE 19

Caste/ Tribe	Total workers		Hours of work							
			No. of workers engaged in the craft for							
	M	F	2 hours		4 hours		6 hours		8 hours	
			M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Karga	21	21	..	1	..	2	..	1	21	17
Bhumij	8	7	..	..	..	2	..	..	8	5
Karmakar	2	2	..	..	..	..	..	1	2	1
Total	31	30	..	1	..	4	..	2	31	23

Note : M denotes Males & F denotes Females—Editor.

PRACTISING CRAFTSMEN & WORKING HOURS



Majority of the artisans (88.5 per cent) work for eight hours a day. The male artisans work for longer periods than the females. Whereas for all the male artisans work for eight hours, only 76.7 per cent of the female artisans devote themselves to the craft for the same number of hours. In the households with more than one female working artisan the hours spent on the craft's processes are divided between the available female hands. This arrangement of feminine minds explains why some females work less than others. The minimum time is devoted by a Karga widow to the craft. Mother of the head of the household, she is not allowed to work more, thanks to the filial affection and dutifulness of her son.

STAGES OF PRODUCTION AND MANIPULATION OF TOOLS IN THE DIFFERENT PROCESSES

This household industry is run partly on the labour of the family, confined to the husband and his consort or to the father and his son. The conjugal partnership, however, is the main characteristic of the participation-aspect of the craft. The male member carries on the arduous functions himself assisted in the later stages of production,

not so laborious as the work in the quarries, by the female partner at home. The knowledge of the males in the techniques of production is learnt in the household from the father, but the females acquire the know-how from their husbands. The techniques are traditional and do not show any change in the course followed by the earlier generations, as stated by one and all. Techniques of production do not differ from household to household nor are they very much different from article to article. Production of articles like *Thala*, *Rekab*, *Plate* and *Pradip* is done in the same method from the first stage to the last. In turning out *Ash-tray* and *Bati* the artisans follow the same track as in producing the other articles except in the last stage of processing.

The different stages of production and the techniques thereof, with reference to the processing of articles sequentially, are discussed in the following :

DIGGING

Stratum of *Phyllite* is not always exposed to the surface. Even if it is exposed, the surface of the rock being weather-beaten, it is not found suitable for use. The weathered rock is softer and more brittle than the one not exposed to sun and air. So, an artisan gropes into the earth for the virgin rock. A pick is his only tool in this preliminary search.

Holding the handle of the pick in a tight grip with both the hands, intermittent strokes are made on the earth with one of the pointed edges of the pick. Some strokes are hard and some are gentle. This stage is over, after the surface of the earth is made loose and the artisan hears the metallic clink, to be sure that the rock is found.

CLEARING EARTH TO EXPOSE THE ROCK

After digging into the earth for some time, the artisan clears the site of the loose earth with his spade and basket. Digging and clearing go

on almost alternately, till a pit, ten to fifteen feet deep, is made and the rock is exposed.

The basket, held tightly between the feet, is filled with earth, taken out from the site with the mild stroke of the spade. The basketful refuse of dug-out earth is thrown away outside the pit, a little away. The refuse is heaped up there.

It may be mentioned that an artisan requires the help of an assistant to clear the site. Generally, the artisans help each other in this work.

SPLITTING THE ROCK

The artisans have a pet name for this operation. They call it *Chot Khaoano* or striking the rock. After an open pit or quarry is dug up, the artisan starts hitting the rock along its *plane of schistosity*. The stroke is directed towards the widely spaced joints of the exposed rock, till a slab of square or rectangular shape is disintegrated from the parent rock. The length of a slab varies between five inches to one foot and breadth from four inches to one foot. A slab generally weighs $\frac{1}{2}$ k.g. to 1 k.g.

Crow-bar is used in this operation. Held between the grip of two palms, the crow-bar is hit either vertically or in a slanting direction, as the dip of the rock demands.

The operations so far constitute the mining aspects and for that matter, these operations explain how the basic raw material is collected. The raw material is the same for all the articles and the operations are not detailed out articlewise.

SIZING-CUM-SHAPING

(i) Once a stone-slab is disintegrated, it is then lifted out of the pit or the quarry and taken to a convenient place beside the quarry. If the quarry is deep, it requires four to five persons to lift a slab. But, when a slab is available on the surface, only two persons are enough to lift it to the work-site. The artisan

decides then and there as to what article he will shape out of the slab. Though the operations remain the same for almost all the articles, the shape and size will vary with the direction of the stroke of his tool.

(ii) He strikes the slab along its plane of schistosity on the surface with the pointed edge of the axe to make the slab thinner. He holds the axe in both the hands and directs the strokes slightly slanted along the vertical planar surface of the stone-slab, placed on the ground and held between the feet.

(iii) After the slab attains the thickness of the desired article, the artisan squats on the ground with two knees wide apart. With the thinned stone-slab placed on the ground, he lightly presses one end of the slab with his left palm and hits on the edges with the blunt hammer-like end of the axe, held in his right hand. In order that the strokes are not hard which might crack the slab, the artisan holds the hand towards the top. This position helps him to control the strokes. The slab is rotated slowly with the left hand, as he continues hammering the edges of the slab, till at last a circular shape is obtained. It is remarkable that no tape or scale is used by an artisan to measure the diameter of the disc, to be desired. He places the tip of his thumb in a central place of the slab and with the tip of the middle finger, stretched to the maximum, he draws an imaginary circle. No mark of charcoal or chalk is made, but surprisingly enough, the artisan bears in mind the imaginary rough circle on the slab. During hammering, he checks up from time to time the measurement and the roundness of the article, in the manner already described.

(iv) After the shape of the coarse round disc is obtained, the artisan starts the last operation of this stage. With the end of the handle pressed under the armpit, the artisan desires the axe to act like a lever. But, the weight of the sharp-pointed head of the axe exerts greater force than desired,

under this improvisation. So, the artisan holds the head of the axe to apply a retarding force, so that the stroke of the pointed end is controlled and mild. The to and fro horizontal movement of the axe is also prevented by the right palm, thus placing the strokes at one and the same direction always. The sitting position of the artisan is no less remarkable a factor in contributing to the shaping operation. With the right foot spread straight on the ground and the left foot folded like an inverted *V*, the artisan places the round disc on the edges, supported by the left foot. With the left palm holding the disc and slowly rotating it, the artisan mildly hits the surface of the disc to carve out a slight depression. The article is also further thinned and scrubbed.

With this operation, the stages of production in the quarry-site are over. The artisan prepares for the next stages of processing at home, where all the semi-finished articles are brought over on the shoulder-yoke. The operations, stated above, hold good for *Plate*, *Thala*, *Rekab*, *Bati*, *Ash-tray* and *Pradip* with some differences in sizing operation for the last three articles.

While for *Bati* and *Ash-tray* the sizing operation is the same except in the choice of the stone-slab, the massive slab is rounded in an identical manner but not thinned to the extent of *Rekab*, *Plate* or *Thala*. The cubic block of stone is rounded off by breaking its angular edges.

In the case of *Pradip* the stone slab is thinned out in the middle with the axe to give it the shape of a solid *T*. The processing was not observed and from the discussion with the two households the techniques were learnt in no more clear terms than what is stated. With the idea that further elaboration will be a risky venture, the discussion is dropped.

The curtain of the second act of the drama of production is raised with the articles brought

STONEWARES

in the artisan's workshop-cum-dwelling. Generally, four to five stone-slabs are carried home by an artisan on the *Baank* and *Sik*. No damage is done to the slabs during the long transportation, thanks to the skilled handling of the crude materials. The next stages of production are the same for all the articles except *Pradip*.

FIXING THE SEMI-FINISHED ARTICLES TO THE KUND

(i) The artisan prepares the rough stone-article by scraping its bottom surface with a flat chisel, locally called *Majni*.

(ii) The scraped surface of the article is heated over burning twigs, dry branches and wooden chips, collected freely from the forest, for about ten minutes. The heating is done in the open courtyard. No tool or equipment is required in this operation. Some twenty five or thirty grains of *seed-lac* are placed at the centre of the heated back surface of the article, placed on the flat ground.

(iii) The flat end of the *Kund* is likewise heated over the same fire for a little less than five minutes.

(iv) The heated end of the *Kund* is then tightly pressed on the molten lac at the centre of the inverted article for about a minute or so.

(v) The *Kund* is then held with its *Al* resting on the stone-slab in the courtyard and rotated on the pivotal *Al*, to check up if the article is affixed to the flat end of the *Kund* in the former's central zone.

SETTING THE KUND

The *Al* of the *Kund* is first inserted in the hole of the *Pargos* and the depression of the *Kund* is set in the groove of the *Khap*. The *Kund* along with the affixed article, fixed between the *Khap* and the *Pargos*, thus hangs suspended above the ground. The article protrudes outside

the *Khap*, above the gap'ng hollow of the ground underneath.

ROTATING THE KUND

(i) A long rope or *Dori* is wound round the middle of the *Kund* for four or five turns. Each of the two ends of the rope has a knot to enable the puller to have a firm grip on the rope. The helper takes her position in front of the *Kund*, keeping the *Khap* to her left. Seated on a gunny bag spread on the floor, the helper or the partner artisan stretches her feet full on the ground, keeping the ankles resting against a depressed hollow on the floor.

(ii) The partner seizes the two ends of the rope by the knots. As she pulls the rope with her left hand, the right end gets shorter and she twists her body to the left without changing her sitting posture. The position is reversed, as the rope is pulled with the right hand. With the constant reversible changes in the position of the rope being made longer and shorter, once in the right end and once more in the left, the *Kund* rotates in effect, once in clock-wise and once in anticlock-wise direction alternately.

The partner artisan in the role of the puller is found in most of the households to be either the head artisan's wife or his son. In two cases, however, day-labourers are appointed more or less regularly to pull the rope and rotate the *Kund*.

Needless to mention, the article affixed to the *Kund* rotates alternately in two directions as mentioned before. The helper prepares the stage by keeping the *Kund* ready for rotation, making herself assured by one or two trials. It is only after this operation that the next stage of processing commences with the head artisan in the scene.

SHAPING

Though the semi-finished article bears a crude shape of the desired form during its

FIRST ACT IN THE CRAFT'S PROCESSES OF PRODUCTION TO SEARCH THE RAW MATERIAL



A long walk

Journey of the pedestrian stone-carvers to the quarry, either at Sankhabhanga or at Dhangikusum, to collect *Phyllite*, the main raw material



In quest

Digging the earth with a pick, an artisan gropes for the virgin rock by hitting hard the earth with the sharp-pointed end of his pick

Not a wasteful expense

After the stratum of the desired rock of *Phyllite* is exposed, the site is cleared of the debris of the dug-up, loose, waste material by throwing the basketful of waste outside the pit, a little away



An interlude in search

To clear earth to expose the rock, the artisan works with a spade and fills a basket with loose dug-up earth and other gravelly refuse



A giant task indeed

Holding a crowbar tightly in between palms, the artisan hits the rock along its plane of schistosity and splits a disintegrated slab by exerting pressure against the rock with the crowbar, inserted in the fissure



To thin a massive block of stone-slab is not an easy job

With the axe held in both the hands, the artisan strikes the planar surface of the stone-slab, placed on the ground and held between the feet in a slanted manner

**MINING OVER,
PRODUCTION
STARTS
AT
THE
QUARRY-SITE**

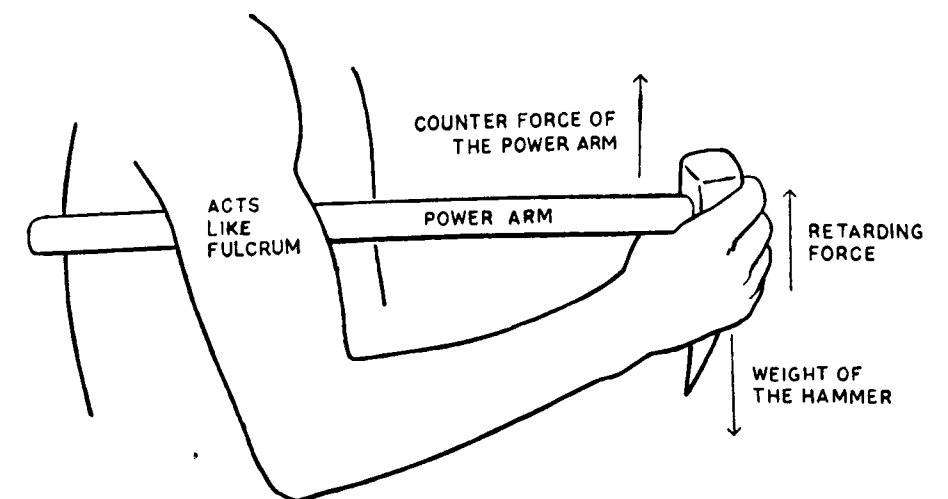


Rounding a square

The thinned stone-slab is rotated slowly and hammered on its irregular edges with the blunt hammer-like end of an axe, to give it a round shape

Patterning a crude form

After the stone-slab attains the shape of a crude round disc, the artisan, holding the end of the handle of the axe in tight grip under the armpit, mildly hits the disc, rotated slowly all the time, to carve out a depression on the disc and to further thin it and shape it by scrubbing



Simple lever in human hand

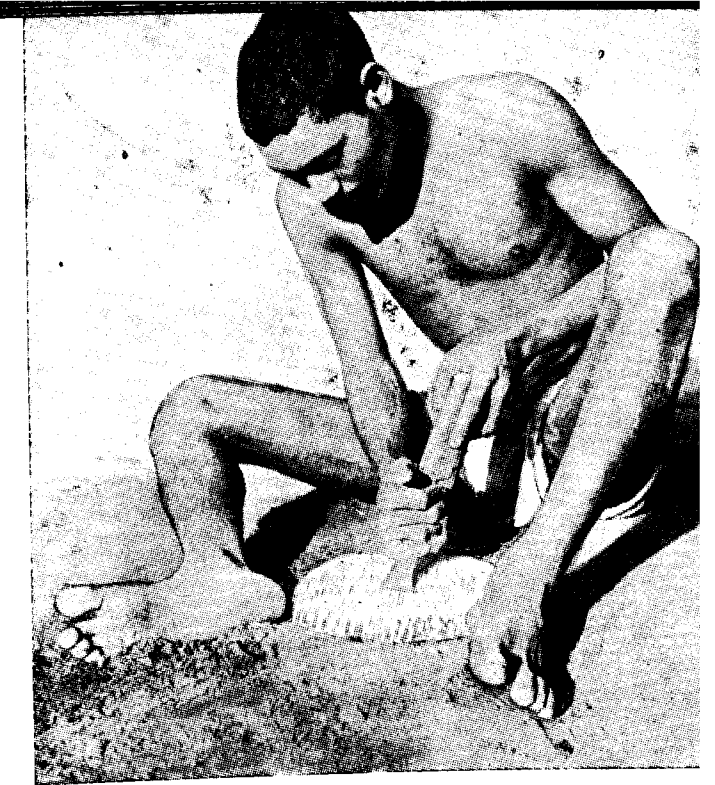
The axe held under the armpit acts like a lever—the weight of the sharp-pointed head of the axe exerts a greater force than desired and to counteract it, the artisan applies a retarding force



Artisans come home

In the journey back from the quarry the artisans carry the semi-finished articles of stone on the shoulder-yoke back home for further processing

SECOND ACT IN PROCESSING RAISES THE CURTAIN AT HOME



Whetting no tool

The rough bottom surface of the semi-finished article of stone is scraped with a *Majni* or flat chisel



Far from a lazy biding

Scraped article is heated over burning twigs, dry branches and wooden chips

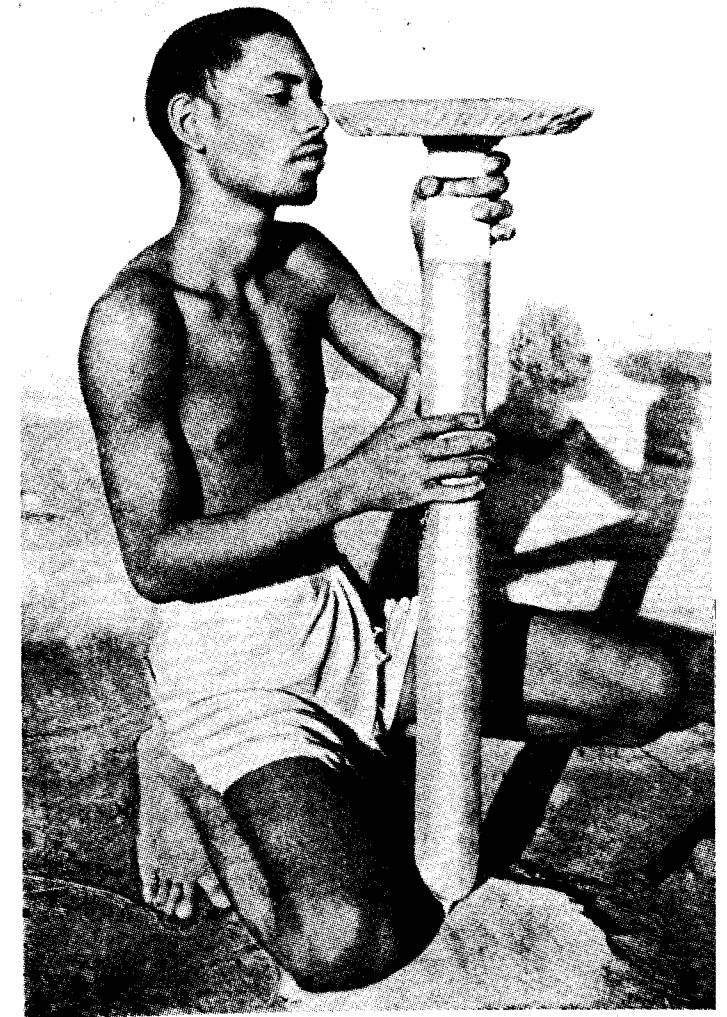


Preparation for an important operation

Seed lac is placed on the heated disc-like article at the centre—the flat end of the *Kund* or country-lathe is heated for a little less than five minutes

A final check

The *Kund*, held with its *Al* (sharp pin-like end) resting on a stone-slab in the courtyard, is rotated on the pivotal *Al* to check if the article is affixed to the flat end of the *Kund* in its centre of gravity



A fixed attachment

The heated end of the *Kund* is tightly pressed against molten lac on the inverted article for about a minute or so



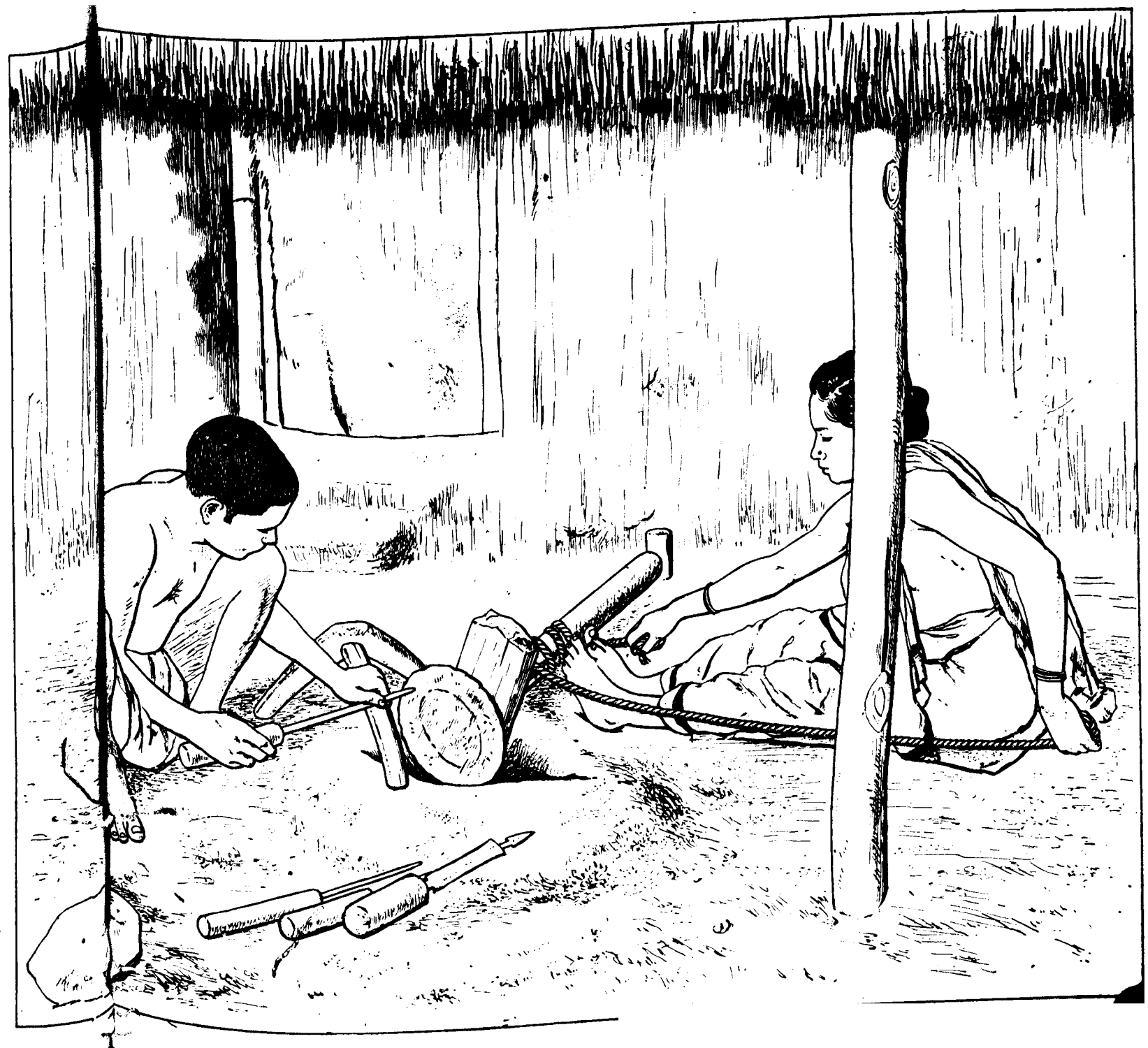
Setting the country-lathe

The *Al* of the *Kund* is first inserted in the hole of the *Pargos* (in the distant end) and the depression of the *Kund* is set in the groove of the *Khap* (the equipment half-buried in a slanted direction)—the *Kund* along with the affixed article, fixed between the *Khap* and the *Pargos*, remains suspended above the ground



Not a game really

Seated on a gunny bag, spread on the earthen floor, the partner artisan stretches her feet full on the ground, keeping the ankles at rest against a depressed hollow on the ground —she seizes the two ends of the *Dori* (Rope), wound round the *Kund*, pulls it with both the hands alternately, to rotate the *Kund* on one or two trial runs



Stage set for operation

The shaping operation starts with the head artisan appearing on the scene and taking his position with the tools, while the *Kund* is rotated by the puller partner artisan, his wife



Shaping an unshapely article

The artisan is shaping the article further with the *Saru Batali* (Chisel) set on the *Phalati* (Inverted tripod-stand), placed on the ground

First stage of designing

In designing the article the artisan first uses the chisel to engrave *Tana Buta* and *Jata Buta* (Curvilinear scratchings)



Prelude to designing

The artisan is polishing the article with a *Majni* (Flat chisel), pressed against the rotating article



Prominence being given to designs

To darken the relief of the surface of the article to enable the designs to look prominent, the artisan presses a piece of linen, moistened with mustard oil and besmeared with black soots, against the article in revolution

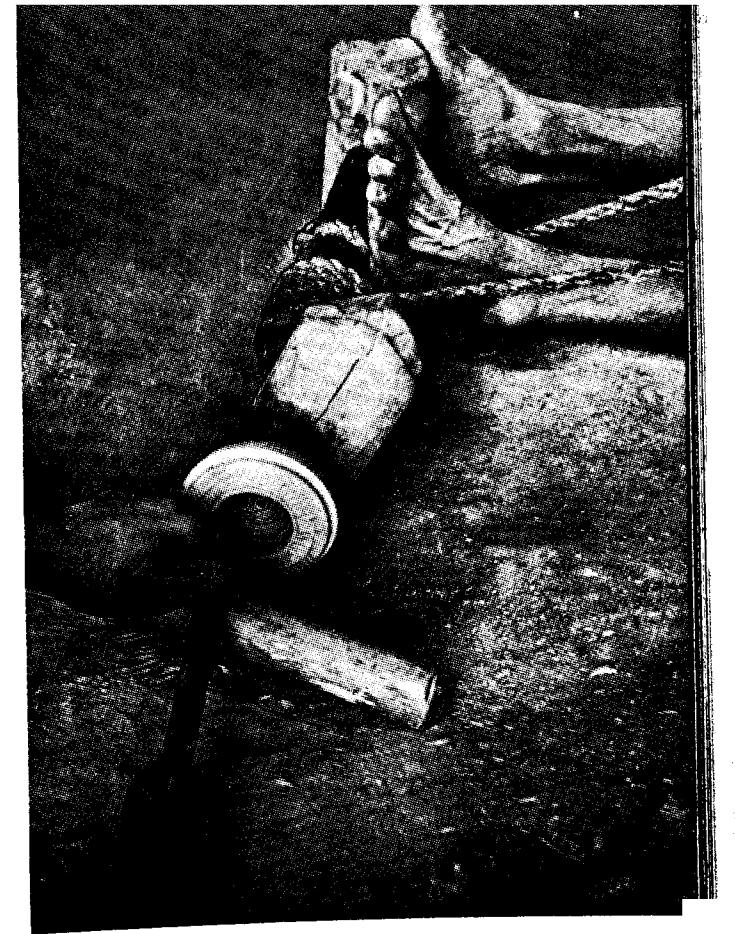


Designing still more

The artisan engraves *Aank* on the already designed article with *Patamkiri* (Chisel), held in a slanting position, against the article revolving with the *Kund*

Article is different, but not its processing

The artisan hollows an *Ash-tray* to the desired depth with a chisel



Not in a fix

To unfix the article from the *Kund*, the artisan places the pointed end of the *Saru Batali* on the joint and exerts horizontal pressure on it



A stage in processing an Ash-tray

The artisan is carving out indented depression with a *Majni* on a half-finished *Ash-tray*

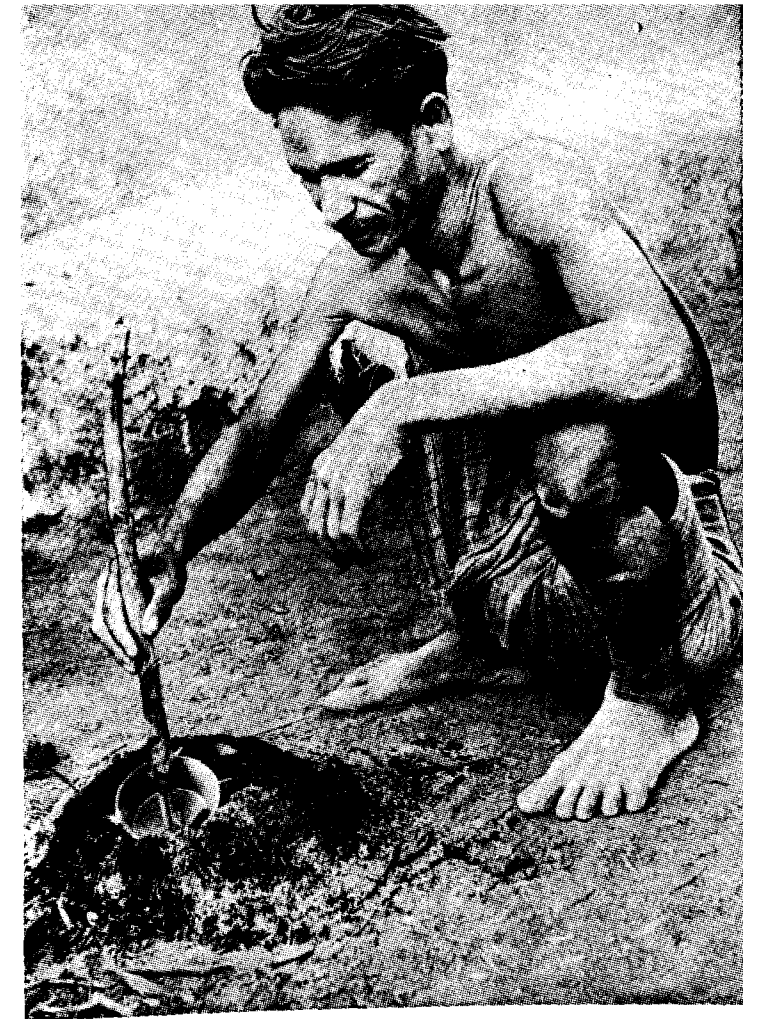


Polishing not quite a smooth job

The artisan is polishing the depressions on an *Ash-tray* with a half-round file

Preparation for the finishing stage

The article is heated on burning paddy-husk for about half an hour



Anointment before sale

The artisan is rubbing a cake of lac on the heated article with a piece of rag, to lacquer the article





Rubbing all over

Charcoal-dust from half-burnt wood is rubbed on the article with a piece of linen

To catch the buyer's eye

The artisan, after smearing the article with a few drops of mustard oil, is rubbing and polishing it with a piece of linen to make it look glossy



PROCESSES OF PRODUCTION

patterning in the quarry-site, much more is left to be done at the workshop at home.

