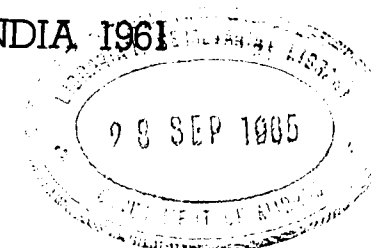




CENSUS OF INDIA 1961



BIHAR

VILLAGE SURVEY
MONOGRAPHS



2

KUMARBHAJA

3

BATBANGA

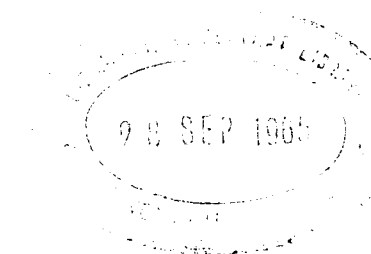
4

JAMKANALI

SUPERINTENDENT OF CENSUS OPERATIONS
BIHAR

VII
208

PRG. 176.1. 2-4 (N)
750



S. D. PRASAD
of the Indian Administrative Service
Superintendent of Census Operations, Bihar

100

1961 CENSUS PUBLICATIONS, BIHAR

(All the Census Publications of this State will bear Vol. no. IV)

Central Government Publications

PART I-A	..	General Report
PART I-B	..	Report on Vital Statistics of Bihar, 1951—60
PART I-C	..	Subsidiary Tables of 1961 including reprints, if any, from previous Census Reports
PART II-A	..	General Population Tables*
PART II-B(i)	..	Economic Tables (B-I to B-IV and B-VII)†
PART II-B(ii)	..	Economic Tables (B-V, B-VI, B-VIII and B-IX)†
PART II-C	..	Social and Cultural Tables†
PART II-D	..	Migration Tables
PART III(i)	..	Household Economic Tables (B-X to B-XIV)†
PART III(ii)	..	Household Economic Tables (B-XV to B-XVII)†
PART IV-A	..	Report on Housing and Establishments*
PART IV-B	..	Housing and Establishment Tables*
PART V-A	..	Special Tables for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes†
PART V-B	..	Ethnographic Notes on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes
PART VI	..	Village Surveys** (37 Monographs on 37 selected villages)
PART VII-A	..	Selected Crafts of Bihar
PART VII-B	..	Fairs and Festivals of Bihar
PART VIII-A	..	Administration Report on Enumeration*
PART VIII-B	..	Administration Report on Tabulation
PART IX	..	Census Atlas of Bihar

State Government Publications

17 Volumes of District Census Handbooks§

*Already printed †In Press **No. 1 of the series already published and Nos. 2-4 cover the present volume.
§Handbooks of Santal Parganas (Part II) already published and Gaya under print.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Foreword	v
Preface	ix
Introduction	xi
Monograph on Kumarbhaja	1
Monograph on Batbanga	41
Monograph on Jamkanali	75

FOREWORD

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

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

Randomness of selection was, therefore, eschewed. There was no intention to build up a picture for the whole State in quantitative terms on the basis of villages selected statistically at random. The selection was avowedly purposive; the object being as much to find out what was happening and how fast to those villages which had fewer reasons to choose change and more to remain lodged in the past as to discover how the more 'normal' types of villages were changing. They were to be primarily type studies which, by virtue of their number and distribution, would also give the reader a 'feel' of what was going on and some kind of a map of the country.

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

- (a) At least eight villages were to be so selected that each of them would contain one dominant community with one predominating occupation, e.g., fishermen, forest workers, jhum cultivators, potters, weavers, salt-makers, quarry workers, etc. A village should have a minimum population of 400, the optimum being between 500 and 700.
- (b) At least seven villages were to be of numerically prominent Scheduled Tribes of the State. Each village could represent a particular tribe. The minimum population should be 400, the optimum being between 500 and 700.
- (c) The third group of villages should each be of fair size, of an old and settled character and contain variegated occupations and be, if possible, multi-ethnic in composition. By fair size was meant a population of 500—700 persons or more. The village should

mainly depend on agriculture and be sufficiently away from the major sources of modern communication such as the district administrative headquarters and business centres. It should be roughly a day's journey from the above places. The villages were to be selected with an eye to variation in terms of size, proximity to city and other means of modern communication, nearness to hills, jungles and major rivers. Thus there was to be a regional distribution throughout the State of this category of villages. If, however, a particular district contained significant ecological variations within its area, more than one village in the district might be selected to study the special adjustments to them.

It is unique feature of these village surveys that they rapidly outgrew their original terms of reference, as my colleagues warmed up to their work. This proved for them an absorbing voyage of discovery and their infectious enthusiasm compelled me to enlarge the inquiry's scope again and again. It was just as well cautiously to feel one's way about at first and then venture further afield, and although it accounts to some extent for a certain unevenness in the quality and coverage of the monographs, it served to compensate the purely honorary and extra-mural rigours of the task. For, the Survey, along with its many ancillaries like the survey of fairs and festivals, of small and rural industry and others, was an 'extra', over and above the crushing load of the 1961 Census.

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

administrative measures, technological and cultural change. Finally, a study camp was organised in the last week of December, 1961 when the whole field was carefully gone through over again and a programme worked out closely knitting the various aims of the Survey together.

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

NEW DELHI :
July 30, 1964

A. MITRA
Registrar General, India

PREFACE

This is the second volume of Village Survey monographs in which an attempt is being made to "invest the dry bones of village statistics with flesh-and-blood, accounts of social structure and social change". It contains a study of three villages in the deep interior of the district of Santal Parganas. Each village is primarily typical of a particular tribe though it contains inhabitants of certain other tribes as well. Thus, village Kumarbhaja represents the Mal Paharias, village Batbanga the Sauria Paharias and village Jamkanali the Santals. The presentation and analysis in a single volume of data relating to these tribes, who live in geographical proximity to one another, may help in providing an overall comparative and connected picture.

The methodology of the studies consisted, firstly, of canvassing the detailed household and village schedules (reproduced in the monograph on village Jojohatu: no. 1 of the Series). This was done initially by the Junior Statistical Supervisors attached to the C. D. Blocks within which the selected villages lay. Subsequently, whole-time Investigators were appointed by the Census organisation for studying each of the selected villages. They spent two to three weeks in each village, checking up the schedules and collecting such further details and particulars as were required. On their return to headquarters, the relevant statistics were compiled and tabulated. On the basis of these and other enquiries, the Investigators prepared the first draft reports which had to be re-written and revised by the Deputy Superintendent. These revised drafts were forwarded to Dr. B. K. Roy Burman, Officer on Special Duty, Social Studies and Handicrafts, Office of the Registrar General, India, who scrutinised the reports and gave valuable suggestions for further enquiries and elucidation of obscure points. Quite often, this meant two or three re-visits to the village by the Investigators for collecting further materials. At one time or the other, before the draft was finalised, the Superintendent of Census Operations as well as the Deputy Superintendent in charge of the Village Surveys also paid brief visits so as to get a practical feel of the villages under study.

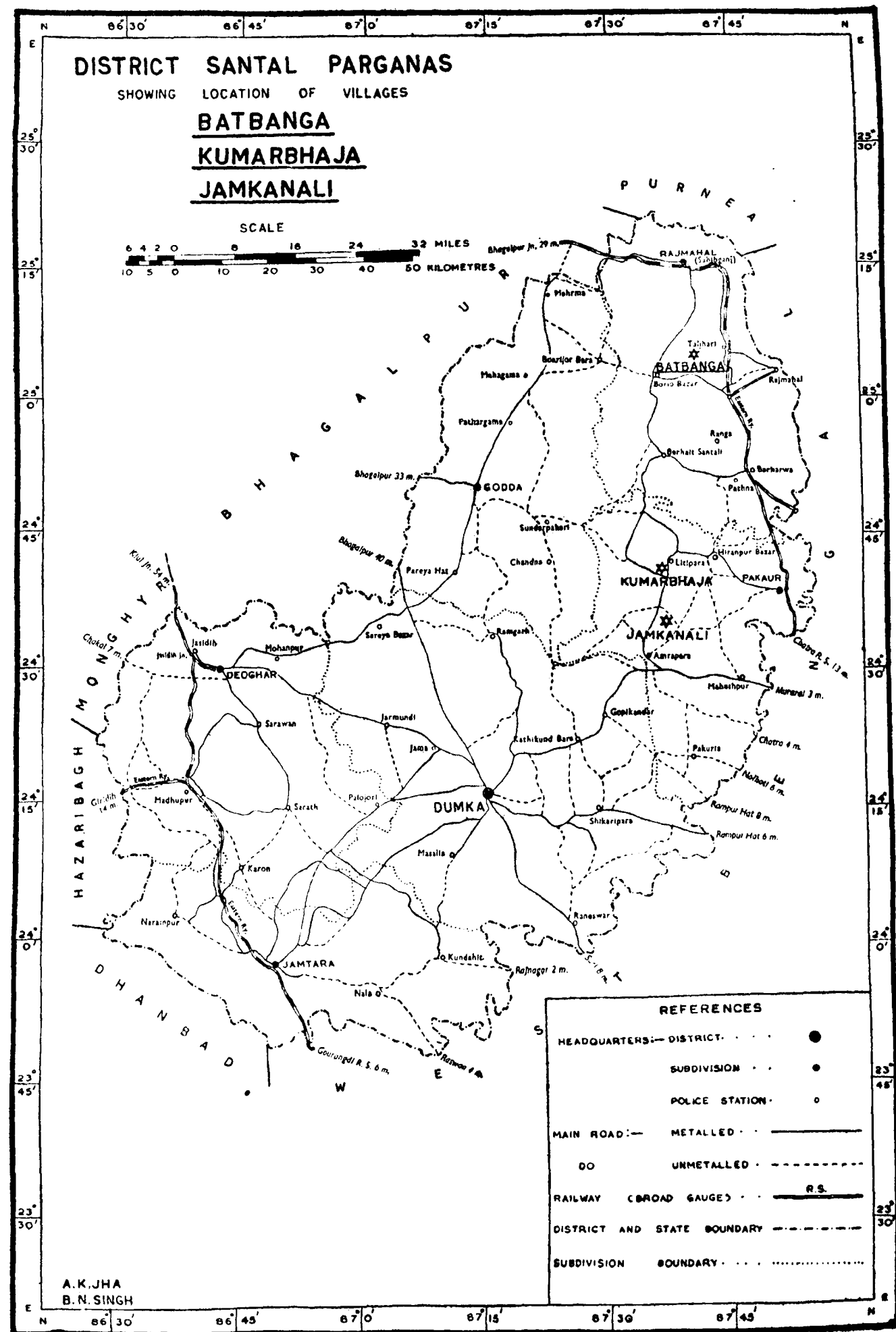
Thus, these studies represent the fruits of common endeavour by several agencies. It needs to be stated that few of the persons engaged on this work can make any pretensions to be experts or specialists in the line. Thus the reports may appear to be somewhat general and discursive in their approach and treatment though objectivity of approach was never eschewed. The difficulties in conducting such enquiries among tribal people are many. For one thing, they are generally secretive by nature and do not easily "open up" before outsiders. Then, there are the problems of language and communications. The limited time within which the enquiries had to be conducted and reports prepared in respect of 30 or more villages proved another handicap. It has also to be remembered that all this had to be done in addition to the usual census work. Published literature on the subject is rather scanty. Notwithstanding these difficulties and drawbacks, the studies have brought their own rewards in the shape of a fruitful diversion from the humdrum of cold statistics. The efforts will have been worthwhile if the monographs can help in better understanding of the life and environs of the people they seek to depict and thus lead to a more realistic appreciation of their pressing needs.

PATNA:

S. D. PRASAD

August 9, 1964

Superintendent of Census Operations, Bihar



INTRODUCTION

This note seeks to outline, in brief, the salient features of the history of the tribes studied in the three villages of which reports are presented in this volume, and also to provide a larger perspective in which the villages have to be viewed. The villages are Kumbhaja (Mal Paharia), Batbanga (Sauria Paharia), and Jamkanali (Santal).

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DISTRICT

The Paharias inhabit the Rajmahal Hills in the district of Santal Parganas where they are to be almost exclusively found. It is indeed remarkable that they have remained almost cut off from their neighbours through the centuries. They remained unaffected by the Hindu and Muslim influence in the past although Gaur (the capital of the Hindu Kings of Bengal) and Rajmahal (the centre of the Moghul rulers) were not far away. In Akbar's time, Khetauri jagirdars were bestowed a nominal supremacy over the Paharias and friendly relations persisted among them till the middle of eighteenth century. Differences then occurred and some of the hill chiefs were treacherously murdered. The Paharias, in revenge, then commenced the raids and depredations which made them a terror in all the adjoining lowland country, and earned for them the epithet of robbers and highway men. The country was in a state of hopeless anarchy when in 1772 the attention of Warren Hastings was drawn to it. Initially attempts were made to subjugate the Paharias by sending out military expeditions. But the difficult terrain, the versatility of the Paharias with their country, and their acclimatisation to not-so-healthy conditions prevalent in the hills and forests gave them a distinct advantage. This resulted in the military expeditions proving generally abortive. The alternative course of conciliation was adopted by Augustus Cleaveland, Collector of Bhagalpur, who introduced a system of payment of pensions to village headmen among the Paharias in consideration of their agreeing to maintain the peace in their respective jurisdictions. The Sardar or the divisional headman presided over a group of villages and in each village, subordinate to the Sardar, there used to be the Manjhi or the village headman. In the beginning itself, as many as 47 Sardars and Manjhis agreed to the

terms offered by Cleaveland and thus what military expeditions could not fulfil was achieved by a tactful policy. To consolidate his first success, and not relying entirely on the assurances given by the headmen, Cleaveland also raised a corps of Hill Archers from among the Paharias. It was known as the Bhagalpur Hill Rangers and it continued to exist till the National Movement of 1857 after which it was disbanded. In 1782, the Rajmahal Hill tract was withdrawn from the jurisdiction of ordinary law courts and offences committed by hillmen were decided by an assembly of Sardars presided over by the Collector.

From times immemorial the Paharias lived on hill-tops eking out a bare livelihood from the bounties of nature in the forests. Cleaveland offered them rent-free land in the lowlands adjoining the hills, commonly known as *Damin-I-Koh*, a Persian word meaning literally 'Skirts of the Hills'. The Paharias, however, refused to descend and mingle with other people on the slopes. They still demurred when the *Damin-I-Koh* was demarcated finally in 1837 in order to exclude non-Paharia elements from acquiring any proprietary (*Zamindari*) rights within its precincts so that the Paharias could remain free from the clutches of outsiders. The opportunity of descending thus provided by Cleaveland's offer could not, however, continue for long. Another race of tribal people, the Santals, began pouring into the country. Dr. Buchanan was the first to notice 500 families of Santals who had migrated from Birbhum district in Bengal and settled in Dumka Sub-division. When the *Damin-I-Koh* was being demarcated in 1826, as many as 30 Santal villages were found within its precincts. The Government of the day ordered the attachment of these villages and their assignment to the Paharias, but the orders were never given effect to. Mr. Wood, who supervised the demarcation, found it impossible to induce the hillmen to settle in the plains and reclaim the forests of *Damin-I-Koh*. He, therefore, urged on Government the desirability of admitting the Santals if only to set the hillmen an example. Government ultimately accepted his proposals and by 1836, 427 villages had been established in the *Damin-I-Koh* inhabited chiefly by the Santals. In 1851, several hundred Santal villages were reported in this area.

Although the Santals had been introduced into the territory meant to have been reserved for the Paharias, the special amenities and safeguards meant for the Paharias were not extended to the Santals. The result was that they fell into the clutches of traders and money-lenders who took advantage of their ignorance and managed to extract many times their legitimate dues. This spurred on the Santals to the rebellion of 1854 which led to the formation of Santal Parganas as a separate non-regulation district in 1855. With better administration now provided, matters improved considerably but unrest amongst the Santals was again perceived in 1871. This brought about the promulgation of Regulation III of 1872 which laid down the rules and principles for the carrying out of survey and settlement operations in the entire district and which has often been hailed as the Magna Carta of the aboriginals. So far as the *Damin-I-Koh* area is concerned, the Paharia villages on the hills were excluded from the first settlement carried out by Mr. Wood in 1879. The Mal Paharia villages in Marpal and Daurpal areas were, however, included. In 1895, 87 Paharia villages (33 held by Mal-Paharias and 54 by Sauria Paharias) in Pakur Damin applied for the settlement of their villages realising that they were worse off than their neighbours in the 92 other Paharia villages which had been settled by Mr. Wood. This was done in the settlement of 1901 except for village-wise boundary survey which was accomplished only in the settlement operations of 1924.

THE PAHARIAS

Early writers such as O'Malley (District Gazetteer of the Santal Parganas, 1910), Bradley-Birt (Story of an Indian Upland, London, 1905) and MacPherson (Settlement Report of the Santal Parganas, 1904) have described the Paharias as a branch of the Dravidian race of which the Oraons of Chotanagpur form a section. This view was the result of the observation of a close resemblance between the languages spoken by the Sauria Paharias (Malto) and the Oraons (Kurukh or Oraon). The traditions of the Oraons about their migrations seemed largely to corroborate the same view, for according to these, they came from their original home in the Carnatic to Bihar and settled on the banks of River Son. Driven from there by the Muslims, the tribe split into two divisions. One of them, now represented by the Oraons, ascended the river Son leading into Palamau

district and turning eastward along river Koel, took possession of the north western portion of Chotanagpur. The other branch, following the course of the river Ganges, settled in the Rajmahal Hills and became the progenitors of the Paharias.

S. S. Sarkar (Transactions of the Bose Research Institute, Volume XI, London, 1936) sought to:

analyse the somatic traits of a tribe hitherto very little known (inhabitants of the Rajmahal Hills) but said to have some common features with the Oraons, as well as possessing a Dravidian tongue.

He further observed:

The dissimilarity in the cultures of the two tribes is, however, very marked. The Oraons have a long list of exogamous totemic clans whereas the Malers (Sauria Paharias) have no such clans. If they did possess a clan system as a result of acculturation with the Oraons, its disappearance is a matter which has yet to be proved.

Summarising the conclusions of Sarkar, Dr. J. C. Bose, in the Introduction to the same volume, wrote:

In regard to Maler-Oraon affinities, it is found that appreciable differences exist between them in regard to Stature, Auricular height of head, Orbitonasal breadth, Orbitonasal arc of head, Length-height index, Breadth-height index, Total facial length, Sagittal Arc of head, Transverse Arc of head, Length-height index, Nasal Elevation Index, Total facial index and Vertical Cephalofacial Index. That there is also some difference in the form of the head is evident from the large difference in the head height and in the length of the head; this latter is as many as six times the difference between the Hill Malers and the Plains Malers, and ten times that between the Hill Malers and Mal Paharias. It has already been shown in what ways the Oraons differ characteristically from the Malers, and it would, therefore, be difficult to assume any close relationship between the two. The dissimilarity of the cultures of the two people also offers an additional proof of the difference between them. It would thus appear that the Malers and the Oraons are two independent Dravidian-speaking peoples who never came into intimate contact with one another. The Malers may be taken as the autochthonous inhabitants of these hills, where they are still found to be living; they undoubtedly appear to be one of the earliest remnants of the pre-Dravidian tribes inhabiting this particular region.

With regard to the relationship between the Sauria Paharias and Mal Paharias, Risley (Castes and Tribes of Bengal, 1892) states:

Mr. Droege, with whom I discussed the subject some years ago, considered the two tribes to be of common origin. This view is borne out by the fact that they can understand one another's language easily, though they assert that the dialects are different; as well as by the identity of ancestral worship, a point in which all races display a remarkably conservative spirit. As for the antagonism, which at present prevails between the North and South Paharias, it is only another instance of what has been commonly observed in Chotanagpur, that two sections of the same tribe which in any way happen to become separated are often far more strongly opposed to one another than if they had been originally distinct tribes.

(NOTE: 1. Mr. Droege, a member of the Church Mission Society, worked among the Paharias and his grammar on Malto is an authority on the subject.)

2. Mal Paharias even now look down upon the Sauria Paharias (say the latter adogeny eat cows and dead animals).

The later observations of Sarkar also led him to conclude:

the three groups of Rajmahal aborigines (Hill Malers, Plains Malers and Mal Paharias) are so closely related to one another that it is difficult to distinguish them apart.

The break-up of Paharias into different sections is generally held to have occurred not more than a few centuries ago. MacPherson observes as follows in his Settlement Report:

The Southern mountaineers now known as Mal Paharias are admitted by ethnologists to belong to the same stock as their northern brethren, the Sauria Maler but even in Buchanan's time they had lost the distinctive Dravidian speech of the Maler and taken on a veneer of Hinduism. The distinction only dated back some seven or eight generations and was probably due to causes that operated after Akbar's conquest. Buchanan (1807-14) found among the southern mountaineers some Rajas or chiefs who called themselves Singhas and traced their descent back to a Rajput who settled amongst them about 150 years before his visit. Sumar Singh, an ancestor of the present Sankara family, was Buchanan's informant and his story was that six or seven generations before, two brothers Aku and Paku came to their country. Aku the eldest obtained the Pargana of Sultana-bad adjacent to the territory of Mal. Paku went amongst the Mountaineers married a high-land girl and persuaded the people to abstain

from beef, which they had formerly used. Possibly the real origin of the distinction between the Northern and Southern mountaineers lies in the fact that the latter were more accessible from the side of Bengal than the former. The northern hills form an unbroken wall 1,000 to 1,500 feet high rising from the Rajmahal plains. The hills further south are more gradual and broken in their rise from the uplands of Pakur.

Sarkar has adduced evidence from historical and geographical records to show that the Mal Paharias separated from the parent stock between the years 1778 and 1819.

Neither the Sauria Paharias nor the Mal Paharias have endogamous or exogamous subdivisions. The Mal Paharias were divided into three sections known as Kumarpali, Dangrapali and Marpali, but as MacPherson observes, these were mere local distinctions and all the three lived intermixed and had exactly the same customs. The three sections derived their names from local geographical units known as Kumarpal, Dangrapal and Marpal. Risley states:

The Mal Paharias are divided into two sub-tribes, Mal Paharia proper and Kumari or Kumari-bing. The latter group, which corresponds to Buchanan's Kumarpali is the more Hinduised of the two.