While the *Kund* with the affixed article rotates, the head artisan squats with knees apart, diagonally opposite to the partner, keeping the *Khap* close to his left. He sets the *Phalati* on the ground near the *Khap* and places the chisels of the two varieties, namely *Patamkiri* and *Saru Batali* one after another. He holds the handle in his right hand and the frontal of the chisel between the thumb and the index finger, tightly pressed against the *Phalati*. The sharp-pointed end of the chisel touches the revolving article and the friction in consequence gives the crude article the desired shape, flatness or hollowness, as the case may be. These processes hold good for all the articles except *Pradip*.

POLISHING-CUM-DESIGNING

(i) While the article has been shaped to the optimum size and shape, the artisan sets to polishing the article. During polishing, the artisan does not change his position or his equipment. Only the tool is changed. Now, he holds the flat chisel or *Majni* in his right hand and one of the legs of the *Phalati* in his left hand. The flat end of the chisel is pressed against the revolving article to smoothen and polish it further.

(ii) The designing process comes next to polishing, with all other conditions remaining unchanged. It is with the to and fro movements of all the chisels with skilful manipulations that the designs of *Tana Buta* and *Jata Buta* are engraved on the article. The revolution of the article makes the scratchings curvilinear. Again, the clock-wise and anti-clockwise revolutions of the article change the direction of the curves in two opposite angles in the design of *Tana Buta*.

(iii) After the two designs of *Tana Buta* and *Jata Buta* are carved out, the head artisan presses a torn piece of linen, moistened with mustard oil and besmeared with black soots collected from the oven or from the lantern, against the revolving article. This is done to

darken the relief of the surface of the article, so that the designs look prominent. This process is followed in the case of *Rekab*, *Thala* and *Plate*.

(iv) The designing process does not halt with the two engravings. Though the processing, mentioned immediately above, is not practised for articles like *Bati* and *Ash-tray*, the design of *Aank* is engraved on all the articles. The *Patamkiri* is the only tool for this purpose. It is held in a slanting position against the article revolving on the *Kund*. The rod of the chisel, pressed in between the thumb and the folded forefinger, rests on the *Phalati*. The concentric circles are effected by placing the *Patamkiri* at different distances from the centre.

UNFIXING THE ARTICLE FROM THE KUND

The artisan removes the article from the *Kund* by placing the pointed edge of the *Saru Batali* vertically on the joint and exerting horizontal pressure on it. After the article is removed, the artisan examines it to see if there is any crack or damage to the article.

REPAIRING DAMAGED ARTICLES

Though repairing does not normally come under processing of a new article, it has been observed that it has become a part of processing inasmuch as small repair is done to cover the minor cracks or damages and to pass the repaired article for an intact one. A little gum is first moistened in some water and the thick paste obtained is then applied to the cracked surface. Even an experienced artisan fails to detect the repairs, when it gets dry.

All the processes are now over with regard to the articles. But, an artisan has still some more operations to perform on an *Ash-tray*. The artisan prepares three elongated depressions on the top surface round the hollow. He holds the *Ash-tray* in the left hand and the *Majni* in the right hand just below the handle of the chisel. With vertical strokes he carves out the three

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STONEWARES

depressions. Then he polishes the depressions with a half-round file.

On the *Pradip* the artisan does the polishing with the chisel and the file.

Though normally the articles, thus processed, are sold in the market to the wholesalers, the final touches are given to the articles by the *Paikars* (wholesalers), before they are sold to the retailers. The practice is so followed. But, against special orders the artisans may undertake the job of the *Paikar* in processing the articles. On such a contingency the price of the article will be higher than that prevailing in the market. The costing aspects are not discussed here, as the general go is not to go in for these further processes. But, it has been possible to see what these processes are and the discussion will be made thereon.

FINISHING (EXCEPT ASH-TRAY AND PRADIP)

(i) The articles are rubbed with sand-paper all over, to make them smoother and have finer surface.

(ii) The articles are then heated on fire of burning wood and paddy-husk for about half an hour to make them stronger and harder than

the unburnt ones. It is stated by a local customer that burning of the stonewares is also an acid-test and qualitative analysis of the articles. Articles made of stones of inferior quality are supposed to crack, when heated. Ten to fifteen items are cracked in 100 specimens of each variety of article.

(iii) *Seed-lac* is boiled in a container for sometime, till it is molten. From the molten lac small cakes are prepared. The heated article is held with a piece of rag in the left hand and supported on a wooden plank. The cake of lac is then rubbed on the surface of the article inside and outside. The article is thus coated with a thin film of lac and assumes a reddish tint.

(iv) Charcoal dust prepared from half-burnt wood, used during previous heating of the articles, is kept ready. The article is thoroughly rubbed with the dusted charcoal with a piece of linen, till it turns blackish.

(v) Finally, the coloured article is besmeared with few drops of mustard oil and polished once more with the piece of linen, soaked in mustard oil. The rubbing-cum-polishing continues for a minute or two and the glossy article is finally ready.

6

STORAGE, MARKETING AND TRANSPORT

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STORAGE, MARKETING AND TRANSPORT

INTRODUCTION

The production-units here are independent establishments, owned by the heads of the practising artisan households. The problems of storage, marketing or of transport of the articles, produced in the household industries, concern the heads only. Therefore, no other artisan in the household meddles into these aspects of the craft.

STORAGE

In any manufacturing industry, whatever its nature, the question of storage is a vital one, especially when the products do not readily find their way to the market. Marketing and production do not go hand in hand simultaneously. Storage of the produced articles is a necessity, which cannot be ignored as a less important aspect of the craft.

Craft of stoneware-production has posed a problem, the problem of storage to the craftsmen here. The craftsmen at Simulpal have no separate place or shed to store the products, they turn out. The question of storage is a big problem to them in view of the fact that there is some time-lag between production and sale of the storewares. The space in the dwelling does not provide any additional room for use exclusively as a godown. So, a portion of the living room is sacrificed to accommodate the stone

articles. A corner of the living room is used to stock the finished products till their disposal in the market. The articles, being bulky in volume, consume considerable space and to avoid more congestion in the rooms, already congested with the household goods of necessity, the artisans look for the earliest opportunity to sell their wares. Friday is the day of expectancy, the day for selling their goods at the *Hat* at Silda, where the artisans carry the week's products. But, one is not sure of his fortune on Friday. It happens at times that a part of the wares remains unsold. The artisans do not always have to carry his unsold wares back home.

At Silda the artisan hires a room to store his unsold products against an average weekly rent of 0.50 *paise*. The rooms available there are improvised structures of the stall-owners, who have their own shops for different articles. They agree to keep the stone articles in their shops till next Friday or *Hat* day (day for marketing) and spare the artisans the trouble of carrying back the unsold products home. The artisan takes delivery of the articles, bailed with the stall-owners on payment of the rent, agreed upon on the previous Friday. The rent varies according to the volume and weight of the goods stored. But, the usual practice is to pay the stall-owners an amount of 0.50 *paise* only.

STONEWARES

Two master-craftsmen sometimes store their products in the Block Development Office at Belpahari for sale of the goods to the customers of that place. This arrangement is made by the good offices of the Block Development Officer, who evinces keen interest in the furtherance of the cause of the craft. He not only gives the facility of storage but also promotes by sale the popularity of the wares among the visiting officials and friends.

The stone-products are articles of such a nature that they do not normally absorb any dirt or foreign substance. A careful handling of the articles negatives the chances of breakage too. The objects being massive, the materials do not require any packing with a piece of cloth or a paper. Neither is any need felt for a container for their storage. The articles, placed one upon the other according to their size and volume, are usually kept on the floor. This practice of storage has been observed to be pursued by all the producing households.

The facility of storage is lacking, as reported already. The Co-operative Society has not been of much help in providing any room or space to the constituent member craftsmen to store their goods. Though it has not forgot the prime need of its members, the Society at the same time has not undertaken any scheme to build a godown or to arrange for a store-room. About three years back, the local Block Development Officer made an arrangement with an Agricultural Credit Society at Silda to allow the unsold products of the craftsmen to be stored in its office-room between one Friday and another. But, the craftsmen did not avail themselves of this facility, for this arrangement was a little difficult to work because of the distance of the Society's office from the market-centre at Silda. They preferred an expense of 0.50 *paise* to the walk for half a mile.

LOCAL MARKETS

The articles produced in bulk have some local customers. *Bati* or bowls, used by almost

every household as containers for chutnees, pickles or any other acid preparations of food, constitute a necessary article for the kitchen. The *Rekabs* and *Thalas* are required more for ceremonial purposes. The local demand for these articles is steady and it is met by the craftsmen, who sell these products to their co-villagers in retail form. Sometimes, the residents of the neighbouring villages visit this place to purchase the articles from the artisans. Outside visitors also get interested in the articles, when they come to the place. They buy the articles from the craftsmen, whereas within the village the artisans sell their products sometimes at home and sometimes by personal visits to the customers.

Two master-craftsmen are found to sell their products occasionally to the residents of Belpahari through the Industrial Extension Wing of the Block Development Office, the employees of which along with others take the opportunity to purchase one or two articles. The local people and the visitors have a glance at the products, make their selection then and there and buy the items of choice, but without going to the production-centre.

All the customers, described so far, do not, however, fall in the group of bulk purchasers. Despite all regard for them, the artisans cannot depend upon these irregular customers for their livelihood. The bulk of the items, produced here, are sold at Silda, the main selling centre for the local craftsmen, situated at a distance of about 12 miles from the village within the same police station. The *Hat*, held there every Friday, is the emporium of stonewares, produced by other craft-centres of this police station also. The *Paikars* or wholesalers are the mainstay for the craftsmen. These wholesale purchasers of stonewares do not all belong to this district. Some of them also come from the district of Bankura.

The places within the State of West Bengal from which the wholesalers come to Silda to purchase the stone goods are given below. The

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number of *Paikars*, who come from each place, could not be collected except for Silda, which is the habitat of about 14 wholesalers.

TABLE 20
Places wherefrom the wholesale dealers come to Silda

Name of the place	Caste of the <i>Paikars</i>	District
Silda	Dom and Bauri	Midnapore
Parihati	Dom	Ditto
Alampur	Dom and Sadgop	Ditto
Gidni	Dom	Ditto
Dubrajpur	Ditto	Ditto
Jhargram	Ditto	Ditto
Paldapara	Ditto	Ditto
Pathra	Ditto	Ditto
Matgoda	Brahman	Bankura
Namgar	Ditto	Ditto
Pulkusma	Dom	Ditto
Simlapal	Bauri	Ditto

Paikars, living at a place called Digha in Ghatsila police station in Singhbhum district of Bihar, also visit Silda for the same purpose.

It is told by the craftsmen that majority of the *Paikars* are Doms by caste, though there are other castes among the wholesalers. Of the *Paikars* of Silda, 13 are Doms and one is a Bauri. All the 13 Dom *Paikars* of Silda and two Dom *Paikars* of Gidni have been surveyed. The trade of stonewares is said to be the traditional and hereditary occupation of these Dom traders, whose fathers and forefathers had pursued it. It is said that the same trade has been followed by them for many years in the past. But, they do not associate any myth or legend with their occupation nor can they explain why they look upon this trade as a sacred profession. The wholesale dealers sell the products to the customers of all communities in different parts of the State of West Bengal. These dealers sell the articles to customers in different places after giving some finishing touches to the goods (processing discussed previously). They have their clientele in the districts of Bankura, Hooghly,

Midnapore, Burdwan, Murshidabad as stated by the artisans and also by the *Paikars*.

In view of the fact that all the articles are sold out at Silda to the *Paikars*, congregating there, the artisans of Simulpal do not visit any other place to explore a larger market. Only in rainy season some of the craftsmen visit nearby villages, such as Dumuria, Kendapara, Kachanda and Sukhjora. The market at Silda has enough demand for the articles, produced at Simulpal. Even if the craft expands and the productivity increases, Silda will absorb the goods, leaving no surplus stock with the artisans. In fact, Silda is the gateway through which the stone articles find an outlet to the innumerable markets over West Bengal through these *Paikars*. It is because of the easy availability of raw materials for practically no cost that a number of craft-centres have developed in the area and Silda provides the wholesale market for all of them. The craftsmen of Simulpal, therefore, remain contented with the insatiate demand of the buyers for their products.

The *Hat* at Silda transacts the business of stonewares on Friday generally between 8 A.M. to 12 noon. A study of the *Hat* has yielded the following particulars.

TABLE 21
Business of stoneware

Place from which artisans bring the wares	Number of seller artisans	Number of articles brought for sale
Simulpal	16	11 to 19
Dakai	4	
Dhangikusum	12	
Goalberia	Not known	
Kasidanga	3	
Burijhore	4	
Singadoba	2	
Dumuria	3	
Labani	3	
Thakuranpahari	Not known	
Birmadol	7	
Lukundi Ghotidoba	10	
Digha	Not known	
Total	64	

Note—Articles of assorted varieties are brought for sale by each artisan.—Editor

STONEWARES

It has been reported that two lamps, carved out of stone, were sent to the Sales Emporium at Midnapore under the West Bengal Small Industries Corporation, Government of West Bengal, for display and sale in 1964. But this supply was more an exception than a practice. Normally the craftsmen do not send their articles to any other agency for sale.

FAIRS

Of the many fairs, held far and near on the occasion of different festivals, the one at *Kanaisahar*, a place at the foot of a small hill (700 ft) at a distance of about a mile and a half from Simulpal, is attended by one master-artisan for the sale of the stone products. The adage goes that the hill was the home of Lord *Krishna* and his consort *Saraswati* (Goddess of Learning) in the mythological period.

The local hill is worshipped on the last Saturday in the Bengali month of *Ashaar* (June-July) every year. A fair, held on the occasion for a day, is attended by a very large number of people. The practising and non-practising artisans, their wives and children visit the fair and enjoy the carnival. One master craftsman and five other artisans of Simulpal visit the fair with wares for sale to the participants. The master craftsman produces articles of all varieties for sale at fairly remunerative price in the fair. The other artisans are large-scale producers. All of them have the courage to face all risks and take the trouble to visit the fair knowing that a part may remain unsold. But, at the same time they also know that risks ultimately pay. In fact, the five artisans have only recently followed suit of the master craftsman, who has been visiting the fair for long. Business is very brisk, but the artisans fail to give the amount of sale in terms of money. "Fun is the prime attraction. Business is secondary," remark the craftsmen to dodge.

OTHER AGENCIES FOR SALE

The sale of goods is now done by the artisans themselves and there is no middleman

now working in the trade. It is a welcome result of the establishment of the Co-operative Society. Prior to its establishment in 1959, the artisans here lived under the malevolent shadow of two middlemen (one a Bairagi and another a Teli), residents of this village. The exploitation followed a set pattern. These middlemen used to offer a very nominal price for the articles, which were invariably sold to these people. The fact these go-betweens earned a huge profit, depriving the artisans of their present income, needs no emphasis nor any corroboration. The hopeless indebtedness of the craftsmen to these people achieved the end very easily and prevented the emancipation of the artisans. The amount of debt ran increasing from month to month and from year to year. In 1959, however, the artisans could break away from the fetters of these middlemen, thanks to the Co-operative Society, the discussion on which will be made later. Since then, the craftsmen are independent salesmen also.

The usual practice now is that the craftsmen visit Silda for the sale of the produced goods. It has also been observed that *Paikars* come to this village, in case some craftsmen fail to go to Silda due to indisposition or due to other extraordinary reason. This contingency does not affect the price of the goods in any way. That the *Paikars* come here to purchase the articles is a pointer to the demand for these articles.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR DISPOSAL

• Sale of goods is always effected by the local craftsmen against cash-payment. Sale on credit is not practised, either in the village or in the market. Customers, however old, whether retailers or *Paikars*, have to make payment in cash. The artisans get their earnings from the weekly sale of the articles. They meet all the needs of the week and other commitments from their weekly income. That is why, they always insist on this form of payment. In the case of articles to be produced on order according to the specification of the customer or on *Barat* (order)

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the artisan does not call for any advance in cash. But, the price, agreed upon mutually, must be paid in cash, when the specified article is delivered to the customer after the stipulated period.

SALE AND UTILISATION PATTERN

During the period 1964-65 eight households, consisting of one Karmakar and seven Kargas, sold their articles both in wholesale and in retail. The articles like *Thala*, *Rekab*, *Plate* and *Bati* were principally sold in wholesale and partially in retail. The articles like *Ash-tray* and *Pradip* (lamp) were all sold in retail form by these households.

The remaining 21 households sold the articles like *Thala*, *Rekab*, *Bati* and *Plate* in wholesale form. These households include one Karmakar, six Bhumij and 14 Karga families.

A portion of the wares of *Thala*, *Rekab*, *Bati* and *Plate* was retained for domestic and ceremonial uses by all the households and the bulk was sold in market. But, articles like *Ash-tray* and *Pradip* were manufactured for sale only and not for domestic use. A limited number of *Thala*, *Plate* and *Ash-tray* was sold in a fair by the Karga master artisan.

OTHER FORMS OF DISPOSAL

When the artisans are hard up with money, they make payment in kind to the local grocery for the articles of necessity, purchased there. The Sunri grocer patronises his regular customers by allowing this privilege of barter. But, this is very rarely resorted to by the artisans and they do so only in times of pressing need.

FLUCTUATIONS IN DEMAND AND SUPPLY

The rainy season affects the rate of production of the craft. Due to inclement weather the neighbouring consumers or the wholesale dealers seldom come to the artisan's house or to the market at Silda. The craftsmen have the same difficulty to negotiate the distance to the market.

As a result, sale comes to a standstill ; so also does purchase. The artisans sometimes find it hard to go to the hills for work in the quarries, if the shower is very heavy and continuous. The quarries, even if opened, cannot be dug very deep due to accumulation of rainwater. The journey with a heavy load along the slippery hills sometimes becomes risky. Those artisans, who have some vestige of land, go to their fields for cultivation. Production, though not stopped, is allowed to come down appreciably. The rainy season may rightly be treated as a slack season of production.

During winter both demand for and supply of the products go up. The craftsmen report that production gets a spurt during winter, especially in the Bengali month of *Paus* (December-January), when the *Paikars* want more articles from them. The *Paikars*, it is reported by the craftsmen, visit different fairs in other parts of the State during this period. Hence, their demand goes up.

UNDISPOSED STOCK

The local craftsmen do not have any unsold stock in any part of the year, except the portion kept stored in the stall-owners' room for a week or so. In that case they slow down their week's production in order to dispose of the items, left unsold in the market.

TRANSPORT

A major part of an artisan's life is spent on the roads. Roads, fit for the passages of motor vehicles are absent here. The narrow pathways or village-tracks made by the ruts of the bullock carts are used by these artisans. They walk although, be it for their journey to the hills or back, or for their tramp to the market. Their limbs are quite strong. Otherwise, how can they stand the strain of walking a distance of 70 miles in a week ? The quarries are seven miles far from their home and they walk up and down the hill to Dhangikusum or Sankhabhanga four days a week. The visit to the market at Silda once a

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week covers a distance of 12 miles both ways on foot. All these troubles and hardships have, of course, entailed no cost on the transportation of raw materials or on the marketing of the finished products or on their transport.

The ride in a bus to Jhargram once or twice a year to purchase the tools or its material often affords the craftsmen enough joy even during a very serious business. The annual expenditure on this item does not exceed Rs. 7/-.

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COST OF PRODUCTION

The significance of the term, *cost of production*, is two-fold. While literally it implies the total expenditure per unit of the product, turned out by a craftsman, thus touching upon all the factors of production, it may also be treated as the ledger or accounts-diary of the entrepreneur, giving one the view of the various factors of production, attracted to an enterprise, and to work conjointly on the production of the goods. The first interpretation serves a limited but specific purpose to calculate the cost price of an article. The second view, wider in its scope and application, enables one to know the economics of the craft with multilateral factors working behind the craft.

The calculation and estimation of the cost of production of an unit of product is beset with many difficulties, mainly due to the following :

(1) The craftsmen, mostly illiterate, do not keep any systematic account of the various items of expenses and depend mostly on memory. The implication of costing does never strike them and they are contented with their earnings, oblivious of the profit and loss aspect of business.

(2) The artisans, helped by the voluntary labour of the family members, produce the articles. So, their labour remains unpaid in all

cases, even though it is remunerative.

(3) Continuity of work is another serious factor to be reckoned with. A discontinuity not only disrupts work, but it also snaps the link of memory retaining the detailed expenses on some items of production. Rains, inclement weather and socio-religious festivals as also the momentous incidents of life like birth and death in individual households are the disruptive factors disturbing sustained work and are unpredictable in their incoming. But, difficulties have been won and are not allowed to supervene as insuperable factors in the attempt at costing the articles and at calculations of the overall cost of production.

The total cost, incurred by any craftsman, may be divided into two broad categories : (1) Prime cost and (2) Overhead cost.

Prime cost includes (1) Direct labour expenses, (2) Direct material expenses and (3) Direct expenses. But, on the other hand, Overhead cost includes (1) Production expenses, (2) Administrative expenses, (3) Selling expenses and (4) Distribution expenses.

In the present craft, operated on a very small scale, all the items of mentioned costs are not covered. The local craftsmen incur costs under the heads of accounts following.

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PRIME COST

Direct labour expenses

(a) Wages paid

The artisans do not normally engage any worker in any operation of the craft, but mostly take the help of their family members. On rare occasions, say on account of the illness of a member, the artisan is forced to engage day-labourers to assist him. The day-labourers, recruited from the open market, are employed on Thursday, the day for the artisan to work at his home. To pull the *Kund* for eight hours, the hired worker is paid Rs. 1.50 *paise*, though the daily rate of wage for day-labourers is Rs. 1.25 *paise* per head. The higher rate is paid because of the strenuous nature of the job. Casual labourer of the type of day-labourer is not required by any artisan on other days generally. Wages are thus paid to outsiders not on piece-work basis, but on time-rate basis.

While data on 27 households as to this aspect are wanting for the sole reason that the appointment of casual labour is a chance event in the households, two households, one a single-membered family and another a three-membered family, handicapped in labour-force by physically invalid wife of the artisan head and her tender-aged daughter, employ casual labour rather more regularly. While the annual expense on account of hired labourer was rupees eighty seven in the single-membered family, another household spent rupees eighty on hired labour during 1964-65.

(b) Unpaid wage

This point assumes an importance only in case of family workers, as their services are never paid for. So, the services rendered by them, though productive, remain unassessed, as there arises no need to evaluate the relations' labour. But, in this analysis, scientific reasoning warrants the evaluation. To evaluate the services, the unpaid wage is calculated in terms of wage in money, as paid to the hired labourer. The wage of any family member, working eight hours a day, is the same as earned by an outside worker. In 23

households, family workers, working eight hours a day for a week, save Rs. 78.00 *paise* per worker per annum as unpaid wage. Again two family workers in a couple of households conserve Rs. 58.00 *paise* annually per worker, working six hours a day weekly. Two households helped by four family workers, each devoting four hours a day every week, make an annual saving of Rs. 40.00 *paise* and another household with a family worker, working two hours a day in a week, is spared the annual expense of Rs. 20.00 *paise*. Incidentally, one of the households has two family workers, one working six hours and another two hours a day every week. The net saving of this household is Rs. 60.00 *paise*. Needless to mention, the estimated savings do not take into account the labour of the family members, engaged casually on other days of the week in some stray operations of the craft. The unpaid wages are thus the minimum possible savings for the households.

Direct material expenses

Price of raw materials

The main raw material for the craft does not cost anything. The token fee for the permit and also other expenses on subsidiary materials are taken together to calculate the cost of the unit of an article on account of its raw materials. The price of raw material for a piece of *Thala* is approximately 0.04 *paise*, for a piece of *Rekab* also 0.04 *paise*, for a piece of *Plate* 0.03 *paise* and lastly for a piece of *Bati* it is 0.03 *paise*. As *Ash-tray* and *Pradip* (Lamp) are neither produced by the majority nor in bulk by the few households turning them out, the price of raw materials for these two articles is left out.

Direct expenses

(a) Hire charge for tools and equipments

No local craftsman pays any rent or charge for the use of any tool or equipment, as all the artisans own some of the tools and equipments. In case of reciprocal aid, co-operation from the co-workers dispenses with the aspect of rent.

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(b) Costs for designing, drawing or layout

In the present craft, the designs are pre-meditated by the artisans themselves and are stamped with the tradition of years. So, these are free legacies of the forefathers of the artisans.

(c) Maintenance cost of tools and equipments

The tools and equipments require timely repair for their efficient and productive uses. But, the households, in the absence of alternate sets, cannot attend to their repair in time. A timely stitch might save nine, but it is rarely done. Still, one cannot indefinitely defer the repair of the tools. The maintenance cost per annum of all the tools is given below, even though all the households are not involved in the expenses thereon. Yet the table will give an idea of the optimum cost.

TABLE 22

Optimum cost of the tools

Name of the tools	Annual cost of maintenance
Gainti (Pick)	Rs. 3.00 <i>paise</i>
Kodal (Spade)	Rs. 3.00 <i>paise</i>
Sabal (Crowbar)	Rs. 3.00 <i>paise</i>
Kurul (Axe)	Rs. 13.00 <i>paise</i>
Saru Batali (Chisel)	Rs. 6.50 <i>paise</i>
Patamkiri	Rs. 6.50 <i>paise</i>
Majni	Rs. 6.50 <i>paise</i>
File	Nil
Total	Rs. 41.50 <i>paise</i>

A household would have had to incur Rs. 41.50 *paise*, if it possessed all the tools.

(d) Other payments for processing

No artisan spends any money on any processing work, because nothing is done outside, without the artisan himself working with or without the assistance of his family members.

OVERHEAD COST

Production expenses

(a) Rent for workshop

The artisans own their workshops, where they work partly on the craft's processing. The opening part of the work starts under the open sky in the hills to quarry the stones. Rental does not normally creep in the cost-book. Thus, the artisan saves Rs. 15.00 *paise* per month as rent for his workshop, the rental being fixed on an *ad hoc* basis for a space of 40 square feet (8ft. x 5 ft.), if an artisan were to hire it.

(b) Depreciation charges

It has been fully discussed in the chapter on tools and equipments.

(c) Interest on loans

Loan for domestic needs does not come up for discussion here. The artisans secure loan from the Government through the Block Development Office for industrial purposes. Such loan from the Government bears an interest of Rs. 6.25 *paise* per cent per annum. The local artisans do not seek any loan from any other source for the purpose of their craft. Only 19 households appear to have taken loan from the Government and they paid interest of varying amounts during 1963-64. The table below will be a helpful indicator of the amount of loan taken and of the interest paid thereon.

TABLE 23

Particulars of loan

Amount of loan of individual households	Amount of interest paid by individual households	No. of indebted households
Rs. 15.00 <i>paise</i>	Re. 0.94 <i>paise</i>	1
Rs. 20.00 <i>paise</i>	Rs. 1.25 <i>paise</i>	14
Rs. 30.00 <i>paise</i>	Rs. 1.82 <i>paise</i>	1
Rs. 40.00 <i>paise</i>	Rs. 2.50 <i>paise</i>	2
Rs. 50.00 <i>paise</i>	Rs. 3.12 <i>paise</i>	1
Total Rs. 155.00 <i>paise</i>	Rs. 9.63 <i>paise</i>	19

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Nineteen households were indebted to the extent of Rs. 155.00 *paise* and paid a total interest of Rs. 9.63 *paise* in 1963-64.

Administrative expenses

As the local artisans themselves look after the administrative side of the craft, which is, in fact, nil, except supervision over the work of the wife or the son. They do not engage any salaried person for the work and are spared from the cost under this head of account too.