Buchanan has given a list of five ranks, based on heredity, which in order of precedence were Sinha, Grihi, Manjhi, Ahriti and Naiya. Risley lists Ahriti, Dehri, Grihi, Manjhi, Patam, Pujhor and Sikdar as septs among the Mal Paharias, it being mentioned that the names of the septs are said to denote the original occupations of their members at the time when exogamy was introduced. The septs, according to Risley, appear to be identical with Buchanan's hereditary distinctions, and he avers that Buchanan would doubtless have discovered the fact that they were exogamous had the subject of exogamy attracted any attention at the time when he wrote. However, B. B. Verma, who studied the Mal Paharias in selected villages in 1958, writes:

Like Buchanan it was also found that the tribe was divided into Dehri, Grihi, Majhiye and Layab, which are nothing more than hereditary occupational divisions where there is no marriage bar (Social Organisation of Mal Paharias, Bulletin of the Bihar Tribal Research Institute, Volume II, Number 2, October 1960).

The investigations among Mal Paharias in Kumarbhaja also revealed that no exogamous subdivisions existed among them.

The Kumarbhag Paharias and the Mal Paharias have been separately returned only in the Census of 1941 according to which there were 9,572 of the former and 40,498 of the latter. Their detailed distribution was as follows:—

Locality	Mal Paharias	Kumarbhags
Bihar State	40,498	9,572
DISTRICTS OTHER THAN SANTAL PARGANAS	305	271
SANTAL PARGANAS DISTRICT	39,809	9,301
Deoghar Subdivision	1,257	100
Dumka Subdivision	26,887	729
Godda Subdivision	1,775	2,041
Pakaur Subdivision	5,256	6,431
Jamtara Subdivision	1,603	Nil
Rajmahal Subdivision	3,031	Nil

THE SANTALS

The following observations made by P. O. Boddington are reproduced from the District Gazetteer of Santal Parganas:

The Santals have been classified as belonging to the Dravidian race, and this classification has been based on anthropological measurements; linguistically there is absolutely no connection between the two, except a few words borrowed. The features are very much alike, and the anthropological measurements give very similar results. But a good many races in this world would in that case have to be classified as Dravidians. Both may have a common origin in the unknown past; but apart from these measurements we know nothing to connect the races with any certainty. Besides, the Dravidian type, although the prevalent one, is by no means the only one found. Several Aryan types are met with, and a Mongoloid one is not very uncommon. Other types may be found, but are too few to be taken into account. All this proves mixture of blood at sometime or other. What I would especially draw attention to in this connection is the Mongoloid type and types resembling what is found in Assam, Burma and further on. To obtain sure results, however, it is necessary to have exact measurement of all types, not only of the Dravidian one. There is

a possibility that they may have been a Dravidian tribe, which for some reason or other gave up their language and adopted a new one; we find instances of a similar nature even among the Kharwarian tribes. But there is no trace of this having happened, and I think it is safest to await further investigations before adopting such a theory.

Finally, we have what outsiders have recorded and connecting points in the history of other better known races. There is not much more than what is mentioned in Sir H. H. Risley's excellent work (Tribes and Castes of Bengal), and what has been recorded here further down in this chapter. It all refers to a recent or comparatively recent time. I think it may be ascertained that the ancestors of these races were living west of Benares about the commencement of our era—I am accepting the theory that the Cheros originally belonged to the Kharwars. The fact that the Ramayana tells us about the help of Hanuman should not be overlooked, but be compared with the statement of the traditions that the Kharwars helped Rama.

When all this is summed up, the result is rather meagre. We may be fairly sure that the ancestors of the race to which the Santals belong were living on the Chota Nagpur plateau about six hundred years ago, and that they had at that time been living there for many generations. Their traditions and their language make it likely that they have reached this place from the west (south-west); and it is not improbable that about two thousand years ago they were on both sides of the Ganges west of Benares.

If we are to accept the traditions of the people these either affirm or pre-suppose that, since the time when the human race was split up into nations, they have always been wandering in a more or less easterly direction—a direction which now-a-days also is followed by them in all their migrations. This would imply that they came into India from the north-west. I must confess that I personally was long of this opinion, and I have not given it up altogether; but I am more and more getting my eyes opened to the fact that the Santal and Munda peoples have their connections towards the east. It is possible that the Santals and other Munda tribes have come from the east into India, that they at first advanced far to the west, and that after some time they were forced by the invading Aryans to retrace their steps; but it is also just as possible that they are the last remnants and laggards of a race which came from the west and has spread to the east and south. As far as I can see, it is not possible to pronounce a more definite opinion at present.

The Santals are the most numerous among the Scheduled Tribes of Bihar, constituting as much as 36.6 per cent of the total tribal population. They have a long history of continuous migrations from one area to another in order to keep pace with their fast increasing numbers. They have migrated in large numbers to West Bengal and Assam as well.

In Bihar, the district of Santal Parganas (which has been so named after them) is their stronghold. More than half (56.9 per cent) of the Santals in Bihar live there. Together with Hazaribagh and Singhbhum, the three districts account for more than four-fifths (82.3 per cent) of the Santals. They are also found in South Monghyr, Purnea, Saharsa and Bhagalpur. Except for Saran and Champaran, there is no district in Bihar without some Santals.

Monograph on Village
KUMARBHAJA
(*In Pakur Subdivision : District Santal Parganas*)

Field Investigation and First Draft
CHANDRESHWAR PRASAD SINHA, M.A.
INVESTIGATOR

Supervision, Guidance and Final Draft
R. N. MISRA
OF THE BIHAR CIVIL SERVICE,
DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT OF CENSUS OPERATIONS, BIHAR

Editor
S. D. PRASAD
OF THE INDIAN ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE,
SUPERINTENDENT OF CENSUS OPERATIONS, BIHAR

PHOTOGRAPHS S. D. Prasad.
 Shyamlanand.
 Public Relations Department, Patna.

MAPS A. K. Jha.
 B. N. Singh

Period of field survey—April, 1962.

CONTENTS				PAGE
CHAPTER I : THE VILLAGE				
Introducing the village	..	..	..	7
Location	..	..	..	7
Physical aspects, flora and fauna	..	..	..	7
Size and number of households	..	..	..	8
Residential pattern	..	..	..	8
Communications	..	..	..	8
Important public places	..	..	..	9
Sources of water	..	..	..	9
History of the village	..	..	..	9
CHAPTER II : THE PEOPLE AND THEIR MATERIAL EQUIPMENTS				
Ethnic composition	..	..	..	11
Language	..	..	..	11
Housetype	..	..	..	12
Dress	..	..	..	13
Ornaments	..	..	..	14
Household goods	..	..	..	15
Food and drink	..	..	..	16
Birth	..	..	..	17
Marriage	..	..	..	18
Death	..	..	..	20
CHAPTER III : ECONOMY				
Land	..	..	..	22
Forest	..	..	..	22
Livestock	..	..	..	23
Factors influencing economic life in the village	..	..	..	23
Livelihood classes	..	..	..	24
Agriculture	..	..	..	26
Forestry	..	..	..	27
Fishing	..	..	..	27
Other occupations	..	..	..	28
Income and expenditure	..	..	..	28
Indebtedness	..	..	..	29

CHAPTER IV : SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE

Age and sex distribution	..	..	..	30
Trend of population	..	..	..	30
Marital status	..	..	..	31
Disease and medical care	..	..	..	33
Education and literacy	..	..	..	33
Family structure	..	..	..	33
Intra-family relationships	..	..	..	34
Inheritance of property	..	..	..	34
Leisure and recreation	..	..	..	34
Religion	..	..	..	35
Religious ceremonies and festivals	..	..	..	36
Village functionaries and inter-tribe relationships	..	..	..	38
Village organisations	..	..	..	38
Impact of development programmes	..	..	..	39

CHAPTER V : CONCLUSION

Level of social awareness	..	..	..	40
Concluding remarks	..	..	..	40

INSET TABLES

I. Rainfall recorded at Hiranpur, Santal Parganas	..	..	..	7
II. Composition of population by tribe and sex	..	..	..	11
III. Septwise population of Santals in the village	..	..	..	11
IV. Distribution of households by the number of rooms and persons occupying them.	..	..	..	12
V. Distribution of households according to the use of ornaments	..	..	..	15
VI. Tribewise average ages and maximum and minimum ages of marriage for males and females.	..	..	..	18
VII. Distance of marital alliances for each tribe	..	..	..	19
VIII. Classification of land in the village	..	..	..	22
IX. Distribution of households by the size of agricultural holding	..	..	..	22
X. Livestock	..	..	..	23
XI. Distribution of workers and non-workers by tribe, sex and age-group.	..	..	..	24
XII. Calendar of agricultural activities	..	..	..	26
XIII. Households by income group	..	..	..	28
XIV. Pattern of expenditure	..	..	..	28
XV. Age and sex distribution	..	..	..	30
XVI. Marital status by tribe and age-group	..	..	..	31
XVII. Households by type of family	..	..	..	33
XVIII. Households by number of members	..	..	..	34

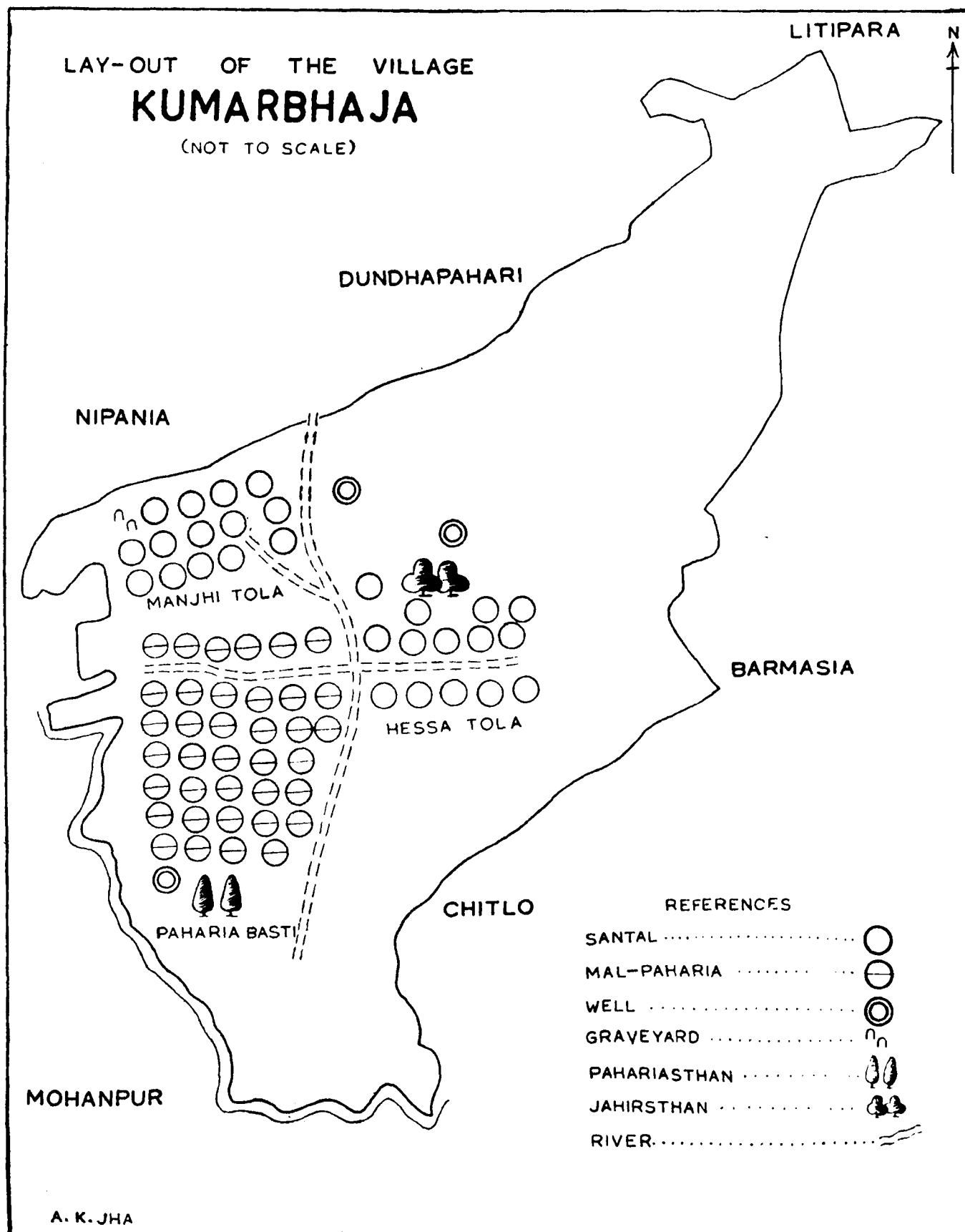
MAPS

1. Map of Santal Parganas District showing the location of Kumarbhaja, Batbanga and Jamkanali.	..	..	..	x
2. Map showing the layout of village Kumarbhaja	..	..	..	6

PHOTOGRAPHS

Facing Page

1. An aspect of the village	..	..	..	8
2. A village street	..	..	..	8
3. The village from a distance	..	..	..	8
4. A hut of reeds and grass	..	..	..	9
5. A door of bamboo in Paharia <i>basti</i>	..	..	..	9
6. An elaborately designed wooden door of a Santal house	..	..	..	9
7. A Mal Paharia girl with ornaments	..	..	..	10
8. Mal Paharia young women	..	..	..	10
9. A Mal Paharia family	..	..	..	11
10. Meal-time for children	..	..	..	11
11. The armlet, bangles, ear-ring and hair-pins adorn a young woman	..	..	..	14
12. Necklaces are of glass, beads or silver	..	..	..	14
13. } The coiffure is ornamented with taste	..	..	..	14
14. }	..	..	..	14
15. The hair needs care	..	..	..	15
16. Grain bins made of plated straw	..	..	..	15
17. A collection of ornaments used in the village	..	..	..	15
18. A group of well dressed women	..	..	..	24
19. Villagers in front of their huts	..	..	..	24
20. Inside a house : busy in grinding	..	..	..	25
21. The Bhar is used for carrying goods	..	..	..	25
22. A bullock cart in the making	..	..	..	25
23. Some agricultural tools and implements	..	..	..	25
24. A man with a bamboo umbrella	..	..	..	34
25. A scene from a Mal Paharia marriage	..	..	..	34
26. A place of worship	..	..	..	35
27. A village dance	..	..	..	35



CHAPTER I

THE VILLAGE

Introducing the village

The Paharias were the earliest settlers, if not autochthones, of the hilly areas of Santal Parganas district which formerly constituted the Government Estate of *Damin-I-Koh*. In course of time, distinct tribes were formed among them. While one section, inhabiting generally the northern portion of the hills, kept itself aloof from the neighbouring people, the other was rather susceptible to Hindu influences. The former is known as Sauria Paharia (or Maler) and the latter goes by the name Mal Paharia. Village Kumarbhaja, lying in the erstwhile *Damin-I-Koh* Estate, is a mixed village of Mal Paharias and Santals, though the former predominate in number. It was selected for the present survey to study the Mal Paharias.

Location

The village is situated at Latitude $24^{\circ}40'$ North and Longitude $87^{\circ}37'$ East. It lies in Littipara Anchal of Pakaur subdivision in the district of Santal Parganas. The headquarters of the Anchal is at present temporarily located at Hiranpur, 15 miles away. It will be shifted ultimately to Littipara which is only 3 miles away. The *halka* office (headquarters of the revenue official known as Karmachari and development official known as Village Level Worker), the post office and the police station are already located at Littipara. The subdivisional headquarters is at Pakaur about 24 miles to the north-east while Dumka, the district headquarters, is nearly 50 miles to the south-west.

To the north of Kumarbhaja lies the village Dundha Pahari; to its west Nipania and Jamjuri; to its south Mohanpur and to its east Chitlo and Barmasia. Chitlo, about 2 miles away, has a Government Agricultural Farm and is also the nearest village lying on a metalled road.

There is a Tassar Seed Supply Station at Amrapara, the headquarters of the Anchal with the same name, about 10 miles south of Kumarbhaja.

Physical Aspects, Flora and Fauna

Littipara Anchal forms the mid-eastern fringe of the *Damin* area and is literally in the

skirts of the hills, which rise towards the west. Kumarbhaja is situated in the eastern part of the Anchal, and the average height of the village is only 250 feet above the mean sea level. Isolated hillocks rise to the north and north-east, the name of the village Dundha Pahari (meaning a hill) on the north being itself significant.

A stream running from west to east flanks the southern boundary of the village, nearest to which lie the Mal Paharia settlements. Water from the stream is used for drinking and other household purposes by the Mal Paharias.

About one third of the area of the village, lying on the east, consists of mounds, and is not cultivable in the ordinary sense. However, Kurao or shifting cultivation used to be practised on them. Less than one sixth of the area of the village is under forests. The agricultural lands are of two kinds. The uplands are known as *bari* and lowlands called *dhani* (rice growing).

Hot winds are unknown and the climate is more characteristic of Bengal, being rather humid. The annual rainfall in 1961 as recorded at Hiranpur was 1195 mm., the bulk of which precipitated in the months of May to September. November to January are usually dry. Table I gives the figures for 1960 and 1961.

TABLE I

Rainfall recorded at Hiranpur, Santal Parganas
(Figures in millimetres)

Month	1960	1961
January	..	..
February	..	74.0
March	28.8	..
April	..	4.8
May	203.4	83.0
June	150.4	310.2
July	358.2	94.4
August	266.2	335.6
September	209.4	195.8
October	131.2	95.4
November	..	..
December	..	1.8
Total	1,347.6	1,195.0

Some important trees of the forest are *Sal* (Santali: Sener; *Shorea robusta*), the smooth leaves of which are used for making leaf-plates; *mahua* (Santali: matkom; Paharia: madagi; *bassia latifolia*) which yields edible flowers; and *asan* (*terminalia tomentosa*) which is the host tree for rearing tassar silk-worms. *Kend* (Santali: terel; *diosyros melanoxylon*); *palas* (*butea frondosa*); *neem* (*melia indica*); *peepul* (Santali: hesa; Paharia: pakari; *ficus religiosa*); mango (Santali: ool; *magnifera indica*); jack fruit (*artocarpus integrifolia*) and tamarind (Santali: jojo; Paharia: tetuli; *tamarindus indica*) are also found. Palmyra palm (Paharia: talmi; *borassus flabellifer*) and date-palm (Paharia: kanjree; *phoenix dactylifera*) trees are useful for their juice.

Animals in wild state are rarely found in or near the village, with the exception of hares and wild boars, which are hunted with bows and arrows.

Size and number of households

The area of the village (comprising revenue mauza number 36) is 602 acres, i.e., a little less than a square mile. It contains 65 households with 322 persons. The density of population works out to 343 persons per square mile, which is about the same as the density for the district as a whole. Kumarbhaja is a fair-sized village judged by the average population of such units in Santal Parganas, which for the 14 villages constituting Littipara Gram Panchayat (of which Kumarbhaja is a constituent) is only about 200 persons.

Residential pattern

The earliest settlements were of the Mal Paharias known collectively as *Paharia basti*. These lie on the mid-western extremity of the village, about a furlong east of the stream which flows north to south at the place. The Santals of the village live in two other hamlets, one known as *Manjhi-tola* about a quarter of a mile almost due north from the Paharia basti, and the other, *Hessatola*, situated at a similar distance to the east. In 1924, when the last settlement operations were carried out, there were a few houses in the eastern portion of the village within the area demarcated for *kurao* (shifting) cultivation, but no houses exist there now. It was reported that the people living there had shifted to the main village, but when exactly this happened could not be ascertained. The

shifting was presumably a result of *kurao* cultivation being more or less given up.

Paharia basti, which derives its name from the people residing in it, contains 37 households. The total number of Santal households, distributed equally in their two hamlets, Manjhi-tola and Hesa tola is 28. Manjhi tola was established earlier, and is so called because the *Manjhi* or the village headman of the Santals had his house there. Hessa tola got its name from hessa or *peepal* trees in the area. It was said to have been established later when the Manjhi-tola became too crowded. This report seems to be in conformity with the observation that most Santals in the village possessed fenced *bari* lands attached to their houses, and all houses were scrupulously clean and tastefully coloured. That no dissensions or differences were responsible for the setting up of Hessa tola can be safely concluded from the fact that the village leaders of the Santals, both temporal and spiritual, all hail from the older Manjhi tola and are equally effective in both the Santal tolas.

The social distance between the Mal Paharias and the Santals of the village finds expression in their settlements being distinct and apart. No Paharia lives in the Santal tolas and no Santal will live in the Paharia basti.

Communications

A *kutcha* road winds up ruggedly to Paharia basti from Chitlo. The distance is about 3 miles by this route. It can be shortened much if one travels on foot. The *kutcha* road is only jeepable and that too, not in the rainy season. The world opens up at Chitlo which lies on the tarmac road, a State highway, connecting the district headquarters at Dumka (45 miles south-west) with the subdivisional headquarters at Pakur (24 miles), and Sahibganj (52 miles). Littipara (3 miles north) is the place where the road branches off in two directions—one to Pakaur in the east and the other to Sahebganj in the west. State Transport buses as well as private buses ply regularly between Dumka and Pakaur, and Dumka and Sahebganj.

Pakaur and Sahebganj are rail-heads lying on the Loop section of the Eastern Railway, running from Kiul to Burdwan via Bhagalpur. Pakaur is the nearest railway station.

There is a post office at Littipara from which money-orders can also be sent. Telegraph facilities are, however, available at Pakaur only.