Selling expenses

The household craft, pursued on so small a scale, does not call for any audio-visual methods of advertisement, nor for any publicity through newspapers to boost the sale of the products or to publicise the name of the establishment. The cost is, therefore, nil on this account.

Distribution expenses

(a) Transport cost

In the chapter on storage, marketing and transport a discussion has been made in details on this aspect. The expenses of transport are minimal due to travels by conveyance being restricted to one or two visits to Jhargram for the purchase of tools or equipments. Only 22 households incurred any expense on account of transport in 1963-64 and the detailed expenses are given below.

TABLE 24

Cost of transport

Annual cost of transport per household	No. of households to have incurred the expense	Total annual cost of transport
Rs. 5.00 <i>paise</i>	1	Rs. 5.00 <i>paise</i>
Rs. 7.00 <i>paise</i>	14	Rs. 98.00 <i>paise</i>
Rs. 8.00 <i>paise</i>	7	Rs. 56.00 <i>paise</i>
Total	22	Rs. 159.00 <i>paise</i>

The amount of total expenses on transport is not very large. The conveyance expense is due on account of journey by bus.

(b) Cost of storage or packing

The local craftsmen do not incur any cost on this item of account.

COST OF PRODUCTION (ARTICLE-WISE)

In this craft the main raw material costs little and the subsidiary raw materials also do not cost much. The assessment of the actual quantity and cost of raw materials, though difficult to make, are dealt with in the costing of articles, a discussion on which will be made now.

The method of Unit Costing has been followed to determine the cost of production. This method has the advantage of precisely indicating the cost by unit of production and being most suitable for application to this craft, where manufacture is more or less continuous, with occasional interruptions during the rains or illness of an individual, and where units are identical.

From the costing of articles the items of *Ash-tray* and *Pradip* are excluded, because of their irregular production by very few households.

Thala

To produce a piece of *Thala* an artisan incurs the following cost :

Price of raw material	0.04 <i>paise</i>
Interest on loans	0.02 <i>paise</i>
Transport cost	0.01 <i>paise</i>
Labour charges	0.08 <i>paise</i>
Miscellaneous	0.05 <i>paise</i>
Total	0.20 <i>paise</i>

Rekab

A piece of *Rekab* involves an artisan in the following expenses :

Price of raw material	0.04 <i>paise</i>
Interest on loans	0.02 <i>paise</i>
Transport cost	0.01 <i>paise</i>
Labour charges	0.06 <i>paise</i>
Miscellaneous	0.05 <i>paise</i>
Total	0.18 <i>paise</i>

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Plate

The production of a piece of *Plate* will entail the following expenses :

Price of raw material	0.03 <i>paise</i>
Interest on loans	0.02 <i>paise</i>
Labour charges	0.04 <i>paise</i>
Transport cost	0.01 <i>paise</i>
Miscellaneous	0.05 <i>paise</i>
Total	0.15 <i>paise</i>

Bati

Lastly, to turn out a piece of *Bati*, an artisan spends in the following manner :

Price of raw material	0.03 <i>paise</i>
Interest on loans	0.02 <i>paise</i>
Transport cost	0.01 <i>paise</i>
Labour charges	0.02 <i>paise</i>
Miscellaneous	0.05 <i>paise</i>
Total	0.13 <i>paise</i>

Cost of production is maximum for a piece of *Thala* and minimum for a piece of *Bati*. It may be mentioned here that *Thala* has the largest demand among its customers, is the biggest in size and also takes the maximum time for production.

The terms *Labour charge* has been used to indicate the unpaid services rendered by the artisan and by his family members and the term *Miscellaneous* indicates depreciation charges and maintenance cost of tools.

INPUT-OUTPUT

Input and output aspects of a craft are the two vital indices of the state of its health, like the diastolic and systolic blood pressures of the body wherefrom the condition of the heart by the record of the inflow and outflow of blood and its volume may be examined.

Investment

Investment is the propulsive factor of production under the input aspect of any craft.

It is the fuel, without which production comes to a standstill. Its importance as the most effective agent of production is realised by the artisans also.

Investment implies outlay of money for production and comprises (a) Fixed or Permanent capital and (b) Circulating or Floating capital.

Fixed capital

Fixed assets covering land, workshop, tools, and equipments, owned in this craft-centre independently and meant for the operations of the craft, come under the purview of fixed capital, not ordinarily meant for conversion into liquid cash. Under pressing demands fixed assets are sold out, sometime to the detriment of the household's business. But, that is a rare phenomenon, not observed during study of the craft.

To spell out the fixed assets under different heads and in different households will be the next point of consideration.

Land

Land is owned by all the households in varying sizes. Here, only the portion of land, used for production purposes, is taken into account. The following table will speak of the households with different sizes of land occupied by the workshop.

TABLE 25

Different sizes of land occupied by the workshop

Size of land	Approximate value Rs. <i>paise</i>	No. of land-owning households	Total investment on land Rs. <i>paise</i>	Remarks
40 sq. ft.	3.70	21	77.70	The average price of land per decimal is stated to be Rs. 40.00 <i>paise</i> .
45 sq. ft.	4.15	6	24.90	
60 sq. ft.	5.50	1	5.50	
72 sq. ft.	6.60	1	6.60	
Total	19.95	29	114.70	

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The total investment on land by the 29 households is Rs. 115.00 *paise* approximately.

Workshop

It is very difficult to assess the valuation of the workshop, as it is situated in a part of the house. The rental of the standard area of workshop, as discussed already, does not come under the scope of fixed capital.

Tools and equipments

The investment on tools and equipments will be Rs. 66.10 *paise* for a beginner artisan, if he were to purchase them at the start of the establishment. The approximate investment on tools and equipments, a new artisan has to make for the different operations, is given below :

Digging	
Pick	Rs. 8.00 <i>paise</i>
Removing earth	
Spade	Rs. 5.00 <i>paise</i>
Jhuri	Re. 0.37 <i>paise</i>
Quarrying	
Crowbar	Rs. 8.00 <i>paise</i>
Sizing	
Axe	Rs. 6.00 <i>paise</i>
Polishing-cum-designing	
Saru Batali	Rs. 5.00 <i>paise</i>
Majni	Rs. 5.00 <i>paise</i>
Patamkiri	Rs. 5.00 <i>paise</i>
Kund	Re. 1.00 <i>paise</i>
Phalati	Re. 0.37 <i>paise</i>
Al	Re. 0.37 <i>paise</i>
Khap	Re. 0.37 <i>paise</i>
Pargos	Re. 0.37 <i>paise</i>
Dori	Re. 0.37 <i>paise</i>
Subtotal	Rs. 45.22 <i>paise</i>
*File	Rs. 15.00 <i>paise</i>
Total	Rs. 60.22 <i>paise</i>

The initial investment on tools and equipments for the different processes of production comes to Rs. 60.00 *paise* approximately. But, some of the equipments being required for transportation of the articles of the quarry to the workshop-cum-dwelling, the beginner artisan requires some more capital, which has been discussed in the opening section.

Now, the 29 practising artisans do not have all the tools and the investment pattern varies from household to household. The table below will be eloquent on that aspect of the craft.

TABLE 26

Investment on equipments

Name of the tools and equipments	No. of households	Annual investment on each tool or equipment		Total investment	Remarks
		Rs. <i>paise</i>	Rs. <i>paise</i>		
Pick	7	8.00	56.00	The annual investment on the tools and equipments has been given, though some households might make a delay in replacing the tools. This table should be read with the table on estimated annual cost of depreciation of the tools and equipments given in Chapter 8.	
Spade	8	5.00	40.00		
Crowbar	6	8.00	48.00		
Axe	29	6.00	174.00		
Chisel					
Saru Batali	29	10.00	290.00		
Majni	29	10.00	290.00		
Patamkiri	29	10.00	290.00		
File	2	15.00	30.00		
Kund	29	1.00	29.00		
Khap	29	0.74	21.75		
Pargos	29	0.74	21.75		
Phalati	29	0.50	14.50		
Al	29	0.37	10.73		
Jhuri	29	0.75	21.75		
Dori	29	19.25	558.25		
Sik	29	1.50	43.50		
Total		96.85	1,939.23		

* Note—For producing *Ash-tray*—Editor.

The annual investment-requirement on account of tools and equipments comes to Rs. 96.85 *paise* for an artisan producing all the wares, though the practice is different. The craft-centre invested Rs. 1,939.23 *paise* on tools and equipments in 1964-65.

An artisan working in a workshop with 40 sq. ft. of space with all the tools and equipments has to invest initially Rs. 70.00 *paise* or so. The total investment of this craft-centre on fixed assets in 1964-65 was Rs. 2,053.93 *paise*.

Circulating capital

In this craft-centre no fund, represented by cash or any asset acquired for the purpose of conversion into cash, has been found. Assets are numbered few and are directed to purposes of production. Readily realisable assets are not used to serve as circulating capital. Circulating capital, monetized in nature, serves the craft only once during its utilisation in any productive purpose and its use is not spread over a considerable period of time.

According to key informants, an amount of Rs. 3,670.00 *paise* was used by the households as circulating capital in 1964-65 to meet the expenses of production and the working expenses of the craft.

An experienced artisan states that the initial capital, required to set a craft agoing from a scratch, is Rs. 200.00 *paise*.

SOURCES OF FINANCE

Capital to finance the craft is secured by the artisan himself. Loan subscribes to the capital sometimes and sometimes diversion of income from the family also provide the capital.

Borrowed capital comes from the Government and from the Co-Operative Society. The loan from the Government and the particulars thereof have been discussed earlier. Private sources do not come in the picture. Financiers are, therefore, absent in the economic scene of the craft. The artisans did not obtain any financial help from the Co-Operative Society in 1964-65.

It has been found that convertible assets, consisting of livestock mainly, were sold by six households, which obtained an amount of Rs. 824.00 *paise*. The amount was meant also to meet domestic needs and it is not possible to make a split-hair apportionment of the amount to the needs of the craft. It is possible, however, to point out that three of these six households did not secure any loan from the Government. The amount obtained from sale of assets by these households stands at Rs. 514.00 *paise* only. It is interesting that 19 households financed the craft partly by loan obtained from Government, three households provided capital for the craft partly from Government help (loan) and sale of assets, three households diverted a portion of the amount from the sale of assets to the productive operations of the craft and four households financed the craft on their own initiative and capital. These last-mentioned households are debt-free and have not lost any asset in financing the craft.

PRODUCTION DURING 1964-65

The log-book of production is absent in the craftsman's thatched huts. The illiterate artisans do not know what to do with it and how to maintain it. The figures of production are gathered from one or two senior and experienced artisans, key informants for the present study.

The following table, based on the approximate figures of production in 1964-65, as given by the key-informants, is an invaluable guide-book for the study of the economy of the craft.

TABLE 27

Production in 1964-65

Name of the article	Number of pieces produced	Value in rupees
Thala	11,924	11,924
Rekab	9,540	7,275
Plate	2,240	980
Bati	3,650	1,350
Ash-tray	560	280
Pradip	260	140
Total		21,949

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The total output, though based on a rough account, comes to about Rs. 21,950.00 *paise* annually, if not more, turned out by the 29 practising households of the area.

PATTERN OF WEEKLY PRODUCTION AND REQUIREMENT OF RAW MATERIAL

An artisan usually procures four stone-slabs

from quarry every week. From a single stone-slab an artisan manufactures three to four *Thalas*, two *Rekabs*, two *Batis* or two *Plates*.

The production generally follows four patterns, so far as articles are concerned. But, the households, cannot be classified according to the pattern of production, for they very often switch

TABLE 28

Pattern of weekly production

Type I	Approximate value in rupees	Type II	Approximate value in rupees	Type III	Approximate value in rupees	Type IV	Approximate value in rupees
10 <i>Thala</i> and 8 <i>Rekabs</i>	10 3	10 <i>Thalas</i> , 5 <i>Rekabs</i> and 2 <i>Batis</i>	10 2 1	10 <i>Thalas</i> , 5 <i>Rekabs</i> and 5 <i>Plates</i>	10 2 3	10 <i>Thalas</i> , 5 <i>Rekabs</i> and 5 <i>Batis</i>	10 2 2
Total	13		13		15		14

from one pattern to another from week to week, according to the size of the stone-slabs quarried as also to the monetary requirements of the households at a particular point of time.

In addition to the four types, *Ash-tray* and *Pradip* are manufactured on a limited scale by some of the households, as discussed already. The production-figures for the week rise up and come down, depending on the man-power in the households, skill of the artisans and on working hours. The table, therefore, is just an average index and a pointer to the general trend of production in the different households.

CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY

Four Karga craftsmen were impressed by the idea of co-operation in 1958. Instead of throwing themselves to the drift of the economic current of the day, these pioneers conceived of integrating the craftsmen of this village and beyond into a Co-Operative Society. Thus, was born the *Simulpal Stone Artisans' Co-Operative Society Ltd.*

Registered in the year 1958 (13.1.58) in the Office of the Assistant Registrar of Co-Operative

over Societies at Midnapore with thirty five artisans as an Industrial Co-Operative, the Society commenced its functions only from 1961. The interregnum was spent on the sale of shares and on publicity. The Board of Management consisted of seven members, of which six were elected.

The area of operation of this organisation covers Simulpal and two neighbouring production-centres at Thakuranpahari and Dakai, the two neighbouring villages situated within a radius of three miles from this place. The Office of the Society is situated in Simulpal. The artisans, who took the main initiative and leadership in the establishment of the Society, belonged to the Karga community, which is incidentally a numerically predominant community among the craftsmen. It will not be out of place to mention the names of the persons, who were master-minds behind the organisation in its infant state. They were Sarvasree Bhusan Mistri, Indrajit Mistri, Gobardhan Mistri and Chitta Ranjan Mistri, who are still living, pursuing the craft and continuing their membership. Now, there are 45 members, all residents of the three production-centres. All of them are ordinary members and majority of them are Kargas.

The qualification clause to enrol oneself as a member is that one should be a practising artisan and that one should purchase at least one share of Rs. 20.00 *paise* each to be subscribed in full in cash with an admission fee of 0.50 *paise*. There is no bar of community or creed, place of residence or place of work on the qualification clause of membership.

Though the Society started with the broad objectives of development of the craft, improvement of the conditions of the craft and of the craftsmen, it limited its function to providing financial assistance to the artisans against articles deposited. The initial capital of the Society amounted to Rs. 1,200.00 *paise* from the subscribed capital raised by the sale of 60 shares and the admission fee of Rs. 17.50 *paise*. The Society was thus fortified with a total capital of Rs. 1,217.50 *paise* in 1961.

The working capital loan of the Society was received from the Government of West Bengal amounting to Rs. 1,200.00 *paise*, free of interest. The Government advanced the loan in 1962 without any condition, except that it should be repaid by the Society, whenever possible. The Society has repaid Rs. 480.00 *paise* till 1964-65, each instalment amounting to Rs. 240.00 *paise*. It has not received any working capital loan, subsidy, gift or donation from any other source.

The Co-Operative Society, not engaged in direct production of any article, has helped its members by way of financial assistance of

Rs. 554.00 *paise* to all the members from 1961-65 against production.

To the Society's attempt at providing marketing facilities at Silda the members did not react favourably and the proposal to utilise the Godown of the Silda Large-Sized Marketing Society was dropped. The distance of the Godown from the *Hat* was the main reason, which made the artisans apathetic to the proposal for this storage facility. The Society did not attempt to extend any other assistance by way of providing workshop facilities, tools, raw materials, technical assistance, servicing, marketing, training, or any other benefit for the craft or by undertaking any welfare activity (education or health) for the craftsmen.

According to the latest Audit Report in 1964, the Society has gained a profit of Rs. 18.43 *paise* till the end of June, 1964. That the Society has incurred no loss but has gained on the contrary is a positive reckoner to the good show, it has given so far. The artisan members have not received any dividend so far, for the obvious reason that the Society gained but an insignificant amount of profit.

The Board of Management consists of six elected members, designated as Directors, and of the Industrial Extension Officer of the Binpur N.E.S. Block II as the Executive Officer of the Society. The names and particulars of the personnel in 1964-65 are given below :

TABLE 29

Board of Management (1964-65)

Name of the office	Name of the person	Date of election	Community	Place of residence	Place of work
Chairman & Cashier (Elected)	Sri Gobardhan Mistri	23.3.64	Karga	Simulpal	Simulpal
Vice-Chairman (Elected)	Sri Indrajit Mistri	23.3.64	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto
Secretary (Elected)	Sri Bhusan Chandra Mistri	23.3.64	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto
Director (Elected)	Sri Chittaranjan Mistri	23.3.64	Bhumij	Dakai	Dakai
Ditto	Sri Ram Chandra Singh	23.3.64	Kheria	Ditto	Ditto
Ditto	Sri Kartik Chandra Savar	23.3.64	Kheria	Belpahari	Belpahari
Executive Officer (Ex-Officio)	Sri Nimai Chandra Mondal (Industrial Extension Officer)	January, 1964	Ugra-Kshatriya		

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The Directors, Chairman-cum-Cashier and Vice-Chairman are all elected office-bearers, having the term of office for a year. None of the office-bearers draws any emolument. On resume, it is found that of the six elected posts, four are from the craft-centre of Simulpal and all belong to the Karga community.

A Karga practising artisan, aged 47 years, engaged in stoneware craft as his primary occupation, has been interviewed. He has been an ordinary member since the birth of the Society. The purpose of the interview is to know the attitude of the member to the organisation, to which he belongs. The Society is stated to have helped him and others only financially, a number of times in the past. But, all his needs are not met by the Society. The artisans are helpless in this regard, as they have no other agency to rely on for help. Storage and transport are the main drawbacks, so far as marketing aspect is concerned. It is anybody's guess to gauge the toil and suffering in carrying the articles, weighing a *Maund* or so, on the shoulder-yoke and on foot to a distance of 14 miles every week during the *Har*-day at Silda. The pain is doubled, if the artisan has to carry back some of the unsold wares. As the interviewee remains absolutely ignorant of the problems of the Society, no other question as to the suggested solutions has been asked. His silence is eloquent on the problems of the artisans, though not on those of the Society.

Attitude of the practising artisans, who are non-members of the Society, is equally important in assessing the impact of the Society on the craftsmen and in determining if the craftsmen have been swayed by any wave of enthusiasm, bred of the Society. Spirit of camaraderie being the cementing force among the artisans, it is important to delve into the question why some artisans opt to remain aloof from the Co-Operative. With the view that a discordant action may be a catch-

word behind the actual state of affairs, a practising Karga artisan, who has just crossed his teens, has been interviewed. Incidentally, the interviewee among all the Karga artisans is the only non-member artisan. He has not yet enrolled himself as a member of the Society, of the existence of which he is aware. He does not know, however, the date of its establishment, as he was too young then. He says that the village-artisans run the Society to extend credit facilities to the members and that the functioning of the Society is satisfactory in his opinion. But, not interested in the Society at the moment and not quite certain about its future, he has kept himself aloof from its sway. Aware that members have drawn some benefits from the Society and admitting that it has been useful to the craft, he remains a lonely figure outside its orbit among his comrade artisans.

The Society has not experienced any difficulty from financial, production or marketing sides. Though it has sufficient capital, it has not organised itself into a Producers' Co-Operative. Its attempt to help the artisans only once in storage of articles died an embryonic death. Its financial assistance to the members has not been in very sizable amounts. The Society has lived for more than seven years. The preliminary hardships, consequent on the birth of a new organisation, are by now over. Finance has not stifled its scope of function and, therefore, there is no reason for its activities to be constricted. The Society has been accepted as a living organisation by many. When there are many paths, yet to be trod by the Society, its avowed purpose should be to integrate the artisans into a closely knit guild to step up production with more efficient tools and to carry the articles to the market promptly for despatch to the sellers. Hopes have not died in the artisans' hearts. One will only wish the Society a long life to be of useful service to the craftsmen community.

8

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ECONOMY OF THE CRAFTSMEN AND THEIR ASPIRATIONS AND MOTIVATIONS

ECONOMIC BEHAVIOUR

As in the case of the craft, so also in the life of the craftsmen certain forces work unseen to shape the economic life of the artisans. To give an idea about the craftsmen it is necessary to detail these forces systematically.

OCCUPATIONAL PATTERN

To understand the economic potentialities of a craft, one should probe into the occupational structure of the craftsmen too.

Out of 61 workers engaged in the craft, as many as 49 persons have taken to this craft as an exclusive source of livelihood. They are not connected with any other pursuit to earn some additional income. Incidentally, the remaining 12 artisans, though they are pursuing the craft as their main occupation, have also subsidiary occupations to supplement their income. The craft provides the main occupation to all the artisans and there is none, who practises the craft as a subsidiary occupation.

All the 12 stone-carver artisans also work in cultivation, which is their only subsidiary occupation. These artisans include eight Kargas, two Bhumij and two Karmakars. They possess meagre areas of cultivable land and work on them during the rainy season, that is for two months in a year. They spend six hours a day in cultivation. The

number of artisans by the size of their agricultural land is given below :

TABLE 30

Artisans with subsidiary occupation and cultivable land

Area of land cultivated by an artisan as a secondary occupation	No. of artisans
10 <i>Cottahs</i>	7 artisans
2 <i>Bighas</i>	4 „
5 <i>Bighas</i>	1 artisan
Total	12 artisans

The other practising artisans are without any agricultural land. It is reported that in the barren rocky region here, only six *Maunds* of paddy on an average are available from a *Bigha* of agricultural land at Simulpal. So, in all cases the total produce of the meagre land is meant for domestic consumption and not for sale.

ENDS OF PRODUCTION

None of the artisans produces any article of stone exclusively for ceremonial purpose or for domestic use. No stonewares are manufactured for use of the permanent clients. No article either is produced exclusively for sale in the different

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fairs and festivals. It is found on the other hand, that all the local craftsmen produce articles here to sell them openly in the local market.

EMPLOYMENT

The artisans find employment throughout the year and if everything works well, they carry on the work without practically any interruption. It is only in the rainy season, when quarries become water-logged due to incessant rainfall, that there is forced cessation of work for all. The number of days, thus lost, is not quite appreciable and does not exceed six days in a year. The continuity of work is interrupted by the voluntary stoppage of work by the artisans during the festivals, they customarily observe. The loss of mandays is negligible in this case also. On such occasions work is stopped for five or six days in all.

It may be pointed out here that the number of days, on which the artisans do not work, does not include the mandays wasted otherwise, because of the want of some vital tools like pick, spade and crowbar in 27 households. This aspect has been discussed in details in connection with tools and equipments.

No person in any artisan family is found to be unemployed. No adult person, able-bodied and capable of doing any work, who is at present not engaged in any work but is on the look-out for it, was met with. That there is no unemployed person in any artisan household is mainly because the craft is not in a moribund state. New entrants always find it lucrative to pursue the craft. Besides, the adult members in the artisan households never sit idle. Either they take up some job, which comes in their way, or they join the artisans, already working in the craft. These new members engage themselves in productive labour to augment their family-income. There are five non-artisan workers in three practising artisan households of the Bhumij community. Four of these five non-artisan workers work inside the village and the other one works outside Simulpal.

All of them work as agricultural labourers, working eight hours a day and being paid in kind. Four agricultural labourers get the daily wage of two *Pies* (*Seers*) of paddy. Besides, they get five *Maunds* of paddy, one *Gamcha* (country-napkin) and two *Dhutis* annually from their employers. The fifth labourer gets a free meal daily at the employer's house and three *Maunds* of paddy, two *Dhutis* and one *Gamcha* annually as remuneration for his labour.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND NON-WORKERS

There are altogether 80 non-workers in the 29 practising artisan households, a non-worker being a person not doing any productive work. The non-workers are composed of 56 dependants, 19 students and five domestic workers engaged in customary household duties. The majority of the dependants are children and only three of them are either advanced in age or physically incapable of doing any work.

INCOME OF THE CRAFTSMEN

The amount of income, earned by different workers from this craft, one of the most important factors, is to be reckoned with, in analysing the economy of the artisans.

The craft being a household industry, the income is always shown against heads of the households, who are at the helm of this manufacturing business. Though the members of the family sometimes participate in the production of the articles, their wages remain always unpaid, thus making it all the more difficult to compute their unearned income.

If income of a craftsman is construed as an index of prosperity of a craft, table on income shows that the craft is not at all decadent. The table clearly indicates that majority of the earning craftsmen earn Rs. 401/- to Rs. 900/- per annum exclusively from this craft. If no craftsman earns a fabulous income from the craft, it is because of competition among the craftsmen to produce articles at a cheap price and that has maintained some

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parity of income among them. The difference in the income-levels of a few craftsmen is caused by factors like differences in the degree of efficiency, the availability of time and number of workers in the family.

A table is given below to show the gross annual income of the local craftsmen, earned from the craft.

TABLE 31

Gross annual income of the workers from the sale of stonewares

Annual income	No. of workers
Below Rs. 400/-	Nil
Rs. 400/- to Rs. 500/-	1
Rs. 501/- to Rs. 600/-	6
Rs. 601/- to Rs. 700/-	4
Rs. 701/- to Rs. 800/-	9
Rs. 801/- to Rs. 900/-	5
Rs. 901/- to Rs. 1,000/-	Nil
Rs. 1,001/- to Rs. 1,100/-	Nil
Rs. 1,101/- to Rs. 1,200/-	3
Rs. 1,201/- to Rs. 1,700/-	Nil
Rs. 1,701/- to Rs. 1,800/-	1
Income unspecified (Family workers)	32
Total	61

The income, that the craftsmen earn from the craft, is not offered in any other sphere. The meagre wage, earned by the non-practising members of the artisan households in other occupations, is enough evidence of these people being underemployed even in the context of the backward economy of the area around. In an area, where the daily wage-rate is Re. 1.00 *paise* for the males and 0.75 *paise* for the females, the wage in kind, daily earned by these members, comes to 0.50 *paise* (if computed in terms of money) and is surely below average. But, these day-labourers have no better choice because of lack of employment opportunities. The craftsmen are

mostly landless. Even the 12 landowner artisans cannot extract much from the not too productive earth of the region. So, the craft appears as the only blessed source of livelihood to these artisans.

From the discussion above, one should not conclude hastily that the craftsmen are forced to practise the craft out of lack of choice. They have, in fact, no better choice. When compared to other few avocations of the non-practising artisans, the craft is found to offer the practising artisans a steady income, often higher than that of the non-practising members. One motivation of the craftsmen should be brought into focus here. The artisans are satisfied with only that income, which they consider absolutely necessary to run the family. The sheer urge to earn an optimum income, the amount of which depends much on the size of the family, does not help them expand either their business or the productivity of their craft. The help, the craftsmen get from the members of their family, are not taken into consideration, while selling their products. The unpaid wage of the head artisan for the days, spent in getting the raw material and in producing the goods, is not reckoned with in calculating the cost of the products, nor is kept in view the unpaid labour of the relatives. The result is obvious. The income from sale of the goods remains very low, giving the artisans no scope for accumulation of capital nor any time to expand their craft.

The discussion on the income of the craftsmen will not be comprehensive and will remain largely incomplete, if no mention is made about how the 27 artisan households fail to augment their income with the present state of the craft remaining unchanged. These households, as recorded previously, do not own the tools like pick, crowbar and spade, so essential for quarrying the stone-slabs. They share these tools with the five households, which own them all. This implies that the craftsmen do not get the raw materials in time and have often to take a longer time by fabricating the stones with axes. The wastage of

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time, often unproductive, results in loss of income for every practising artisan household. It has been further observed that each household could process more articles worth Rs. 25/- a week in the minimum, if they could have had the necessary tools and had they worked with them full time. The cost of these tools, calculated to be Rs. 21/-, would require a total money outlay of Rs. 21/- for their purchase. The tools will have a recurring weekly expense of 0.75 paise or so. Though the craftsmen complain that lack of funds does not enable them to purchase the tools, the facts tell otherwise. Due to the co-operation of the owner households, the tools are made available to all the craftsmen and the non-owners do not feel the need of purchasing these tools at all. That exclusive possession of all tools can step up production has struck many, but none has taken any initiative so far to purchase the tools, partly due to their immobility and partly due to their reconciliation to the existing state of things. The unconcern for an increased income is very hard to remove, especially when the artisans express satisfaction for what little they get. A look at the annual budget of some of the craftsmen households in different income-groups may justify the observations.

Still, these households have a better economy than that of others. The *per capita* income of the practising artisan households is given in the table below.

TABLE 32

Practising artisan households and per capita annual income

Community	No. of households with <i>per capita</i> annual income of								Total no. of households
	Rs. 0-100	Rs. 101-150	Rs. 151-200	Rs. 201-250	Rs. 251-300	Rs. 301-350	Rs. 351-400	Rs. 401 and above	
Karga	4	7	4	2	2	..	1	1	21
Bhumij	1	1	2	1	..	1	..	..	6
Karmakar	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	2
Total	6	8	7	3	2	1	1	1	29
Percentage	20.7	27.6	24.1	10.3	6.9	3.5	3.5	3.4	100.0

On comparison with the non-practising artisan households, the table on whose *per capita* income is given in chapter 9, it is observed that the present craft has succoured the practising households in greater number than any other means of livelihood.

SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

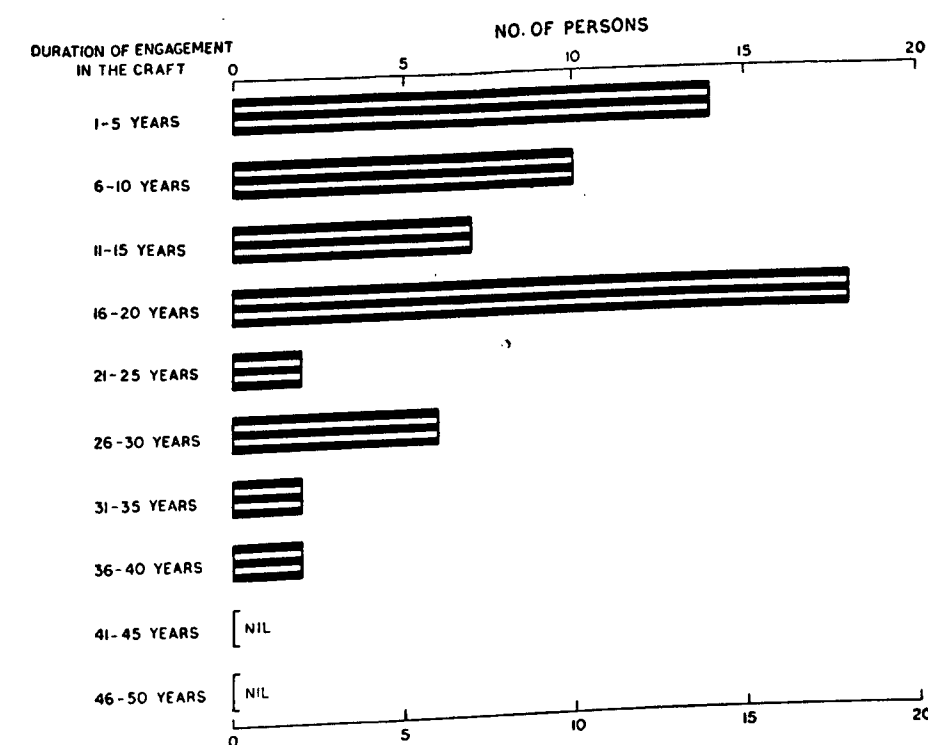
A study of the social and personal characters, aspirations and motivations of the craftsmen is indispensable on account of these factors having a close bearing on the economic behaviour of the craftsmen.

The majority of the local craftsmen are connected with the craft for a considerable period of time, though a few artisans have adopted this craft only in recent years. The number of years, that the craftsmen spent on the craft, is an important consideration for an analysis of the inflow of artisans in the craft. If the inflow is found to be uniform, one may safely conclude the craft to be still holding some attractions for the local craftsmen. If not, they would have discouraged the younger people from taking up the craft.

From the table in the page next, it is evident that the majority of the artisans are associated with the craft for 16-20 years. The entry of recruits has been more or less uniform in course of the last 20 years, the entrants being all young persons.

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DURATION OF ENGAGEMENT IN THE CRAFT



The number of craftsmen, engaged in the craft for more than 20 years, is less than those associated with it for less than two decades.

TABLE 33

Practising artisans and the duration of their engagement in the craft

Duration of engagement in the craft	Males	Females	Persons
1- 5 years	5	9	14
6-10 years	4	6	10
11-15 years	3	4	7
16-20 years	8	10	18
21-25 years	1	1	2
26-30 years	6	..	6
31-35 years	2	..	2
36-40 years	2	..	2
Total	31	30	61

ATTITUDE OF THE CRAFTSMEN

The local craftsmen are contented with the present state of the craft. Obviously, they express a feeling of satiation and satisfaction. Aware of some of the drawbacks of transportation and storage, they look for ways and means to ride over them. True, some artisans are fatalists, but a larger number is enterprising and energetic. They are optimistic about the future of the craft, provided, they say, the problems of the craft, as discussed already, are solved. The artisan heads of all the practising households want their children to take up the craft, when their turn will come. They do not want their progenies to deviate from their traditional occupation.

TRADITIONAL AND HEREDITARY OCCUPATIONS

The traditional occupation of the Kargas is carpentry and that of the Bhumij is cultivation. But, here in Simulpal, both the Kargas and the Bhumij claim stone-carving to be the traditional

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occupation of their communities. The Karmakars return blacksmithy to be their traditional occupation here and the same is true for them anywhere in West Bengal.

By hereditary occupation is meant the occupation of the father. It is found that only seven artisans, constituted by three Kargas, three Karmakars and one Bhumij, have deviated from their fathers' occupations.

Carpentry was the occupation of the fathers of one Karga male and two Karga females. The fact that the Karga male has taken up the craft of stone-carving demonstrates that it is a case of deviation from the traditional occupation of the Kargas and that this artisan is practising the present craft for only one generation. The deviation of the female artisans is explained by the fact that prior to their marriage they belonged to different places and different families, in which some other traditional occupation of the community was practised. In the present area they have taken up stone-carving, the occupation of their husbands.

Two Karmakar artisans have given up blacksmithy only in their life-time. Their fathers had practised the traditional occupation of the caste. The occupation of one Karmakar artisan's father was cultivation, which is, however, not the traditional occupation of the Karmakars.

The father of one solitary Bhumij artisan was an agricultural labourer. In a word, his father was connected with agriculture. But, the present incumbent has started practising the craft in his own life-time.

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL QUALITIES

To carve out stone-slabs into fancy household articles is a colossal job indeed. The processing operations are painstaking and laborious. A good craftsman, therefore, must have a good physique with capacity to bear all the physical strain, that the craft demands of him. He should also have the strength of the limbs and shoulders

to dig stones in the quarries, to lift and carry the stone-slabs home and shape them into desired articles. The physical strength of an artisan must be balanced amply by certain faculties of the mind. He should be patient and watchful. He should have a sense of proportion and of artistry, otherwise it will be very difficult for him to shape a square slab into a round plate. He should strike the stones but not too hard, for hard strokes will only break them. Again, he should have a very strong heart to move up and down the hills and trek long distances of improvised pathways along the fields to reach the *Hat* with the wares. One, who does not have the requisite qualities, will fail to be a craftsman, not to speak of turning a good craftsman.

OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS

This craft poses many hazards to the craftsmen during their work. These occupational hazards lead to physical injuries mostly. The nature of some injuries may be very severe, capable of permanently disabling a craftsman, depending on how and where the injury is inflicted. Though no such serious accident has ever occurred in the past, the artisans guard against it. Caution is the first precept to be borne in mind, if one is to avert a mishap.

A misplaced stroke of an axe may cause a permanent disfigurement of any part of the body, if the stone-cutter is listless for even a moment. Trivial abrasions or bleeding injuries are found to be a routine occurrence in the daily life of the craftsmen, meriting no artisan's attention.

The craftsmen carry huge weight of stone on their shoulder-yoke from the quarries to their residences. The weighty load, borne long on the shoulders, makes the skin ulcerated and almost all the adult male artisans suffer from chronic sores, which, even if cured, leave permanent scar-marks on the body.

If the exertion is too much for an artisan, he may suffer from heart diseases. Almost all the

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male artisans are observed to suffer from diseases of the heart. Respiratory diseases are also fairly prevalent. Laborious work and lack of nutritious food make them susceptible to wasting diseases like tuberculosis.

HOBBIES AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The village does not offer to the artisans any recognised means of recreation like a cinema or a library or a club. After day's toil in the hills, the workers find in their home a haven of rest. Very few look for opportunities outside to spend their leisure-hours, for none has any leisure in the real sense. Some of them have some hobbies of their own and they cultivate the hobbies in their own way.

A *Kirtan* party (a group of psalmists), founded by a Bairagi villager, is patronised by many working craftsmen. The party sings devotional songs in chorus. If invited, this party also visits villages outside Simulpal.

Of the 61 artisans, only 21 have some hobbies or recreational activities. The remaining artisans, too busy with their mundane life, have little interest in any recreation.

Of the 21 artisans with some hobbies, 12 persons find some joy in singing devotional songs after their day's stress and strain. All of them are Kargas. Six artisans, comprising four Kargas, one Bhumij and one Karmakar, get together at some relative's or friend's house after day's work and spend some fleeting hours of the evening in gossip. For the Karga artisans every time is tea-time. Two radio-sets in the village, owned by a Teli and a Bairagi, offer a source of recreation to a solitary Karga artisan, who listens to the broadcasts, whenever possible, after exhausting work of the day.

The children of the craftsmen with the assistance of the village-boys have founded a Club, styled as *Kishore Sangha*, which started functioning from 1960. The Club has no room of its

own and its game is restricted to only football, either inside the village-open or in the ground, located at the neighbouring village of Thakuranpahari.

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

The artisans are all Hindus by religion and *Vaishnavas* by sect. Almost in every artisan's house the sacred *Tulsi* plant (Basil) or *Hari* tree, to use the local term, is found planted in the compound.

The artisans worship *Viśvakarmā* and *Śiva* as their tutelary gods during the months of *Bhadra* (August-September) and *Chaitra* (March-April) respectively of the Bengali Calendar. Except these two deities, *Garām*, the village-god, is also worshipped by the artisans and the goddess *Saraswatī* on a community basis.

The worship of *Garām* is held on a community basis at the foot of a *Śāl* tree in the western corner of the village. The village-god is not represented by any image. Some terracotta figures and toys, mainly of elephants, symbolise the abode of the god. The villagers believe that *Garām* is the protector of the village against evil spirits. His worship takes place in the Bengali month of *Magh* (January-February) and is organised mainly by the Bhumij. A Bhumij artisan officiates in this worship as a priest, against no remuneration for his service. On any day fixed by the villagers the worship is arranged and terracotta elephants are offered to the deity by different worshippers in individual capacities in compliance with the pledges made by them earlier. The offerings to the deity generally consist of milk, sweetmeats, fruits and rice of both sun-dried and boiled varieties. Fowls and goats are also sacrificed before the deity. Sandalwood and flowers are used by the priest during the worship. At night, the meat of the goats and fowls and rice of both varieties are cooked and partaken of by the villagers, assembling there. The Bhumij take the main initiative in organising and celebrating this worship. Subscriptions are raised from all

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the villagers, irrespective of caste. The rate is not fixed and one donates according to one's mite.

The worship of the Goddess *Saraswatī* (Goddess of Learning) takes place in the Bengali month of *Magh* (January-February) on the *Śrī Pañcamī* day (the fifth day in lunar fortnight). The worship is held on a community basis by the village-boys by collecting subscriptions from the villagers, irrespective of caste or creed. Even boys, not attending schools, take active part in the festival. This worship is held in the Primary School of the village. A Brahman resident of a neighbouring village performs the service of a priest against remuneration in cash and kind, amounts of which are not fixed. The deity is represented by an earthen image, purchased from the market at Belpahari.

The offerings consist of flowers, sweetmeats, fruits etc. The children mainly participate in the festival and the elders are happy to see their children radiant with joyous smiles.

The women of the village, including the female craftsmen, observe *Tusu Parab*, a festival in the Bengali month of *Paus* (December-January). Almost in every household the females purchase small earthen dolls of *Tusu*, a legendary virgin, from the market and worship it themselves throughout the month. Daily in the morning, they worship it with flowers, fruits, *Durva* grass, mustard oilseeds and husks of paddy, placed on a decorated earthen pot. At night, songs glorifying *Tusu* are sung by the girls. On the last day of the month, the dolls are immersed in the morning in the Dakai rivulet at the southern corner of the village after a sleepless night, spent by the female worshippers on the penultimate day of the immersion ceremony. The festival is believed to augur prosperity for the household, celebrating it.

A fair is held on the day of immersion and approximately 2,000 persons come from around

and participate in it. Temporary stalls of sweetmeats and fireworks are erected on the sides of the rivulet. Demonstrations of mock fights with sticks are given by the local people at daytime and fireworks are displayed at night.

At Kanaisahar, at a distance of two miles, a fair is held on the last Sunday of the Bengali month of *Ashar* (June-July). The craftsmen participate in this fair, but none but one artisan sells stone-ware there.

Some of the artisans visit a fair held at Balichua, two miles off this place, on the last day of the Bengali month of *Chaitra* (December-January).

In addition to the fairs and festivals, socio-religious functions in connection with life-cycle in the households are also observed by the artisans.

Some artisan households occasionally perform the worship of Goddesses *Manasā* and *Kālī* in their households in fulfilment of vows, made to the deities earlier.

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

There are two informal *Caste Panchayats* or *Samāj* among the Kargas and the Bhumij. The craftsmen of these communities take the advice of the leaders or *Mātabbars* of these *Panchayats* or *Samāj*. As aged persons, much experienced in life, these heads are associated with cultivation. Still, practising the craftsmen have no less regard for the *Mātabbars* than the non-artisans.

The Karmakar artisans have no informal village organisation and whenever necessary, they take decisions themselves on the problems of their life.

The informal *Caste Panchayats* guide and shape the social life of the people according to some fixed norms. The corporate life of the village is, however, regulated by the *Pradhān* (of the elected *Anchal Panchayat*), a Bairagi by community and a resident of the village.



Long march for livelihood

Stone-carver artisans of Simulpal with articles of stone on the *Baank* are on their quiet but toilsome journey to the *Hat* at Silda



In the arena of the market at long last

Hat at Silda, an unassuming open-air country market, is the mart of stone articles, where craftsmen of Simulpal and other regional craft-centres are assembled to sell their wares to the *Paikars* (Wholesalers)



Unkindest cut of a wound, not a sad memento for the artisans

Permanent scars of a healed-up ulcer, on the shoulders of a craftsman, caused by abrasions of the *Baank*, are impressive evidence of the occupational hazard of the craft

ECONOMY OF THE CRAFTSMEN AND THEIR ASPIRATIONS AND MOTIVATIONS

The elected statutory *Panchayats* and the informal *Caste Panchayat* have no say in the economic life of the artisans. The craft is pursued by the persons, following the dictates of their own mind. The problems, if any, of this occupation are solved by the artisans themselves. They do not take any one's counsel in this matter, nor does any outsider volunteer to advise them on this score.

DAILY LIFE

The quiet village of Simulpal wakes up with the first streak of morning light appearing in the horizon. The artisans are busy finishing their morning breakfast after a hurried bath in the village-tank. Their wives get up earlier with the cock's crow, as they have to feed their husbands before the latter go to the hills. With sunrise, the working artisans are out on the village-path, one following another in a long row, with shoulder-yokes dangling on the shoulders, and axe and other implements, clutched in their hands. The solitude of the hills and dales are ruffled by the footsteps of the artisans and by their casual chatter during their journey to the hills along the up and down serpentine track through the forests. The hardy artisans reach the hills in no time and set down to the hard toil of the day, sweating all the time with dust-swept body and grizzled hair and hitting the stones savagely. The place is astir with the metallic clinks, the sound giving an outsider the impression that the hill is being roused from its slumber. Deep caverns are hollowed out and stone-slabs are quarried from the stratum of rock. Here and there, one or two artisans take a short nap or smoke an indigenous cigar, relaxingly seated on a stone and feeding the caged

parrot (carried by some fellow-worker to the place of work) on a wild fruit of the forest. A little after noon, when natural light further mellows, the artisans hark to the silent call of their homes. The journey back resumes. This time the artisans carry some of the half-finished stone articles on the shoulder-yoke. Bent under the weight of the goods, they look more fatigued. They reach their village in twilight, wash their bodies after a dip in the tank and tread the doorsteps of their home in wet clothes. There the housewife stands, attending to her dear husband with the prepared food, ready for service. The artisan takes his meals, enquires of the children, exchanges some jokes and retires to rest. Some artisans flock to the house of the master-craftsman to sing devotional songs in accompaniment of percussion instruments and cymbals.

While the life of the artisans follows the same routine in the quarries for four days a week, it welcomes the change offered by the visit to the *Hat* with all the articles, shaped out during the week. The artisan awaits his visit to the market, where they hope to sell out their wares. The housewife is no less expectant for the same day, when her husband will bring the household goods, required for the week ahead. The children look forward to the hour, till their father comes from the market. One or two tinsel articles will be brought for them. Two days are spent at home, one for working on the half-done goods to finish them and another for complete rest.

The daily life of the artisan is hard, but he toils and struggles with a smile. The sweat brings him pleasure, because he loves to work.

Work may be worship at other times, but *Kirtan* (Psalms) is so now

Not divorced from diversion, the *Vaishnavite* stone-carvers are assembled in the house of a master-craftsman after day's hard work to sing *Kirtans* as chorists, in accompaniment of flute, harmonium and cymbals at even-tide, when the hurricane lanterns dimly burn and the evenminded artisans relax



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TABLE 34

*Annual family budget of a practising Karmakar household**

Source of income	Amount Rs. P.	Items of expenditure	Amount Rs. P.
(a) Cultivation	160.00	(a) Food including cereals and non-cereals	740.00
(b) Livestock and products	..	(b) Drinks	..
(c) Wages	..	(c) Fuel and lighting	15.00
(d) Arts and crafts	768.00	(d) House-rent and repairs	..
(e) Fishery	..	(e) Clothing	30.00
(f) Forestry	..	(f) Travelling	5.00
(g) Trade	..	(g) Recreation	10.00
(h) Transport	..	(h) Education	30.00
(i) Profession	..	(i) Other services	..
(j) Services	..	(j) Interest	0.94
(k) Rent	..	(k) Remittances	..
(l) Investments	..	(l) Hired labour	..
(m) Remittances	..	(m) Purchase for production	112.00
(n) Others	..	(n) Others	0.06
(o) Borrowing	15.00	(o) Purchase of assets	..
(p) Principal received back	..	(p) Construction and improvement of building and other structure	..
(q) Sale of assets	..	(q) Land development	..
Total	943.00	Total	943.00

* The annual income and expenditure of this household relate to the earning members of the family including the non-practising members.—Editor.

ECONOMY OF THE CRAFTSMEN AND THEIR ASPIRATIONS AND MOTIVATIONS

TABLE 35

*Annual family budget of a Bhumij household**

Source of income	Amount Rs. P.	Items of expenditure	Amount Rs. P.
(a) Cultivation	..	(a) Food including cereals and non-cereals	430.00
(b) Livestock and products	..	(b) Drinks	..
(c) Wages	..	(c) Fuel and lighting	16.00
(d) Arts and crafts	576.00	(d) House-rent and repairs	..
(e) Fishery	..	(e) Clothing	32.00
(f) Forestry	..	(f) Travelling	8.00
(g) Trade	..	(g) Recreation	2.00
(h) Transport	..	(h) Education	70.00
(i) Profession	..	(i) Other services	..
(j) Services	..	(j) Interest	..
(k) Rent	..	(k) Remittances	..
(l) Investments	..	(l) Hired labour	..
(m) Remittances	..	(m) Purchase for production	118.00
(n) Others	..	(n) Others	..
(o) Borrowing	..	(o) Purchase of assets	..
(p) Principal received back	..	(p) Construction and improvement of building and other structure	..
(q) Sale of assets	100.00	(q) Land development	..
Total	676.00	Total	676.00

* The annual income and expenditure of this family relate to the earning members of the family including the non-practising members.—Editor.

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TABLE 36

*Annual family budget of a Karga household**

Source of income	Amount Rs. P.	Items of expenditure	Amount Rs. P.
(a) Cultivation	..	(a) Food including cereals and non-cereals	560.00
(b) Livestock and products	..	(b) Drinks	..
(c) Wages	..	(c) Fuel and lighting	18.00
(d) Arts and crafts	720.00	(d) House-rent and repairs	..
(e) Fishery	..	(e) Clothing	28.00
(f) Forestry	..	(f) Travelling	8.00
(g) Trade	..	(g) Recreation	..
(h) Transport	..	(h) Education	..
(i) Profession	..	(i) Other services	..
(j) Services	..	(j) Interest	1.25
(k) Rent	..	(k) Remittances	..
(l) Investments	..	(l) Hired labour	..
(m) Remittances	..	(m) Purchase for production	116.75
(n) Others	..	(n) Others	..
(o) Borrowing	20.00	(o) Purchase of assets	8.00
(p) Principal received back	..	(p) Construction and improvement of building and other structure	..
(q) Sale of assets	..	(q) Land development	..
Total	740.00	Total	740.00

* The annual income and expenditure of this household relate to the earning members of the family including the non-practising members.—Editor.

9

NON-PRACTISING ARTISANS

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NON-PRACTISING ARTISANS

INTRODUCTION

An analysis of a craft can never be comprehensive without a probe into the socio-economic life of the craftsmen. Again, to base the observations about a craft's future on a granitic foundation, the analysis should project itself into its past. It is necessary also to bring within the fold of the study craftsmen, who are no more practising the craft now. The non-practising artisans may either be members of practising artisan households, in which one or two members or more still pursue the craft at present, or they may come from some other households, which had practised the craft in the past but have now ceased pursuing it. It would have been valuable to have culled information also about the households, which have left the craft and the place as well. But, lost as they are for ever to the place, they are also lost for this investigation. Still, the households, which are now living, and the artisans therein, rich in the experience of the craft, even though they are now non-practising members, have provided invaluable information for the study of the craft and have thereby strengthened the analysis of its economic potentialities. It becomes easy then to forecast the future of the craft with some exactitude, if not with the infallibility of the *Papal Bull*. The study of the non-practising artisans in the practising and non-practising households, apart from enabling one to presage the economic future

of the craft, gives one an inside view of the social forces, that shape the attitude of the people and guide their destiny to an unforeseeable destination. The values inherent in these unseen forces are only revealed, if the artisans are studied closely. It is understood only then why they have left the craft, if the cessation has been prompted by economic, social or physical factors, and if the loss of these trained hands has raised any ripple in the course of the craft and made it a jot weaker. And finally, the personal element of their dissociation from the occupation, in some cases traditional and in some others hereditary, for which a fond attachment, so characteristic of human nature, grows out of its pursuit for years or for decades, cannot be sacrificed altogether, though this may have neither any economic importance nor any social value.

NON-PRACTISING ARTISAN HOUSEHOLDS

Before a discussion starts on the non-practising artisans, it is necessary to know the non-practising artisan households, their communities, the total number of persons therein, the size of the households, the age and sex-wise distribution of the persons and all other relevant demographic information. The table overleaf will be helpful on the sex-wise and community-wise distribution of the persons in the non-practising artisan households.

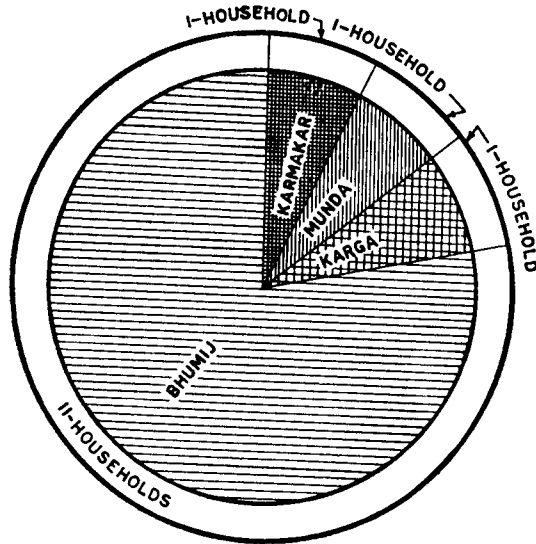
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TABLE 37

Non-practising artisan households

Community	No. of families	Total no. of members			Average size of household
		Male	Female	Total	
Karga	1	3	4	7	7.0
Munda	1	2	3	5	5.0
Karmakar	1	3	1	4	4.0
Bhumij	11	35	32	67	6.1
Total	14	43	40	83	5.9

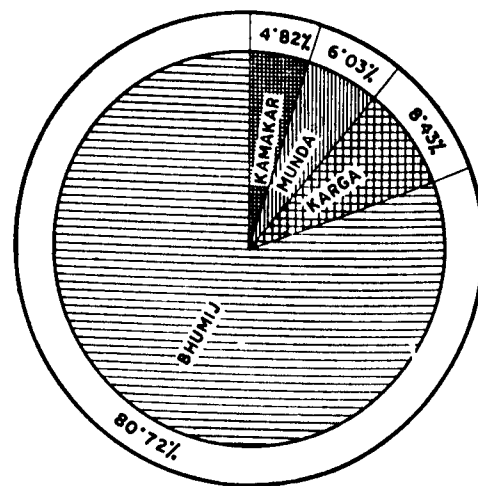
NON-PRACTISING ARTISAN HOUSEHOLDS



It is interesting that the households, which have ceased to practise the craft, are drawn from four communities, of which the Munda is the solitary community, in which there is no practising artisan household at present. The Mundas are members of the Scheduled Tribe in the State of West Bengal. The second important point is that the Karga households form the majority among the practising artisan families (72.4 per cent), but among the non-practising households, like the Karmakars and the Mundas, they are in the minority (7.1 per cent). Incidentally it may be mentioned here that one of the traditional occupations of the Kargas is stone-cutting. The Kargas state that both wood-carving and stone-cutting

are traditional occupations of their community as a whole and not of a few families of the area only. The Bhumij, who explain 20.7 per cent of the practising artisan households, are in the majority among the non-practising families (78.6 per cent). Female members in the Karga and Munda households outnumber the males. The average sex-ratio in the 14 households taken as a whole comes to 930 females per thousand males. Though the average size of the households is 5.9, the Karga family is the biggest in size and the Karmakar household is the smallest.

POPULATION IN NON-PRACTISING ARTISAN HOUSEHOLDS



About 54.2 per cent of the members in the non-practising artisan households are children in the age-group 0-14 and 44.6 per cent of the members constitute the labour-force in the age-group 15-59, while 1.2 per cent of the persons in these households are in the age-group 60 years and above, constituting the old age-group.

On an analysis of the working members in these households, it is found that above 44.6 per cent of the total members are engaged in productive economic pursuits, no matter if they earn an income or not. About 11.4 per cent of the children in the age-group 0-14 are in the workers' group. The workers from the age-group 15-59 account for 89.2 per cent of the persons in the same age-group.

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TABLE 38

Age-structure

Age-group	Persons			Workers		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
0-4	5	10	15	..	..	..
5-9	9	4	13	..	..	..
10-14	9	8	17	2	2	4
15-19	5	3	8	5	1	6
20-24	2	3	5	2	3	5
25-29	2	3	5	1	3	4
30-34	2	3	5	2	3	5
35-39	3	2	5	3	2	5
40-44	1	2	3	1	1	2
45-49	2	..	2	2	..	2
50-54	2	2	4	2	2	4
55-59	..	..	..	..	..	..
60+	1	..	1	..	..	..
Total	43	40	83	20	17	37

MARITAL STATUS

Fifty persons, including 28 males and 22 females, have not yet married. There are 15 couples in all and obviously 30 persons, comprising 15 males and 15 females, are married. There are, in all, three widows in these non-practising artisan households.

LITERACY, EDUCATIONAL STANDARD
AND LANGUAGE

Of the total members in the non-practising artisan households, only 16 persons (19.3 per cent), of which 14 are males, are literate. While two Karmakar males are members of the limited literate group, the rest come from the Bhumi community. The members of the Munda and Karga non-practising households can neither read nor write. Of the literates, one Bhumi male has not attended any School. But the education of the other 15 literates, of which two are females, is limited to the Primary Standard only. All the households speak in Bengali, whether speaking

among themselves or speaking to others.

RELIGION

All the households are Hindus and they worship the deities of the Hindu pantheon.