1. An aspect of the village



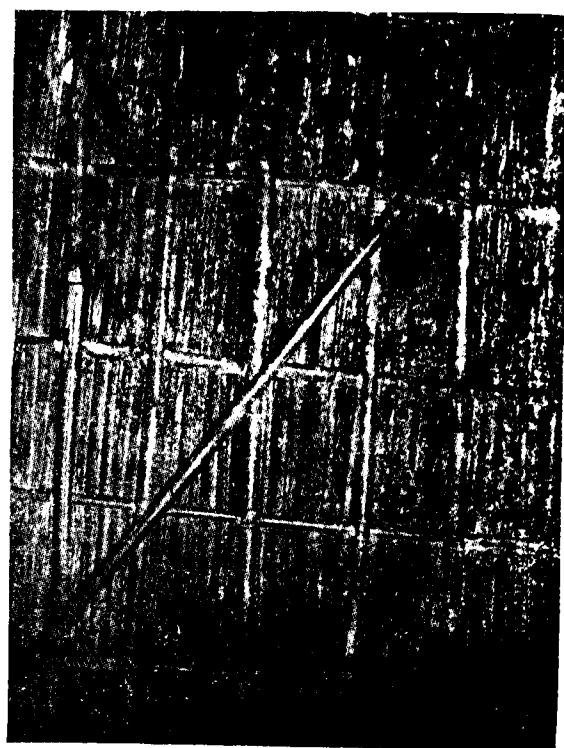
2. A village street



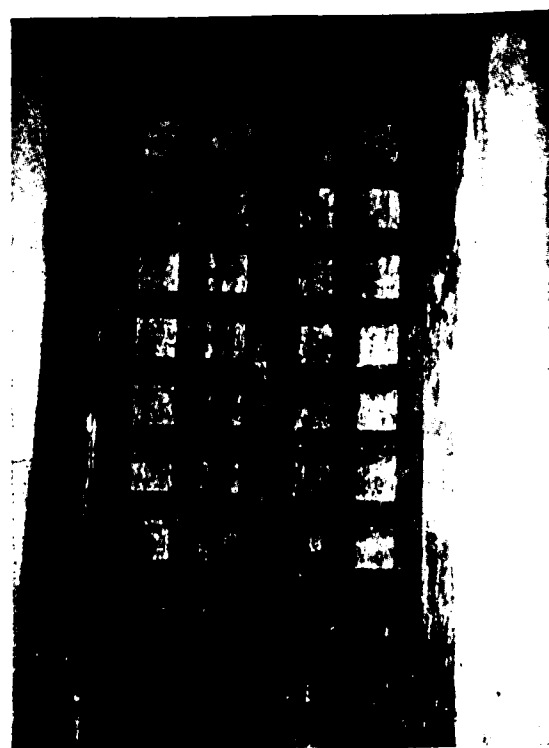
3. The village from a distance



4. A hut of reeds and grass



5. A door of bamboo in Paharia Basti



6. An elaborately designed wooden door of a Santal House

Important public places

There is no public building in the village for any administrative, development or welfare activity. Not even a primary school is located there. The only places of community use are the primeval orchards set apart for general worship by each of the two tribes inhabiting the village. These are known as *Jahir-sthan*. The Paharia *Jahir-sthan* is situated south of the Paharia basti, whilst the Santal *Jahir-sthan* is found to the north of Hessa tola. They are used exclusively by the two tribes. During the first visit of the Investigator in April, 1962, there was a covered spot in Paharia basti for worship. Closed by a wall on one side, it was crudely decorated with designs and sketches as illustrated in photograph 26. During subsequent visits a year later, no trace of it could be found. It was learnt that the photographed place related to a special worship occasioned by some sort of *manauti* (propitiation of gods or ancestors if a desired event takes place).

Gochar lands have been kept apart in four plots in an area of about 10 acres. All villagers have the right to graze their cattle on such land. There is no segregation of plots for exclusive use by either community.

The Santals bury their dead, but there is no fixed place for burial. Generally a person is buried in an unused portion of the family holding. The Paharias generally prefer cremation. A site for this purpose has been provided on the mounds to the east of the village where fuel is more easily obtainable.

There are no shops in the village. So all commodities are bought and sold weekly in markets at Parerkola (3 miles south of Chitlo) or at Littipara, both situated on the State highway. Cattle are bought and sold at Hiranpur, which is reputed to be the largest regular cattle market in Bihar.

Sources of water

The Paharias depend on the stream for their supply of water. It is often banded with earthen dams to store water in which cattle can also be bathed. There is also a *kutcha* well to the south of Paharia basti. A *pucca* well was got constructed by the Damini Magistrate in Manjhi tola more than fifteen years ago. Another *pucca* well exists in Hessa tola, having been constructed by the Welfare Department of the State Government in more recent years.

History of the village

The Paharia hamlet of the village has been in existence for a very long time, and the history of its origin is so much lost in antiquity that no reliable estimate of the period of its establishment could be made. Babna and Jabra, the Paharia *Sardars* of Kumarbhaja and the Parerkola Colony (in the neighbourhood) respectively, stated that people of *Kumhar* (potter) caste had once been settled in the village, giving it the name Kumarbhaja. This version is, however, not in conformity with the history of Paharias in the district nor with the present-day occupational structure of the village. There is also no evidence to suggest any connection of the village name with the Kumarbhag section of Paharias.

It was learnt that seven Mal Paharia families of the village had migrated to a Government sponsored colony at Parerkola (about 6 miles away) in 1954. This colony was actually meant for bringing down the Sauria Paharias whose natural habitat is on hill-tops, and settling them on the plains. Apparently, the scheme misfired. It appears that even the Mal Paharia migrants to the Colony did not entirely cut off their relations with the village.

The Santals have been settled for more than a hundred years—all reported having come more than five generations back.

Legends concerning the people

Mal Paharias. A legend concerning the Paharias has been recounted by Bradely-Birt (Story of an Indian Upland, London, 1905) according to which God created seven brothers and sent them to the Rajmahal hills to people the earth. They prepared a great feast consisting of many dishes, it being decreed that each brother in his turn should make his choice from the things that pleased him most. After making his choice each was to proceed to seek a new home which was most suited to his needs. But when the time came and the feast was prepared and spread, the eldest brother had fallen sick. The second brother, who thus got the first choice, selected the variety of vegetables. He descended to the plains and from him sprang up the Hindu race. The second (actually the third) brother chose flesh of all kinds except pork. He went further afield reaching the great north-west and became the ancestors of Muslims. The fourth brother also took flesh and from him sprang the Kharwars. The fifth brother took hog's flesh that the others had

despised and the Kiratis were his descendants. The sixth brother took the flesh of wild animals and became the ancestor of the great and the wide-spread Kolarian race. The youngest brother took food of all kinds that remained of the feast. He travelled far and was heard of no more. But when the English came from a far-off land it was concluded that they must be the descendants of the youngest brother. It is from the eldest brother that the Paharias trace their descent. He, having fallen sick during the preparation of the feast, had been unable to come forward to claim his share. His brothers, taking pity on his helplessness as they passed away from the feast, gave him each a portion of the viands they had chosen. So he ate food of all kinds, clean and unclean, and became outcasted. Unable on account of his sickness to travel far, he made his permanent home on his native hills.

Obviously the above legend dealt with the origin of Paharias of all sections. Some Sauria Paharias still take flesh of all kinds, including beef and flesh of dead animals. The Mal Paharias consider such an allusion to a common origin with Sauria Paharias as humiliating and no Mal Paharia of Kumarbhaja acknowledged being in the know of the legend recounted above.

It will be of interest to recount here what the villagers had to say about the formation of the distinct groups comprising the Mal Paharias and the Kumarbhag Paharias. Jabra Sardar, an old man of about 60, is one of the residents of Kumarbhaja who, along with others, has been settled in a colony set up by the Welfare Department of Government in village Parerkola. He asserted that all Paharias were one people in bygone days. However, one person began abstaining from beef. When his cattle died, he got them buried just as a respectable member of the family would be. His progenitors followed the lead given by him and came to be known as Mal Paharias, as they respected their *mal* or cattle. Bamna Sirdar, another resident, averred that he and his villagers (that is, the Paharias of Kumarbhaja) were Mal Paharias. In the village itself, persons interrogated at random agreed that they were Mal Paharias; in any case, they strongly rebutted the suggestion that they were Sauria Paharias. The Paharia headman of Kumarbhaja, or Pradhan as he is called, however, claimed that the villagers were Kumarbhag Paharias who, like Mal Paharias, abstain from

eating beef. But they go further and abjure even milk and all articles made of leather. According to the Pradhan, Kumarbhags are socially higher than Mals, and no intermarriage between the two sections is permissible, though cases of this kind had occurred in the recent past. These were, however, restricted among a few educated persons.

That the Paharias of the village are Kumarbhags was also insisted upon by the Kalyan Grain Gola Sewak of a neighbouring village, himself a Sauria Paharia, who seemed to be well informed about the people of the area. The language spoken by the Paharias of Kumarbhaja is a corrupt form of Malto, the language of the Sauria Paharias, and unintelligible to a Hindi or Bengali knowing person. On the other hand, Mal Paharias are generally recorded as speaking a corrupt form of Bengali.

Santals. The synopsis of a legend concerning the origin of Santals, as recounted in the village is given below:—

In the beginning there was only water in the world and Thakurji came down from the heavens every day to take his bath there. One day, he created a gander from the dirt of his body. The next day he created a goose in the same way. This pair laid two eggs but since there was only water in the world, it became a problem as to where they should be kept. So Thakurji threw some Siram grass on water, and planted a Karam tree on which the eggs were laid. In due course Pilchu Haram and Pilchu Buri emanated from the two eggs. With their help, Thakurji created earth. The original pair learnt the mysteries of sex in a state of inebriation and produced seven sons and seven daughters. Pilchu Haram went to the forest with his sons and taught them to hunt. The mother took her daughters to a separate place and showed them how to gather fruits and roots from the jungles. After many years the brothers came back, and unaware of their relationship, each took one of his sister for his wife. The issues of the seven couples constitute the Santal people and the seven septs among them, viz., Murmu, Kisku, Hasda, Tudu, Morandi, Soren and Hembrom.

According to traditions of the Santals five more septs were added subsequently (viz., Baske, Besra, Paunra, Chore and Bedea), though none of these five septs was found in the village. Each of the seven original septs is represented in it.



7. A Mal-Paharia girl with ornaments



8. Mal-Paharia young women



9. A Mal-Paharia family



10. Meal-time for children

(Facing page 11)

CHAPTER II

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR MATERIAL EQUIPMENTS.

Ethnic composition

Kumarbhaja is an entirely tribal village. Its population consists only of Mal Paharias and Santals. In many of the neighbouring villages, a few households of blacksmiths (belonging to a non-tribal caste locally known as Maraiya) are usually found, but there are no such households in the village. Table II gives the number of households and persons for each of the tribes.

TABLE II
Composition of Population by Tribe and Sex

Tribe	Number of households	Persons	Males	Females	Sex ratio
Mal Paharia ..	37	183	92	91	989
Santal ..	28	139	77	62	805
Total ..	65	322	169	153	905

Numerically, the Mal Paharias are the predominant tribe, constituting nearly 57 per cent of the population. While the sex-ratio among the Mal Paharias is quite balanced, it is abnormally low among the Santals of the village.

The District Gazetteer of Santal Parganas describes the Mal Paharias as follows:—

The Mal Paharias are a Hinduised section of the (Paharia) tribe and differ in many respects from the Maler. They have the same slender build, but are darker and also dirtier. They cut their hair short, and some of them are taller and more robust than the Maler.

The villagers of Kumarbhaja were, however, found to be generally short-statured, seldom exceeding five feet three inches; lean but not weak, and of swarthy complexion. Men have scanty facial hair growth. Women are often comely, in spite of broad low noses and small eyes.

According to the Gazetteer again,

"the Santal is a man of medium stature, but muscular and sturdily built, wiry and capable of great physical endurance. His complexion is dark, varying from brown to an almost jet black colour. The latter is very rare, while a light-brown complexion is by no means infrequent, and would be much oftener in evidence, if the

Santal did not expose his body to the sun and air as he generally does: the Mongoloid types are generally fair coloured. He is beardless or nearly so, but has coarse and sometimes curly hair on the pate. The cheekbones are somewhat prominent, the nose is generally broad and depressed, the mouth is large and lips full and projecting".

The Santals belong to the Proto-Austroloid race whereas the Mal Paharias appear to be one of the earliest remnants of the pre-Dravidian people.

There are no sub-groups or septs among the Mal Paharias. The Santals are divided into seven original septs, each of which is represented in the village as in Table III.

TABLE III
Sept-wise population of Santals in the village

Sept	Number of	
	Households	Persons
Murmu ..	12	62
Kisku ..	6	33
Hasda ..	4	16
Tudu ..	3	11
Marandi ..	1	2
Soren ..	1	7
Hembrom ..	1	8
Total ..	28	139

Language

The Santals have their own language known as Santali. It can be offered as a subject in the High School Examination in Bihar. It has no script of its own and is written either in Devanagari or Roman characters. All the adult Santals in the village returned Bengali as their subsidiary language.

The mother-tongue of Mal Paharias is Paharia or Malto which is a Dravidian language. As in the case of Santals, all the Paharia households contained at least one speaker of Bengali. In addition, every Mal Paharia of the village is thoroughly familiar with Santali which is the predominant language of the area.

As will be apparent from subsequent discussions, the Santals and the Mal Paharias do not inter-mingle to any appreciable extent. It is difficult, therefore, to assess their social standing in regard to each other. However, the

Santals appeared to be more affluent and progressive while the Mal Paharias were not so well off and inclined to be rather conservative.

Housetype

The difference between the Mal Paharias and the Santals is strongly evidenced in the type of houses that they live in. The Paharia *basti* presents a striking contrast to the Santal *tolas* in this respect.

Houses of the Mal Paharias

The Mal Paharia dwellings are made of wattled bamboos, the interstices being filled with long coarse grass (*khar*). The walls so constructed provide adequate protection against sun and rain. But they are a picture of shabbiness and impermanence, particularly to a city-dweller. Mud walls were found in only 12 out of 37 Mal Paharia houses. Even in these cases, the mud structure went up to only three or four feet from the ground level. Bamboo and grass were used to complete the remaining portion. Roofs are invariably thatched with *khar* grass, and have no tile. The slope of the roof is on two sides only. From inside, the walls are occasionally plastered with a thin layer of mud up to three feet above the ground level. By their very nature, the houses have to be kept in constant repair. Thus, the place of worship illustrated in photograph 23 had all but disappeared when the village was revisited about a year after the photograph was taken.

The houses are usually 10 feet wide and 15 feet long, and consist of a single apartment with a partitioned-off space about four feet deep along the length of the house which is used for storing goods. The single room thus contains the hearth, the household and agricultural goods and implements, and the store of grains: in short, the entire earthly possessions of the household. The houses are constructed without any systematic arrangement and may face any direction. A single door is provided. This is also made of wattled bamboos (photograph 5) and has no hinges with the result that it has to be lifted up before being shut or opened. The door is about five feet high, and a tall person has to stoop to gain entrance. No windows are provided, nor is there any other arrangement for lighting or ventilation. Once inside the inner apartment, everything is lost in darkness; and even in broad daylight, a lamp must be lit if one wants to have a look round the room. No courtyard is provided. Open spaces between the

houses often contain *khatias* or rope-string cots on which people rest. Household chores such as hand pounding of grains, etc., are also performed in these open spaces.

Houses of the Santals

By contrast, the Santal *tolas* appear to be in a different world altogether. The houses have raised plinths and broad mud walls which are kept neat and trim by the constant application of dark grey mud plaster. As one enters the street in these *tolas*, the back portions of the houses come to his view. The walls are straight and regular, often painted in stripes of red, white and black. No Santal will build a house with entrance facing the street, lest malign spirits find easy access into his home. A platform about three feet high and two feet wide is often attached to the back wall so that people can often sit on them in their spare hours and gossip. Each house has a courtyard enclosed by a wall or hedge. It provides the much-cherished privacy in a Santal's domestic life. Rooms are generally 10 to 15 feet long and 8 to 12 feet wide. Every house has a deep verandah running along one side of the courtyard. The roof is supported on wooden posts, thatch being provided on bamboo rafters. Only four houses had tiled roofs, the tiles being of the rectangular variety commonly known as Ranigunj tiles. Cattle sheds are provided separately.

Every Santal household has a sequestered corner (about 3 feet by 3) of the room reserved for the ancestral spirits (*haipromko*). This reserved space is known as *blitar*. Ancestral spirits are worshipped at this spot during festivals such as Sohrai and Sarhul. Pigs and fowls are sacrificed on these occasions. The area of the space does not vary appreciably in respect of the relative affluence of the households.

The distribution of households by the number of rooms and persons living in them is given below:—

Tribe	Total no. of houses	Total no. of rooms	Households with one room		Households with two rooms	
			No. of households	No. of persons	No. of households	No. of persons
Mal Paharia	37	47	27	124	10	58
Santal	28	43	13	54	15	88
Total	65	90	40	178	25	146

It will be seen that apart from greater structural comforts enjoyed by the Santals, they also have more living space than the Mal Paharias. Three-fourths of the Mal Paharia households have but one room, the average number of persons per room being 5. Less than half of the Santal households consist of single-roomed dwellings; and even in them, the average number of occupants per room is only 4. Again, while only a quarter of the Mal Paharia households have two rooms, more than half of the Santal households are so privileged. The average number of occupants per room in such households is, however, 6 in both cases.

As is natural to expect, two-roomed dwellings are owned by households in the higher income-group. Thus, 8 Santal families having income of more than Rs. 50 per month owned such houses whereas only 2 in the same income-group lived in one-roomed dwellings. Similarly, 8 out of 10 Mal Paharia households living in two-roomed houses earned more than Rs. 50 a month each.

Timber and grass for constructing houses are obtained from the forests nearby without payment.

It is the practice with both the tribes in the village to approve of a site for building a new house only if there are favourable omens. The Mal Paharias place an egg in an upright position in the middle of the proposed site. The egg is left on the spot over-night and should it remain undisturbed till the next morning, the site is considered auspicious. The Santals, on the other hand, depend on the more common method of keeping rice grains at the four corners of the proposed site. If these are undisturbed in quantity after having been left there over-night, the site is selected as favourable.

More often than not, the members of a family themselves engage in the construction of their house. Relatives are also called in sometimes to help. Since this kind of arrangement is mutual, no cash payment has to be made. A drink of rice-beer is, however, offered invariably at the conclusion of the day's work. Only very occasionally are hired labourers employed, in which case the rate of payment is Rs. 1.50 per day.

The roofs generally have two slopes and sometimes also four. The smaller huts of Mal Paharias generally have two slopes whereas the houses of Santals often have four slopes.

No ceremonies or religious observations were reported to be performed at the commencement of house-construction. However, when the house is ready and the family moves into it for the first time, friends and relatives are usually entertained to a house-warming feast.

With regard to the value of houses, no rough and ready information was available. The Mal Paharia houses do not require great labour for building and paid labour is seldom employed. Relatives and friends lend a helping hand in return of a drink or a meal. No costly substance is used in the construction of a Mal Paharia house. The Santal houses, however, are usually built with hired labour, though their incidence is minimised as far as possible by extending the period of construction. This is also advantageous from the point of durability of the house, as each layer of wall has more time to get sunbaked. The doors are generally made of timber, solid and heavy, and occasionally carved and elaborately designed (photograph 6). These are made by carpenters in the neighbouring market centres. The wooden posts and bamboo rafters are also of some value. A person who had recently built a single-roomed house with a commodious verandah estimated having spent Rs. 200, but not much reliance can be placed on such statements as the people are not quite at home with figures.

Notwithstanding the apparently shabby external appearance, the Mal Paharia houses are kept clean inside and the floors are regularly plastered with mud. A housewife takes great pains to make the best possible use of the limited space available and keeps the few household belongings in an orderly manner (photograph 16).

The Santals are well known for their almost impeccable cleanliness at home and those of Kumarbhaja are no exception. So great is their pride in the proper maintenance of their houses that the women often forsake their leisure hours to daub the walls with various coloured mud, adding a touch of refinement here and there, when everything was apparently quite satisfactory even before.

Dress

Indian cotton (*simur*: *Bombax malabaricum*) is grown in the Damin area, and presumably in the past people made their own clothes. However, there is no spinning or weaving industry prevalent in the area now.

though *tassar* cocoons are reared. In Kumarbaja, people depend entirely on the weekly markets for buying whatever clothes they require and can afford. There is hardly any difference between the apparel worn by Mal Paharias and Santals in the village. The clothes are generally handloom products made by Patwas (a weaving caste) in the district.

The menfolk wear simply a loin cloth, generally leaving their bodies bare, or sometimes putting on cheap readymade vests, the latter being held on to even when they are in tatters. For special occasions, however, shirts are kept and used, as will be found in the photograph of the person going through the ceremonies of a mock marriage in photograph 25. Light cotton sheet is all that is used to cover the body in winter. No head-dress is worn.

The women folk, while doing their daily chores, do not like to use sewn cloth. A coloured, striped or checked piece of cloth, about 2½ yards in length, is worn round the waist and allowed to fall just above the ankles. This is known as the *prahan*. A *panchi* covers the upper part of the body. It is a piece of cloth about 2 yards long. One end is kept on the right thigh, and the cloth thrown diagonally over the left shoulder, covering the breasts but allowing free movement of the arms. After passing over the shoulder the cloth is tied around the waist. Illustrations in photographs 15 and 16 will show that blouses are not worn when women are engaged in their household work. But each of them possesses a blouse for being put on when the occasion so demands. The blouse is worn in addition to the garments specified above, as can be seen in photograph 18.

Up to the age of 3 or 4 years, children are generally naked. Thereafter, any piece of cloth tied round the waist suffices. Since very few children attend school (there being none in the village), the use of shorts and shirts among boys has not found its way in the village.

Men keep their hair short, trimming it themselves periodically or getting it trimmed in the weekly market where the barbers' stalls are always full. Women keep long hair which is combed straight backwards, without any parting, and tied in a bun centrally at the back of the neck (photographs 13 and 14).

The use of footwear is almost non-existent in the village, only a few Santals possessing shoes

and sandals. That no leather footwear is used by any Mal Paharia lends weight to the headman's assertion that all leather articles are a taboo among them. Other informants, however, stated that there was no taboo as such on wearing leather shoes and the fact that no Mal Paharia possessed them was ascribable only to their poor economic condition.

Both Mal Paharia and Santal women get themselves tattooed. The tattoo marks are believed to remain even after death and render identification possible in the world hereafter. Tattooing is done by itinerant females known as *khudnis*. Girls get themselves tattooed when they are about 8 years of age. Wrists, ankles, neck and forehead are the parts of the body generally marked. Designs imitative of ornaments are made. The ingredient used for tattooing is soot gathered from vessels used for cooking, to which human milk is added. The portion of the body treated is washed with water and turmeric till it heals up. The charges depend upon the size and the design and vary from 25 nP to Rs. 1.50 nP.

Ornaments

The Mal Paharia women are fond of personal adornment. Notwithstanding almost incessant calls upon their time for domestic and other duties, they manage not only to keep tidy but also bedeck themselves with their simple adornments. A Santal woman, though well-groomed, does not seem to have such innate hankering after jewellery.

Silver trinkets hanging on chains adorn the bun of hair at the back of the neck. Silver hairpins, with circular ornamented pieces at one end, are used to keep the hair in position.

Ornaments for the ear are of two types: one is the pendent type, e.g., a small chain (see photograph 7), and the other consists of ornamented rings. Both are made of silver, known as *pagra* and *putki* respectively.

Silver nose-rings or *makuris* are almost invariably used. They cost little—not more than half a rupee or so. They are worn on the left nostril and are without any elaborate design. They are made of silver-wire in the design of plain rings.