SIZE AND TYPE OF HOUSEHOLDS

The table on the size of the households and their types is given below :

TABLE 39

Size and type of households

Size of the households	Simple	Intermediate	Joint	Others	Total
1 membered	..	..	..	..	..
2 membered	..	..	..	..	..
3 membered	1	..	..	1	2
4 membered	3	..	..	..	3
5 membered	1	..	..	..	1
6 membered	2	..	..	..	2
7 membered	2	..	..	..	2
8 membered	2	..	1	..	3
9 membered	..	..	..	..	..
10 membered	..	..	1	..	..
Total	11	..	2	1	14

Majority of the households are of *Simple* type, consisting of husband, wife and unmarried children. Of the two *Joint* Bhumij households, one consists of parents, their two married sons with their wives and married children and the other comprises the married head with his wife, his widowed mother and his unmarried children as well as his married brother with his wife. The Bhumij household of the *Others* type consists of the bachelor head with his unmarried brother and widowed mother. There is no household of the *Intermediate* type, consisting of married couple with or without children and of one of the parents.

Simple households are not necessarily small in size. While the smallest household of this type consists of three members, the largest ones are

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found to contain as many as eight members.

OCCUPATIONAL PATTERN

Of 37 workers, 21 persons are males and the rest are females. The Industrial Classification of each worker according to the broad nature of his economic pursuit and the occupation of each are given later. Here, a community-wise table of each worker according to sex and broad Industrial Classification is given below :

Of 37 workers, the majority (67.7 per cent) are engaged in other services, which, in fact, include day-labourers working mainly in this village. Again, as many as 16 females (51.6 per cent) are workers, of which only one is a family-worker and as such, is a non-earning member, helping her carpenter husband, who is the earning head of her family.

In cultivation the workers are all owner-

TABLE 40

Occupational pattern

Community	Cultivation			Agricultural labourer			Livestock			Manufacturing household industry			Other services		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Bhumij	8	..	8	1	2	3	2	..	2	..	..	..	6	12	18
Karga	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	2	..	..	..
Karmakar	..	..	..	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	1
Munda	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	2
Total	8	..	8	2	2	4	2	..	2	1	1	2	8	13	21

cultivators with some vestiges of land. None cultivates other's land on crop-share basis. Among the cultivators, two are family-workers with unpaid wages. Of these, three persons work as day-labourers and their occupation is subsidiary to the primary work of cultivation. Another works as an agricultural labourer subsidiarily to cultivation. Four other cultivators have no subsidiary occupation at all.

The persons, engaged in livestock, are cow-boys, one of whom is an unpaid worker, tending the cattle of his family.

Manufacturing includes the solitary household industry of carpentry, in which the head of only one household is assisted by his wife.

In other services all the workers are day-labourers doing miscellaneous work, such as earth-digging, thatching of roofs, casual work in the washing plant of the white-clay and yellow

ochre factory at Thakuranpahari etc. But, none of the occupations is specialised in by any worker nor does any worker work continuously in a particular sector for a number of days at a stretch. Only two workers in other services also work in cultivation subsidiarily, as they own some land and till it.

INCOME

The occupational structure of the non-practising artisan households will be meaningful only after a look at their annual income. The table is given overleaf.

It is indeed interesting that majority (92.9 per cent) of the non-practising artisan households earn their annual income not exceeding Rs. 900.00 paise. The solitary Bhumij family with the maximum annual income, among these non-practising families, has also the maximum number of earning workers in the family, to the income budget of

NON-PRACTISING ARTISANS

TABLE 41

Annual family income

Annual income in rupees	No. of households				Total
	Bhumij	Karga	Karmakar	Munda	
Upto 300	..	..	..	..	..
301— 400	1	..	1	..	2
401— 500	..	..	..	..	..
501— 600	..	..	..	1	1
601— 700	6	1	..	..	7
701— 800	2	..	..	..	2
801— 900	1	..	..	..	1
901—1,600	..	..	..	..	..
1,601—1,700	1	..	..	..	1
Total	11	1	1	1	14

which five persons contribute their earnings. Though income-pattern of these households apparently compares very favourably with that of the practising craftsmen's households, the actual position is otherwise. The income in the practising artisan households, as reflected in the relevant table in Chapter 8, is earned by the single working head, who is the entrepreneur, the prime mover of the household craft, assisted sometimes by his wife, brother or son and sometimes by none. In the non-practising households the income is the accumulated earnings of more than one member,

for there are 34 earning workers in 14 households. Three households with single earning worker in each consist of one Karga and two Bhumij families. Incidentally, the annual income of two families, one Bhumij and one Karga, does not exceed Rs. 400.00 paise, the third Bhumij household, however, being an exception with an annual income of Rs. 700.00 paise, earned by one single worker. While the annual income of each worker according to the broad Industrial Classification and occupation has been spelled out later, it is necessary to point out that the sources of livelihood of the non-practising households are no more lucrative than the craft of stone-carving. That income is not a factor to have played any role in dissociating these households from the craft will be evident from the discussion about the reasons for their cessation. The craft is an attractive source of livelihood, because it has potentialities for both the producers as well as the customers and it has the virility to live still longer than one can possibly imagine. The attitude of the non-practising artisans, discussed later, will be a pointer to this end. Income of the non-practising households has, therefore, served but a specific purpose to show that the labour of the persons in their households is remunerative, but not more than that of the practising artisans.

If the non-practising households are reviewed in the background of per capita annual income and

TABLE 42

Non-practising households and per capita annual income

Community	No of non-practising artisan households with per capita annual income of									Total no. of households
	Rs. 0-50	Rs. 51-100	Rs. 101-150	Rs. 151-200	Rs. 201-250	Rs. 251-300	Rs. 301-350	Rs. 351-400	Rs. 400 and above	
Bhumij	..	4	3	1	3	..	..	..	..	11
Karga	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Karmakar	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Munda	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Total	..	5	5	1	3	..	..	..	..	14
Percentage	..	35.7	35.7	7.2	21.4	..	..	..	..	100.0

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compared with the practising artisan households on that point, the observation that income of the practising households is more than that of the non-practising ones is further strengthened. A table is given per page, showing the distribution of the non-practising artisan households according to their *per capita* annual income.

Whereas the maximum range of *per capita* annual income of the non-practising households ranges from Rs. 201.00 *paise* to Rs. 250.00 *paise*, that of the practising households is found even in Rs. 401.00 *paise* and above. While more than 70 per cent of the non-practising households are confined to the *per capita* annual income not exceeding Rs. 150.00 *paise*, a little over 48 per cent of the practising households are in this category. This comparison will perhaps show beyond doubt that the craft is a more lucrative profession than many other avocations.

The distribution of the workers in the non-practising artisan households, according to their income, occupation and place of activity, may be evidenced by the following table :

TABLE 43

Workers in the non-practising artisan households with their occupation and income

Category of workers	Total workers	Annual income	Area of work
Cultivator			
Tillers of own land	8	(a) Rs. 700.00 <i>paise</i>	Inside the village
		(b) Rs. 100.00 <i>paise</i>	"
		(c) *Rs. 300.00 <i>paise</i>	"
		(d) *Rs. 300.00 <i>paise</i>	"
		(e) *Rs. 300.00 <i>paise</i>	"
		(f) **Rs. 320.00 <i>paise</i>	"
		(g) Income unspecified (Family worker)	"
		(h) Ditto	"
Livestock			
Cowboys	2	(a) Rs. 40.00 <i>paise</i>	"
		(b) Income unspecified (Family worker)	"

Category of workers	Total workers	Annual income	Area of work
Agricultural labourers	4	(a) Rs. 100.00 <i>paise</i>	Inside the village
		(b) Rs. 180.00 <i>paise</i>	"
		(c) Rs. 100.00 <i>paise</i>	"
		(d) Rs. 180.00 <i>paise</i>	"
Manufacturing household industry			
Carpenters	2	(a) Rs. 365.00 <i>paise</i>	"
		(b) Income unspecified (Family worker)	"
Other services			
Day-labourers	21	(a) Rs. 360.00 <i>paise</i>	Inside and outside the village
		(b) Rs. 340.00 <i>paise</i>	"
		(c) Rs. 340.00 <i>paise</i>	"
		(d) Rs. 340.00 <i>paise</i>	"
		(e) Rs. 340.00 <i>paise</i>	"
		(f) Rs. 340.00 <i>paise</i>	"
		(g) Rs. 340.00 <i>paise</i>	"
		(h) Rs. 340.00 <i>paise</i>	"
		(i) Rs. 340.00 <i>paise</i>	"
		(j) Rs. 340.00 <i>paise</i>	"
		(k) Rs. 360.00 <i>paise</i>	"
		(l) Rs. 340.00 <i>paise</i>	"
		(m) Rs. 340.00 <i>paise</i>	"
		(n) Rs. 360.00 <i>paise</i>	"
		(o) Rs. 340.00 <i>paise</i>	"
		(p) Rs. 340.00 <i>paise</i>	"
		(q) Rs. 360.00 <i>paise</i>	"
		(r) Rs. 360.00 <i>paise</i>	"
		(s) Rs. 340.00 <i>paise</i>	"
		(t) †Rs. 380.00 <i>paise</i>	"
		(u) †Rs. 300.00 <i>paise</i>	"

Note :

- * Cultivation as primary occupation and secondary occupation as day-labourer.
- ** Cultivation as primary occupation and secondary occupation as agricultural labourer.
- † Day-labourer as primary occupation and cultivation as secondary occupation.—Editor.

NON-PRACTISING ARTISANS

It is evident from the previous table that except for four workers, the annual income of all others has been stated. The four excepted workers are family workers, who are not paid any wage in cash or in kind. It may be mentioned here that the labourers are generally paid in kind, the rate of daily wage being three *Seers* of paddy for the males and two *Seers* of paddy for the females. When paid in cash, very seldom of course, the daily wage stands at Re. 1.00 *paise* for a male labourer and 0.75 *paise* for a female worker. The annual income, shown before, is mostly based on computation, by which payments in kind have been calculated in terms of cash.

A table on the range of annual income of the workers is also given below :

TABLE 44

Annual income

Range of annual income	No. of workers
Below Rs. 100/-	1
Between Rs. 101/- to Rs. 200/-	5
Between Rs. 201/- to Rs. 300/-	4
Between Rs. 301/- to Rs. 400/-	22
Between Rs. 401/- to Rs. 700/-	1
Income unspecified	4*
Total	37

* Family workers—Editor.

NON-WORKERS

Dependant infants, children not attending schools and disabled persons constitute the majority of the non-workers (63.0 per cent). The thirteen dependants in the age-group of 5-14 are neither getting education in schools, though their age warrants so, nor are they being utilised in any economic pursuits. The loss is thus caused both ways. The old man over 60 years is disabled by his blindness. The paucity of females in domestic service is explained by the fact that the females here combine the duties of both an earner and of a domestic worker. The five females are exceptions to this pattern. All the students, except one, are having their education in the Primary School of the village in different classes. One Bhumij boy is a student in the Higher Secondary School at Belpahari. A little less than one-third of the total non-workers is constituted by children of (0-4) age-group, wherein the females outnumber the males. It is also interesting that no male in the working age-group (15-59) is a non-worker.

The non-working persons in the non-practising households are detailed in the table at the bottom according to sex and age-group.

HEREDITARY OCCUPATION

In the non-practising households the occupation of the fathers of all the heads, except of one

TABLE 45

Activity of non-workers

Age-group	Total no. of non-workers			Students attending school			Domestic work			Dependants including infants, children not attending school and disabled persons		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
0-4	5	10	15	..	..	..	..	..	..	5	10	15
5-9	9	4	13	4	1	5	..	..	..	5	3	8
10-14	7	6	13	6	1	7	..	1	1	1	4	5
15-59	..	4	4	..	..	..	..	4	4	..	..	..
0+	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	1
Total	22	24	46	10	2	12	..	5	5	12	17	29

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Bhumij household, was the craft of stone-carving. Fathers of eight heads of households, comprising one Karga, one Karmakar, one Munda and five Bhumij produced stone articles as a primary occupation, the rest having pursued the craft as a subsidiary occupation. The husband of the widowed head of the Bhumij household had pursued the craft as a primary occupation. In fourteen households twelve heads are married and their wives mostly come from different places and from different families. Still, the fathers-in-law of two Bhumij heads pursued the craft as a secondary occupation, the residence of one being in a village named Bakshal in Ghatsila P.S. in Bihar and that of another being in the village of Simulpal itself.

DISSOCIATION OF THE NON-PRACTISING HOUSEHOLDS FROM THE CRAFT

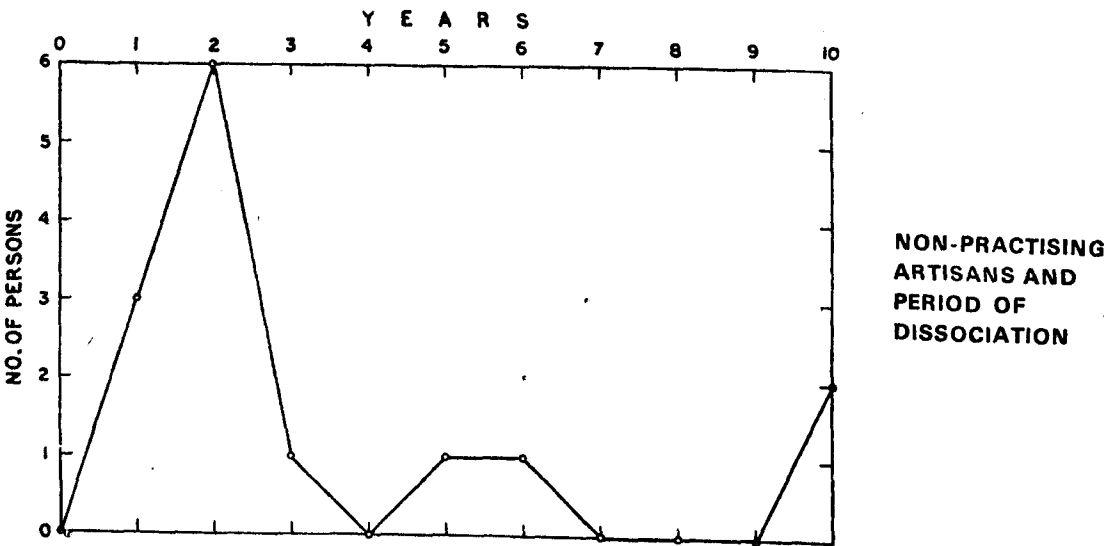
The non-practising households have left the craft either in the lifetime of the head or after the death of the head's husband or father, as the case may be. Again, in some of these households the artisans, who had practised the craft sometime ago, are still living. The discussion about the erstwhile artisans will be made elsewhere. Here, the period of time, which elapsed after the households had left the craft, in which neither the head nor any member had ever participated, is shown

below. It may be mentioned that in seven non-practising households the retired artisans are still living, whereas in seven other households no other living member except the head's father or husband, since deceased, had practised the craft in their life-time.

The period of dissociation of the households is given below :

TABLE 46
Period of dissociation of the households

Period of dissociation	Households in which the non-practising artisans are alive	Households in which the non-practising artisans are not alive	Total
One year	1	..	1
Two years	3	1	4
Three years	1	..	1
Four years	..	..	..
Five years	..	1	1
Six years	1	1	2
Ten years	1	1	2
Thirteen years	..	1	1
Sixteen years	..	1	1
Eighteen years	..	1	1
Total	7	7	14



NON-PRACTISING ARTISANS

It may be noted that eleven households left the craft in course of the last decade. One Karmakar and six Bhumij households seceded from the craft after the death of the husband or of the father of the head and they do not have any living non-practising artisan.

NON-PRACTISING ARTISANS

The non-practising artisans constitute the most important core of the discussion about the households, erstwhile engaged in the craft. They are the living artisans, though experienced yet no longer engaged in the craft. Some of them are

busy in other vocations and again some have busy idle hours at their disposal, consequent upon their retirement either due to old age or due to ill health. The non-practising artisans, discussed here, do not come from the non-practising artisan households only, but they also include the non-practising artisans, resident in the practising artisan households. The total number of households, from which the non-practising artisans come, is ten, constituted by seven non-practising families and three practising households.

The details about the non-practising artisans are given below :

TABLE 47
Activity of non-practising artisans

Location of the non-practising artisans	Community	Sex	Marital status	Age	Period of dissociation	Present occupation	Reason for dissociation
Non-practising artisan household	Bhumij	Male	Married	45 years	1 year	Day-labourer	To earn daily income
Practising artisan household	Karga	Female	Ditto	38 years	1 year	Non-worker	Ill health
Non-practising artisan household	Bhumij	Ditto	Ditto	30 years	1 year	Day-labourer	To earn daily income
Ditto	Ditto	Male	Ditto	60 years	2 years	Non-worker	Physical incapacity
Ditto	Ditto	Female	Widow	50 years	2 years	Day-labourer	Husband's death
Ditto	Ditto	Male	Married	50 years	2 years	Ditto	Ill health
Ditto	Ditto	Female	Widow	40 years	2 years	Agricultural labourer	Husband's death
Ditto	Munda	Male	Married	30 years	2 years	Day-labourer	To earn daily income
Ditto	Ditto	Female	Ditto	20 years	2 years	Ditto	Ditto
Ditto	Bhumij	Ditto	Widow	36 years	3 years	Ditto	Husband's death
Practising artisan household	Karga	Ditto	Ditto	50 years	5 years	Non-worker	Old age
Non-practising artisan household	Bhumij	Ditto	Ditto	50 years	6 years	Day-labourer	Husband's death
Practising artisan household	Karga	Ditto	Ditto	60 years	10 years	Non-worker	Old age
Non-practising artisan household	Ditto	Male	Married	40 years	10 years	Carpentry	Family quarrel

All the artisans, except two, are in the age-group of 15-59, constituting the labour-force. But,

two of them are non-workers, though the total number of non-workers is four. While 64.3 per

cent of the persons are females, the majority of the female non-practising artisans are widows. It has already been discussed that in this household craft husband or father becomes the central figure of the manufacturing industry, in which his wife or son also works. Seldom does the widow practise the craft herself, for it requires some male working members to collect the raw material and to do the laborious jobs themselves. That is why, the widows, though experienced in a way, cannot wholly carry on the operations of the craft themselves. As such, their experience is wasted. Turning to the reasons of cessation, it is found that while in six cases infirmity due to old age or ill health intervened in the life of the craftsmen as a deterrent factor, in four cases it was husband's death that prevented the widowed artisan from carrying on the normal work of the craft. Though daily income was required as a necessity in three cases, it was not the income from the craft that had any adverse effect on the artisan's life in making him averse to the craft. The present way of earning income from the craft every week after the sale of the articles was not considered advantageous by three seceding artisans. To meet the daily needs, the life of a day-labourer was opted instead. Thus, it may be safely concluded that income or for that matter, any economic debacle did not snatch these artisans away from the craft, though in some cases death did the same.

INCOME OF THE NON-PRACTISING ARTISANS AT THE TIME OF DISSOCIATION

To make the analysis more self-contained and more pointed, the income, earned by the non-practising artisans when they had last left the craft, is also discussed here. This will further bolster up the contention that the craft is still impregnated with economic potentialities and it behoves only the strong and healthy persons to earn the tempting income, it offers. As income has a reference to the nature of occupation also, it is shown against the non-practising artisans, who had worked in the craft as primary workers or as secondary workers.

As the three non-practising artisans in the

practising artisan households were family-workers and their income remained unspecified, they are not shown in the table below. The point of interest about these workers is that they had worked in the craft as primary workers, having devoted full-time attention to their avocation.

TABLE 48

Income of the non-practising artisans

Range of annual income from the craft at the time of dissociation	No. of workers	Primary workers	Subsidiary workers
Rs. 0—100	..	..	..
101—200	..	..	..
201—300	1	..	1
301—400	..	..	..
401—500	3	..	3
501—600	..	..	..
601—700	..	..	..
701—800	2	2	..
Unspecified (Family worker)	5	2	3
Total	11	4	7

The workers with the income in the range Rs. (401-500) include a female artisan, who also worked as a family-worker and the income was obviously that of her husband, who had accepted the craft as a secondary occupation. Again, one female worker, who along with her husband had pursued the craft as a primary occupation, has been shown in the income range Rs. (701-800) and the income shown is that of her deceased husband. The workers with unspecified income are artisans with unpaid wages and include four females and a male. The male worker is a Karga, who had dissociated himself from the craft after a split in the family due to quarrel and had actually worked as a family-worker in the craft, pursued by his brother. It may be pointed out that the income, once earned from the craft in the past, exceeds that now earned from other sources.

AFTERMATH OF CESSATION

After a discussion of the details about the non-practising artisans, it becomes necessary to take into account certain vital information about their skill, their tools and about their attitude towards the craft, which will be helpful in writing the socio-economic causerie on these craftsmen. As regards skill, the seven non-practising artisan households, bereft of any living non-practising artisans, do not come in the purview of the present discussion nor do they figure in the discussion *et sequentes*. The surviving members in other households have neither the skill nor the training, which passed away with the artisans, since deceased. Their attitude, therefore, is one of sauntering observers, no more so keen as before, but again not one of apathy. As fellow craftsmen in an erstwhile occupation, the living non-practising artisans of today evince a sense of belonging to the same family of craftsmen in their dealings and relations with the practising households.

As regards the attitude towards resumption of the craft's occupation, the observation is that it is out of question for the seven non-practising households without any living non-practising artisan, for the obvious reason that no other member therein has got any training in the craft, which may now enable them to resume hammering the stone with axe and chisel. The seven other non-practising households with the eleven non-practising artisans express mixed reaction. Five households, comprising four Bhumij and one Karga, will not resume the craft's occupation. The Karga household, a secessionist from the brother's family after family-quarrel, has no wistful hope to go back to the craft; it is no more possible at present, as the family has no tools, no equipments and no capital. The four Bhumij households also endorse the same opinion that they would not be fellow-travellers in the craft's pursuit, though not for the reason given by the Munda, a purely personal reason not holding good in their cases. Labour is their handicap; the living experienced artisans, since retired from the craft, are incapacitated people, either blind or lacking in physical

strength. Two households without any tools also find in the absence of tools a stumbling factor in the resumption of the craft's occupation.

The persons willing to take up the craft are limited to the solitary Munda and one Bhumij households. The Munda waits for grant from Government, enabling him to purchase the tools, and the Bhumij expresses his willingness, subject to the provision of daily income. The latter, therefore, is as good as other households, for daily income will not come from the craft ever in his life and he, willing all the time to go back to the craft, will never be able to pursue it. The three non-practising artisans resident in the practising families are 'Retired Leisure' with rest *ad infinitum*. Of these seven households, three families, for which the craft was secondary occupation, expressed the opinion that they were fully rehabilitated after having given up the craft. The two Bhumij households with annual income of Rs. 900.00 *paise* and Rs. 700.00 *paise* and one Munda family with an annual income of Rs. 700.00 *paise* fall in this trio. All the other households feel a sense of economic loss too, because of their displacement from the craft-occupation.

LOSS TO THE CRAFT

The question of personal loss concerning the 14 non-practising households has been thrashed out in the foregoing discussions. It will perhaps be worthy of enterprise to examine if the craft had lost anything by the dissociation of these 14 households. Labour and capital apart, the question of tools is a vital one and it may be seen if any tool or equipment has been given to time's rusting process ever since. A table in the page following will show the ownership of the tools and also the price thereof.

The dismal tale of the tools need not be recounted here to show that they have been kept aside and allowed to rust as scrap, a relic of the past and a faithful witness to the households' past association with the craft. The important tools like pick, spade and crowbar, so much in demand

TABLE 49
Tools and price

Name of the tools and equipments	*Price in rupees	No. of households possessing the tools and equipments
Gainti (Pick)	3.00 to 5.50	6
Kodal (Spade)	4.50	5
Sabal (Crowbar)	5.50	6
Kurul (Axe)	4.00 to 6.00	3
Batali (Chisel)	4.00	2
Kund (Country-lathe)	0.50 to 1.00	1

Note : *Only two households could state the price—Editor.

now in the practising households, have not been used for long. The only explicable reason for the households having not allowed the tools to be communised is the faint hope of reviving in some unknowable future their active association with the craft and the result was that years rolled on, the tools rusted and none profited economically. The possession of tools in a very limited number

of non-practising households should not lead one to the hasty presumption that they had not owned the tools. In fact, they had some of the tools, but they lost most of them. The price of some of the tools may be compared with that, discussed previously. It is indicative of the price-rise, which started before Independence and attained the present state of its acme.

The loss of clients and of market has been of no significance to the craft and to the present centre. The assemblage of the clients being at the *Hat*, it is not possible to assess exactly in terms of number the loss of clients or rather the transference of clients from the non-practising to the practising households and from this craft-centre to others. That some factor or other prevented the fourteen households from pursuing the craft is regretted by all and these retired craftsmen of yesterday wish that they could join their brethren of today in the journey to the hills and back and in the errands to the *Hat*. But, that is not to be. So, they have accepted the life they lead now, with only a wistful hope, never to be realised perhaps, that their children will have the craftsmen's blood but never the craftsmen's skill.

10

PLACE OF THE CRAFT
IN THE REGIONAL
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

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PLACE OF THE CRAFT IN THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

INTRODUCTION

The craft and the craftsmen have been discussed and analysed in details. But, the end is not achieved with the means of discussion on the craftsmen and on their avocation alone. The life-force of the craft is born of and sustained by the demand of the consumers. The consumers control the destiny of the artisans, for they and they only decide if the craft will stay or languish. True, the articles of stone, produced here or in the craft-centres near about this place, are not entirely consumed by the local people. The articles have a wider market in other districts of West Bengal. But, even without knowing the consumers in far-flung places, without sensing their intuitions and preferences, it may be possible to presage the future of the craft on a probe into the socio-religious attitudes of a cross-section of the local consumers. The latter well reflect the image of other people in the rural areas of the State, even though they are ethnically, socio-culturally and economically different. Whatever the difference, the unity is more striking, as unity is rooted in their beliefs and practices, in their habits and thoughts, one not fundamentally different from or reverse to another.

CONSUMERS' PREFERENCE

The study of the consumers is very important in assessing their demand for the articles, in

knowing their preference for any particular variety of article and also in analysing the factors behind their choice of items of stone in preference to comparable items of other materials. The socio-religious and economic complex of the households determine and constitute their demands. With this end in view the broad outline of the households' social, religious and economic life is given.

Ten households have been selected for this study. Eight of them reside in the village proper and the remaining two in two neighbouring villages, Kakrihorn and Odalchua, the first being situated at a distance of one and half miles and the other being two miles away from Simulpal. The households represent ten communities, from each of which one household is selected. The communities are Bairagi, Brahman, Kheria, Mahato, Munda, Napit, Santal, Sunri, Sutradhar and Teli.

According to 1961 Census, the Sunris are members of the Scheduled Caste throughout West Bengal except in Purulia district and in the territories transferred from Purnea district of Bihar. The Kherias, the Mundas, and the Santals are Scheduled Tribes throughout the State of West Bengal. All except the Brahman and the Sunri households live in Simulpal.

The heads of the interviewed households are

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all males and all of them belong to the age-group 25-59, the break-up of which is given below :

TABLE 50
Age-group of consumers

Age-group	No. of person
25-29	1
30-34	1
35-39	1
40-44	2
45-49	1
50-54	3
55-59	1
Total	10

The majority of the persons are over 40 years of age and none of them is under 25 years.

Cultivation is the source of livelihood of four heads of households (Bairagi, Mahato, Napit and Santal). The heads of the Kheria, Munda and Sutradhar families are day-labourers. The Sunri is the owner of a grocer's shop and the Brahman is a priest.

CONSUMPTION-PATTERN

The profile of the consumer households does not mean anything, unless the consumption pattern of the articles is also known. All the households have not purchased the articles for their use at a time or in the same year. But, all the purchased articles are of this place.

The earliest year of purchase is 1963, when the Mahato and the Sutradhar households purchased five pieces of *Bati* at 0.25 *paise* and 0.37 *paise* per piece, the variance in price having been due to difference in size and quality of the articles. In the Sutradhar family six pieces of *Rekab* were purchased the same year at 0.50 *paise* per piece. These two households have not purchased any article since then. The stone articles were purchased for use as domestic utensils for taking food. While one of the households has

four pieces of bowls of aluminium, another cannot specify the number of bowls of the same material. Obviously the articles of aluminium are also used as substitutes. Enamelled plates are substitutes for *Rekabs*.

In 1964 six households (all except the Mahato, Santal, Sunri and Sutradhar families) bought 42 *Batis* of stone for domestic use. The price varied from 0.25 *paise* to 0.37 *paise* per piece. None of the households has any substitute article of other material. In all 13 *Thalas* were purchased the same year by the Teli and the Brahman households for use in their families at the price, as prevailed in 1963. Both the families have utensils of bellmetal for similar use. The Brahman household has enamelled plates in addition. The plate of bellmetal had cost the households Rs. 3.00 *paise* per piece and the enamelled plate Re. 1.00 *paise*. The Teli family also bought two *Rekabs* at 0.50 *paise* per piece for ceremonial use during the worship of household deities. There is no substitute of this article in his household. One Bairagi family purchased five *Plates* for ceremonial use. The article also constituted an item of present to some other household. The price of *Plate* is stated to have been charged at 0.12 *paise* per *Plate*, an unusually low rate for the consideration that the purchaser was the *Pradhan* of the local *Anchal Panchayat*. The household has *Plates* of china-clay, each costing 0.50 *paise*.

In 1965 (till March) the Santal household made a purchase of two *Batis* for use as domestic utensil along with bowls of aluminium. The Sunri family purchased two *Pradips* for use during worship of deities. The article had cost 0.25 *paise* per piece and the purchaser family had no other substitute.

On a resume of the above discussion it is thus found that the 10 consumer households had purchased 49 *Batis*, 13 *Thalas*, eight *Rekabs*, five *Plates* and two *Pradips*. Most of the households used the articles as domestic utensils and also for ceremonial purposes. Some of the articles have substitutes though, all the households do not have

PLACE OF THE CRAFT IN THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

the substitute articles. *Bati* is the most common article of use.

CONSUMERS' PREFERENCE FOR ANY SUBSTITUTE

The articles of identical nature and use, made of other materials in mills or factories, are available in the markets at Belpahari and Silda. *Batis*, made of aluminium, *Thalas*, made of bellmetal and enamel, *Rekabs*, made of enamel, and *Plates*, made of china-clay, are used as substitutes. But, their use is restricted to only a few consumer households. Three families also used *Bati*, made of aluminium. In two households *Thalas*, made of bellmetal, and in one of them enamelled *Thalas* also came into use. Enamelled *Rekab* is found in one household. *Plates*, made of china-clay, were used by one household only. In all these households the substitute articles were used in a limited way. The article like *Pradip* has no factory-made or mill-made substitute.

Inspite of the fact that the factory-made or mill-made substitutes are more durable, handy and have good finish than the handicraft products, the consumers prefer stonewares due to their cheap price and easy availability in the local market. The question of religious complex and necessity are, of course, no mean factors to shape the consumers' preference for the stonewares.

It is locally believed by all the consumer households that stoneware, if used in the household, lengthens the span of life of its members. None is found to have been attracted to the articles of stone out of mere fashion. Rather, some substitute articles are used as an expression of modernism. *Plates* of china-clay, used by a Bairagi family, are points in instance. The consumers generally want to purchase and use only the articles, made of stone of superior quality. They also want to procure burnt stonewares, which prove to be durable for a longer time.

The consumers have a special liking for *Bati* or bowl, although other articles are produced here in more or less adequate number.

During *Kali Puja*, *Manasa Puja* and *Lakshmi Puja*, the sale of the articles gets a spurt and the consumers purchase the articles comparatively more than in normal times.

It is heartening to note that the consumers are well-acquainted with the different aspects of the craft. They are conscious of the state of affairs in the households of the craftsmen. Instead of being passive observers, the consumers volunteer to suggest some measures for the improvement of the craft. The suggestions not being very much technical nor having an economist's bias, expert flavour is absent in the suggestions, expressive of the simple ways of thinking of the rural consumers. They use the articles of the craft and so they evince some interest in it.

(1) The financial condition of the craftsmen should be improved. But, no definite steps are suggested by the interviewed consumers.

(2) The craftsmen should be given proper training, which, according to the consumers, means technical training.

(3) The Co-Operative Society should be more active and effective.

(4) The craftsmen being mostly landless and the craft being their only source of livelihood, the craftsmen should be provided with all help.

(5) Transport facilities should be offered to the artisans for the carriage of raw materials and finished products.

(6) In order to save man-power the use of *Kund* may be replaced by a diesel-operated machine.

USE OF STONE ARTICLES TODAY IN WEST BENGAL

With roots struck deep in the unknown past, the craft of stone-carving exists today in undiminished glory. The tools of stone, used in the prehistoric past, are relics for the present, as they have outlived their necessity and fully served their purpose long before. But, the utensils of

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stone, used long ago in the dim past in Mohenjodaro and Harappa in the cupboards of the housewives, are not anachronistic today. That is why, these are still used in the humble huts of the tribals and non-tribals alike. Stone-utensils, if found in the houses of the residents of urban areas, should not amaze anybody either. For, in West Bengal stonewares have both utilitarian values and ritualistic significance. Stone articles find their use in the household for taking food, especially pickles and sour preparations. The adage goes,

ভোজিতে পাথর ভাল,
ভোজাইতে থাল।

i.e., utensils made of stone are good for containing food, whereas one requires a plate to serve it. The anonymous composer of the rhyme suggests that hard and weighty stone-utensils do not disturb the eater's attention by frequent movements this way or that. The use of stone-utensils in the preparation of herbal medicines as prescribed by the *Ayurvedic* and *Unani* physicians continues unabated even today, with beginning since the days of *Caraka* and *Suśruta*, if not earlier.

According to popular custom (*Deśācār*), widows are required to take food in stone utensils, the latter being looked upon as more sacred than the metallic ones. Offerings of flowers, fruits and sweetmeats are made on stone plates or stone dishes in the worship of deities in households and temples, though the use of utensils of brass, copper and wood is not obviated thereby. It is popularly believed by Caste Hindus that married women should not use stone-utensils in their domestic life, for the use may cut short the life of the husband. As a corollary to the belief that stone utensils are inauspicious for a woman under coverture, no such utensils are given to a married daughter on the occasion of her *Dvirāgamana* (going back to her husband's house for the second time). Breakage of stone utensils is regarded as inauspicious. An offering of sugar or *Gur* (molasses) or flowers of identical weight should be made to the nearest temple on such an ominous

contingency. Brahmans are offered drinks and sweets in glasses and plates of marble or of *Kuṣṭhi* or black slate by devout Hindus, especially the non-Brahmans. In the marriage ceremony the bride in the Caste Hindu society is required to stand on a stone plate containing a mixture of water, lac-dye and milk before entering the husband's house on her arrival there after marriage, as a newly wed bride is taken for a *Lakṣmī* or Goddess of Wealth. But, the precise *Śāstric* injunction for this practice is not easy to find. This has a faint resemblance of the *Gṛha Praveśa* ceremony in India of the time of the *Kalpa Sūtras* (*vide Kauśika Sūtra-77,6-23*), as discussed earlier.

The multiple uses of stone articles, some supported by the scriptures, some by traditional, popular customs and some more by sheer domestic needs, vouchsafe the stay of the craft for a very long period.

PLACE OF THE CRAFT-CENTRE IN THE REGIONAL ECONOMY

It is illuminating that the craft of Simulpal is representative of the craft of the area around. On a hurried survey, some information about ten craft-centres in the same police station could be gathered. The table following will speak for the potentialities of the craft.

The Bhumij alone account for 100 households practising the craft in eight centres. The fact that the articles, produced in ten craft-centres, are all consumed in the market at Silda strengthens the conclusion that the craft of stoneware production holds a very important place in the local economy, in as much as a little less than two hundred and fifty persons are engaged in a fruitful economic pursuit. The demand of the stone articles has been accentuated by the cheapness of the wares and by the acceptance of their use as household articles by the local residents and as items of merchandise by the wholesalers. The abundance of raw material in the local substratum of earth explains the localisation and concentration of so many craft-centres in one single police station.

PLACE OF THE CRAFT IN THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

TABLE 51

Other craft-centres of the region

Name of the mauza	J. L. No.	Community	No. of practising artisan households	No. of artisans		
				Male	Female	Total
Birmadal	154	Bhumij Kheria	5	5	5	10
			2	2	2	4
Burijhor	52	Bhumij	5	5	5	10
Dakai	162	Bhumij	15	16	13	29
		Karmakar	2	2	2	4
		Kheria	4	4	4	8
		Santal	1	1	1	2
Dhangikusum	93	Bhumij	30	32	30	62
		Kheria	2	2	2	4
		Tantubaya	1	2	1	3
Dumuria	173	Bhuiyan	10	10	10	20
Gohalberya	107	Bhumij	20	20	20	40
Kasidanga	261	Ditto	20	20	20	40
Labani	162	Ditto	3	3	3	6
Singaduba	53	Ditto	2	2	2	4
Thakuranpahari	150	Karga	1	1	1	2
Total			123	127	121	248

OTHER CENTRES IN WEST BENGAL

There may be more craft-centres in and around the centre of the present study or in other places of West Bengal. The District Hand Book of Bankura (1951) mentions stone crockery being manufactured by the Karengas in Mejhia. From the Industry Directory prepared by the Directorate of Industries, Government of West Bengal in April, 1963 on the basis of a Survey of Industries in 1960-62, it is learnt that in Matgoda (J. L. No. 162) in Raipur P.S. stone figures, dolls etc. are manufactured, the same place also being mentioned as the main centre for stone-turning by the Karangas in *Tribes and Castes of West Bengal* by Sri A. Mitra. I. C. S. (pp. 302).

Though it has not been possible to make a survey of the craft of stonewares throughout West Bengal, it may be emphatically urged and

with some exactitude perhaps, that the craft exists in the districts of Midnapore and Bankura, because of the easy availability of suitable stones and rocks there. Quartzite of Susunia Hill in Bankura is used for stone crockery including grinding flats (*Sil*), wheels (*Chakki*) for grinding spices and wheat. The craft of stone image-making is pursued in many places in West Bengal, of which Dainhat in the district of Burdwan is one. But, stone image-making being outside the scope of the present study, it is not dealt with here.

OTHER CENTRES IN INDIA

The study of the craft of stone-carving in West Bengal will suffer from lack of comparable data, if information is not furnished of similar other centres in India. The necessity of a discussion about the same craft in other States

STONEWARES

assumes vital importance in view of the large quantities of articles (turned out elsewhere) infiltrating in the State of West Bengal through the cosmopolitan mart in Calcutta. Dr. P. K. Gangopodhyay has furnished an account of "Potstone Occurrences in India", the article being included in Appendix II to acquaint the readers with the distribution of some of the centres in

India. Details about some more centres are now discussed.

BIHAR

From the study of the market in Calcutta it is found that stone articles in Gaya have been in steady demand in the Capital of the State of West Bengal. A study of the manufacture of stonewares

TABLE 52

Articles of Bihar

Article	Size	Design	Price	
			Rs. paise to	Rs. paise
Kharal	3 inches to 24 inches	Kistinume (boat-like), Circular	0 . 40	25 . 50
Kundi	3 inches to 10 inches	Circular	0 . 72	6 . 50
*Buddha	4 inches to 12 inches	Bhumisparsha Mudra, Abhaya Vardan Mudra, Upadesh Mudra	3 . 87	33 . 00
Nandi	8 inches to 10 inches	Kukru, Pasar	6 . 00	7 . 00
Ganesh	5 inches to 16 inches	Ashish Mudra, Asandar Mudra	5 . 00	12 . 00
Parvati	5 inches to 10 inches	Badradar, Nirgam	6 . 00	14 . 00
Mahadeva	2½ inches to 15 inches	Bangla, Gauripat, Naepheni, Nandi-Mahadeva	0 . 62	20 . 50
Kritimurta	5 inches to 6 inches	Badradar, Nirgam	2 . 55	3 . 00
Krishna	10 inches	Badradar, Nirgam	27 . 50	
Kali	12 inches	Badradar, Nirgam	33 . 50	
Shiva	5 inches	Badradar, Nirgam	5 . 00	
Hanuman	14 inches	Badradar, Nirgam	10 . 25	
Surya	21 inches	Badradar, Nirgam	242 . 00	

*Images of Buddha are exported to Buddhist countries like Ceylon, Burma and Thailand. Apart from cultural intercourse, these articles are earning a good amount of foreign exchange.

PLACE OF THE CRAFT IN THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

in the village Patharkatti in the district of Gaya in Bihar has yielded some very useful information. There are now about 81 artisans, all Gaur Brahmans by caste, in the village Patharkatti. The artisan community of Gaur Brahmans was brought to the place from Jaipur in Rajasthan by Ahalya Bai, the then Maharani of Indore, to build the Vishnupad Temple at Gaya. There are varieties of stones, from which articles are produced and they are known by local names, such as Hansraj, Tamra, Parasit, Dhanmahua, Motia, Pir, Kasauti, Sapnari, Urdia, Telasan, Bajna and Vishnupad. The stones are all found in the area around.

The articles produced are mainly mortar, pestle (Kharal) and stone images. Other than these, no stone utensil is manufactured¹.

The relevant details about the articles such as size, design and price may be obtained from the previous table.

RAJASTHAN

The land of marbles is Rajasthan. The marbles there do not all go to the making of palaces and temples nor are all used to enshrine tearful memories in tombs or memorial-stones. Articles of common use like utensils for households are also produced there. Though articles of marble are produced in Jaipur, it cannot boast of them. On the other hand, Makrana (near Jodhpur) produces very fine marble wares for domestic use. ²There are many marble-quarries near Makrana, which is a small township of about 17 thousand people in the Parbatsar Tehsil of Nagaur district of Rajasthan. Makrana is famous for its marble mines, round which all activity in

the town revolves. Almost every household is connected with the marble industry in some way or other. Almost all households, engaged in the household industry, are Muslims. The largest number of households are connected with the production of marble-wares. Workers either buy pieces of marble from some dealers or some stockists arrange to supply marble on credit to the workers. The work is carried on in the household itself, where all members participate generally and children pick up work, while they are still very young. The articles produced are varied. Thali (Flat plate), Katories (Bowls), Gilas (Tumbler), Chakla, Belan, Kharhal (Mortar and pestle), Bowls, and Tea-sets of marble have acquired celebrity among many other items manufactured.

UTTAR PRADESH

³Uttar Pradesh is also famous for the stone-wares of Varanasi. There are about 125 artisans engaged in the craft of stone-carving in Varanasi or Benaras. The artisans belong to Gour Viswakarma, Bengali Brahman and Sangtarash castes. With no special agency for training, workers of these castes get informal training in the household and training over, they get themselves engaged in the craft for their livelihood.

From the stones which include marble and other varieties of black, white and other colours, available in the bed of the river Narvada, different kinds of stone articles are prepared. Statues of national leaders, eminent personages, deities etc. are carved out, but without the aid of any design or picture. The articles are prepared on orders from customers as per individual experiences and impressions of the artisans. Idols of marble cost about Rs. 200.00 paise to Rs. 300.00 paise per foot, whereas cost of other articles varies from Rs. 5.00 paise to Rs. 15.00 paise per foot.

1. Sri R. N. Misra, Deputy Superintendent of Census Operations, Bihar, was kind enough to comply with my request for the particulars.—Editor.
2. Dr. U. B. Mathur, Deputy Superintendent of Census Operations, Rajasthan, kindly took pains to collect the information on my request. To him I am very much indebted for the valuable details as also for the photograph.—Editor.

3. Sri D. D. Joshi, Deputy Superintendent of Census Operations, Uttar Pradesh, was kind enough to get the information from District Industrial Officer, Varanasi. Thanks are due to them for this work of love.—Editor.

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Craftsmen do not export the articles outside India. Some articles are, however, purchased by foreign tourists. The market of the craft is restricted within India mainly.

MARKET IN CALCUTTA

It is somewhat disappointing to have experienced the absence of the stone articles of

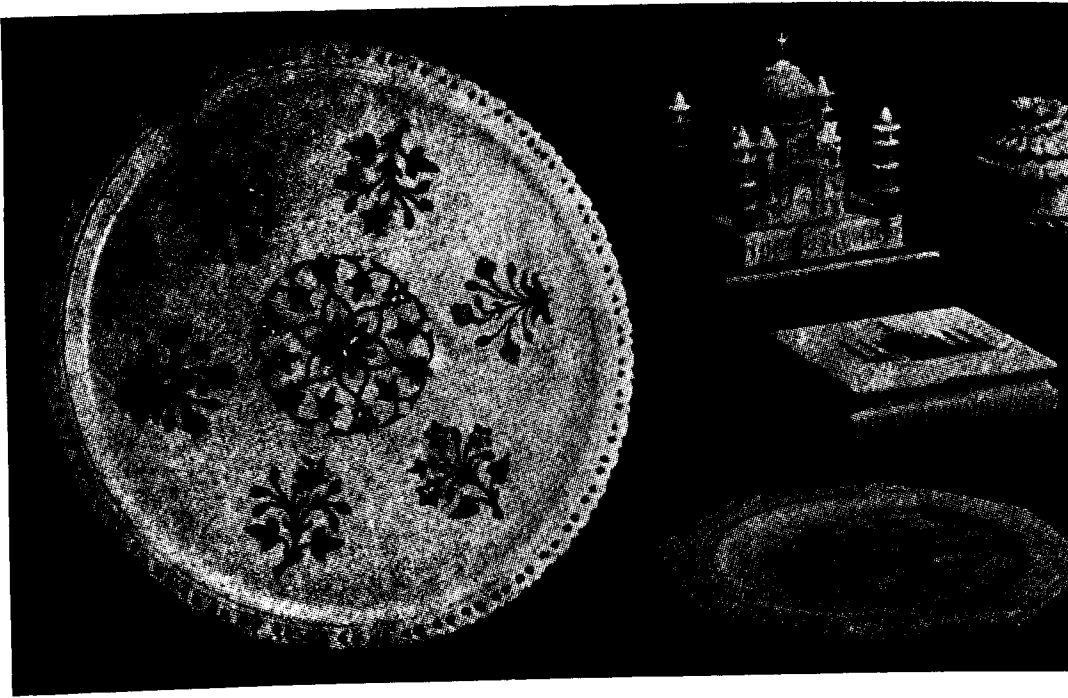
Midnapore district in the market at Calcutta, though the out-turn of the craft products in the craft-centre of study has been found to be worth several thousands of rupees in a year. The market of stone articles in Chitpur area of Calcutta and in the Sales Emporium of the Government of West Bengal at Lindsay Street could not place a single specimen of the craft's

TABLE 53

Articles of other stones in Calcutta market

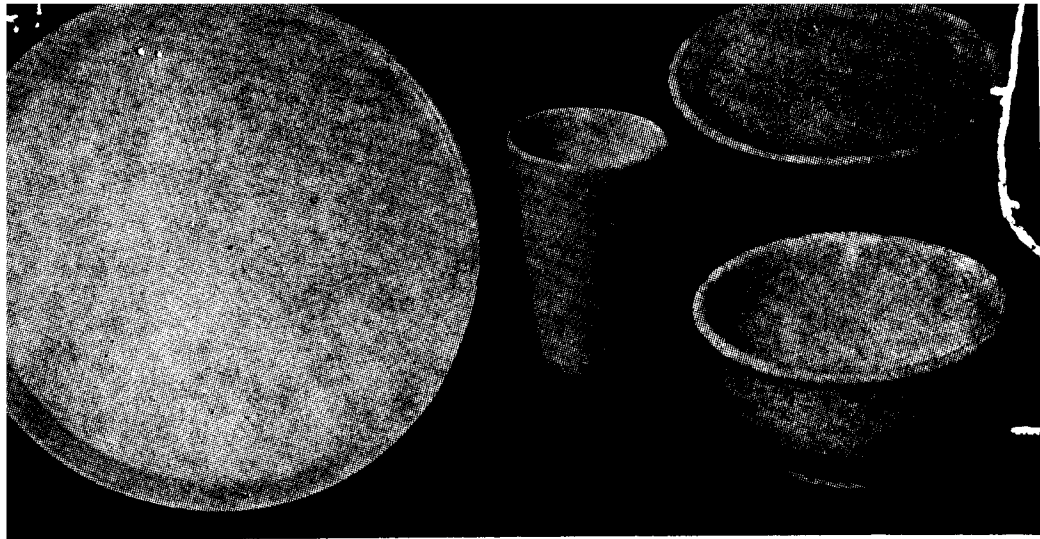
Name and address of the establishment	Place of origin of the article	Nature of the article of stone	Price		Remarks
			Rs.	paise	
Marble Museum (Prop : Sri Madhu Sudan Basak), 378, Upper Chitpur Road, Cal-7	Balasore, Orissa	Thala	Rs. 1.75	paise	The articles are all said to be made of Potstone. Thala and small Bati are much in local demand. The articles are procured from the Bulgaria Prastar Silpi Samabaya Samiti, Balasore, Orissa. The establishment has been dealing with stone articles for more than thirty years.
		Bati (big)	Rs. 3.50	paise	
		Bati (medium)	Re 0.94	paise	
		Bati (small)	Re 0.56	paise	
		Rekab	Rs. 2.75	paise	
Italian Art Floor, (Prop : Sri Golab Singh) 48, Upper Chitpur Road, Cal-7	Gaya, Bihar	Tumbler	Rs. 4.50	paise	The articles are procured from the artisans at Gaya in the open market. The last two articles are made of Soapstone, the quarry being situated at Chandil in Bihar. The first two articles are made of Potstone available at Gaya. The Soapstone is greyish black in colour and is smooth grained. Locally it is known as Kasthi. The Potstone is bluish black in colour and is coarse-grained. Locally it is known as Nilkantha Kasthi. The famous tumbler with the image of Giri Gobardhan inside of which resembles the Cup of Tantalus (with Siphon arrangement) popular in the open market at Gaya is not locally available. Khol and Dati and Thala are most in demand by the local consumers in Calcutta. The trader is a veteran of twenty five years.
		Kundi (mortar)	Rs. 2.00	paise	
		Khol and Dati (Mortar & Pestle)	5.00		
		Thala (Unpolished)	0.75		
		Thala (Polished)	4.00		
Ditto	Jaipur, Rajasthan	Thala	14.00		The articles of marble-stone are purchased direct from the artisans at Jaipur. The Bati is the most popular item in the local market. The white marble stone is known as Sange Malmal, but articles of Jaipur stones are not found.
		Tumbler	5.00		
		Bati	3.00		
		Plate	5.00		
U.P. Handicrafts (Owner : Govt. of U.P.) Sales Emporium, 12B, Lindsay Street, Cal-16	Agra, Uttar Pradesh	Inlaid Marble Plate (14")	200.00		All the articles except the model of Taj Mahal are made of marble-stone. The model of Taj Mahal is made of Soapstone with the base of marble. While all the articles have local demand, they are very much popular among the tourists. The small inlaid marble plates are especially in demand by the Japanese and French tourists.
		Inlaid Marble Plate (small)	8.00		
		Powder pot	10.61		
		Cigarette case	10.61		
		Table lamp	20.00		
		Elephant row	8.00		
		Taj Mahal model (6") with case	30.00		

CALCUTTA, INDIA'S CITY,
RECEIVES
STONEWARES OF OTHER STATES
THROUGH
HUNDRED GATES
OPEN FOR ENTRANCE



U. P. sends her products

Inlaid plate, Powder-case, Cigarette-case, inlaid dish and model of Taj Mahal, all of marble and produced in Agra, hold temptations to the foreign tourists in Calcutta

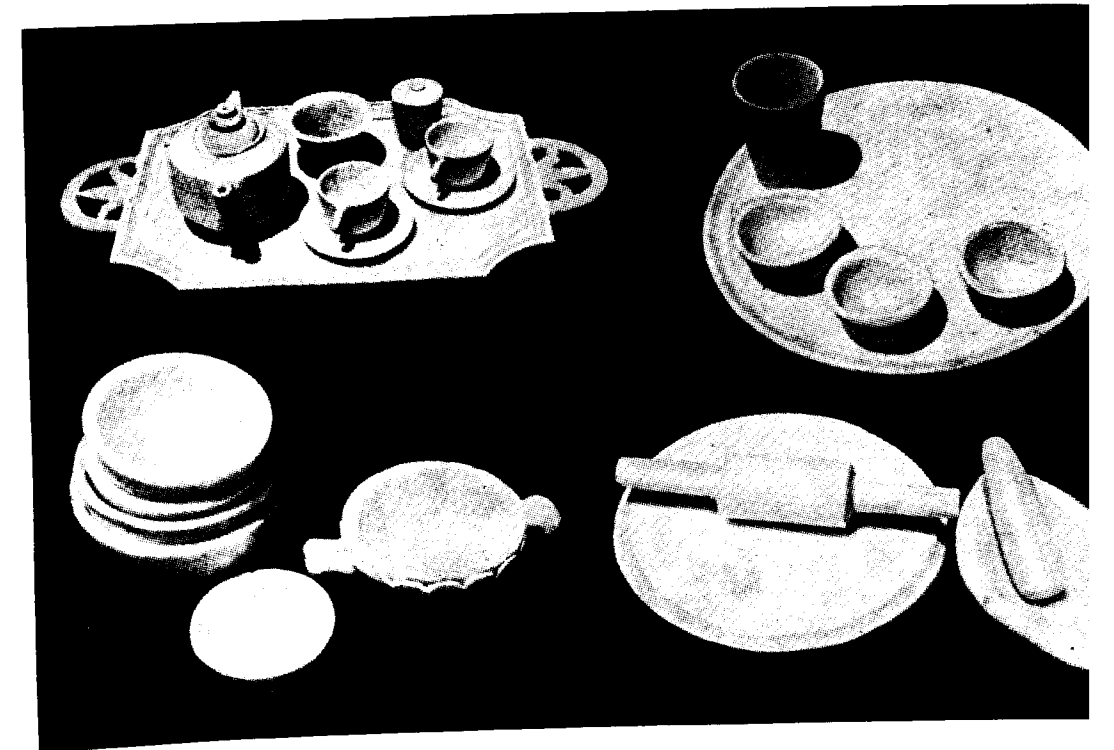
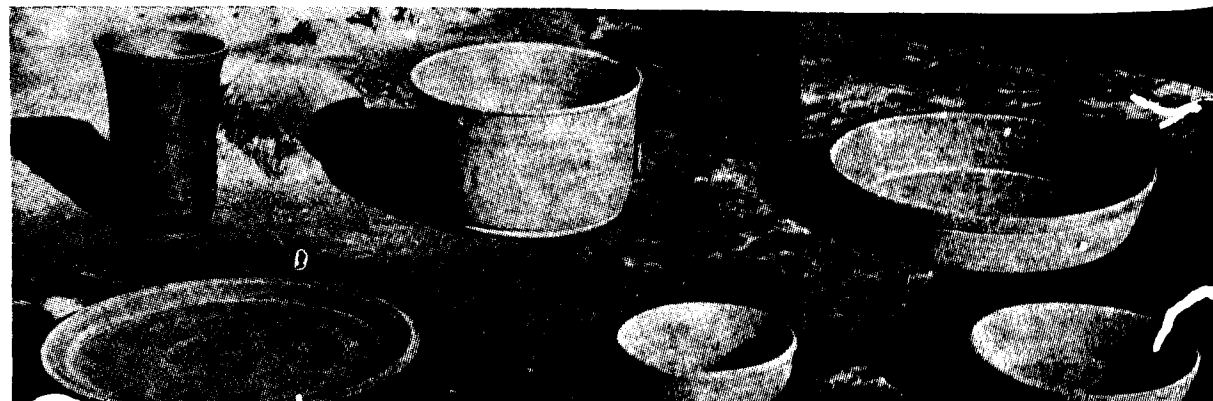


From Jaipur to the heart of Calcutta

Thala, tumbler, *Bati* and plate of *Sange Marmal*, a variety of marble stone, imported to Calcutta from Jaipur by a trader in Chitpur area for sale, the *Bati* being the most popular item in the local market

Wares from the neighbouring State of Orissa

Tumbler, *Thala*, *Bati* (Big, medium & small) and *Rekab*, all of *Potstone*, produced by craftsmen of Balasore in Orissa, have been selling at Calcutta market for more than thirty years

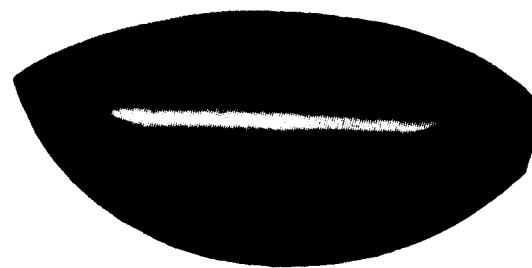


Sublime marble retains the 'loveliest things of beauty' and utility

Marble wares of Makrana in the Parbatsar Tehsil of Nagaur district in Rajasthan, produced by Muslim craftsmen, are one of the famous products of Rajasthan—the range of wares of the place is well reflected in the Tea-set (top left), *Thali* (Plate), *Katories* (Bowls) and *Gilas* (Glass) (top right), Bowls (bottom left), *Chakla*, *Balan* and the *Kharhal* (bottom right), all being household articles of utility



Thala (Polished) of Soapstone, carved out in Chandil of Bihar, and Kundi (Mortar) of Potstone, carved out at Gaya (Bihar), sell in Calcutta



Khol (Mortar) and Dati (Pestle) of Soapstone, both the articles being products of Gaya, are available in the market at Calcutta

products of the State for sale. A survey of the wares of stone, offered for sale there, was made and the information gathered is detailed in the discussion here to locate the places of origin of the stone articles, brought to this metropolis for sale, the nature of the articles and their price.