Sikris or silver chains, *malas* or beads of coral, and necklaces made of silver coins attached



11. The armlet, bangles, ear-ring and hair pins adorn a young woman



12. Necklace are of glass, beads or silver



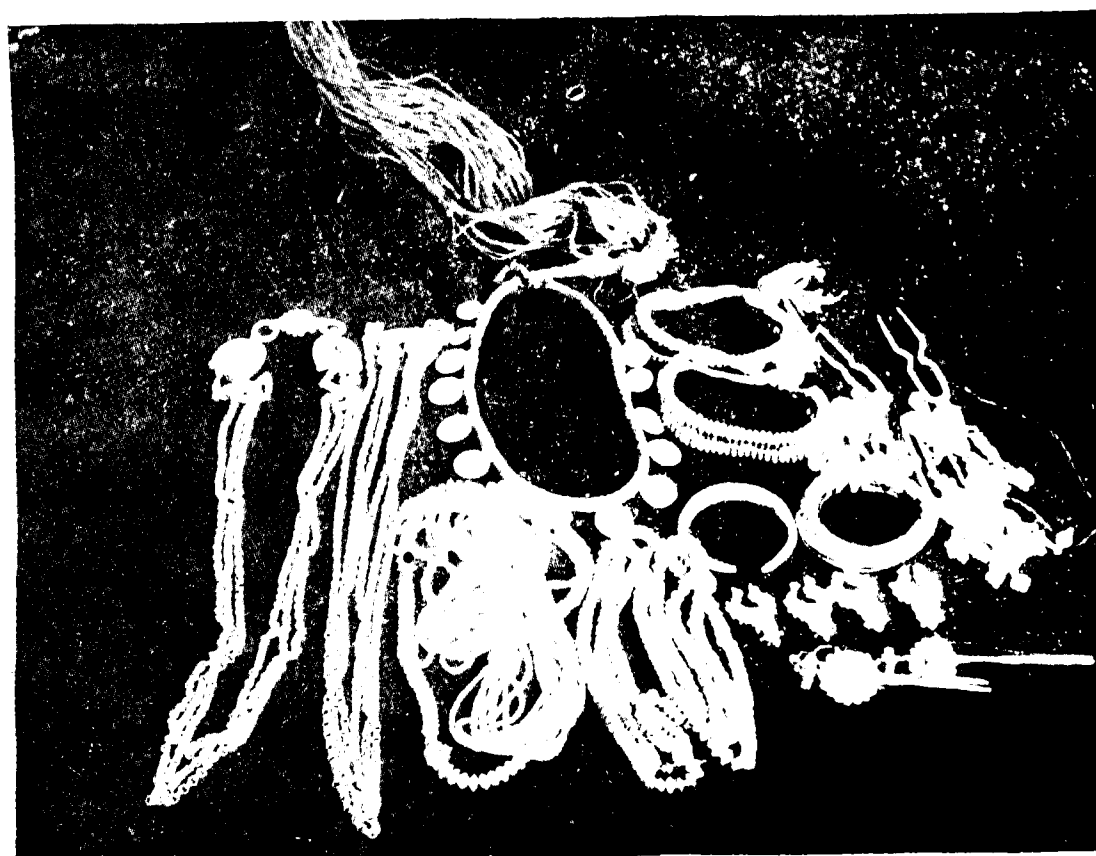
13-14. The coiffure is ornamented with taste



15. The hair needs care



16. Grain bins made of plaited straw



17. A collection of ornaments used in the village

(Facing page 15)

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR MATERIAL EQUIPMENTS

15

to a piece of cord are worn round the neck. Chains of silver worn around the waist are called *harharis*.

Besides glass bangles, those of silver known as *sankha* are sometimes worn on the wrists. *Baju* and *khage* are armlets, also made of silver. As seen in photograph 18, they are worn on both arms by young Mal Paharia maidens. That the ankles of all of them are bare may lead one to suppose that no ornaments are used there, but in photograph 17 can be seen the *bainu*, a silver ornament worn round the ankles.

Rings do not appear to be in use either on the fingers or on the toes.

A list of common ornaments, metal of which they are made, part of the body which

they adorn and their average price is given below:—

Name of ornament	Material used	Part of the body on which used	Approximate price
<i>Mukari</i> ..	Silver ..	Back side of the head	Rs. 7 to Rs. 9
<i>Hasuli</i> ..	Silver ..	Neck ..	Rs. 35 to Rs. 40
<i>Siki</i> ..	Silver ..	Neck ..	Rs. 15 to Rs. 20
<i>Kundu</i> ..	Corals ..	Neck ..	25 nP. to 50 nP.
<i>Jijri</i> ..	Silver ..	Neck ..	Rs. 35 to Rs. 45
<i>Kosi</i> ..	Silver ..	Ear ..	Rs. 6 to Rs. 7
<i>Putki</i> ..	Silver ..	Ear ..	Rs. 2 to Rs. 3
<i>Papra</i> ..	Silver or gold	Ear ..	Rs. 5 to Rs. 20
<i>Ankari</i> ..	Silver ..	Nose ..	50 nP. to 75 nP.
<i>Nathia</i> ..	Gold ..	Nose ..	Rs. 20 to Rs. 25
<i>Baju</i> ..	Silver ..	Arms ..	Rs. 2.75 to Rs. 4
<i>Khage</i> ..	Silver ..	Arms ..	Rs. 2.75 to Rs. 4
<i>Basia</i> ..	Bell-metal	Wrists ..	75 nP. to Re. 1
<i>Bangles</i> ..	Glass ..	Wrists ..	25 nP. to 50 nP.
<i>Harhari</i> ..	Silver ..	Waist ..	Rs. 10 to Rs. 15
<i>Baink</i> ..	Silver ..	Ankles ..	Rs. 5 to Rs. 7
<i>Mandali</i> ..	Silver ..	Neck ..	Rs. 2 to Rs. 3
<i>Todar</i> ..	Silver or iron	Wrists ..	25 nP. to Re. 1

For a people eking out a bare existence the use of ornaments is surprisingly wide-spread and varied. The following table shows the extent of

use of ornaments in households classified by income-groups separately for Mal Paharias and Santals:—

TABLE V

Distribution of households according to the use of ornaments

				Monthly income-group				
			Total no. of households	Less than Rs. 25	Rs. 25 to Rs. 50	Rs. 51 to Rs. 75	Rs. 76 to Rs. 100	Above Rs. 100
Total households	..	Santal	28	3	15	8	2	..
	..	Mal Paharia	37	..	21	14	1	1
Households wearing ornaments.	..	Santal	26	2	14	8	2	..
	..	Mal Paharia	34	..	19	13	1	1
Households in which both males and females wear ornaments.	..	Santal	13	2	4	6	1	..
	..	Mal Paharia	6	..	3	2	..	1
Households in which females only wear ornaments.	..	Santal	13	..	10	2	1	..
	..	Mal Paharia	28	..	16	11	1	..

The ornaments are all bought in the weekly markets to which traders from nearby towns come to sell their wares. Usually made of silver, the ornaments have some value, and a comparatively well-to-do person of the village estimated Rs. 125 as the total value of his wife's ornaments. Many of the ornaments had been coming from generations and it was not possible to arrive at the present value of each item. A collection of ornaments is shown in photograph 17.

The women have a strong fascination for cheap cosmetics sold in the market; soaps, oils and scents are the coveted possession of a favoured few.

Household goods

"Furniture there is none", wrote Bradley-Birt more than half a century ago, "save the crazy *parkom*—a rough wooden framework crossed and recrossed with stout string—that serves as the most primitive of beds". The

position is almost the same today, the *parkom* (usually one in a household) serving as the bed of the seniormost member of the household and also as the seat for any relative, friend or guest who may call. Chairs, benches and *chaukis* (wooden beds) were found in only 2 Santal households. They claimed to be in possession of these since more than 5 years.

Dhibris or metal lamps still provide light in eighty-eight per cent of Mal Paharia and fifty per cent of Santal households, hurricane lanterns being found in the remaining. Only one Santal household possesses a battery torch. Petromax, stove, bicycle and radio are entirely unknown; there has been no change in the position during the last decade.

Mortar and pestle made of solid wood are used for dehusking grains (photograph 19) and stone-grinders (*jata*) for grinding (photograph 20). Containers made of plaited straw are used for storing grains (photograph 16). *Soop* made of bamboo is used for winnowing the chaff from grains.

The utensils of one household are shown in photograph 20. Starting from the left, there is the stone piece used for grinding spices, the *soop* and the *hasua* or cutting knife. Metal vessels for storing water are in the background with an earthen pot for cooking, and a wooden ladle above it. Brass *thalis* (deep plates with high rims) are used for taking food, and finally there are metal containers. In addition, every household possesses iron buckets for fetching and drawing water, and *lotas* or small metal pots for drinking water. *Pachwai* or home brewed liquor is prepared in earthen vessels.

Food and drink

The diet of the people is meagre though not without variety. Rice and maize are the main crops grown along with a species of beans known as *ghanghri*. While rice is grown in *dhani* lands, chiefly owned by Santals, maize and beans are grown on *bari* lands belonging mainly to Mal Paharias. Thus, though all the Santal and Mal Paharia households reported rice and maize as the staple grains consumed by them, rice is used to a greater extent by Santals than Mal Paharias. Both the grains are usually taken boiled. Paddy is first boiled and then dehusked in the pestle and mortar. The rice thus produced is boiled with water, the surplus of which is then drained off instead of being taken as a gruel. Maize is partially ground into small

bits before being boiled and sometimes also powdered into flour and made into unleavened bread. Pulses like *kurthi* (*Dolichos biflorus*), *rahari* (*Cajanus indicus*), *kakaro* and *orure* are also eaten.

The consumption of vegetables is limited to the quantity grown by the people and almost every house has some creepers going up the wall and roof and a few plants in the space adjoining it. Beans, pumpkins and other gourds, brinjals and tomatoes are grown. On many occasions a housewife requiring, say a little salt and spices, will take a pumpkin or two to the weekly market six miles away, sell them there and purchase her requirements.

Every household in the village is non-vegetarian. Goat, pig and fowl are eaten, only beef being prohibited among the Mal Paharias and the Santals. Generally the Santals take beef and it is peculiar that those of Kumarbha reported this item as tabooed from their diet. While it is possible that the influence of the neighbouring Mal Paharias may have been responsible for this difference, the main reason for such returns is more probably a desire on their part to be treated better by the Hindus. In spite, however, of the variety of animal food that is permissible for eating, in actual practice it forms but an insignificant part of their diet. More often than not, it is only when animal sacrifice is enjoined by religious, spiritual or mundane obligations that animals are killed and eaten. Eggs are generally left for hatching. Milk is not taken by the Mal Paharias since it is a taboo among them. It is not sold either. The Santals also do not milk their cows, which are generally under-fed and weak.

Regular meals are usually taken twice a day, one at about noon and the other on return from work in the evening. 11 households of 8 of Mal Paharias and 3 of Santals—reported taking three meals a day, and the remaining two meals. Quite often, left-overs are taken in the early morning and this seems to account for the difference in returns. None of the households appeared to be outstanding in the matter of food consumption. As a matter of fact, the dietary habits of the people are so deeply embedded in their life that even comparative affluence causes little change in them. In 6 months immediately following the harvest grain-containers are full in everybody's house and in this period, there is a lot of feasting and merry-making. Soon after, the circumstances are not so happy. Grains may then be taken

once a day and during very lean periods, perhaps not at all. The bounties of nature, however, come to their rescue. Certain varieties of fruits abound in the area and in season, they constitute the bulk of the villagers' food. Jack-fruit and mango fall in this category; *mahua* flowers are dried, powdered into flour and eaten; *jamun*,

bair, *inli* and *tarab* are some other fruits taken. Tender leaves of *peepal*, *sahjana* and other trees are boiled and eaten.

The following list gives the names of chief trees yielding fruits, vegetables and roots along with the season in which they are obtained:—

Category	Name of tree	Botanical name	Paharia name	Season
A. Yielding fruits and leaves used as vegetables	(1) Pipal	<i>Ficus religiosa</i>	.. Pakari	Summer
	(2) Mango	<i>Mangifera Indica</i>	.. ..	Summer
	(3) Inli	<i>Tamarindus Indica</i>	.. Tetuli	Summer
	(4) Sal	<i>Shorea robusta</i>	.. ..	Summer
	(5) Mahua	<i>Bassia latifolia</i>	.. Madagi	Summer
	(6) Asan	<i>Terminalia tomentosa</i>	.. ..	..
	(7) Bair	<i>Ziziphus Jujuba</i>	.. Ilkirdu	Winter
	(8) Piar	<i>Buchanania latifolia</i>	.. Katipiare	Summer
	(9) Sahjana	<i>Moringa Pterygosperma</i>	.. Sajori sage	Summer
	(10) Jamun	<i>Eugenia Jambolana</i>	.. Jamboo	Summer
	(11) Tar	<i>Borassus flabellifer</i>	.. Tahni or Tar	Rains
	(12) Kela	<i>Musa sapientum</i>	.. Kaladi or Kela	All seasons
	(13) Bel	<i>Aegle marmelos</i>	.. Kote or Bail	Summer
	(14) Sarifa	<i>Annona Squamosa</i>	.. Atta or Sarifa	Winter
	(15) Khajur	<i>Phoenix dactylifera</i>	.. Kanjree or Khajur	Summer
B. Vegetables	(1) Beans	<i>Dolichos Lablab</i>	.. ..	Summer
	(2) Pumpkins	<i>Lagenaria vulgaris</i>	.. ..	Rains Summer
	(3) Brinjals	<i>Solanum melongena</i>	.. ..	Summer
	(4) Tomato	<i>Lycopersicum esculentum</i>	.. ..	Winter
C. Roots	(1) Auli	.. ..	.. ..	Summer
	(2) Chandia	.. ..	Sanhra	Summer
	(3) Chalangi	.. ..	Kundri	Rains
	(4) Koma	.. ..	Kandra Sag	Rains
	(5) Marhari	.. ..	Oncaro	Rains

None of the households reported taking sugar, *gur* (molasses) being used as the sweetening ingredient for special dishes. Tea and similar beverages are not taken at all, but in the weekly markets the crowd in the tea-stalls is almost as large as that in the stalls selling *pachwai*, the indigenously brewed beer made from rice or maize corns. *Pachwai*, liquor made from mahua, toddy and palm juice are important drinks and necessary accompaniment to all kinds

of social meets and festive occasions. Though intoxicating; they contribute largely to the caloric and vitamin value of their food intake.

Beliefs and practices relating to birth, marriage and death

A. MAL PAHARIAS

Birth. Pregnancy within the bonds of marriage is always a happy event. The event is generally known only when the abdomen begins

to bulge a few months after the conception. The prospective mother continues to perform her usual work almost right up to the time of delivery. No special diet is given to her during this period. She is particular to avoid possible malign influences on her progeny. She will endeavour not to go alone to bring firewood or to fetch water, and she can never do so after sunset. Thus are the designs of the evil spirits thwarted, spirits that lie in wait for pregnant women and may cause miscarriage or even loss of life. While taking such precautions against evil spirits, the benign ones are exhorted to confer their blessings on the young life being fostered in the mother. The *Ojha* or medicine man (a Paharia of the village) is often called to invoke their blessings. He does so by sacrificing a hen and *arwa* rice (rice made from unboiled paddy).

Delivery sometimes takes place in a specially erected temporary hut, though there is no hard and fast rule about it. An elderly female relative such as the mother-in-law, the sister-in-law or any other village woman attends to the parturient mother with a skill derived solely from experience and for her, Lister might just as well have never existed. She is usually given a rupee as remuneration or reward, for her services. The umbilical chord is cut with a knife by the attending woman.

The mother, the child, and the father become polluted after the birth of a child and continue to remain in the new hut or are segregated for nine days. Other members of the family keep aloof from the child and its parents are not allowed to touch them or the family utensils and food. The husband has, therefore, to administer to the wants of his wife till the family pollution is removed. This happens when they take a bath and clean their clothes and the child's hair is completely shaved by a barber who also shaves the man's beard and pares the woman's nails. The ceremony is known as *randa jagu*. The proud parents may now go back to their house with the new member of the family and the woman begins to cook and work as before.

Though normal intra-family relations have thus been restored, the family remains under a cloud of pollution so far as the village is concerned. No villager will eat with a member of the family until a ceremonial feast is given to the entire village, usually within three months of the child's birth. The feast is held on a large scale and tribesmen are traditionally invited from

neighbouring villages. This has to be done for every child born. Usually information about the proposed date and invitations are carried by the father to as many villages as he can cover in the course of one day. But the feast is by no means sumptuous, nor is it excessively costly for the father. Both the villagers and the invitees from outside usually bring a pot of *pachwai* with them. Supplemented with a large pot of rice provided by the father, the refreshments are adequate for a few hours of gossiping, singing and dancing.

Name-giving ceremony usually follows the child's entering the family house. The Mal Paharias have but few standard names and these seem to pass on from generation to generation. The eldest child is usually given the name of its grandparents. The second child is given the name of an uncle or aunt and so on, so that an occasion for going beyond traditional names never arises. In this manner the Mal Paharias continually keep alive the names of their ancestors.

Modern medical facilities are available at Littipara which has a medical centre, but no cases from the village were sent up to it for ante-natal or post-natal care.

The children are breast fed up to the age of three years though they begin to take solid food after a year or so. In case the mother is of indifferent health, weaning takes place earlier either by sending the child with some relative for a few weeks or by smearing bitter tasting *neem* (*melia indica*) leaves on the nipples. Children are carried on the side, tying them up on the backs not being resorted to.

There is no initiation ceremony associated with the attainment of puberty nor any system of communal training for the youth of either sex in village dormitories.

Marriage. The system of betrothal is not in vogue. Statistics about the ages of marriage for all married males and females of the village are given below:—

TABLE VI
Tribewise average, Maximum and Minimum ages of marriage for males and females

	Mal Paharia		Santal	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
1	2	3	4	5
1. Average age of marriage	18	13	18	14
2. Minimum age of marriage	14	9	12	7
3. Maximum age of marriage	24	19	23	19

Marriages are usually performed after puberty. There is little difference between the two tribes in the average age as well as maximum age of marriage. The minimum age of marriage is, however, lower among the Santals. This is rather strange, because the influence of Hinduism is generally held to have been greater on Mal Paharias than Santals.

Marriages are avoided with kinsfolk up to the third generation on both mother's and father's side. Levirate is in vogue, it being permissible, and even desirable, for a man to marry his elder brother's widow, whether she has any children or not. Thus Siva Paharia and Munsu Santal married the widows of their deceased elder brothers. The system of sororate is also allowed, a man being free to marry his wife's younger sister though not an elder one. The first wife, if living, has to agree to such a marriage. However, no such cases came to light in the village.

There are no exogamous clans among the Mal Paharias, nor is there any territorial exogamy. Table VII below gives the distance of marital relations.

TABLE VII
Distance of marital alliances, tribewise
Number of marriages

Distance of wife's home	Number of marriages		
	Mal Paharia	Santal	Total
Same village ..	7	3	10
1—3 miles ..	6	11	17
4—6 miles ..	27	14	41
7—9 miles ..	..	2	2
10—12 miles ..	2	1	3
13—15 miles ..	4	1	5
16—99 miles ..	2	4	6
100 miles and over ..	..	..	..
Total ..	48	36	84

It is observed that among the Mal Paharias, 7 marriages took place in the same village, and a little over 80 per cent of the marriages were contracted within a radius of 6 miles. Among the Santals, the number of marriages in the same village is less, though the percentage of marriages within a radius of 6 miles is almost the same.

Monogamy is the general rule though polygamy is allowed. Polyandry is prohibited.

All marriages are strictly confined to members of the same tribe (but of different sects among the Santals). It is not permissible, much less desirable, for either Mal Paharias or Santals to marry outside their tribes. No case of such marriage or any consanguineous marriage was found in the village.

A Mal Paharia can secure his wife by any of the various systems socially permissible. Marriage by payment of bride-price arranged and settled by the parents is, however, generally practised. Other forms are—

- (i) marriage by agreement (*Banda hucha banje*);
- (ii) marriage by force (*Sinduran—Chirka-bohia aur ekia*);
- (iii) marriage by intrusion (*Tani-barcha-e-Banda-balohi*);
- (iv) marriage by consent (*pumung-ati-banje*);
- (v) widow marriage (*Ambar-po-pel-mao*).

Of the above kinds, instances of only marriage by intrusion and widow marriage actually occurred in the village.

Marriage by payment of bride price. The groom's father informs a *sithu* or mediator of his intention of getting his son married. The *sithu* is generally a villager of considerable experience in these matters. He goes to the girl's house and, on being satisfied that she will be suited to the boy, offers her a trifling present of, say, a necklace of glass beads. The acceptance of the present by the girl signifies the willingness of the bride's side to proceed with the negotiations and they give an idea of the bride price wanted by them. If the demand is not too unreasonable—there is always some scope for bargaining—the groom and the bride along with their parents and friends meet in a weekly market on a pre-appointed day. This arrangement gives an opportunity to both the boy and the girl of meeting each other. Subject to their mutual assent, the parents settle the details of the marriage. Bride price, known as *pen*, varies according to the demands of the girl's side and the affluence of the boy's side. Formerly, it used to be Rs. 12 but now anything from Rs. 20 to Rs. 50 is payable. Besides, clothes have to be provided for the girl's relatives as follows:—(i) grandmother—6 yards of cloth, (ii) uncle—1 *dhoti* and 1 coarse towel, (iii) mother—a 6-yard *sari*. These are, of course, in addition to what the girl herself is given. Some grain is also offered in kind as part of the bride price. It consists usually of about one maund of rice. The bride price received in cash is shared by the maternal and paternal uncles of the girl.

On the day appointed for the marriage, the groom comes to the girl's house with a party of ten or twelve persons consisting of relatives of

either sex. The party is welcomed and put up for the night in a nearby grove. Adequate quantities of grain, meat and the inevitable *pachwai* are provided to suffice for a whole night of revelry, dancing and singing at which the local villagers also join in. The marriage ceremony is performed the next morning. The groom and the bride, decked in new clothes, sit on a mat or sometimes in the laps of their parents or other elderly relatives. Vermilion is mutually applied and the marriage is thus solemnised. The bride goes to her new house soon after along with the groom's party.

Marriage by agreement. When a couple intimately known to each other decide to live as husband and wife, the girl simply goes to the boy's house and begins to live with him. When the girl's parents know of it, they come and demand a penalty in addition to the usual bride price. The penalty prescribed is Rs. 10 if the man was unmarried before and Rs. 15 if he was married. If the penalty and bride-price are paid, the matter is settled amicably; otherwise the bride's parents may exercise their prerogative of lifting away the domestic animals in the person's house. This often results in altercations.