The articles of stone, sold in Calcutta, cover both utilitarian goods as well as fancy products. The absence of any product of West Bengal in the market of Calcutta is partly explained by the long-standing goodwill of the articles produced outside. The craft of West Bengal, hidden from the public eye of the City of Calcutta, pulsated very slowly although. Nobody cared to enquire of the product or to acquire it. The ignorance of the people of the City has hindered the popularisation of the unknown products of Midnapore district. The products of other States, on the other hand, had a steady inflow to Calcutta market. The traders of Calcutta had established these products in their urban customers' hearts and households. It is very difficult now to dislodge the products by replacement.

Brand-consciousness being a consumer's craze, a Gaya product or an article of Orissa will compare more favourably with any West Bengal article, though the latter may possess all the qualities of the former. Who knows if any product of Simulpal or of any craft-centre of its vicinity does not pass for a product of other place? It is not easy to distinguish a local article of stone from that of Gaya or Balasore. The trader in Calcutta has the advantages in simulating a *Rekab* or a *Thala* of Simulpal or of its sister craft-centres of the neighbourhood for a similar article of Bihar and Orissa. The former product costs less than that of other States, while the sale price is always higher. The customer will fail to discern the difference from just a cursory look at the product in its finished stage.

Even if it is assumed that the product of Simulpal is not sold as such in Calcutta, the fact stands that it has a wide market in West Bengal and Bihar.

FOREIGN TRADE

To conceive of a foreign market now for the West Bengal product will be a reverie. But, it will be quite pertinent to examine the figures of export of articles of stone through Calcutta, as they are available. The articles exported are made of ordinary stone like *Potstone*, *Soapstone*, but do not include marble-stone. The exported wares are produced outside West Bengal for the obvious reason that the traders in the Calcutta market are not aware of any product of the State. Even then, one should not lose sight of the implications of the export figures. If stone articles have a favourable foreign market, as corroborated by the export figures, there is no reason why West Bengal products should not catch the foreigner's eye. To upgrade West Bengal's products to the standard of other products is, no doubt a difficult task, but not altogether a baffling job. The figures of international trade of stone articles may be examined now.

Except in 1963, the export figures record an upward trend. The international business, though very modest, not exceeding twenty six thousand rupees ever since 1960, has immense possibilities, if properly looked after and nurtured. The world market is fairly widespread and all the major countries of the globe appear to have been attracted to the stone-goods of India with oriental designs and art-work. The Export Promotion Council may probe into the arena of the craft to patronise the right products and to export them overseas. Ceylon imported more than Rs. 16,000/- worth of stone-articles in 1964 but in 1965, her imports were not worth of any particular mention.

Australia appeared as an importing country for the first time in 1965 and her imports were worth more than Rs. 18,000/-. The business with these two countries and with U. K. should be developed more and the causes of declining exports to these countries should catch the attention of appropriate Ministry of the Govt. of India.

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TABLE 54

Exports through Calcutta Customs Zone

For twelve months ending in	Commodities	Countries	Quantity (in K.G.)	Value (in rupees)
March, 1961	Table, other household and art articles wholly of ordinary stone	Pakistan	2,048	5,300
		Other countries (Small value)	5,033	7,866
		Total	7,081	13,166
March, 1962	Ditto	Kenya	5,350	2,837
		Other countries (Small value)	11,292	6,445
		U. K.	84	1,366
		Total	16,726	10,648
March, 1963	Ditto	British Guinea	600	375
		Burma	33	65
		Fiji Islands	100	52
		Hong Kong	15	40
		Kenya	1,780	428
		Kuwait	22	118
		Maldives	2,280	1,115
		Panama	7	4
		Rhodesia	120	120
		Saudi Arabia	291	90
		Singapore	545	454
		Suritania	80	251
		U. K.	806	633
		U. S. A.	800	1,389
		West Germany	10	40
		Zanzibar	60	40
		Total	7,549	5,214
March, 1964	Ditto	Batavian Isalnds	755	290
		Ceylon	49,856	16,691
		Denmark	100	500
		Kenya	2,280	3,524
		Rhodesia	195	172
		U. K.	480	633
		U. S. A.	80	83
		Zanzibar	125	105
		Total	53,871	21,998
March, 1965	Ditto	Australia	40	90
		Ceylon	7,113	18,725
		Israel	9	20
		Kuwait	110	408
		Mozambique	50	171
		Rhodesia	144	107
		Nyasaland		
		Federation		
		Singapore	373	423
		Seyhilles	10	85
		U. K.	5,126	5,160
		U. S. A.	250	500
		Total	13,225	25,689

PLACE OF THE CRAFT IN THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

PROBLEMS OF THE CRAFT

The glamour of international market should not make one turn away from the humble market at home. The age-old centre of Simulpal or for that matter any other craft-centre in its neighbourhood has prospects in its own way. But, the problems besetting the life of the craft and of the craftsmen do not make the future a jot brighter than what it should be. In a frenzied cry everywhere for the promotion of the handicrafts one often forgets the little difficulties, the helpless craftsmen experience silently and stubbornly. They resist the difficulties as long as they can and often one generation passes away handing over its accumulated problems to the incoming one. But, the struggle itself does not overcome the problems and as a consequence, a craft languishes, becomes moribund and ends in death. The present craft, despite many difficulties and problems of its own, is not at all decadent. It has the features of a virile and productive craft, sustaining the economy of the local people for years together. True, the tools are crude, the designs are simple and limited few, the finish not upto the modern consumers' expectations and the raw materials not very much durable. But, the price is cheap and the articles are often utilitarian. If the stone utensil is brittle, it is not the craft or its followers to blame for the inherent defect of nature's free gifts.

One may wonder why the craft's health has not been diagnosed as diseased and decadent. The fortune of a craft is carved out by its customers, who constitute the demand for the articles. The present craft, though deprived of the benevolent patronship of the Capital of the State and of the leading emporia in her heart, has innumerable patrons scattered in the rural areas and in the less known urban tracts of the State. The discussion about the market of the products earlier cannot but lead to this inference. In the centre of the present study no article is left undisposed. The craftsmen visit only one single market at Silda, but the market is steady and its demands are continuous.

While the consumers' demand for the products makes the craft alive and gets it going, the internal structure of the craft-organisation sets it on a path of unfaltered pursuit. The craftsmen have stuck to their occupation with steadfast zeal. The dissociation of a few craftsmen from the craft has been mostly due to old age and physical incapacity in the last phase of human life. The craft's economy has nothing to do with their cessation. The workers are drawn from all ages. And even in the age-group of 0-14 there are two craftsmen. Old age being not a regret here, the aged people have the consolation that the young entrants are attracted to the craft's returns, however paltry they may be, and that the mantle, fallen from their tremulous hands, will be taken up ably by the strong young people of today and tomorrow. That the craft has provided the households with a means of livelihood, which compared to other available opportunities is quite satisfactory, is a symptom of its youthfulness and not of decay. None among the craftsmen has ever left the craft or the place in quest of a better livelihood elsewhere nor has any household migrated to a new place with the hope of earning more income. Market and prospective customers being steady, it is blasphemous for the craftsmen to talk or think of migration. The craftsmen are proud of their traditional skill and they glow with radiant hope in continuing the practice of their forefathers. The future generation will only bring resplendent glory to the households in ceaselessly carrying on their occupation.

Though optimism pervades the hearts of the unsophisticated artisans working silently here, it will be far from the truth to suggest that they have no problems. Problems of life are many and they do not like to dilate on them. The little difficulties of the artisans are the liabilities of their occupation, the most serious one being the lack of transport. The distance covered by these workers on foot every day is very long. The narrow country-path leading to the quarries is traversed on foot all the way for a stretch of six to seven miles and back with a load of stones. The

journey is likewise toilsome to the market. From Belpahari buses are available. But, the troubles are not minimised for the six miles' walk upto Belpahari. The craftsmen are not allowed to board the buses with their wares, lest the wares should annoy the fellow passengers. The available space in the vehicles is not allowed to be enjoyed by the stone articles. The artisans in their turn do not feel it safe to place the wares on the roof of the bus uncared for and unattended, obviously in their apprehension of breakage during transit and transportation. So, they trek all along. The absence of transport facilities has made their life hard. The physical exertion is heightened thereby. The Co-Operative Society of the artisans may seriously think of this aspect and arrange for some means of transport to be of use to the artisan members. But, then again, transport requires good road. The link between Simulpal and the quarries is provided by natural pathways. To make the paths fit for transport should be the concern of the local authorities of administration. Even if the Co-Operative Society fails to provide transport facilities, the good roads connecting Belpahari with the quarries *via* Simulpal may be negotiated by buses through extended routes.

Added to the problem of transport is that of storage. Lack of a central godown in the market leaves the artisans with no option but to keep the unsold wares in private godowns or sometimes to carry them home on foot. A central storage in the craft-centre is a long-felt need. This will save the artisans from the trouble of visiting the market. The wholesalers, in that case, will have to come to the craft-centre to purchase the required articles.

The skilled hands are not enough to make the most of the raw materials. Tools of good materials are the basic need of the craft. Vital tools like pick, spade and the crowbar are not owned by all. A good Samaritan's favour in allowing the tools to be used by all cannot pull the production level to the desired end. The pride of ownership often acts in disguise to give

a spurt to a producer's activities and it may give the craftsmen the incentive to work at will with their own tools. But, that is not the case at the moment. When everyone falls upon the tools of a few, the pace of work is slowed down as a normal rule. The life of the tools is no less adversely affected. Government's help in securing cash loan has not achieved the desired purpose, for help in cash is found to be misspent on immediate needs of the households. The Industries Department should assess the real needs of the craftsmen and provide them with the most modern quarrying implements, so that human labour is not wasted unnecessarily by mere sweat and toil without the optimum productivity. The country-lathe may also be replaced by a more modern but cheap mechanical contrivance, thus keeping the puller's energy intact for some other useful work.

Knowledge of superior techniques and designs are not lost always on the trainees. The simple craftsmen are tradition-bound in the operations of the craft's processes, but they are not obsessed with the legacy of their earlier generations. Willing to learn whatever new method is useful to them, they have not had the opportunity or scope to be aware of the technological improvements. The craftsmen are in ruts of old practice, but they are not stolid people. A training-cum-production centre will be thronged by many, if they chance to see any good in it.

The Co-Operative Society has bound the artisans together by an identity of interests and has lived beyond the critical moments of its birth. But, its activities will tantamount to lip-service, if it is wedded to assisting the members with only financial help. Marketing and storage apart, production may be a very serious proposal for its consideration. A cynosure of the local craftsmen, the Society is looked upon as an organisation to give them proper leadership and to solve their emergent problems. Hopes should not die so soon without any effort.

International market may be a far cry. But Calcutta or other big cities in India should not

remain a wonderland for the craft in the remote corner of this State. The goods turned out by the artisans may have scope for further improvement. But, the deficiency, if any, may be made good by the exploration of the raw materials abounding in the region. The Mines and Minerals Directorate has a responsibility to find out the right materials for the local craftsmen. Apart from the economic use of the otherwise useless hidden wealth of the earth, the employment of so many people without setting up any institution or spending any amount from the State Exchequer is no proposition of mean importance. The technical guidance of the Geologists also will be of immense help to the ignorant illiterate mass, working here.

CONCLUSION

The tale of the stone-carvers is marked by the *esprit de corps*, the quintessential characteristic of the present craft. The workers are all imbued with the feeling of brotherliness and sense of co-operation in their search for stones, in their journeys together for work and after, in their monstrous efforts to break the hills together, in their errands to the markets, in their tense moments when muscles are taut with the grip firmly fixed on the axe or in the relaxed mood of the weary evening. The designs and tools are simple and traditional, the two most important features of folk art. The contact with urban demands has oriented one or two artisans to

shape out articles like *Ash-tray*. But, the form and shape of other articles have not been spoilt by contaminating cultures and inroads of urban sophistications. The question of the nature of a tribal craft has been discussed at length by Dr. B. K. Roy Burman, the article of whom is given in Appendix III. One may interpret the present craft as a tribal craft, not because it is pursued by tribals alone, but because it has all the features of a tribal craft referred to by Dr. Roy Burman. Situated in an area with a fair concentration of tribals, the craft is pursued by tribals and non-tribals together. The articles are consumed by both, some for household use and some others for ritualistic functions.

The course of the craft's story has to be ended and the end cannot be but hopeful. The craftsmen have been hopeful throughout, from their birth till death, from generation to generation, from the past to the present day. The stone plate of Simulpal can well vie with its counterpart of Mohenjodaro. Its life is long and it has an assured future, if not popular glory. The present survey may or may not usher in its trail any change, bringing in any good. But, the craftsmen will not stop. Their journey will start on foot every morning to the hills and end in the wearied footsteps in the twilight. And they will dream everyday of the Friday market at Silda and "in trembling hope repose".

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APPENDIX

GEOLOGICAL REPORT ON
PHYLLITES AROUND SIMULPAL,
MIDNAPORE DISTRICT,
WEST BENGAL

By
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Note : The books above were all consulted. Extracts on relevant portions, taken at my instance by Sri Dulal Chand Dutt, Typist of my Office, were utilised in some chapters of the present monograph. To Sri Dutt I remain grateful for his ungrudging help.—Editor.

APPENDIX

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INTRODUCTION

Household utensils like *Plates*, *Bowls* and *Batis* are made locally at Simulpal (86°42' ; 22°36'), Midnapore District, West Bengal. Raw materials for this craft are collected mainly from two localities—Sakhabhanga, which is situated about three miles south-west of Simulpal and Dhangikusum, which is about three miles north-west of Simulpal. Geologically considered, raw materials from these two localities are *Phyllites* (metamorphic argillaceous and tuffaceous rocks).

In this report the geological set-up and occurrence of different rock types around Simulpal are briefly described. In particular the occurrence and quarrying of *Phyllites* are discussed in some details. The report includes description of petrographic features of the *Phyllitic* rocks, collected from the quarries at Sakhabhanga and Dhangikusum. Finally, the potentialities of *Phyllites* as a raw material for this craft have been considered, and the possibility of use of rock types other than *Phyllite* has been mentioned.

GEOLOGY

GEOLOGICAL OUTLINE OF THE AREA

Geologically the area around Simulpal is a part of south-eastern section of *Dalma Syncline* north of Singhbhum Thrust Belt (Dunn and Dey, 1942, plate 24). Results of recent investigations

suggest that the rocks in this area are laid out in complex structural patterns (Naha, 1959, 1962 ; Sarkar and Saha, 1962). The occurrence and distribution of main rock types around Simulpal have been incorporated in Figure 1 of this report.

The main rock types seen in outcrop are *Phyllite*, *Mica-schist*, *Quartzite*, *Epidiorite*, *Dalma Lava* (basic rock), *Talc-schist*, *Chlorite-schist*, *Lava-schist* and *Laterite*. Of these, the *Phyllites*, which are quarried at Dhangikusum and Sakhabhanga, are used as raw materials for the preparation of utensils by the craftsmen of Simulpal. Geology of these *Phyllites* is the theme of the report. For the description of other rock types readers may consult Memoir 69, Pt. 2 of the Geological Survey of India by J. A. Dunn and A. K. Dey (1942). A brief reference to *Phyllites* and other rocks of this part of Midnapore District also occurs in Director's Report in Memoir 1 (1859, pp. 258-260) of the Geological Survey of India.

METHOD OF QUARRYING PHYLLITE

The author visited a quarry-site at Sakhabhanga on the 28th June, 1965, in order to ascertain the actual method of quarrying of *Phyllite*. The observations made during the visit are stated below.

The work-sites are situated on the

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northern slope of a roughly NE-SW trending ridge of *Phyllite* about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile south of Sakhabhanga village. The *Phyllite* rocks possess a close-spaced planar arrangement, known as schistosity which, at this place, dips moderately steeply to the south-east. The dip is against the slope. The quarries are small open-cast excavations and operated crudely by manual labour with pointed iron-bars and shovel-like equipments. There are many such cuttings, each measuring about 10ft. x 15ft. on the slope and extending not more than 15ft. in vertical depth. A typical quarry is illustrated in Figure 2 which represents a vertical section along the direction of dip of *Phyllite*. From this quarry relevant data on planar structures of the rock, which are important for quarrying the material, have been collected. These are stated in Table 1 below.

TABLE I

Data on planar structures

Attitude of Schistosity	Attitude of Joint Planes
48° towards 140°	(a) 70° towards 335°
	(b) 42° towards 345°
	(c) 60° towards 22°
	(d) 42° towards 132°

As stated previously, the planar surfaces, called schistosity, are very closely spaced and are less than $\frac{1}{16}$ inch apart (Figures 3 and 4). Schistosity is an easy plane of fissility. The rock can be split into slabs of any desired thickness along these planes. The joint planes are planes of fracture in the rock and are more widely spaced; the distance between any two joint planes of the same set may vary from a few inches to a few feet. Joint planes denoted as (a), (b) and (c) in Table I dip at steep angles in direction opposite to that of schistosity. Joint plane (d) is nearly subparallel to schistosity. The close-spaced schistosity is well developed throughout the outcrop of *Phyllite*, whereas the relatively more widely spaced joints are less regular in

degree of development and distribution. The two types of planar structures guide the process of quarrying of *Phyllite*. The rock is split along schistosity to yield blocks approximately 2ft. x 2ft. in size and 6 inches in thickness. Widely spaced joint planes help in trimming the blocks to size. If the joint planes are closely spaced (say, a few inches) and well-developed, the quarried blocks of rock are small-sized and liable to disintegration under chisel and hammer. The craftsmen instinctively avoid such outcrops of *Phyllites* with relatively closer joints on the hill slope. The quarrying of the rock is followed in the direction of dip of schistosity inward towards the hill. After attaining a vertical depth of about 15 feet, the cuttings are abandoned because of danger of falling rocks from over-hanging parts (see Figure 2). Due to lack of any planned open-cast mining method, the hill slope at Sakhabhanga is littered with many shallow, abandoned diggings. Adoption of a methodical form of open-cast mining will benefit the craftsmen in the long run. A considerable quantity of fresh, unweathered raw materials occur at deeper levels and these cannot be recovered, unless a planned methodical system of quarrying is followed. In future it will be an expensive operation to clear and open up abandoned quarry-holes, which are now being gradually filled up with debris.

The mining equipments are apparently as ancient as the craft itself. Reference to this subject occurs in Director's Report in Memoir I (1859, p. 278) of the Geological Survey of India and quoted below :

"A short bar of iron pointed at one end and a wooden mallet suffice to procure from the rock a piece of size, sufficient for a plate or bowl. This is rudely cut into the intended form by the quarryman on the spot, and the thus half-finished materials are brought down from the quarries or holes on the hill side and finished by different workers in the village below."

The present author's observations at Sakha-

bhanga suggest that the method of procurement of raw material has not changed for the past hundred years.

PETROGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION OF RAW MATERIAL

Petrographic description of quarried rocks has been prepared from studies of hand specimens (Figure 4) and thin sections under the microscope (Figure 3).

The *Phyllites* of Sakhabhanga are reddish and greyish in colour and moderately heavy (specific gravity varying from 2.89 to 3.03). When treated with water, these rocks emit a strong earthy smell. A close-spaced schistosity is the main plane of parting of the rock. The rock displays a shining appearance on this plane. Under the microscope the rocks are seen to consist of the following minerals :

Fine-grained flakes of *Sericite* (white *Mica*), small sized *Quartz* and *Feldspar*, and considerable amount of opaque dark materials (possibly iron-oxides). The schistosity is due to the parallel alignment of minerals, particularly the flaky *Sericite*.

The reddish and greyish *Phyllites* of Dhangikusum are petrographically similar to those described from Sakhabhanga. In some specimens from Dhangikusum one new mineral called *Chloritoid* has been found.

Dunn and Dey (1942), in their description of *Phyllites* around Simulpal, noted :

"..... in Midnapore district, the fine-grained *Phyllites* possess various colours and present a considerable variety of structures. Locally, at Kuldiha (22°39' ; 86°45'), north of Tulsibani (22°39' ; 86°43'), and in the vicinity of Aguibil (22°39' ; 86°42'), the rocks are slaty and possess a banded structure. Pink and purple varieties are found near Astaguri (22°39' ; 86°45'), Balichua (22°38' ; 86°41'), Thakuranpahari (22°37' ; 86°42'), Odolchua (22°38' ; 86°41') and Katuchua (22°37' ; 86°41'), and are locally worked into utensils."

This description, combined with the present

author's observations, suggest that the *Phyllitic* raw material can be collected from many localities in this part of Midnapore district. The distribution of *Phyllite* has been shown in Figure 1 attached to this report.

COMMENTS ON RAW MATERIALS

RAW MATERIAL USED

The *Phyllite* rocks have two main properties, which are useful for this craft. Firstly, these are soft and can be shaped easily ; secondly, these possess schistosity and can be quarried and split to any desired size. The schistosity, however, is an inherent plane of weakness of the rocks. The finished utensils possess this weakness and it is not uncommon to find these articles cracking or splitting along these planes. If the utensils are washed and used in water, the chances are that water may seep along these planes of weakness and enhance the possibility of damage. It is suggested that some kind of adhesive and waterproof material may be used in the preparation of utensils as a guard against such damage. At present, the craftsmen use lac for this purpose, but the desired protection is not always achieved.

OTHER POSSIBLE RAW MATERIALS

North of Simulpal, outcrops of *Lava* occur in a nearly East-West belt (Figure 1). Shearing and chemical alteration have changed these rocks to *Schists* of various types. Of these, *Chlorite-schist* and *Talc-schist* can be used as raw materials for manufacture of utensils. These rocks are soft as well as durable and do not emit any strong earthy smell like argillaceous *Phyllites*. In some localities in Midnapore district these rocks are already in use, as noted by Dunn and Dey (1942) :

"In the stream section south of Kattara (22°40' ; 86°41') crumpled *Chlorite-schists* contain small lentils of *Calcite*. *Talc-schists* occur here and there within the outcrop of the altered *Lavas* and at several places the schist is quarried and worked into utensils."

Among other rock types around Simulpal,

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Laterite and *Quartzite* may not be suitable for this craft. *Laterite* is heavy and difficult to spade due to its gritty texture, whereas *Quartzite*, although durable, is hard.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Sri S. Sinha, Officer on Special Duty, Census Office, West Bengal, kindly arranged a visit to the Simulpal area. Sri P. K. Banerjee, B. D. O., Binpur II, N.E.S Block, Belpahari, offered kind hospitality during the field trip. Sri D. Sen, Investigator, Census Office, West Bengal, kindly collected samples of rocks from Dhangikusum. These gestures of help and co-operation are gratefully acknowledged by the author.

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EXPLANATION OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Geological map showing distribution of main rock types around Sakhabhanga, Dhangikusum and Simulpal in Midnapore district, West Bengal. (From Dunn and Dey, 1942, Plate 24)

Figure 2. Geological section across a quarry of *Phyllite* at Sakhabhanga.

Figure 3. Photomicrograph of thin section of *Phyllite* shown in Figure 4. Note the close spacing of schistosity (s-s). Parallel polarized light. Magnification ninety times.

Figure 4. Photograph of a hand specimen of *Phyllite*, used as raw material. Note schistosity (s-s) of the rock. The specimen is from Sakhabhanga.

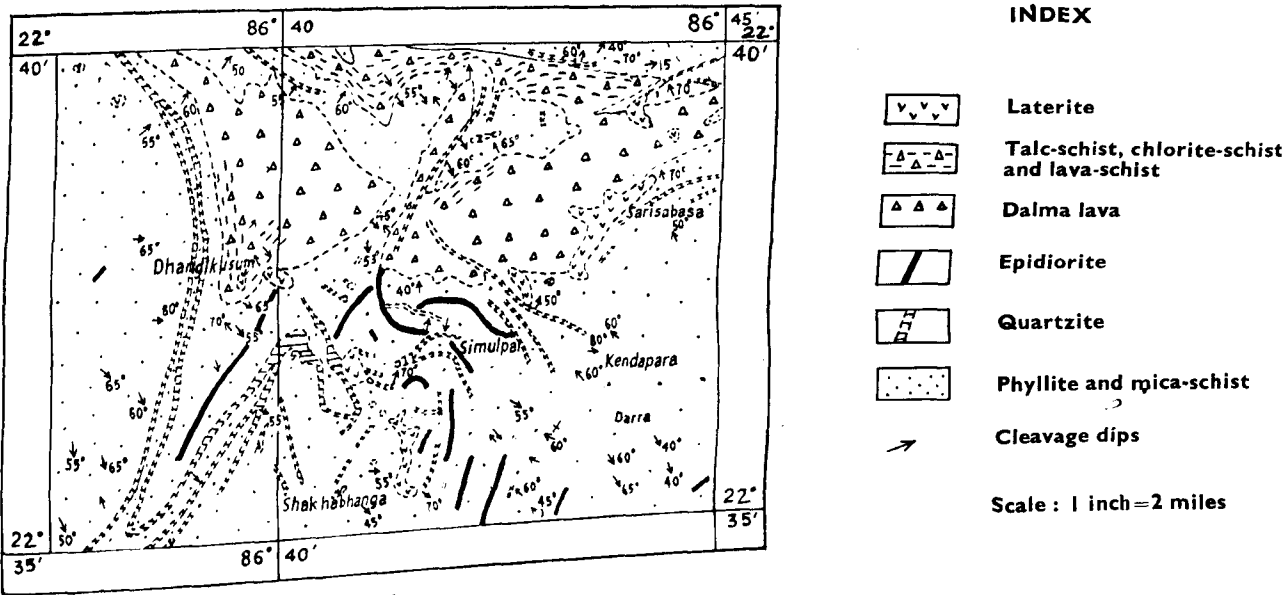


Fig. 1
Geological map around Sakhabhanga, Dhangikusum and Simulpal in Midnapore Dt. West Bengal. (From Dunn and Dey, 1942).

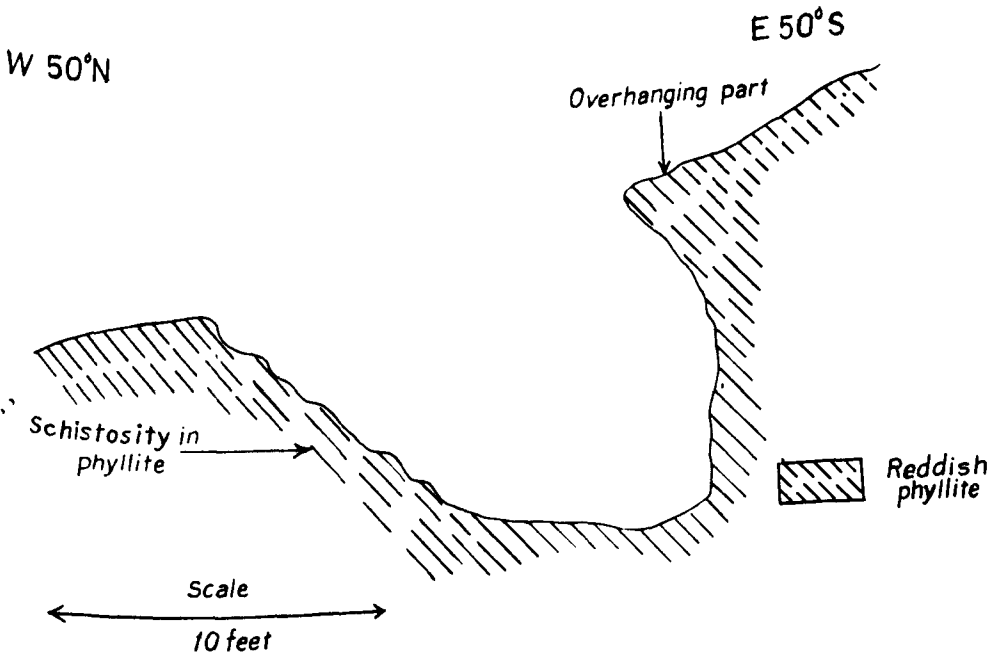
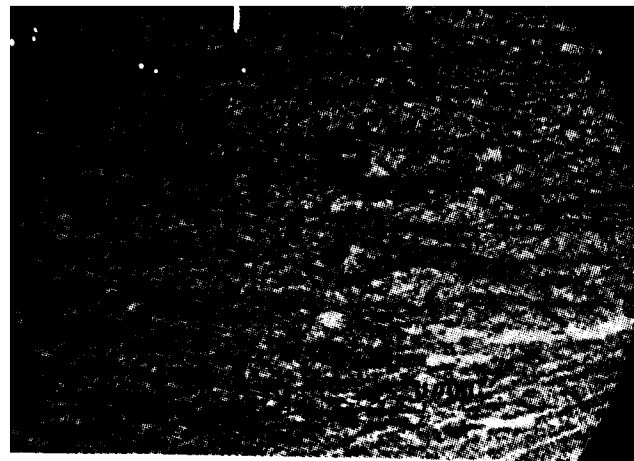


Fig. 2
Geological section across a quarry at Sakhabhanga, Midnapore Dt.



A microscopic view
A thin section of *Phyllite*
under a microscope

APPENDIX II

NOTE ON SOME POTSTONE OCCURRENCES IN INDIA

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As seen by the naked eye

A slab of *Phyllite*,
collected as the specimen
of a geologist, to study the
physical characteristics



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The raw material, which is used by the craftsmen of Simulpal for the manufacture of utensils, is *Phyllite*, an argillaceous metamorphic rock. A detailed report on this material has been presented in Appendix I of this Monograph under the heading, "Geological Report on *Phyllites* round Simulpal, Midnapore District, West Bengal". Although locally the *Phyllite* of Simulpal is known as *Potstone*, the author wishes to note here that in geological sciences the term *Potstone* generally indicates a variety of *Talc* rock and not *Phyllite*. In fact, *Talc* rock had been so widely used by craftsmen as *Potstone* throughout India since ancient times that this term, although descriptive, has now assumed a technical meaning. In this respect the *Phyllite* of Simulpal is a substitute material for the common *Potstone* or *Talc* rock.

In order to draw attention to the common raw material for *Potstone* industry, the present author has summarised below an account of some recorded occurrences in India of *Potstone* variety of *Talc* rocks from the book, *India's Mineral Wealth* by J. Coggin Brown and A. K. Dey (Oxford University Press, 1955, pages 524-531 and page 722). In this summary the original mode of representation and statements made by Coggin Brown and Dey have been preserved as far as possible. The distribution and use of *Talc* rocks, which are quarried for purposes other than

manufacture of utensils, have not been considered here.

The mineral, *Talc*, is chemically a hydrated silicate of magnesium ($3\text{MgO}, 4\text{SiO}_2, \text{H}_2\text{O}$). It has a typical soapy feel and is often foliated. *Steatite* or *Soapstone* is a compact, structureless variety of *Talc*. The *Talc* rocks (commonly *Talc-schists*) and especially the mineral, *Talc*, have various industrial uses. Of these, some *Talc* rocks, quarried in various parts of India as *Soapstone*, are used as *Potstones* for preparing utensils. The material is soft and easy to cut and shape. It is resistant to the action of acids and corrosive melts. It is a bad conductor of heat and electricity.

Geologically, *Talc* is widely distributed in metamorphic rocks of India; many of the occurrences are small or consist merely of *Potstones* derived from the alteration of basic and ultrabasic rocks, so that in the existing state of our knowledge of these occurrences only a few deposits can be classified as really good material. The notable occurrences include those of Jaipur and Mewar (Udaipur) in Rajasthan; of Mutssukota, near Tadpatri, in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh and of the Marble Rocks, near Jabalpur, in Madhya Pradesh; in each of these occurrences the mineral is believed to have been formed by the replacement of *Dolomite*. The Marble Rock occurrences and those in Kilekora, in the

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Drug district, support cottage industry engaged in the manufacture of household *Potstone* utensils.

Geological reports indicate that, besides other areas of work in Madras State, in Omalur taluk of Salem district about 200 families are engaged in carving *Potstone* into household utensils, images, toys and similar articles. In Hyderabad *Soapstone* is carved into stonewares for local usage from material quarried two miles north-west of Kulkulapalli, in Nalgonda district, while *Talcose* rocks near Singareni, in Warangal district, are used for *Slate* pencils, ink-stands and the like.

In Bihar there are many occurrences of *Potstones*, although soft *Chloritic schists* and decomposed basic rocks are often used as *Potstones* in addition to the true *Talcose* rocks. In the hill ranges extending from Ranchi border to the Midnapore district of West Bengal, *Potstones* formed by alteration of the *Dalma Lavas* and ultrabasic rocks are worked locally. In a belt stretching from east to west across Singhbhum into south-eastern Dhalbhum, there is a series of *Steatite* and *Talc-schist* occurrences. Here one of the largest *Potstone* deposits occurs to the west of Mahulisol, about four miles south-south-east of Dhalbhumgarh. *Steatite* and *Potstone*, resulting from the alteration of ultrabasic rocks, occur in the hills along the borders of Dhalbhum and Mayurbhanj and especially near the localities, Raghaddih, Kuardih and Kadal. Small pockets, of *Soapstone* have been reported from localities,

several miles west of Chaibasa. In the Santal Parganas *Soapstone* quarries are situated four miles north of Jasidih.

In Orissa there are large *Steatite* deposits of massive variety about five miles from Kollaru in Koraput, occurring as bands in *Quartzites* and *Biotite gneisses*. At Mahamuhan in Balasore, a *Talc-tremolite* rock is abundant and has been worked for many years as a source of *Potstone*. Other quarries are reported from Sundargarh, Keonjhar and Nilgiri districts in Orissa.

Among other reported occurrences of *Potstone* are the deposits in Dharwar and Ratnagiri districts in Bombay. A large deposit is recorded between Kundal and Dev Mori in Idar. Here the material, some 2,000,000 tons, is finely schistose, moderately hard, pale blue or pinkish grey in colour. *Steatite* has been worked for many years in Bijawar, Vindhya Pradesh, and is reported from near Soreng, in Sikkim, about fifteen miles north-west of Darjeeling. Compact, translucent, pale yellowish green *Talc* occurs at several places in the Great Limestone of the Raisi tehsil in Kashmir.

Complete statistics of *Steatite* production are not available, for there is known to be a trade of undetermined size and value in the mineral in many parts of India. No estimate of total reserve of *Potstones*, used for carving and architectural purposes, in India is available.

APPENDIX III

CRAFT OF THE TRIBAL POPULATION

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APPENDIX III

*CRAFT OF THE TRIBAL POPULATION

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1. What is tribal craft? It may be used in two different senses—one is evolutionary and the other is empirical.

2. In the evolutionary sense tribal craft would mean craft characteristic of the primitive stage of development of technology, irrespective of whether the craftsmen themselves are tribals or non-tribals. Thus for instance, brassware of Bankura district of West Bengal, manufactured through wax loss process by the craftsmen belonging to the non-tribal Dhokra community is considered by many to belong to the category of tribal craft.

The snag about this definition is that many of the traditional crafts of the country, characterised by simplicity of design, technique and skill, are associated with highly developed cultures from time immemorial. Thus for instance, terracotta figurines, made by manipulation of clay with hands, were found in many Harappan culture sites. Among the modern peasant population also these are by no means rare. Perhaps many will not agree to include them in the category of tribal craft.

3. In the empirical sense, tribal craft would mean craft specimens found among the tribal people. Here again one would ask whether craft objects manufactured by non-tribal craftsmen but consumed by the tribal communities

should be considered as specimens of tribal craft or whether only objects manufactured by tribal craftsmen and consumed by tribal people should be considered to belong to the category of tribal craft.

It is not possible to give a straight answer to this question as, within the two broad divisions indicated above, there would be a number of subdivisions. Some of the more important ones are as follows :

(a) The craft objects are generally produced by the non-tribal craftsmen living outside the tribal areas and the bulk of the consumers are non-tribals, though a small proportion of the consumers are tribals e.g., brassware of Sarthebari found among the tribals of NEFA.

(b) The craft objects are generally produced by non-tribal craftsmen living inside the tribal areas but the bulk of the consumers are non-tribals e.g., *Saris* of particular design woven by the Hos of Kolhan area in Singhbhum district.

(c) The craft objects are generally produced by non-tribal craftsmen living outside the tribal areas but the bulk of the consumers are tribals e.g., silver ornaments of particular shape and design manufactured by the craftsmen of Jaipur for Bhils and other tribals.

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(d) The craft objects are generally produced by non-tribal craftsmen living inside the tribal areas and the bulk of the consumers are tribals e.g., *Saris* used by the Mundas during marriage which are woven by the Swasia.

(e) The craft objects, though generally produced by tribal craftsmen, are not particularly related to their tradition, and the consumers are both tribals and non-tribals e.g., country tile manufactured by the Oraons and Mundas, country boats including seagoing vessels manufactured by the Minicoites.

(f) The craft objects are generally produced by the tribals mainly or partly according to their traditional pattern but the bulk of the consumers are non-tribals e.g., embroidered cloths manufactured by the Todas for the tourists.

(g) The craft objects are generally produced by tribal craftsmen and the consumers are mainly tribals e.g., Naga spear.

It seems that characterisation of certain types, out of the above types, as belonging to the category of tribal craft, should depend on the objects of such characterisation. If the emphasis is on tribal culture and simplicity of technology objects manufactured by tribal and non-tribal craftsmen mainly for the consumption of the tribal communities should be considered as specimens of tribal craft. Objects manufactured by the tribals according to their tradition of non-tribal consumers should also be included under the category of associated tribal craft from the cultural point of view.

If the emphasis is on the economic development of tribal population, all objects manufactured by the tribals, whether according to tribal tradition or not, and whether the consumers are mainly tribals or not, should be included under tribal craft. Objects, manufactured by the non-tribal craftsmen mainly for tribal consumers, should be put under a special category of associated tribal craft from the economic point

of view.

4. On an analysis of the tribal specimens collected by the Anthropology Department of Calcutta University, it has been found that for 244 specimens out of 492 specimens the tribals are both manufacturers and consumers, for 107 specimens the manufacturers are non-tribals and the tribals are only consumers, for 123 specimens the tribals are the consumers and it is not known who the manufacturers are, and for 18 specimens the tribals are the consumers and the manufacturers are both tribals and non-tribals.[†]

The collection of the Calcutta University cannot be said to be representative of the material equipments of culture of the tribals throughout the country, but even then it gives some idea about the state of their material culture and it shows that while the tribals depend considerably on the non-tribals for satisfaction of their needs of material objects, they are not producing for the outside market to such a significant extent that the produce could attract notice of the oldest anthropological museum in the country.

5. It may now be examined what types of industrial objects are generally found among the tribals. The Office of the Registrar General, India, has prepared a list of tribal specimens found in twelve museums of the country, viz. Museums of Anthropology Department of Calcutta University, Bihar University, Delhi University, Museums of Bihar Tribal Research Institute, Chindwara Tribal Research Institute, NEFA Administration, Shillong Centre, and Nagpur Centre of the Anthropological Survey of India, Bharatiya Adim Jati Sevak Sangha, Delhi, State Museums at Gauhati and Nagpur.

Altogether 2,447 specimens divided into 143 divisions have been covered in these 12 museums.

It can be considered that the specimens in

[†] I am indebted to Sarvashri M. S. Dutta and N. K. Banerjee of the Office of the Registrar General, India for their assistance in making this analysis.

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the 12 museums provide a fairly representative sample of the material equipments of the tribal communities in India.

It would be of some interest to compare the material equipments of the tribal communities with the household industries found among the general population of India.

The Director General of Employment and Training has prepared a Code of Standard Industrial Classification in India. With some adaptation of this code, a code of common household industry has been prepared by the Registrar General of India. The code has listed 28 major groups and 368 minor groups. As against this number, the tribal specimens in the 12 museums have been tentatively found to belong to 18 major groups and 222 minor groups. This classification of the tribal specimens is very rough and tentative, as many particulars, necessary for the classification, are at present lacking. But even then the figures give some crude quantitative measure of the state of technological development among the tribals.

The names of the major groups under which the tribal specimens are found and the number of minor groups tentatively listed under each of the major groups are as follows :

Name of Major Groups	Number of Minor Groups
Field produce and plantation crops	17
Forestry and logging	5
Fishing	6
Livestock and hunting	23
Foodstuff	8
Beverage	2
Tobacco products	2
Textile	17
Manufacture of wood & wooden products	54
Leather and leather products	5
Rubber & rubber products	2
Chemical and chemical products other than petroleum and coal.	1

Basic metals and their products (except machinery and transport)	28
Transport equipments	2
Paper and paper products	2
Non-metallic mineral products other than petroleum and coal	13
Miscellaneous industries	16
Articles of consumption other than those connected with various industries	19
Total	222

6. It is now proposed to examine the position in respect of the specific crafts found in the various tribal areas. Spinning and weaving are very common among the tribal population of Assam, Manipur, Tripura, NEFA, Nagaland, some parts of West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab. The wooden bamboo works are found among the tribals throughout India. The Asurs of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh manufacture iron smelting in primitive kilns and Agarias of Madhya Pradesh manufacture iron implements as well as smelt iron. Pot-making is found among the tribals of NEFA, Nagaland and some other areas. Fibre rope-making as an important means of livelihood is found among the more primitive tribes like Birhors, Chenchus etc. Among the Abujahmarias of Madhya Pradesh the bark of Dhaman trees is beaten into fibre for fine nylon strips and woven into fine clothes.

The illustrations can thus be multiplied several times, but it is not necessary to do so.

7. The tribal crafts are very frequently found to possess important social and cultural dimensions which considerably influence the development programme. In Nagaland, it has been found that among the Aos, only the females of certain villages would manufacture earthen pots, which are related to their cultural tradition. Similarly iron work is confined to certain families of some villages. According to Mills, among Naga tribes these crafts were confined to despised families. As mentioned by Elwin, it is sometimes risky in Tirap to be a good artisan. If somebody carves well, the people would ask who the artist is and

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this may bring in its trail bad luck. When carving a pillar in *Morong* or bachelors' dormitory a dog is sacrificed and the artisan is required to abstain from his diet and observe a rule of chastity for a number of days.

Elwin has further mentioned that among the Wanchos, weaving is restricted to the Chief's wife and daughter only.

Among the tribal people of Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj it has been found that during the period of *Tussar* cocoon rearing, the rearers are required to refrain from shaving their beard and to forego sex relations. As these restrictions are not observed in the Cocoon Multiplication Centre, established by the Government at Bangripasa, the Centre failed to be popular for quite a long time. Among the Bodos of West Bengal, no girl could previously expect to attract a good groom unless she was expert in *Sari*-spinning and *Sari*-weaving. Even now, it is considered to be a female occupation. In the Government *Sari*-weaving Centre set up in Bodo area this fact was overlooked and training was imparted to a number of male trainees. These males were attracted to the training because of the handsome stipend, but after training was over they did not care to take up the craft because it would be shameful for them to do in their home, what is considered to be women's job.

Among the Totos of West Bengal there are a few old women who in the past used to weave coarse cloth with a black and yellow stripe design. Now the Totos rarely wear this traditional cloth. An attempt was made by the Government of West Bengal to revive the craft. It was announced that a reward of Rs. 250/- would be given to participants weaving new clothes of traditional type, during the period of six months. But none came forward to receive the reward. The Totos used to weave traditional cloth with yarn supplied by another tribe viz., the Rabhas. Now the Rabhas rarely spin yarn and on the other hand the Toto craftsmen do not think it proper to weave clothes

of traditional type with yarn purchased from the market.

A reverse case has been noticed in Ao area. A Tribal Welfare Centre has been set up near Mokokchung by Bharatiya Adim Jati Sevak Sangha. A Craft Training Institute has been organised as a part of the Centre. It was found that though the Ao Nagas have tradition of weaving various types of clothes of beautiful designs, weaving had not been included as a subject for training in this Institute. The reason was that the Khadi and Village Industries Commission which finances the Institute insisted that weaving should be done by home-spun yarn only. On the other hand the Ao Nagas have now practically given up spinning of yarns; they use yarn purchased from the market which the Centre is not prepared to use. Here the ideological orthodoxy of an welfare agency was the main impediment.

At Darjeeling where Weaving Centre was set up by the Govt. of West Bengal for the benefit of the Bhutias who have beautiful traditional design of their own, it was found that in the Centre, the traditional design of the Bhutias was ignored, and Santiniketan designs were introduced to the trainees. Naturally these could not sustain the interest of the Bhutia trainees and the Centre was in a moribund condition.

Later on the mistake was discovered and it was decided that while the Centre should aim at technological improvement, there would not be any interference with their traditional design and aesthetical value.

At Belpahari of Midnapore it was found that in the training programme in a Weaving Centre set up for the benefit of the Santhals, maximum emphasis was given on type of produce which would require use of Jacquard and which does not have local demand. In a follow-up of the ex-trainees it was found that they did not have the means to purchase Jacquard and also they felt diffident to produce types of clothes

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marketing of which would pose a new problem. Hence they did not produce what they learnt to produce mostly in the Centre. The major part of the training became useless.

8. From what has been stated above, it should not, however, be considered that cultural and social factors always provide unalterable rigid frame-work. Among the Nagas, various types of designs in the garments were associated in the past with head-hunting and costly feast of merit. With disappearance of these institutions, the associated designs also went out of use for quite a long time. It seemed that these beautiful designs would completely die out; but now it appears that a slow but steady revival of the old

designs is taking place. Their significance has, however, changed. Previously they were of ritual significance, now they are looked upon as decorative objects, but they are nevertheless highly valued, because of their association with the past of the community. The Todas of Nilgiri Hills have beautiful embroidery work for generations. They have several traditional designs, and one of them has the head of a buffalo as the motif. It is used only in the funeral clothes. As the Toda culture mainly centres round the cult of sacred buffalo, previously embroidery with buffalo heads as the motif was very much restricted. But now in the changed context of secularisation of values, the old taboo has been greatly relaxed and the Toda women are doing embroidery work with buffalo motif for sale among the foreign tourists.

*Synopsis of a talk given in Tribal Orientation & Training Centre, Bhubaneswar.—Editor.

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- Kota Book Depot (Rest)

KUMTA—

- S. V. Kamta, Booksellers & Stationers (N. Kanara) (Reg.)

LIST OF AGENTS FOR THE SALE OF GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PUBLICATIONS

LUCKNOW—

- 1 Soochna Sahitya Depot (State Book Depot)
- 2 Balkrishna Book Co. Ltd., Hazratganj (Reg.)
- 3 British Book Depot, 84, Hazratganj (Reg.)
- 4 Ram Advani, Hazratganj, P. B. 154 (Reg.)
- 5 Universal Publishers (P.) Ltd., Hazratganj (Reg.)
- 6 Eastern Book Co., Lalbagh Rd. (Reg.)
- 7 Civil & Military Educational Stores, 106/B, Sardar Bazar (Rest)
- 8 Aquarium Supply Co., 213, Faizabad Road (Rest)
- 9 Law Book Mart, Amin-ud-Daula Park (Rest)

MIDHIANA—

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

MADRAS—

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

MADURAI—

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

MANDYA SUGAR TOWN—

- K. N. Narimhe Gowda & Sons (Rest)

MANGALORE—

- U. R. Shenoy Sons, Car Street, Post. Box 128 (Reg.)

MANJESHWAR—

- Mukunda Krishna Nayak (Rest)

MATHURA—

- Rath & Co., Tilohi Bldg. Bengali Ghat (Rest)

MEERUT—

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

MONGHYR—

- Anusandhan, Minerva Press Building (Rest)

MUSSOORIE—

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

MUZAFFARNAGAR—

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

MUZAFFARPUR—

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

MYSORE—

- 1 H. Venkataramiah & Sons, New Statue Circle (Reg.)
- 2 Peoples Book House, Opp. Jagan Mohan Palace (Reg.)

MYSORE—

- 3 Geeta Book House, Booksellers & Publishers Krishnamurthipuram (Rest)
- 4 News Papers House, Lansdowne Building (Rest)
- 5 Indian Mercantile Corporation, Toy Palace Ramvilas (Rest)

NADIAD

- R. S. Desay, Station Road (Rest)

NAGPUR—

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

NAINITAL—

- Coural Book Depot, Bara Bazar (Rest)

NANDED—

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

NEW DELHI—

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

LIST OF AGENTS FOR THE SALE OF GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PUBLICATIONS

NEW DELHI—

- 30 Sant Ram Booksellers, 16, New Municipal Market, Lody Colony (Rest)

PANJIM—

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

PATHANKOT—

- The Krishna Book depot, Main Bazar (Rest)

PATIALA—

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

PATNA—

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

PITHORAGARH—

- Maniram Punetha & Sons (Rest)

PONDICHERRY—

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

POONA—

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

PUDUKOTTAI—

- Shri P. N. Swaminathan Sivam & Co., East Main Road (Rest)

RAJKOT—

- Mohan Lal Dossabhai Shah, Booksellers and Sub-agents (Reg.)

RANCHI—

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

REWA—

- Supdt., Govt. State Emporium V. P.

ROURKELA—

- The Rourkela Review (Rest)

SAHARANPUR—

- Chandra Bharata Pustak Bhandar, Court Road (Rest)

SECUNDERABAD—

- Hindustan Diary Publishers, Market Street (Reg.)

SILCHAR—

- Shri Nishitto Sen Nazirpatti (Reg.)

SIMLA—

- 1 Supdt., Himachal Pradesh Govt.
- 2 Minerva Book Shop, The Mall (Reg.)
- 3 The New Book Depot, 79, The Mall (Reg.)

SINNAR—

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

SHILLONG—

- 1 The Officer-in-Charge, Assam Govt., B. D.
- 2 Chapla Bookstall, P. B. No. 1 (Rest)

SONEPAT—

- United Book Agency (Reg.)

SRINAGAR—

- The Kashmir Bookshop, Residency Road (Reg.)

SURAT—

- Shri Gajanan Pustakalaya, Tower Road (Reg.)

TIRUCHIRAPALLI—

- 1 Kalpana Publishers, Wosiur (Reg.)
- 2 S. Krishnaswami & Co., 35, Subhash Chandra Bose Road (Reg.)
- 3 Palamiappa Bros. (Rest)

TRIVANDRUM—

- 1 International Book Depot, Main Road (Reg.)
- 2 Reddear Press & Book Depot, F. B. No. 4 (Rest)

TUTICORIN—

- Shri K. Thiagarajan, 10-C, French Chapal Road (Rest)

UDAIPUR—

- 1 Jagdish & Co., Inside Surajapole (Rest)
- 2 Book Centre, Maharana, Bhopal Consumers, Co-op. Society Ltd. (Rest)

UJJAIN—

- Manak Chand Book Depot, Sati Gate (Rest)

VARANASI—

- 1 Students Friends & Co., Lanka (Rest)
- 2 Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, Gopal Mandir Road, P. B. 8 (Reg.)
- 3 Glob Book Centre (Rest)
- 4 Kohinoor Stores, University Road, Lanka (Reg.)
- 5 B. H. U. Book Depot (Rest)

VELLORE—

- A. Venkatasubhan, Law Booksellers (Reg.)

VIJAYAWADA—

- The Book & Review Centre, Eluru Road, Governpet (Rest)

VISAKHAPATNAM—

- 1 Gupta Brothers, Vizia Bldg. (Reg.)
- 2 Book Centre, 11/97, Main Road (Reg.)
- 3 The Secy. Andhra University, General Co-op. Stores Ltd. (Rest)

VIZIANAGARAM—

- Sarda & Co. (Rest)

WARDHA—

- Swarajeya Bhandar, Bhorji Market (Reg.)

FOR LOCAL SALE

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

RAILWAY BOOKSTALL HOLDERS

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

FOREIGN

- 1 S/S. Education Enterprise Private Ltd., Kathumandu (Nepal)
- 2 S/S. Aktie Bologat, C. E. Fritzes Kungl. Hovobokhandel, Fredsgation-2 Box 1656, Stockholm-16 (Sweden)

LIST OF AGENTS FOR THE SALE OF GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PUBLICATIONS

FOREIGN

- 3 Reise-und Verkehrsverlag Stuttgart, Post 730, Gutenbergstra 21, Stuttgart No. 11245, Stuttgart den (Germany West)
- 4 Shri Iswar Subramanyam 452, Reversite Driv Apt. 6, New York, 27 NWY
- 5 The Proprietor, Book Centre, Lakshmi Mansons, 49, The Mall, Lahore (Pakistan).

ON S. AND R. BASIS

- 1 The Head Clerk, Govt. Book Depot, Ahmedabad
- 2 The Asst. Director, Extension Centre, Kapiles-war Road, Belgaum
- 3 The Employment Officer, Employment Exchange, Dhar
- 4 The Asstt. Director, Footwear Extension Centre, Polo Ground No. 1, Jodhpur
- 5 The O.I/C., Extension Centre, Club Road, Muzaffarpur
- 6 The Director, Indian Bureau of Mines, Govt, of India, Ministry of Mines & Euel, Nagpur
- 7 The Asstt. Director Industrial Extension Centre, Nadiad (Gujarat)
- 8 The Head Clerk, Photozincographic Press, 5, Finance Road, Poona.
- 9 Govt. Printing & Stationery, Rajkot
- 10 The O. I/C Extension Centre, Industrial Estate, Kokar, Ranchi
- 11 The Director, S. I. S. I. Industrial Extension Centre, Udhna, Surat
- 12 The Registrar of Companies, Narayani Building, 27, Brabourne Road, Calcutta-1
- 13 The Registrar of Companies, Kerala, 50, Feet Road, Ernakulam
- 14 The Registrar of Companies, H. No. 3-5-83, Hyderguda, Hyderabad
- 15 Registrar of Companies, Assam, Manipur and Tripura, Shillong
- 16 Registrar of Companies, Sunlight Insurance Bldg. Ajmeri Gate Extension, New Delhi
- 17 Registrar of Companies, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh, Link Road, Jullundur City
- 18 Registrar of Companies, Bihar, Jamal Road, Patna-1
- 19 Registrar of Companies, Raj. & Ajmer; Shri Kamta Prasad House, 1st Floor, 'C' Scheme, Ashok Marg., Jaipur

ON S. AND R. BASIS

- 20 The Regisirar of Companies, Andhra Bank Bldg. 6 Linghi Chetty St. P. B. 1530. Madras
- 21 The Registrar of Companies, Mahatma Gandhi Road, West Cott. Bldg. P. B. 334, Kanpur
- 22 The Registrar of Companies, Everest 100, Marine Drive, Bombay
- 23 The Registrar of Companies, 162, Brigade Road Bangalore
- 24 The Registrar of Companies, Gwalior
- 25 Asstt. Director, Extension Centre, Bhuli Road, Dhanbad
- 26 Registrar of Companies, Orissa, Cuttack Chandi, Cuttack
- 27 The Registrar of Companies, Gujarat State, Gujarat Samachar Bldg., Ahmedabad
- 28 Publication Division, Sale Depot, North Block, New Delhi
- 29 The Development Commissioner, Small Scale Industries, New Delhi
- 30 The O. I/C., University Employment Bureau, Lucknow
- 31 O. I/C., S. I. S. I. Extension Centre, Malda
- 32 O. I/C., S. I. S. I. Extension Centre, Habra, Tabaluria, 24-Parganas
- 33 O. I/C., S. I. S. I. Model Carpentry Workshop, Piyali Nagar, P. O. Burnpur
- 34 O. I/C., S. I. S. I., Chrontanning Extension Centre, Tangra 33. North Topsis Road, Calcutta-46
- 35 O. I/C., S. I. S. I. Extension Centre (Footwear), Calcutta
- 36 Asstt. Director, Extension Centre, Hyderabad
- 37 Asstt. Director, Extension Centre, Krishna Distt (A. P.)
- 38 Employment Officer, Employment Exchange, Jhabua
- 39 Dy. Director Incharge, S. I. S. I., C/o. Chief Civil Admn. Goa, Panjim
- 40 The Registrar of Trade Unions, Kanpur
- 41 The Employment Officer, Emyloyment Exchange, Gopal Bhavan, Mornia
- 42 The O I/C., State Information Centre, Hyderabad
- 43 The Registrar of Companies, Pondicherry
- 44 The Asstt. Director of Publicity and Information, Vidhana Saubha (P. B. 271) Bangalore.

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