Marriage by force. When a young man has set his heart on a maiden of his choice but is doubtful if she will reciprocate his feelings, he prefers to take no chances. In the market place or some other gathering, he will stealthily approach the girl and daub her forehead with vermillion. No sooner has he done this, he flies away or else he may be soundly thrashed by the girl's relatives. Once he has applied the vermillion, the boy simply sits tight and his wishes are fulfilled. The girl's parents soon come to know about him and pursue him to his house. As a token of their wrath, they catch and kill his goats and pigs. Finally, however, an agreement is arrived at and the boy and the girl are united in wedlock.

Marriage by intrusion. On the other hand, a girl may develop a fancy for a boy of her dreams and determine to marry him. Failing to attract him by the usual means, she simply goes and begins to live in his house. Being unwelcome both to the boy and his relatives, she is treated harshly and all efforts are made to torment her and make her return. If, however, the girl is able to withstand all the hardship, she is finally accepted and rewarded for her sufferings.

Marriage by consent. This form of marriage provides a safety valve for persons who cannot

afford the bride-price and feasting. By prior mutual consent the boy goes to the girl's house where they exchange garlands of beads. This signifies their union as man and wife. There is no feasting or revelry.

Widow re-marriage. In case both the spouses have been widowed before, the bride price is dispensed with. Widows can marry bachelors, but such marriages are generally the outcome of earlier intimacy.

Divorce. Divorce is permissible and can be sought by either party. The husband cannot claim refund of bride price if he moves for divorce, even if the wife is guilty of adultery but he is entitled to it if the wife is the mover. In case there are children (who go with the wife), bride price does not have to be returned at all. There are no elaborate proceedings for obtaining a divorce. A group of elders hear and decree according to the merits of the case. Divorce may be asked for on grounds of barrenness, unfaithfulness or slothfulness on the part of the woman. However, there is no person in a divorced state in the village. Munsî Santal divorced his wife because of adultery and married his elder brother's widow. The woman also got married again.

Whatever the freedom in sexual relationships before marriage, extra marital relations are severely frowned upon and, if detected, end generally in dissolution of the marriage. That very few divorces have been obtained in the village on this ground would seem to show that such occurrences seldom see the light of the day.

Death. The death of a person means the severance of physical relationship with the family, but the spirit of the deceased is supposed to influence the family for all time. Ancestral spirits are, therefore, properly propitiated in all festivals and religious ceremonies.

The dead body is draped with a new piece of cloth and carried on a cot to the cremation ground. A few coins are placed on its chest and head. His earthly belongings such as the cot, bows and arrows, utensils and clothes are kept by his side. The funeral procession is joined by the Mal Paharias of the village, men as well as women, and every household is represented by at least one person.

The funeral pyre has been made earlier with dried branches of trees. The body is placed on it, the head being kept towards the north or the west. The body is then covered with more

twigs, each member of the funeral procession contributing a stick or two and thus paying his last homage to the departed soul. The pyre is lit by the son or the brother of the deceased, if a male; and by the son or the husband, if a female. Fire is first nominally applied at the mouth. As the pyre burns, a few eggs are thrown in it as the last worldly offering to the deceased. A little rice and cooked meat are offered nearby as the first offering to his spirit. His personal belongings of trifling value (such as the cot, bows and arrows, sticks) are consigned with him to the flames. But the people are practical-minded enough to remove articles of real value such as clothes and utensils. These are, however, not to be taken back to the house and are usually sold off at nominal price on the spot. Before the funeral party returns to the village, each member takes a purificatory bath, failing which every one must at least wash his hands and feet.

The dead person is thus disposed of, but not so the villagers. His spirit will continue to crave for food unless the village is feasted however nominally. This must be done within eight months of a death. There is no hard and fast rule about the period of performance of the purificatory ceremony known as *kuman*. But it must be performed on the same day of the week on which the person died. On the fixed day, the villagers assemble near the cremation ground. First of all, some boiled rice and an egg are offered to the spirit of the departed. The barber, who has been called earlier, shaves the heads of the mourning family and beards of others, and pares their nails. After a bath, the people assemble again in the village and there is community feasting and drinking. Villagers often contribute grains and animals towards the food and drink consumed.

B. SANTALS

The life-cycle of Santals has been described in detail in the portion relating to village Jamkanali, which appears elsewhere in this volume. Jamkanali is only about 6 miles away from Kumarbhaja and there were hardly any differences in the beliefs and practices reported by the Santals in the two villages. Statistics regarding marriages pertaining to the Santals of Kumarbhaja have already been dealt with above. A brief outline of the life-cycle among the Santals of Kumarbhaja is given below:

Birth. No sooner the coming of a child becomes obvious, spiritual blessings are sought

through the Santal *naike* (priest). A fowl, some *arwa* rice and vermillion are offered to the *Bongas* (spirits). Contrary to the practices prevalent among some of the Mal Paharias, the Santal children are born in a part of the normal residence. The mother is attended to by a local elderly woman. The period of pollution is not fixed. The purification ceremony may take place on the day of birth, or on the third, fifth or seventh day. On this day, the villagers of the Santal community (and more particularly the Santal village officials) are invited to a feast. The child is named on the same day, preference being given to names of grand-parents on either side. The lineage is thus sought to be kept alive.

The Santals have a solemn ceremony called *Chucho Chatiar* by which a person is initiated into the tribe. The traditional history of the Santals is recounted during this ceremony, in spite of the fact that the children are seldom of sufficient age to comprehend the recitation. To save expenses, often groups of children of different families undergo this initiation simultaneously.

Marriage. The Santals preserve sept-exogamy. Marriages between persons connected up to three generations on either side are prohibited. Thus, parallel and cross-cousin marriages and marriage with sister's daughter are all debarred. Levirate is permissible, as also sororate. Widows and divorcees may re-marry.

Monogamy is the general rule and there is no polygamous marriage in the village. Polyandry is unknown. As among the Mal Paharias, there is general village exogamy. Only one in twelve Santal marriages have been contracted within the village.

Various kinds of marriages are socially recognised but *bapla* or *kiring bahu* (that is, marriage by payment of bride price) is the most common.

Death. The Santals, usually cremate the dead though there is no fixed cremation place. The earthly possessions of the deceased including clothes, utensils, bows and arrows, axe and flute are consigned to the flames along with the body. The remaining bones are properly kept and subsequently consigned to a river, preferably the Damodar. The purification ceremony known as *tel nahan* takes place on the fifth day. The finale is *bhandhan* which forever lifts the veil of pollution and which is accompanied by feasting. No time-limit is prescribed for it.

CHAPTER III

ECONOMY

Land. The entire economic resources of the villagers are derived from land and trees. Cultivation and gathering of fuel are their main occupations. The agricultural holdings are confined to the limits of the revenue *mauza* (village), of which less than 47 per cent is cultivable. The table below gives the classification of land in various categories as in 1960-61.

TABLE VIII

Classification of land in the village

Nature of land	Area in acres
I. Uncultivated area—	
(i) Forests	75.24
(ii) Barren land	43.93
(iii) Permanent pastures and other grazing land.	61.16
(iv) Land fallow for 2-5 years	10.05
(v) Current fallows	28.10
(vi) Culturable waste	93.27
(vii) Homestead and other non-agricultural land.	10.13
Total	321.88
II. Total cultivated area	280.41
Total area of village	602.29

According to revenue records of the village, the entire area consists of 721 plots. Of these, 1,272 bighas, or nearly 400 acres, are in the permanent occupancy of *raiya*s or tenants. The area of land possessed by different households at the time of the last Survey (in the year 1924) was 384 acres, which is fairly close to the present figure.

Even for the purpose of collection of rent, the village is divided into two sections—Paharia and Santal. The Santal tenants have to pay a rent of Rs. 82 per annum for an area of 157 acres, whereas the Mal Paharias have to pay only Rs. 49.50 for 227 acres. The explanation lies in the fact that the lands owned by the Santals are subject to a higher rate of rent because they are generally of superior quality

and paddy-growing. The Mal Paharias have mostly uplands of lower productive value.

Table IX gives the distribution of households of each tribe according to the size of agricultural holding. The quality of land has not been taken into account, and this fact has to be kept in mind while making an appraisal of the data.

TABLE IX

Distribution of households by the size of agricultural holding

Households having —	Number of households	
	Mal Paharia	Santal
1. No land	1	2
2. 1—2.4 acres	10	3
3. 2.5—4.9 acres	9	8
4. 5—10 acres	7	10
5. More than 10 acres	10	5
Total	37	28

According to the Santal Parganas Tenancy Act, land is held by the tenant as a permanent occupancy *raiya*, but his rights are inalienable and no transfer, sale or mortgage to a non-aboriginal is legally valid. But for this safeguard, it is doubtful if the landed interests of the tribal people in the Santal Parganas would have withstood the onslaught of time. Even as it is, quite a few are in the clutches of money-lenders to whom a good portion of the produce has to be given every year in repayment of loans for which a verbal pledge is the only guarantee. Answers to the question on the extent of ownership of land in relation to the previous generation showed that no change had taken place except as a consequence of inheritance resulting in the sharing of property by the sons.

Forest. There are in all 75.24 acres of forests in the village. These are situated on *raiya*ti land, i.e., specific plots are held by individual tenants. The villagers have the right to utilize the forest produce without payment of a royalty or rent to Government. A considerable portion of the earnings of the people, particularly of the Mal Paharias who hardly grow

enough for their consumption for the whole year, is derived from the forests. *Kend* leaves are gathered and sold for making *bidis* (leaf cigarettes). Fuel wood is also gathered and sold. Bamboos obtained from clumps are used for the construction of houses by the Mal Paharias while the Santals can get their requirements of timber for construction purposes from the *sal* trees. Mention has already been made of the various kinds of forest fruits and leaves which are used to supplement the food of local inhabitants. The facts clearly show how great a part is played by the forests in the economy of these people.

Livestock. Table X gives for each tribe the number of domestic animals and birds owned by the people.

TABLE X

Livestock

	Mal Paharia	Santal
1. Total number of households ..	37	28
2. Milch cattle—		
(a) Number of households having ..	22	24
(b) Heads of cattle ..	50	62
3. Draught cattle —		
(a) Number of households having ..	17	16
(b) Heads of cattle ..	31	33
4. Goats—		
(a) Number of households having ..	6	13
(b) Heads of cattle ..	17	44
5. Pigs—		
(a) Number of households having ..	33	25
(b) Number of pigs ..	124	70
6. Fowl—		
(a) Number of households having ..	35	27
(b) Number of birds ..	167	101

Evidently the Santals are better off than the Mal Paharias in their livestock wealth except in respect of pigs and fowls, of which the latter have more.

In Kumarbhaja, milch cattle means cows, as she-buffaloes are not found in the village. Their appreciable number is, however, no index of the quantity of milk produced. The Mal Paharias do

not milk their cattle at all, and even among the Santals regular milking is not in vogue. The quality of cattle is very poor, and a cow does not yield more than a quarter or half a *seer* (two pounds) of milk at a time. The consumption of milk is, in fact, almost negligible.

Only less than half of the Mal Paharia households own draught cattle, and there is not even one head of draught cattle for every Mal Paharia household in the village. The Mal Paharias have taken to the plough not more than a generation ago. Previously they engaged in *kurea* cultivation. Thus the figures are quite consistent. That the Santals should possess only 33 heads of draught cattle may appear to be somewhat strange since they are the people who own the best paddy lands and to them the plough is no innovation.

In respect of goats, the Santals greatly surpass the Mal Paharias. Twice as many households among them possess almost three times as many goats. Pigs appear to be more favoured among the Mal Paharias. Almost every household among them owns pigs, and their number is more than one and a half times the number owned by the Santals. Pork, incidentally, is a cherished food among both the Santals and the Mal Paharias and quite a good number of animals are butchered and sold piecemeal in the weekly markets at Re. 1 per *seer*. Fowls also are reared in greater number by the Mal Paharias. They are all of local breed. There has been no attempt to introduce better breeds of poultry in the village.

More than 60 acres of land in the village are reserved as permanent pastures and grazing lands. The animals are grazed on these as also in the forests. When the supply of grass and the forest undergrowth gives way, hay is given to animals as fodder. Regular feeding is not done. Oil-cakes or other nutritious items are never added to the food of the animals.

Factors influencing economic life in the village

The Scheduled Tribes of the Santal Parganas in general, and of the erstwhile Government estate of the *Damin-I-Koh* in particular, have always been specially looked after against exploitation by outsiders. They have been free from the domination of *Zamindars* (landlords) and Government agencies have always adopted a benevolent attitude towards them. The various measures for the abolition of landlordism in the post-independence era have, therefore, left them largely untouched.

In spite of the fact that the village lies within the Littipara Community Development

Block (with its headquarters presently at Hiranpur), hardly any development schemes have been executed or are under execution in it. The only benefit to the people of this village has been the provision of Land Improvement loans, a facility which has been availed of only by a few Mal Paharias. The loan money is utilised for preparing low and levelled agricultural fields from areas in which only dribbling and sowing used to be practised before. A sum of Rs. 630 had been advanced for the purpose to 5 persons.

There are no cottage industries in the village nor any scheme for their introduction. The entire area is completely agricultural and even employment as labourer is generally not available.

The nearest town is Pakur (24 miles away) which is actually an overgrown village, with a population of only 11,745 according to the 1961 Census. There is no other urban development near about. Electricity has yet to come in the area.

Communications are comparatively easy and the produce of the village finds a ready, if competitive, market in the weekly *hats*. Fowls and eggs particularly are lifted by wholesalers and the villagers get the barest minimum as price.

The money-lenders of Littipara and Amrapara still provide the bulk of finance to the people in times of need. Agricultural loans are provided by Government. A sum of Rs. 1,885 had been advanced till the year 1962-63, of which only Rs. 80 had been taken equally by 2 Santals and the rest by Mal Paharias.

Livelihood classes

The passage of time has hardly brought about any perceptible change in the livelihood pattern of the village. The working population is even now, as before, engaged primarily in cultivation. According to the Census of 1951, the entire population of 298 persons was dependent upon cultivation of lands owned by them. In 1961 also, the position was more or less the same. Only about 7 per cent of the economically active persons were engaged in agricultural labour and the remaining in cultivation of their own lands. No person is engaged in other sectors, e.g., trade and commerce, transport and communication, household or other manufacturing industries, mining and quarrying, or other services. Economically active persons

constitute about 55 per cent of the total population of the village. Table XI gives the distribution of workers and non-workers by tribe, sex and age.

TABLE XI

Distribution of workers and non-workers by tribes, sex and age-group

	Mal Paharia			Santals		
	Per- sons	Males	Females	Per- sons	Males	Females
1. Total population						
All ages	183	92	91	139	77	62
0-14 years	95	45	50	70	41	29
15 years and over	88	47	41	69	36	33
2. Workers						
All ages	105	50	55	78	46	32
0-14 years	26	6	20	19	10	9
15 years and over	79	44	35	59	36	23
3. Non-workers						
All ages	78	42	36	61	31	30
0-14 years	69	39	30	51	31	20
15 years and over	9	3	6	10	..	10
4. Percentage of workers to total population—						
All ages	57.38	54.35	60.34	56.12	59.74	51.61
0-14 years	27.37	13.33	40.00	27.14	24.39	31.03
15 years and over	89.77	93.62	85.37	85.51	100.00	69.70

It is seen that both among the Mal Paharias and the Santals, the participation rate among females (the proportion of workers to total population) is quite high. It also appears that girls begin to work sooner than the boys, 40 per cent of Mal Paharia and 31 per cent of Santal females below 15 years of age being classified as workers. The proportion of workers is high also among adult women of either tribe.

Cultivation, however, is not the only occupation of the people. The Mal Paharias particularly have to supplement their income by gathering and selling fuel. By its very nature, the work is of a seasonal kind, but 48 Mal Paharias (including 26 females) and 12 Santals (including 6 females) returned the selling of fuel as a subsidiary occupation. Even when agricultural work is in full swing, some members of a household are usually free to bring and sell



18. A group of well-dressed women



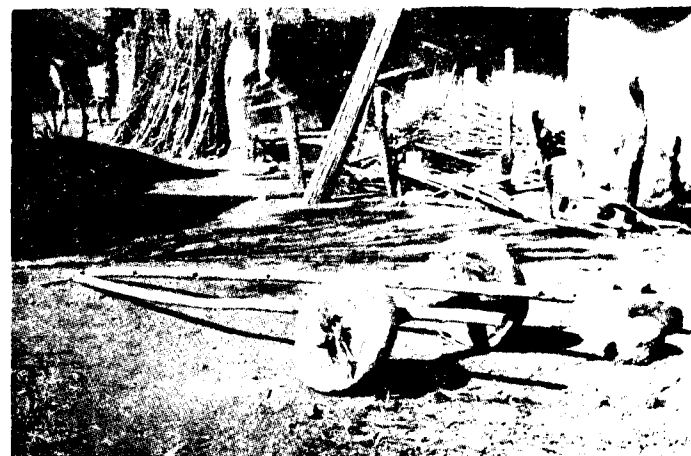
19. Villagers in front of their huts



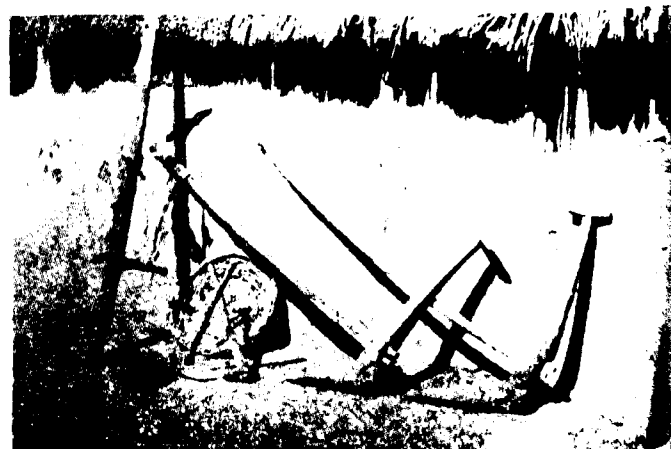
20. Inside a house - busy in grinding



21. The Bhar is used for carrying goods

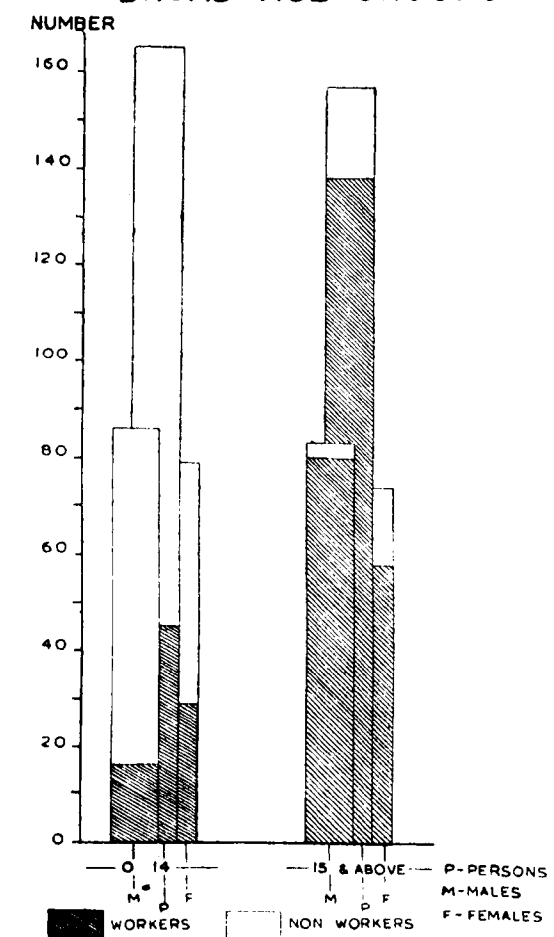


22. A bullock-cart in the making



23. Some agricultural tools and implements

WORKERS AND NON WORKERS BY BROAD AGE GROUPS



KUMARBHAJA

firewood. Thus, 27 out of 37 Mal Paharia households and 13 out of 28 Santal households engage themselves in collecting fuel for sale. Households, which do not possess land, depend for their livelihood chiefly on selling wood.

It is thus evident that decades, nay even centuries, have gone by without making any visible impact on the occupational pattern of the village. Every son is content to follow in the footsteps of his father. No change is apparently desired since questions on this point revealed that there is no mobility of aspiration.

Agriculture

Out of 602.29 acres of land in the village, only 280.41 acres (or nearly 43.2 per cent of the total area) are cultivated. The following figures give the classification of the cultivated area according to seasonal crops grown:—

Seasonal crop	Area in acres
<i>Aghani</i> ..	187.55
<i>Bhadai</i> ..	69.94
<i>Rabi</i> ..	29.12
Total ..	286.61

Of the above, an area of 6.20 acres only is double-cropped, the net area sown being 280.41 acres. None of the land is irrigated, and the entire agricultural operations are solely dependent on adequate and timely rainfall.

An area of about 200 acres towards the east of the village had been demarcated during the last survey and settlement operations within the precincts of which the right of *kurwa* cultivation was conferred upon the Mal Paharias. *Kurwa* is no longer practised in the village. In a survey conducted in the village under the auspices of the Bihar Tribal Research Institute, it has been observed as follows:

In village Kumarbhaja, which is in Paki Damin, I was told that they have given up shifting cultivation and have taken to plough cultivation. Only two families out of 35 practise shifting cultivation during 1958-59 in village Kumarbhaja.

The following statement gives an idea of the various agricultural activities and the periods therefor:—

TABLE XII
Calendar of agricultural activities

Month		Name of crop				
English	Vernacular	For which fields ploughed	Sown	Wooded	Harvested	
May-June	.. Jeth ..	..	Paddy	..	..	..
June-July	.. Asarh ..	Maize, gondli, kodo	Maize, gondli, kodo, Rahar, Basbati, Paddy.	Maize, Rahar	..	..
July-August	.. Sawan ..	Paddy	Kurthi	Maize, Paddy	..	..
August-September	.. Bhado ..	..	Til, Kurthi, Surguja	..	Maize, gondli	..
September-October	.. Asin ..	Sarson (Mustard)	Sarson	..	Maize	..
October-November	.. Kartik ..	..	..	..	..	..
November-December	.. Aghan ..	..	..	..	Paddy, Kurthi	..
December-January	.. Paus ..	..	..	..	Paddy, Til, Kurthi, Kodo, Surguja.	..
January-February	.. Magh ..	..	..	..	..	..
February-March	.. Falgun ..	..	..	..	Sarson	..
March-April	.. Chait ..	..	..	..	Rahar	..
April-May	.. Baisakh ..	..	..	..	..	..
May-June	.. Jeth ..	..	Paddy	..	..	..

NOTE.—Botanical names of the crops are: Maize (*Zea mays*), rahar (*Cajanus indicus*), Kodo (*Paspalum scrobiculatum*), gondli (*Panicum miliare*), kurthi (*Dolichos biflorus*), Mustard (*Brassica campestris*).

Paddy is the chief *Aghani* crop for which the fields are ploughed from June onwards. Usually every bit of paddy land is ploughed at least twice and cowdung is added. Ploughing is done only by men. Both oxen and he-buffaloes are used: sometimes, even cows and she-buffaloes. Seeds are broadcast in July and transplantation of the seedlings completed by August, the latter being an exclusive job for women. Harvesting is done in December (*Aghan*) by all persons. Bullocks are not used for threshing; instead, the stalks of paddy are beaten against a stone-piece by the people themselves to separate the grains. Nearly 2,500 maunds of paddy were produced in 1960-61, giving an average per acre yield of 12½ maunds. These figures of production have been computed from the data furnished by the households and appear to be somewhat exaggerated. The average yield in neighbouring areas has been estimated at about 9 maunds per acre.

Maize is an important *bhadai* crop. It is grown on *bari* lands which stand on higher level than paddy lands. Millets, beans, *rahar* and mustard are other *bhadai* crops. The fields are cleared and ploughed in *Jeth* (May) and sowing is done in the same month. The crop is harvested in *Bhado* (September). In 1960-61, about 700 maunds of maize were produced giving an average of about 10 maunds per acre.

Pulses constitute the *rabi* crops sown in September/October after the rains have ceased. These are harvested in February. The acreage under *rabi* crops was only about 30 acres. These are grown mostly by the Santals.

Plough is the most important agricultural implement. It is of the conventional type. Besides the plough, levellers (*mange*), sickles (*tetarai*) and spades (*pasna*) are used. The plough consists of *pal* (plough share), the beam (*ish*), handle (*karwa*), yoke (*jumali*).

Except that the quality of land has been improved in certain patches, it appears that agricultural operations are still in their age-old condition. Improved seeds, manures, fertilizers and techniques have not been adopted nor has any effective measure been taken for inducing the people to take to them. Notwithstanding the existence of the Community Development Block, proper advice and demonstrations do not seem to be available. The villagers were generally unaware even of the existence of the Village Level Worker. Not a single household could describe his functions correctly or otherwise.

No system of reciprocal aid in agricultural operations seems to be in existence in this village.

But friends and neighbours assist each other for nominal consideration, often consisting of a good drink of *pachwai*.

Forestry

Forest produce are heavily drawn upon by the people. Dry firewood is usually collected by women and is made up into small bundles, each selling for two annas. Firewood worth up to Rs. 2 is carried at a time by individual women on their heads to the weekly markets and sold there. The chief fuel trees are *kend*, *pare* and *dela* of which the latter two are not identified by their botanical names. There is no restriction to felling of trees or branches of these trees and transporting them for sale to the markets. *Sal* is the chief timber available. *Kend* leaves are also collected and sold to merchants of Sunri caste of village Dangrapara. They sell them to wholesalers for manufacturing *bidis*. The people themselves keep a stock of these leaves and roll their cigarettes whenever required. These are about 6 inches long, and stuffed with raw tobacco, rather harsh in taste and almost intolerable even to a cigarette smoker. Mangoes and other fruits are also collected and sold in season. The sales are almost always made in cash.

Fishing

The stream running by the western and southern boundary of the village is known as Kumargarha. It usually dries up in summer. During the rains and in the months immediately after, there is abundant water in it and fishing is possible. This, however, is not an occupation as such, and merely serves to supplement the food requirement of the people in addition to providing them with some kind of sport. Most people including women and children are adept in the art of fishing which is done individually or in groups. A single person catches fish with the help of the usual hook, line (*suta*) and sinker (*dange*). Various kinds of earthworms are used as bait. The nets for catching fish are also of different kinds. The one attached to a circular frame with handle, known as *nirup jale*, is handled by a single person. It is dipped into water and the fish that are caught are brought up. Two persons use *cut jale*; the two ends of the net are caught by persons on either side. The larger nets which are thrown into water and handled by a group of persons are known as *bair jale*.

The varieties of fish that are caught are known locally as *gachi*, *gutte*, *chete*, *ficha*, *pothi*, *gogi* and *mangru*. The majority of

CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE

Age and sex distribution

It has been observed earlier that the sexes are more or less evenly distributed among the Mal Paharias, but not so among the Santals. The latter phenomenon is peculiar to the village.

The sex-ratio for the Anchal as a whole, largely predominated by Santals, is quite normal and the peculiarity noticed in the village is not really indicative of any trend in the community.

Table XV gives the tribewise population of the village distributed by age and sex.

TABLE XV
Age and sex distribution

Tribe	Age-group	Number			Percentage to total		
		Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
Mal Paharia	0-14	95	45	50	51.91	48.91	54.95
	15-24	28	12	16	15.30	13.04	17.58
	25-59	58	34	24	31.69	30.96	26.37
	60 and over	2	1	1	1.10	1.09	1.10
	All ages	183	92	91	100.00	100.00	100.00
Santal	0-14	70	41	29	50.36	53.25	46.77
	15-24	26	13	13	18.70	16.88	20.97
	25-59	42	23	19	30.22	29.87	30.65
	60 and over	1	Nil	1	0.72	..	1.61
	All ages	139	77	62	100.00	100.00	100.00

Both among the Mal Paharias as well as the Santals, the proportion of population in the age-group 0-14 years is unusually large (exceeding 50 per cent). The corresponding proportions for the Anchal and the district are: for Mal Paharias—43.3 and 45.5 per cent respectively, and for Santals 42.62 and 41.64 per cent respectively. For the total population of the State, the percentage of population in the age-group 0-14 years is 42.31 per cent. A large proportion in this age-group generally implies a high birth-rate and fast growing population. This inference is not supported by the 1951 and 1961 population figures of the village which are 298 and 311 respectively, indicating a growth rate of 4.36 per cent in a decade which is lower than the district average of 15.21 per cent and State average of 19.78 per cent.

Though balanced for the total population, the sex-ratio among the Mal Paharias is not so for individual age-groups. There are more females in the age-groups 0-14 years and 15-24 years, while the reverse is true of the age-group 25-59 years.

Among the Santals, the sex-ratio is adverse for the total population. It is so because of the

imbalance in the age-groups 0-14 years and 25-59 years. There is perfect parity in the age-group 15-24 years.

No precise explanation is easily discernible for these peculiarities. There is hardly any consistency in them and this, perhaps, points to the fact that no biological factors are at work behind them. They are apparently sporadic in nature. The factor which may be largely responsible for such peculiarities is the poor age-consciousness among the people. It is a common hurdle to correct age reporting everywhere in this State, but the more backward an area the more pronounced are its effects. The figures relating to age have, therefore, to be treated with great reserve. Questioned about the age at which the persons got their children married, many could only indicate the height of the boy or girl at marriage and further leading questions put in order to get a tangible reply proved of little avail.

Trend of population

The village has shown an increase of 4.36 per cent only in its population during the

decade 1951-61. During the same period, the rates of increase in the Anchal, the district and the State were 13.93 per cent, 15.21 per cent, and 19.77 per cent respectively. It follows that the growth rate in the village was abnormally low. At the time of the present survey, however, 322 persons were counted in the village. This gives an increase of 24 persons or 8 per cent for the decade.

The main reason affecting the growth of population in the village during the last decade seems to be the migration of 7 Mal Paharia families to the Government-sponsored Colony at Parerkola in 1954, the year in which the Colony was set up. Details of the families that moved are given below:—

- (1) Jabra Paharia with his wife, two sons and their families living jointly.
- (2) Durga Paharia (son of Jabra Paharia, living separately) with his wife and five daughters.
- (3) Govind Paharia with his wife and two sons.
- (4) Rama Paharia (son of Govind Paharia and living separately) with his wife, three sons and three daughters.
- (5) Dharma Paharia with his brother.
- (6) Babna Paharia with his wife, two sons, three daughters and mother.
- (7) Kalu Kartik with his wife, one son and three daughters.

It would appear that the whole family migrated in each case. Out of 7 families, the first 5 own some lands in village Kumarbhaja. The lands are let out to relatives for cultivation and half of the produce is taken by the owners. The last 2 families are landless. It is thus seen that in

spite of having moved to Parerkola and having got enough resources to maintain themselves there, the Mal Paharias of Kumarbhaja still have certain economic ties with their original village. The ties extend also to the social sphere. Thus the mother of Babna Paharia often comes to Kumarbhaja to live with her daughter who is living alone.

Under the settlement scheme, 100 acres of forest land have been distributed among 40 families. The cost of reclamation of forest land was paid for by Government at the rate of Rs. 60 per *bigha*. Each family was provided with Rs. 60 for construction of a house. Since they could not cultivate their lands initially, they were given a subsidy of six *chattaks* of rice per head per day and eight annas per family till the 31st March, 1955. Each family was provided with a pair of bullocks, adequate implements (plough, yoke, spade, sickle and *gainta*), one she-calf, two hens, one pig and one she-goat. A he-goat, 5 cocks and 5 bullock-carts were given for the Colony as a whole. Irrigational facilities have been provided by construction of a tank at the cost of Rs. 4,500 in which fish is also reared. An Upper Primary School has been established in the Colony where powdered milk is distributed from time to time. An *Ayurvedic* dispensary has also been set up in the Colony. When the Colony was visited by the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in 1958, he noted, "in the third Colony I visited at Parerkola the families of Paharias were very happy as they have their own land to cultivate and there are irrigational facilities available".

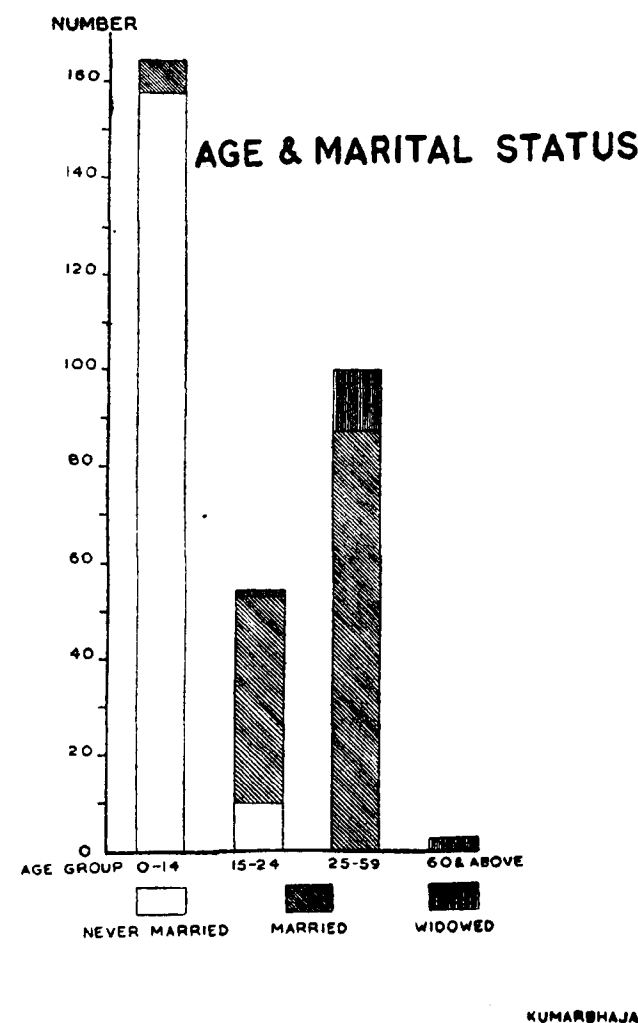
Marital status

The marital status of members of each tribe by age-group is indicated in the following table:

TABLE XVI
Marital status by tribe and age-group

Tribe	Age-group	Persons				Males				Females			
		T	UM	M	W	T	UM	M	W	T	UM	M	W
Mal Paharia	All ages	183	92	84	7	92	47	42	3	91	45	42	4
	0-14	95	90	5	..	45	45	..	..	50	45	5	..
	15-24	28	2	25	1	12	2	10	..	16	..	15	1
	25-59	58	..	54	4	34	..	32	2	24	..	22	2
	60 and above	2	..	..	2	1	..	..	1	1	..	..	1
Santal	All ages	139	76	54	9	77	46	27	4	62	30	27	5
	0-14	70	68	2	..	41	41	..	..	29	27	2	..
	15-24	26	8	18	..	13	5	8	..	13	3	10	..
	25-59	42	..	34	8	23	..	19	4	19	..	15	4
	60 and above	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	1

NOTE—T=Total, M=Married, UM=Unmarried, W=Widowed.



Out of 322 persons, 168 are unmarried; of them 158 are in the age-group 0-14, and 10 in the age-group 15-24.

Child marriages are not in vogue now. Only 5 Mal Paharia and 2 Santal girls in the age-group 0-14 are married. Marriage is, however, a social obligation and none of the Mal Paharia girls over 15 years of age is unmarried. Among the Santals, however, there are 3 unmarried girls in the age-group 15-24. The number of unmarried males in the same age-group (15-24) is greater. There are 10 such persons—2 among the Mal Paharias and 8 among the Santals. There is not a single unmarried person in either sex or tribe who is more than 24 years of age.

The incidence of widowhood is not large. Out of 154 persons who were ever married, only 16 are in widowed state. Only one Mal Paharia woman became widowed when less than 25 years old. The three persons aged above 60 have all lost their spouses. It is also observed that the Mal Paharias marry earlier than the Santals.

Disease and medical care

Children are always born at home under the care of an elderly lady. Even complicated cases are dealt with locally. In no case was hospitalisation resorted to or the services of a doctor or qualified midwife obtained. Even for their ordinary ailments the people do not seek medical advice and are content to take things in their course, depending on spiritual forces to pull them through. There is a *Dendo* or medicine man in the village. He is a Mal Paharia. He administers herbal concoctions which are often efficacious.

Since the inception of the Community Development Block at Littipara, a medical unit has been provided. It is in the charge of a qualified doctor. He visits each of the three Health sub-centres in the Block once a week. So far as Kumarbhaja is concerned, it is more convenient for the people to go to the dispensary at Littipara itself rather than attend the nearest Health sub-centre. Started only a few years ago, the dispensary at Littipara has yet to attract patients in good numbers. Preventive measures such as spraying of D. D. T., etc., are taken regularly by the Anti-Malaria Department. The incidence of malaria, reportedly quite high even late as in 1958, has now been reduced to negligible proportions.

Education and literacy

The extent of literacy is often used as an index to gauge the relative enlightenment of communities. Judged by this standard, the villagers of Kumarbhaja are almost in the primitive ages when reading and writing were unknown. There are only 2 literates in the village. Both are Mal Paharia youngmen read up to the primary standard. One is the younger brother of the Mal Paharia *Pradhan* (head man). No Santal can read and write.

There is no school in the village and at the time of the Survey, not a single child attended the school at Littipara or elsewhere.

Family structure

A household usually consists of husband, wife and their children. It is the normal practice for a son to fend for himself soon after he is married. In many cases, though the family hut is shared, separate kitchens begin to function.

Families can be divided into 3 broad categories according to the kinds of members constituting them. These are—simple, intermediate and joint. A simple family consists of husband, wife and unmarried children. In a family of intermediate type, there are a married couple and their unmarried children together with unmarried brothers or sisters, and parents. A joint family covers the rest, i.e., families consisting of married couples with married sons or daughters as well as married brothers or sisters, parents and others. A classification of households in Kumarbhaja on the above basis gives the following result:—

TABLE XVII
Households by type of family

Type of family	Number of households	
	Mal Paharia	Santal
1. Simple	24	19
2. Intermediate	4	3
3. Joint	9	6
4. Total	37	28

It is thus evident that nearly two-thirds of the households in both the tribes are of simple type, and a little less than one-fourth of joint type. Intermediate type constitutes a mere one-tenth of the total.

An idea of the size of households in the two tribes can be had from the table below:—

TABLE XVIII							
Households by number of members							
Size of household	Mal Paharia				Santal		
	No. of house- holds	Number of persons		No. of house- holds	Number of persons		
		Males	Fe- males		Males	Fe- males	
2—3 members	..	7	11	8	8	10	9
4—6 members	..	22	51	52	12	34	25
7—9 members	..	8	30	31	8	33	28
Total	..	37	92	91	28	77	62

Nearly 60 per cent of the households among the Mal Paharias and 43 per cent among the Santals belong to the intermediate size-class (4—6 members). In the remaining two size-classes—one small and the other large—the proportions are more or less evenly distributed. It follows that among the Santals, the incidence of both small and large-sized households is higher (about 28 per cent in each case) than among the Mal Paharias (about 20 per cent in each case). It may also be noted that there is no household with more than 9 members. Large-sized joint families, as commonly found in some parts of the State, are therefore unknown here.

Intra-family relationship

The father is the acknowledged head of the family. By virtue of almost equal participation in economic pursuits along with other members, the women also have an important position and all major decisions are taken by mutual agreement. The children are fondly brought up as is natural. The fact that they are not given any schooling arises not due to any lack of attention but because of ignorance and different sense of values. Aged parents are given the consideration and care due to them.

Inheritance of property

The inheritable assets comprise generally of immoveable landed property in which ownership is restricted to males. Amongst the Mal Paharias, who have a patrilineal society, the father is the owner of all property and the sons are entitled to inherit equally after his death. Often, when a son gets married and separates, some of the family agricultural holdings are

apportioned to him for his exclusive tillage. On the father's death, the eldest son gets the house and on him devolves the duty of maintaining the widowed mother and unmarried brothers and sisters if any. In recognition of this fact, the eldest son gets a larger share in the property. The exact extent of this is determined by the circumstances of individual cases according to the consensus of opinion of the village elders. As the land is being divided amongst the sons, a portion is specifically earmarked for the maintenance of aforesaid persons. The mother's right to maintenance, however, lasts only so long as she lives with her children. Should she choose to re-marry, her economic ties with her former husband's property are automatically severed. In the event of there being no sons, the widow is entitled to life-interest in the property without any right of alienation. After her death, the property reverts to the nearest male agnate of the deceased. Should there be no such relatives, the land is taken over by the village headman who may re-allocate it to other deserving villagers.

Among the Santals the property is shared by the sons, and the system of inheritance is similar to that among the Mal Paharias.

In the village itself nobody was aware of recent enactments such as the Hindu Succession Act. Every one was unanimous in the view that sons are the first heirs and so they should divide the property equally among themselves: daughters and widows cannot have any share except in the circumstances stated above. This village, therefore, provides a glaring example of a supposed social reform being carried out by the legislative enactment even before preparing public opinion or mobilising mass awareness. The result is that the benefits of the law are not actually enforced on the ground: they merely adorn the statute book.

Leisure and recreation

Notwithstanding their lack of material comforts, or perhaps to compensate for it, the villagers are endowed with a care-free spirit and they often lose themselves in gay abandon in music and dancing. The dances of Mal Paharias are generally the same for all occasions except marriage songs and dances, which are known as *bachana* and *nalnar* respectively. Among the Santals, these are known as *dangsiri* and *anni*.

While the dances are arranged only on some auspicious occasions such as marriages and



24. A man with a bamboo umbrella



25. A scene from a Mal-Paharia marriage



26. A place of worship



27. A village dance

(Facing page)

festivals, the flute is a man's constant companion. He carries it with him when tending the cattle or attending the fields. The stillness of a warm afternoon is often permeated with distant echoes of a flute being played. The tones are deep and rich and the tunes quite pleasing to the ear. The people have no musical notations, no teachers and no lessons. Yet they have, as it were, an innate sense of music and rhythm and a considerable ability to transcend themselves beyond the immediate problems of life.

The dances are free for all—men and women, young and old. They take turns and once started, dances continue through the greater part of the night or so long as the sustaining supply of *pachwai* continues. While there is an open space near the Santal Jog Manjhi's house for dances in the Santal tolas, no fixed location exists in the Mal Paharia basti.

The two communities in the village keep aloof in festivities and recreation as in other aspects of life. This antipathy is perhaps a relic of the past, for the Santals must have been unwelcome intruders in the Paharia country.

Religion:

MAL PAHARIAS

The Mal Paharias are generally recognised as a branch of the Paharias which has largely been susceptible to Hindu influences. Yet in the Census of 1931, a mere 200 out of more than 37,000 Mal Paharias returned their religion as Hinduism. By contrast, 96 out of every 100 Mal Paharias have described themselves as Hindus in the Census of 1961. On the face of it, the figures would indicate that there have been significant changes in the religious beliefs of the Mal Paharias during these decades. But such was not the case in Kumarbhaja.

Among the Mal Paharias, there is no concept of a supreme being; the chief deities are the Sun (*Beru Gosain*) and the Earth (*Dharati Garami*). Due reverence is given to the Sun in the morning and evening. A special worship of the Sun is described in the District Gazetteer thus:

On occasional Sundays a special worship is performed by the Head of the family, who must prepare himself for the rite by eating no salt on the previous Friday and fasting all Saturday. Before sunrise on Sunday morning a new earthen vessel, a new basket, some rice, oil, areca nuts and vermillion and a brass lota of water with a mango branch stuck in it, are laid out on

a clean space of ground in front of the house. The worshipper shows these offerings to the rising sun and prays, addressing the luminary as 'Gosain', that he and his family may be saved from any specific danger or trouble that is supposed to threaten them. The rice is then given to a goat, which is decapitated while eating by a single blow from behind. The body of the animal is then cooked and served up at a feast of which the neighbours partake; the head alone, which is deemed prasad, or sacred, being carefully reserved for the members of the family.

The above description is a striking example of the Hindu ceremonies absorbed in a tribal way of life. The day of worship and abstention from salt are common with the Hindu pattern, but the sacrifice of a goat has been added. The Sun is a very fastidious deity for the Hindus and the slightest pollution of the offerings made to him would render the devotee liable to the extreme wrath of the deity. To the Hindu it would be sacrilegious to make an animal sacrifice to the Sun. The Mal Paharias of the village, while acknowledging the existence of the *puja* described above, were however, not very specific about its performance in the village itself.

4 Mal Paharias of the village described *Shiva*, the Hindu god, as their deity and 2 mentioned *Agni-devata* or fire-god, neither of these occurring in the original pantheon of Paharia deities.

The family is guarded by its ancestral spirits and these are always propitiated on festive occasions.

The Pahariasthan and Jahirasthan of the two communities have already been referred to in Chapter I.

The Mal Paharia priest is called *Nado* and the office is hereditary.

SANTALS

The supreme deity is called *Thakur* but he is not regularly worshipped. The popular gods are *Marang Buru* or the great mountain, *Moreko* or fire, *Jahir-era*, the goddess of the grove and *Gosain era*, sister of *Moreko*. They are all worshipped in the Jahirasthan. Each family has its own *Orak-bongas* or household gods, whose names cannot be divulged. The Santals of the village, like the Mal Paharias, returned Hinduism as their religion. The *Naike* is the chief functionary of Santals at religious ceremonies. The post is again hereditary.

Religious ceremonies and festivals:

(A) MAL PAHARIAS

(i) *Tat-ariye* or *aam-puja*, literally meaning mango-worship, is performed in the month of *Chait* or a little later when mango fruits become available. This is a ceremony for the worship of ancestral spirits. First of all the *Nado* (priest) goes to the Pahariasthan (*Chuto Kurio*) with the villagers and makes an offering of a fowl, some eggs and a few mangoes along with the usual vermilion and *arwa* rice (prepared from unboiled paddy). As soon as this function is over, the people return to their homes and make personal offerings to their ancestral spirits (*nad gumos*). It is believed that this ceremony is essential for the family's well-being and prosperity, and its observance must precede the taking of mango fruits.

(ii) When the maize crops are ready in the month of *Bhado* (August-September) the ceremony of *Gangi-ariye* or maize worship takes place. The practice is similar to that observed in *Tat-ariye*. Family spirits are given offerings after a communal offering of a fowl and eggs in the sacred grove. Maize is eaten only after the ceremonies are concluded.

(iii) The next ceremony is *Osre-ariye* or bean-worship. It is performed when the bean-crop (*ghangra*) is ready in the month of *Agahan*. On this occasion, however, the procedure is more elaborate and communal rather than individual. The *Nado* and his wife remain on fast on the preceding day. Accompanied by the villagers, they go to the grove on the appointed day with a wooden seat, a pot of *pachwai*, a pig, a goat, fowls and eggs contributed by villagers. On the wooden seat are placed a few leaf-cups of boiled rice. The animals and birds are then sacrificed by the *Nado*. But for a portion reserved for him, the entire quantity of meat is cooked and shared by all. Women are, however, excluded. As in other cases, the villagers offer individual sacrifices in their homes on the following day. After this, the way is open for partaking of the beans.

(iv) And finally comes the *Pun-tadi*, the most important and the biggest ceremony in the month of *Paus* (December-January) when the people are most well-off, having just reaped their paddy harvests. As in the case of *Osre-ariye*, every villager contributes to the cost of animals to be sacrificed in the grove. On this occasion, the feasting is on a larger scale and quite a few

goats and pigs are taken for being sacrificed. *Pachwai* is also liberally contributed and a big feast is provided. Dancing and singing are on a wider scale than before. Risley describes the dancing as follows:—

On this occasion, the men and women dance vis-a-vis to each other, the musicians keeping between. The men dance holding each other above their elbows, the left hand of one holding the right elbow of the other, whose right hand again holds the left elbow of the man that has seized him. The forearms touching are held stiffly out and swayed up and down. They move sideways, advance and retire, sometimes bending low, sometimes erect. The women hold each other by the palms, interlacing the fingers, left palm upon right palm, and left and right fore arms touching. They move like the men.

He continues to observe,

...the dancing party, who are greatly excited with drink shout continually 'bur', 'bur' (pudendum muliebrem) a mode of invocation believed to be specially acceptable to the goddess (Dharti Mai). In this somewhat indelicate cry we may perhaps, see a barbarous and undraped reference to the vis genetrix naturae so prominent in many early forms of belief.

The latter observation, however, was disclaimed by the villagers.

(B) SANTALS

Festivals are more numerous among the Santals. They are almost invariably linked with the people's work in their fields. The following calendar indicates the main festivals and their time and occasion:—

Serial no.	Month	English month	Festival	Occasion
1	Falgun	February-March	Baha ..	New year
2	Asarh ..	June-July ..	Erok-sim	Commencement of sowing of crops
3	Savan ..	July-August	Hariarsim	Sprouting of paddy
4	Bhado	August-September	Irigungli nawali	Harvesting of bhada crops
5	Agahan	November-December	Janthar Puja	Harvesting of early paddy
6	Paus ..	December-January	Sohrae ..	Harvesting of paddy
7	Paus ..	December-January	Sakrat ..	Close of the month
8	Magh ..	January-February	Magh-Sim	Cutting of jungle grass

Erok-sim, *Sohrae* and *Baha* are the festivals at which the whole village performs sacrifices publicly as well as in individual houses.

Sohrae is actually a great festival of the Santals. It is celebrated by the Paharias as *Bandana* which term is also used for *Sohrae*. The crops have just been harvested and threshed. The people are in most buoyant spirit. While offering thanks to the *bongas*, the festival combines riotous revelry, feasting, drinking, singing and dancing and, perhaps, a certain amount of uninhibited licentiousness. The dates for the festival vary from village to village. Relatives and friends are invited. Quite a few persons join in the celebrations from village to village and are carried away by the stream of joyousness for weeks together.

On the night preceding the commencement of the festival, the *gorait* takes three fowls—two white and one speckled—to the *naike*. The *naike* observes religious abstinence during the night. He sleeps on the ground and avoids sex relations. Next morning the fowls are taken by the *naike* to the bank of the stream. Meanwhile, the *gorait* has collected one fowl and half a seer of rice from each family which also he brings to the site of sacrifices. The speckled fowl is sacrificed to the Supreme Being who is exhorted to overlook the shortcomings in the offerings and to preserve the health and honour of the villagers and guests during the festival. Fowls are then sacrificed to the various *bongas*.

The fowls and rice are cooked together and the entire village shares in the repast which is supplemented by *pachwai* contributed by them earlier. The *Manjhi* then gives the signal for revelries to begin. The words recounted by Kolean may not now be used in their entirety but the spirit remains. Says the *Manjhi*:—

"For five days and five nights dance and enjoy yourselves, brothers and sisters; let there be no disputes, no quarrels, no covetousness, no greed; if there is any covetousness and greed, look out well, also the fenced vegetables you may pluck but not what is climbing on poles, nor what is shrivelled up, pluck but not what is unripe; and the flower they have fixed with laths, have tied with thread, do not commit the sin of plucking these flowers". The people reply, "with twelve balls of cotton we are shutting our ears up; then whatever there may be, big or small, we shall not see or listen to it."

The *Manjhi* thus allegorically prohibits the men from touching women who are too young

or too old and those that are married. In reply the people assembled formally acquiesce to closing their eyes to all *liasons* in the festival period.

Cattle are ceremonially cared for and "blessed" by men and women. All else is sheer exultation.

The next important festival is *Baha* celebrated as *Sarhul* by the Mundas and Oraons of Chotanagpur. Using *Sal* flowers for adornment or *mahua* flowers as food is permissible only after this festival has been performed.

On the fixed day, two structures with roofs are put up in the *jahir-than* (sacred grove). One is meant for *Jahir-era*, *Moreko* and *Marang Buru*, and the other for *Gosain Era*. The area is cleansed and plastered with cowdung paste. In the evening three persons, all men, come to the house of the *naike*. They are possessed by *Jahir Era*, *Moreko* and *Marang Buru* respectively. The *naike* has earlier cleansed and stored the implements and other requisites for them. *Jahir-Era* takes a necklace—the spirit is a female, though not the one possessed—a winnowing fan and a broom. *Moreko* takes bows and arrows. *Marang Buru* carries a battle axe. Thus replete with the articles, the possessed ones, now *bongas*, proceed to the *Jahirthan*, followed by the young people of the village. On arriving there, the *bongas* lay down the articles carried by them. The *naike* washes their feet and seeks to learn of what is in store for the future. After this the spirits leave and the persons, returning to normalcy, share in the flowing cups of beverages. Dancing and singing continue for the whole night. These are in harmony with the season; "in the flower festival there are only beautiful songs; there is nothing indecent". On the next day, the procedure is repeated. The *bongas* then pluck the first flowers. Fowls are sacrificed by the *naike* at the spot and later by the villagers in their homes. When the party returns to the village, there is a lot of revelry including throwing of water on each other, reminiscent of the Hindu festival, *Holi*.

Eroksim is the festival in which the first offering of the year is made. Every villager contributes a fowl which is offered to the various *bongas* by the *naike*. The sacrificial offerings are shared by all. Exhortations are made for ensuring good crops.

Finally, reference may be made to offerings to *Sing Bonga* (Sun). There is a belief that the

Sing Bonga can cure venereal diseases, a gift of the *Dikus* or non-Santals. For, as tradition has it, when Sita was carried off by Ravan to Lanka, she prayed to *Sing Bonga* that she be afflicted with venereal disease. Her wish was granted and thus her chastity remained without being violated in spite of Ravana's evil designs.

Village functionaries and inter-tribe relationships

The Damin area of Pakur subdivision now comprises of Littipara and Amrapara Anchals. The former, in which Kumarbhaja is situated, is made up of 4 groups of villages known collectively as Bungalows. The Bungalows constitute a unit of revenue administration and for the people, the villages within a Bungalow are confederated in social matters under the leadership of a *Parganait*. Thus, village Kumarbhaja lies in Littipara Bungalow. The *Parganait* of the Bungalow is a Santal whose number in the Anchal is almost twice that of Paharias. The *Parganait* is responsible for the collection of rent from the villagers under his charge. He gets it done through *Pradhans* or *Manjhis* (village headmen). If the rent is collected in full before the close of the financial year, he gets a commission of 6-8 per cent and is assured of an income of Rs. 20 per month. Should the payment be deferred, as is often the case, he forfeits the commission payable. A *Parganait* is appointed by Government and the office is usually hereditary, but the village headmen can move Government for his replacement. This can also be done by Government *suo moto*. In making the appointments, however, the wishes of the people are generally respected.

In every village, there is a headman. In the case of a mixed Paharia and Santal village like Kumarbhaja, there is a separate headman for each tribe. The Paharia headman is called *Pradhan* and the Santal headman *Manjhi*. Other functionaries among the Paharias are the *Nado* (priest) and the *Chowkidar* (village messenger). The Santals similarly have the *Manjhi* (Headman), the *Pramanik* (Assistant to the headman), the *Jog Manjhi* (Custodian of the morals), the *Naike* (Priest), the *Kudam Naike* (Assistant to the Priest) and the *Gorait* (Peon to headman and village messenger).

It would thus appear that both the communities in the village are entirely self-contained and there are no economic or social ties between them. A Mal Paharia will call his tribesmen from distant villages to share in a feast but not the Santal living close to him in the

same village. A Mal Paharia will not even eat the food touched by the Santal who often eats beef and has no compunction in carrying the carcasses of cattle.

The country may have seen in its long history the fusion of widely differing cultures, but in Kumarbhaja, the Mal Paharias and the Santals have successfully maintained their separate identities in every sphere. Liasons between young persons of the two tribes did not come to light and even Cupid seems to have been overawed by the sense of aloofness between them.

Village organisations

The Mal Paharia village council consists of the *Pradhan*, the *Chowkidar* and some elderly men of the village. It meets whenever a complaint is brought to the *Pradhan* who also presides at such meetings. The cases dealt with relate largely to violation of social laws like pre-marital liasons resulting in conception, unfaithfulness, and elopement. The general principle followed is one of effecting a compromise between the parties. It is brought about by the payment of a stipulated amount as compensation by the wrong-doer to the aggrieved party. Not an insubstantial portion of the fine is set apart for a village feast. Thus, there is hardly any wrong which the payment of a fine will not set right. Once the fine is paid, the culprit is absolved not only from social stigma but also moral and spiritual liability. The fines vary according to the nature of the offence and the paying capacity of the person fined. The village council did not meet even once during the course of the investigation.

In areas where Paharias dominate in numbers, there is a Paharia *Sardar* whose jurisdiction extends over a Bungalow, just like that of a Santal *Parganait*. Normally, cases involving disputes between two villages are decided upon by the *Sardar*. As already noted, Littipara Bungalow is presided over a Santal *Parganait*. The Mal Paharias, therefore, have to resolve their inter-village differences among themselves because they do not like to place their quarrels for adjudication in the hands of a Santal *Parganait*.

The Santals have their own village council consisting of the entire group of village officials mentioned earlier. A case brought up to the *Manjhi* of Littipara village came to notice at

the time of the survey. The aggrieved person complained that he had caught his wife red-handed in adultery on the preceding night. He not only identified his wife's paramour but even brought him along with him on the day appointed for the hearing. The accused was given an opportunity to speak in defence but he had nothing to say. So the proceedings were summarily concluded. He was fined Rs. 120 for the offence. Half of the amount was payable as compensation to the husband, and the other half was to be utilised for refreshments. Whether the couple made up and lived together subsequently could not be ascertained. But in such cases, the husband is usually happy about the money he gets, and does not pursue the matter further.

A statutory *Gram Panchayat* has now been formed. Its judicial branch can deal with trivial criminal cases and civil disputes involving property valued upto Rs. 50. Kumarbhaja is a constituent village of Littipara *Gram Panchayat* which consists of 14 villages divided into 4 wards as noted below:-

Ward no.	Constituent Villages.	Thana no.
I	Littipara ..	34
	Dundhapahari ..	35
II	Nipania ..	18
	Sanwalapur ..	30
	Ranbahal ..	19
	Madhuban ..	20
III	Mohanpur ..	37
	KUMARBHAJA ..	36
	Jhapri ..	31
IV	Kairodato ..	32
	Chota Pokharia ..	25
	Bara Pokharia ..	21
	Katal Para ..	29
	Rargo ..	33

The executive head of the *Panchayat* is known as *Mukhia* and the judicial head *Sarpanch*. Both are elected by an electorate consisting of all adult members of the constituent villages. In addition, there are 5 *Panches* or

advisors to the *Sarpanch*, and 8 members of the executive committee to assist the *Mukhia*. Each ward elects a *Panch* and an executive member, while one each are nominated by the local administration from each ward.

The Littipara *Gram Panchayat* has non-tribal businessmen both as *Mukhia* and *Sarpanch*. So far as Kumarbhaja is concerned, the Mal Paharia *Pradhan* is the only villager finding a place in the *Panchayat*. He was nominated as a *Panch*. It is natural, therefore, that the people of the village are reluctant to go to the *Panchayat* for settlement of their disputes. Till the time of the survey, no case from the village had been referred to it. Only about fifty per cent of the heads of households were aware of the existence of statutory *Panchayat*. All of them expressed the opinion that its formation had made no difference to them whatsoever.

There are no clubs, libraries or other voluntary organisations in the village.

Impact of development programmes

The existence of the Community Development Block has virtually had no effect on Kumarbhaja. Not a single development scheme has been or is being executed in the village. Naturally, even such villagers as are aware of its existence disclaim having derived any benefit from the programme. Out of 63 households, only 18 were aware of the existence of the C. D. Block, and none of the Village Level Worker.

The State Government have under implementation a special scheme for the development and welfare of Paharias in the district. There is a special officer, called Paharia Welfare Officer, stationed at Dumka for this purpose. Schemes of development include provision of schools, medical facilities (ayurvedic) and drinking water. Unfortunately, not a single scheme of this project also has touched Kumarbhaja.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Level of social awareness

In January, 1963, when the village was revisited, the Mal Paharia Pradhan was asked about the Sino-Indian war. According to him, the Congress and China were fighting, but he could not elaborate on what either the Congress or China meant. He was proud, however, that in line with other villages, steps were being taken in Kumarbhaja to collect one rupee per household as war contribution to be paid to the Block Development Officer. This, perhaps, indicates how far removed the villagers are from the facts and realities of the contemporary life, though Kumarbhaja can hardly be considered to be situated at the back of beyond.

Almost every head of household is aware of the Anchal and the Thana headquarters and the rivers of the area, but only one could specify the Subdivisional and District Headquarters. Obviously, there is little litigation among the people which would require their going to Pakur.

Family planning is unheard of. If there are any indigenous medicines for contraception or abortion, no clue could be had about them. Questions regarding attitude to family planning are, therefore, devoid of significance. However, about one-third of the Mal Paharia and Santal heads of households would prefer to have no more children. Most of these persons belong to the age group 30-40 years and already have up to 3 children during a married life of more than 10 years. With proper advice, therefore, something positive can be done about the introduction of family planning schemes.

Legislations like the Hindu Succession and Adoption Acts are entirely unheard of.

Concluding remarks

A villager of Kumarbhaja lives more as an integral part of the village society than as an individual. There are no secrets in the village and intimate details of the people's lives are freely talked about. There is a marked degree of co-operation in the people's economic and social activities and a good deal of accommodation with regard to each other's material impoverishment. The co-operation is, however, confined within each community.

There still remains an awe of the non-tribals, and the old people are hesitant to mix with them. Yet the Mal Paharias of the village exhibited an attitude at variance with the general norm when in 1954, some households shifted to a Government Housing Colony at Parerkola (about 6 miles away) where they got free houses, lands and cultivating implements to start a new life. Jabra Paharia from Kumarbhaja also became the head of the new colony of settlees.

An earlier report about the village states that a marriage between a Mal Paharia and a Sauria Paharia had taken place in the village but this was not corroborated during the investigation.

The village leaves an impression of conservatism in all aspects. The age-old practice of shifting cultivation has died out but only the crudest form of plough-cultivation is practised. The people's attitudes and behaviour as also their material culture have remained immune from the winds of change that are blowing all over the country.

Monograph on Village

BATBANGA

(In Rajmahal Subdivision : District Santal Parganas)

Field Investigation

MARUTI PRASAD VERMA, M.A.
INVESTIGATOR

Supervision, Guidance, First and Final Draft

R. N. MISRA
OF THE BIHAR CIVIL SERVICE,
DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT OF CENSUS OPERATIONS, BIHAR

Editor

S. D. PRASAD
OF THE INDIAN ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE,
SUPERINTENDENT OF CENSUS OPERATIONS, BIHAR

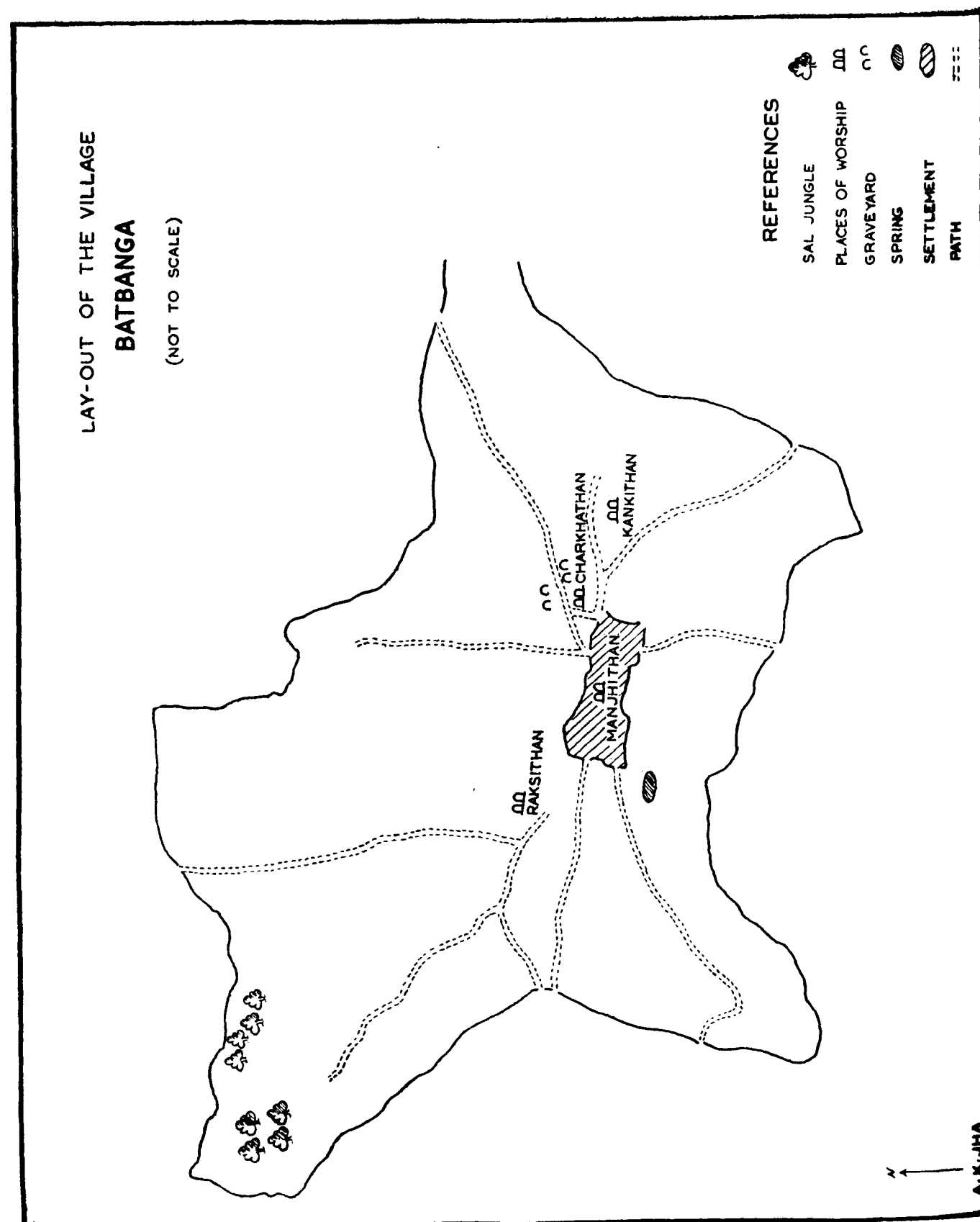
PHOTOGRAPHS S. D. Prasad.
 Shyamlanand.
 Public Relations Department, Patna.
 MAPS A. K. Jha.
 Period of field survey—January, 1962.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER I : THE VILLAGE	
Introducing the village	47
Location	47
Physical aspects, flora and fauna	47
Size and number of households	49
Residential pattern	49
Communications	50
Important public places	50
History of the village	51
CHAPTER II : THE PEOPLE	
Ethnic composition	52
Housetype	52
Dress	55
Ornaments	55
Household goods	56
Food and drink	56
Birth	58
Marriage	59
Death	61
CHAPTER III : ECONOMY	
Land and forest	63
Livestock	63
Factors influencing economic life in the village	63
Livelihood classes and working force	64
Ownership of land	64
Agriculture	65
Forestry	66
Income and expenditure	67
Indebtedness	67
CHAPTER IV : SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE	
Trend of population	68
Age and sex distribution	68
Marital status	68

	PAGE
Education and literacy	69
Disease and medical care	69
Family structure	69
Intra-family relationships	69
Inheritance of property	70
Religion	70
Community festivals	71
Intra-village relations	72
Village administration	72
CHAPTER V : CONCLUSION	
Level of social awareness	74
Conclusion	74
INSET TABLES	
1. Livestock	63
2. Workers and non-workers by sex and age-group	64
3. Non-workers classified by their activities, age-group and sex	64
4. Distribution of households by income-groups	67
5. Age and sex distribution	68
6. Marital status by age-group and sex	68
7. Households by the number of persons and sex	69
PHOTOGRAPHS	FACING PAGE
1. A panoramic view of the village : palm trees abound in the settlement area	50
2. The village in its forest setting	50
3. The houses are symmetrically arranged, small lanes intervening	50
4. The hill path to the village	51
5. The Rakshithan	51
6. In the graveyard. A decrepit structure alongside one newly erected	51
7. An unusual house with roofs sloping on four sides and covered verandahs all round	54
8. A grain container on raised bamboo scaffold with typical houses in the background	54
9. The Manjhithan. The pole in the right foreground has buffalo horns	54
10. Poles being fixed for a house under construction	55
11. A house wall with part of mud covering worn off	55
12. A village group in front of their houses	55
13. Sauria girls in their usual attire and adornments	56
14. Women and children in front of a typical house	56

	FACING PAGE
15. A village belle : note the ornaments on the ear, nose and right hand	57
16. On the threshold of womanhood : a well-decked girl	58
17. Camera-shy or apprehensive ? The lure of ornaments starts early in life	58
18. Mother and child	59
19. A Sauria in his native dress and hair style	59
20. A coy smile in midst of household chores. The wall of wattled bamboo in the left foreground is typical of the village	64
21. Ornaments are very popular	64
22. Reminiscing	64
23. A couple with their household goods. The two girls on the right are pounding grains	65
24. Even girls are eager to learn	65
25. Preparing for a goat sacrifice	70
26. Application of vermilion marks the forging of the marital bond	70
27. Swaying in rhythm to the haunting tunes of the flute	71
28. A group of villagers	71



CHAPTER I

THE VILLAGE

Introducing the village

The Sauria Paharias—or Malers, as they are sometimes called—are a distinct tribe according to the official List of Scheduled Tribes in Bihar. There are two other Paharias—Mal Paharias and Kumarbhag Paharias—who are also found in the Santal Parganas. The inter-relationship among the three tribes has already been discussed in the introductory chapter. The Mal Paharias continue to be treated as a separate Scheduled Tribe, but the Kumarbhags became so much 'Hinduised' or culturally absorbed with the Hindus that they are not even treated as a Scheduled Tribe in Bihar. Of the three, however, the Sauria Paharias are the most 'tribal' and display several unique features. Their villages generally lie on hill-tops—it is almost invariably so in the Damini area of Rajmahal Subdivision in the district of Santal Parganas. Thus, they are among the most isolated and inaccessible of the tribes in Bihar. Their mother-tongue is Malto, which belongs to the Dravidian group of languages and is quite different from Santali or Mundari. According to the Census of 1961, there were 55,606 Sauria Paharias in Bihar, as against 45,423 Mal Paharias. More than 98 per cent of them were found in the Santal Parganas. The Kumarbhag Paharias were not separately enumerated as they were not treated as a Scheduled Tribe. In 1941, however, their population was returned as 9,572.

Village Batbanga was selected for the present series of surveys for the study of Sauria Paharias. Its population consists entirely of members of this tribe, which is classified as a distinct tribe in the List of Scheduled Tribes in Bihar notified under Article 342 of the Constitution of India. Batbanga is included in "the list of Sauria Paharia Hills" in the Survey and Settlement Report of the district.

Location

Village Batbanga is situated at Latitude 25°4' North and Longitude 82°57' East. It lies on the eastern fringe of the Rajmahal hills and is only eight miles by road from Taljhari which is in the plains. Taljhari has a railway station on the Loop Section of the Eastern Railway running from Burdwan to Kiul via Bhagalpur.

It is the headquarters of the Anchal-cum-Community Development Block and Police Station of the same name. The Subdivisional headquarters is at Sahibganj, seventeen miles north-west of Taljhari.

The important weekly markets for Batbanga are Taljhari, Tin Pahar and Borio, the last two being about twelve miles away to the south-east and south-west respectively of the village. Both are the headquarters of Anchal-cum-Community Development Blocks.

Batbanga is the headquarters of the Sardar having jurisdiction over Brindaban and Taljhari Bungalows. The neighbouring villages are Boga, Digra and Hathibathan, all inhabited mostly by Sauria Paharias.

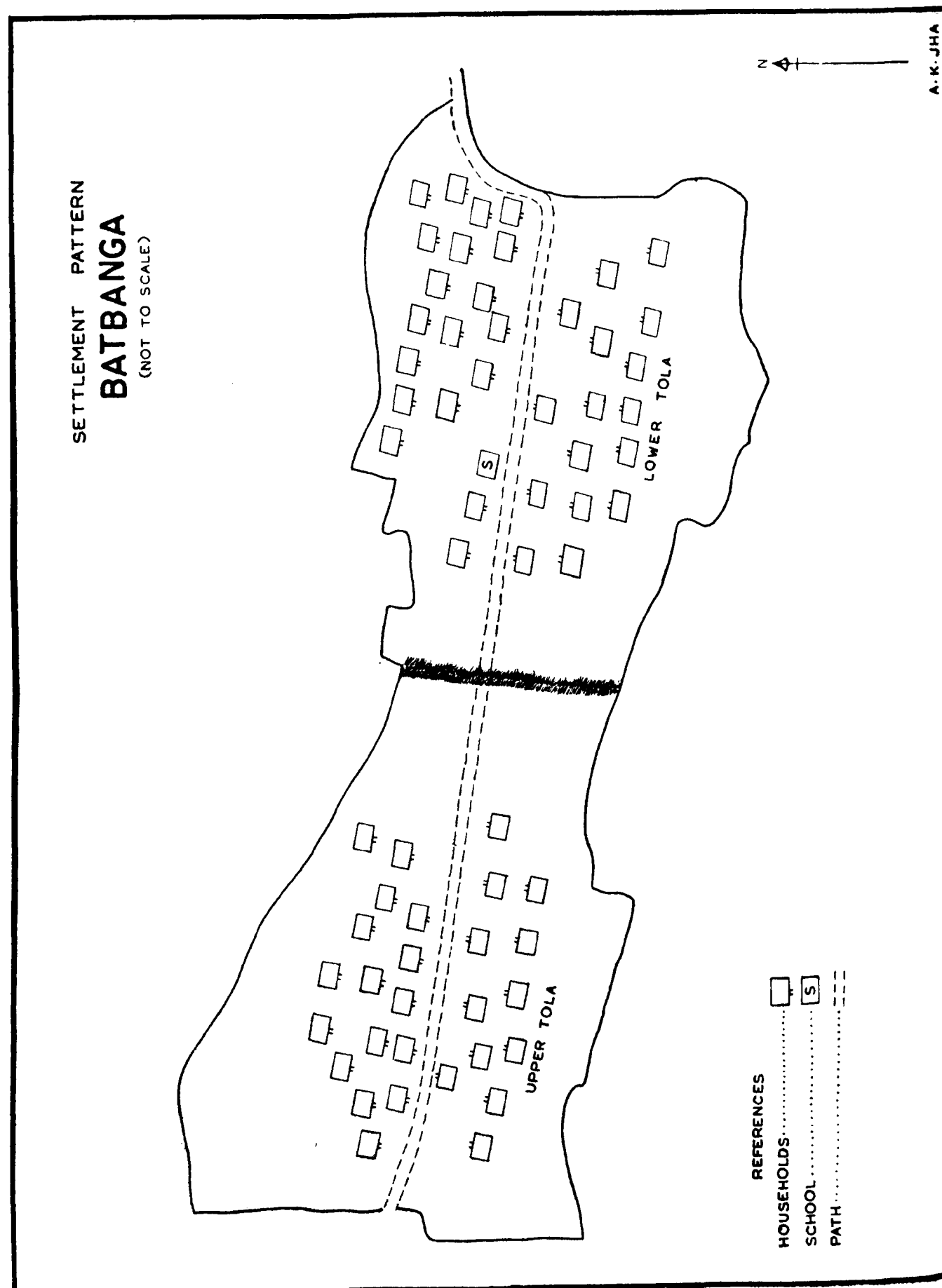
Physical aspects, flora and fauna

"The Rajmahal Hills stretch from Sahibganj on the Ganges to Nangalbanga on the Rampur Hat Road close to the south-eastern boundary of the district (of Santal Parganas). They consist of a succession of hills, plateaus, valleys and ravines, the general elevation of which varies from 500 to 800 feet above sea-level, though some hills have an altitude of 1,500 feet and a few are said to rise to the height of 2,000 feet. They consist of a succession of basaltic lava flows or traps with inter-stratification of shale and sandstone." (The District Gazetteer of Santal Parganas, 1911.)

Village Batbanga lies perched on the top of the hills to the immediate west of Taljhari. The route to the village consists of a roughly hewn path along the slope of the hill, a little steep in climb. Down below, the Ganges, easily visible, flows majestically on. The Settlement Report aptly describes the scenery thus:

"Nothing can be nobler than the prospect from the crest of the north eastern circle of hills between Sahibganj and Rajmahal, where one looks down the steep hillsides upon the silver stream of the Ganges and the fertile plains beyond, extending as far as the eye can reach".

Batbanga is yet a few miles off after the hill has been climbed. But the land is always undulating and covered with vegetation, there being no semblance with the vast arable table-lands, mostly under the plough, in the Netarhat



plateau, north-west of Ranchi. Winding through the pathways (where even two persons cannot walk abreast because of protruding shrubs on either side), one comes across a graveyard before the actual dwellings are reached. This probably led the Assistant Settlement Officer to record nearly half a century ago, "Batbanga is a veritable village of the dead in the midst of a Sal forest".

Mango (*mangifera indica*), jack-fruit (*artocarpus integrifolia*), mahua (*bassia latifolia*), kend (*diospyros melanoxylon*) and bair (*Zizyphus jujuba*) are some of the fruit trees that thrive on these hills. They provide a large measure of the food for the people. Among the timber-producing trees are the sal (*shorea robusta*), gamhar (*Gmelina arborea*), murga (*pterocarpus marsupium*), satsal (*Dalbergis latifolia*) and the inevitable clumps of bamboos. The collection and sale of firewood is an important means of livelihood to the villagers. Dabri, churki, oal (*amorphallus sp*) and wild potatoes (*solanum sp*) are some of the edible roots grown in the area. Many of the plants and creepers are known for their medicinal properties.

Leopards are still found in the area, and killing a leopard is a great event. Through a curious system, not only the concerned village is justly proud of the achievement, but also the neighbouring Sauria Paharia villages which participate in the celebrations extolling the glorious feat. During the course of the Survey, a batch of twelve men came to Batbanga carrying a stuffed leopard on bamboo poles, properly covered with a white piece of new cloth. Gongs were struck by a few persons as the party made its way to the village. The leopard was kept in an open space, and uncovered. Its ears and nose were adorned with rings of brass. On its head some vermilion marks were given. The villagers scrutinized the animal and asked questions about its killing. The party was then fed and a sum of Rs. 10 was paid to it in token of the esteem it had earned. After staying in the village for about six hours, the party left for its next place of demonstration in the late afternoon, the echoes of gongs again reverberating through the hills.

Bears, wild pigs and deer are also found. Birds are numerous in the diara (alluvion) areas just below; these include snipes and quails. Peafowls and jungle-fowls are found in the hills and a villager of Batbanga had a pair of peafowls as his pets.

Size and number of households

Batbanga is a rather large village as Sauria Paharia villages go. It contains 63 households having 258 persons. Normally, a Sauria Paharia settlement consists of 20–40 families. Out of the fourteen villages constituting the statutory Gram Panchayat of which Batbanga is a constituent, three are plains villages, and the remaining hill-villages. Among the hill-villages, no village other than Batbanga contains even a hundred persons.

As mentioned earlier, Batbanga is the name of a hill settled with the Sauria Paharias. The area of the village, according to the Settlement records, is about 2,060 acres, or more than 3 sq. miles. At the time of the Revenue Settlement in 1908, the village was reported to consist of 88 households. Even in 1951, the number of houses was 77 and population 322. There was no history of migration from the village. The decrease in population is thus apparently a feature of the community as a whole caused by high mortality rates.

Residential pattern

The village consists only of Sauria Paharias and there is no question, therefore, of tribewise grouping of houses. It appears that the only available piece of level land near the source of water has been selected as the village-site. As the terrain is undulating, extensive areas of flat land are hard to find. Therefore, the settlements of the village had to be spread over two places almost contiguous to one another. The level of one is, however, about 15 to 20 feet higher than that of the other. The village is thus divided into two tolas, viz., upper tola, called *ment-kora* and lower tola called *kundo*. The Sardar lives in the lower tola which probably was established first. However, the present Pradhan resides in the upper tola.

The number of households, persons, males and females in each of the two tolas is given below:—

Name of Tola	Number of			
	Households	Persons	Males	Females
Lower Tola	..	35	159	80
Upper Tola	..	28	99	50
Total	..	63	258	130

Evidently the lower *tola* is more densely populated. No more level land is now available for construction of house in either of the *tolas*. Actually the house of an immigrant Sauria Paharia to the village, who came a couple of years ago, has been built on the extreme edge of the level land bordering on the slopes of the hill, towards the south-eastern fringe of the lower *tola*.

Communications

The Sahibganj-Barhait Road is only three miles off from Batbanga. It is the nearest road, though unmetalled, for the village. Buses ply on it regularly, except during the rains. However, both economic and administrative ties of the village are closer with Taljhari which is about eight miles away. Rail communications are available at Taljhari. Though there is a road from Taljhari to Tin Pahar, it has no public conveyance running on it.

By the very nature of the location of the village, the villagers have no option but to walk, and carry their load themselves. Bullocks or ponies are not used at all.

There is a post-office at Taljhari which also receives money orders, but the nearest telegraph office is at Sahibganj, the Subdivisional headquarters.

Important public places

There is no structure in the village for use by the community. The Lower Primary School that has been established is run in the house of one of the villagers. Actually, the teacher stays in the house and the students are taught in the open space nearabout. It was learnt that a scheme for the school-building could not be taken up because the standard type-plan envisaged the construction of a brick-and-mortar building which was clearly impossible on the hill-top where the cost of transporting bricks alone would probably exceed the estimated cost of the building. A request had been made for accord- ing special sanction for constructing the building out of wattled bamboos, normally used in the area for constructing houses. The proposal had not, however, been accepted till January, 1963.

There are four centres of worship in the village. The first is a *Manjhi-asthan*, also known as *Singh-asthan*, situated in the middle of the lower *tola*. There are some roughly-hewn stone pieces kept here, but no canopy or roof has been provided, nor any walls.

Towards the eastern extremity of the settle- ment is *Kankithan*, which also has a few stone pieces which are symbolic objects of veneration.

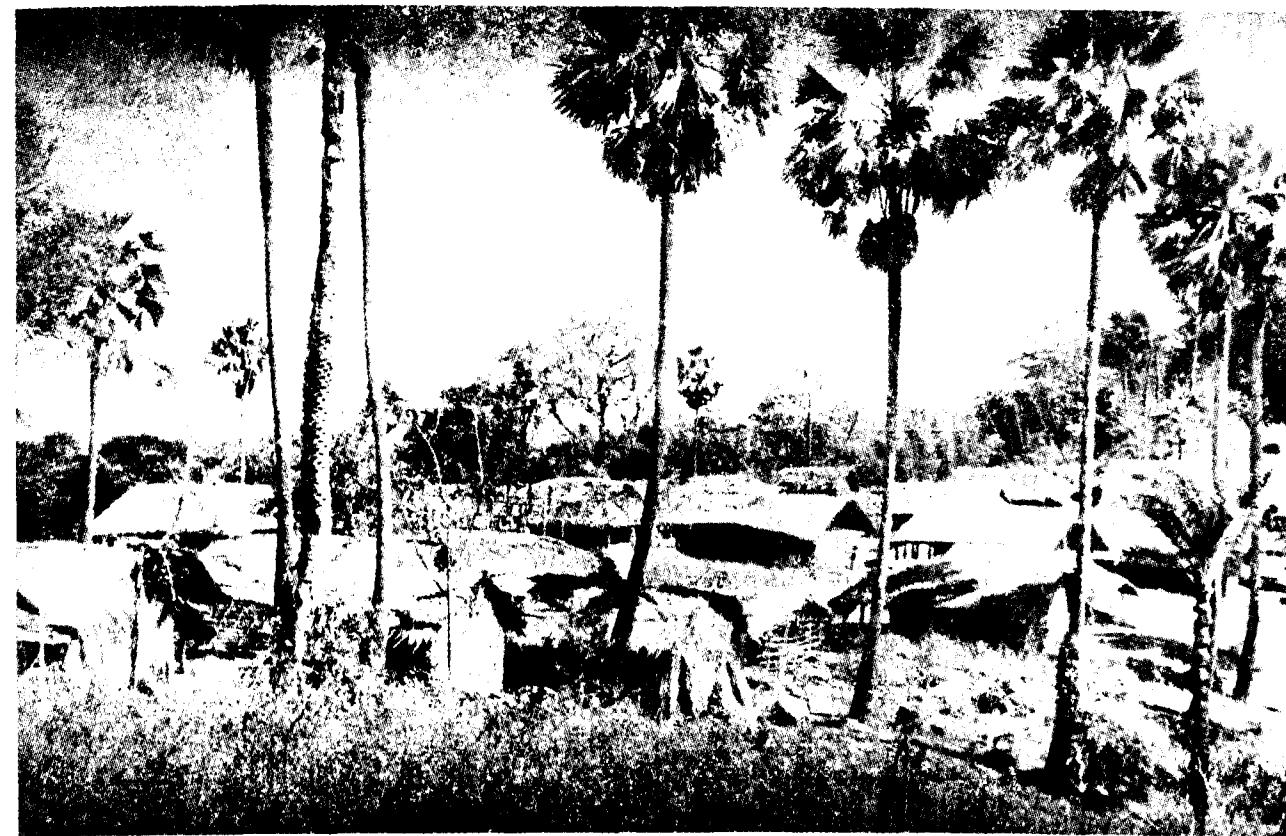
The *Charkhathan* is situated towards the east, away from the settlements. On this spot, there are high wooden posts which are climbed during festivals and upon which persons swing themselves as on a spinning wheel; hence, the significance of the name—*Charkhathan*.

Finally, there is a *Rakshithan* situated about 50 yards west of the upper *tola*, on a still higher level. The path leading to it was hardly negoti- able, covered as it was with overgrown thorny bushes. The shrine itself was nothing more than a large tree with vermilion-marked stone pieces at its foot. It was said that at the time of worship of Rakshi, the path is cleared, and the surrounding area cleaned.

There are three recognised graveyards in the village: one to the west of the upper *tola*, one to the east of the lower *tola* (one that i met with before entering the village on the way from Taljhari), and the last towards the north of the settlements. Generally persons o either *tola* are buried in the graveyard neares to the place of habitation, but no rigidity i observed in this respect. The graveyard to the north is no longer used.

There are two springs near the village both situated at a small distance apart, abou 200 yards down the slope of the hill in the south. Of them, however, one was not used a the time of the Survey. The entire village wa thus dependent on one spring for its suppl of water. The distance of the spring from the eastern extremity of the lower *tola* would be approximately a quarter of a mile. It wa reported that a scheme for the construction o a drinking water well had been taken up unde the auspices of the Community Development Block in the *bari* land situated adjacent to the lower *tola*. Before the digging had progressed substantially, rocks were met with and the scheme had to be abandoned. Nothing wa mentioned about the recovery or otherwise o the advances made on this account to the executing agency. Apparently the experience proved a deterrent to taking up any other scheme of a similar nature.

Besides the Lower Primary School, a library is the only other welfare institution in the village.



28. A panoramic view of the village : palm trees abound in the settlement area



29. The village in its forest setting



30. The houses are symmetrically arranged—small lanes intervening the trees in the centre stands in the open space used for recreational meets.



31. The hill-paths to the village. Note the protruding shrubs and the thick vegetation



32. The Rakshithan



33. In the graveyard. A decrepit structure, alongside one newly erected.

THE VILLAGE

51

History of the village

The Sauria Paharias are held to be autochthones of the area and the history of their villages is lost in the hoary past. A people, who often fail to recollect the names of their grandparents, can hardly recount legends and stories about their past.

It was found that 57 out of 63 households in Batbanga had been settled there more than

4 generations. 3 households had settled a generation ago, and another 3 in the present generation.

The population of the village is on the decline. Members of the tribe, who are relatives and find it convenient to immigrate, are therefore welcomed as settlers.

There are no monuments or historical relics in the village.



CHAPTER II

THE PEOPLE

Ethnic composition

The village is inhabited exclusively by Sauria Paharias, also known in the locality as *Sanwaria Paharia*. Risley mentions them as *Male* and earlier anthropologists have referred to them as *Malers*. The following description of Sauria Paharia is from the District Gazetteer:

"The Maler is short of stature and slight of make with limbs long in proportion to his short stature. His complexion is a light brown; his nose is not prominent but flat and broad at the base; and his eyes have the peculiar beady look of the Dravidian."

The Sauria Paharias seemed to lack the vivacity usually found among the tribals, and presented a glum and melancholy appearance, obviously under-nourished and bearing the scars of the struggle for bare existence. Life for the Saurias at present is no less hard than it was for their forbears. Though their physical labours have remained practically undiminished, the villagers are somewhat exposed now to modern influences, which are not always suited to their economy and well-being.

The Sauria Paharias call themselves *Maler*, a name by which they have been known to the earlier anthropologists and administrators. *Maler*, in *Malto*, means 'men'. The Hindus of the district refer to them simply as *Paharias* or *hillmen*. This has led to difficulties in the correct enumeration and tabulation of Sauria Paharias and *Mal Paharias* in the successive Censuses. Only *Paharias* were returned in 1872 and 1891. The Sauria Paharias were returned as *Male* in 1901 and as Sauria Paharias from 1921 onwards.

The Sauria Paharias are a Scheduled Tribe only in Bihar. They are not found in any other State. 'Census of India, Paper no. 2 of 1960' suggests that the Sauria Paharia is the same as *Savar*, a populous Scheduled Tribe of Orissa. Yet the *Mal Paharias* who are closely allied to the Saurias racially, have not been shown as synonymous with any other tribe.

Even in Bihar, the Sauria Paharias are almost exclusively confined to the district of Santal Parganas. Thus, out of 55,606 Saurias

enumerated in 1961, only 1,282 were found in the neighbouring district of Purnea. The hills of Sahibganj, Godda and Pakur Subdivisions are the home of the Saurias. They are hardly to be found in Deoghar, Dumka and Jamtara Subdivisions.

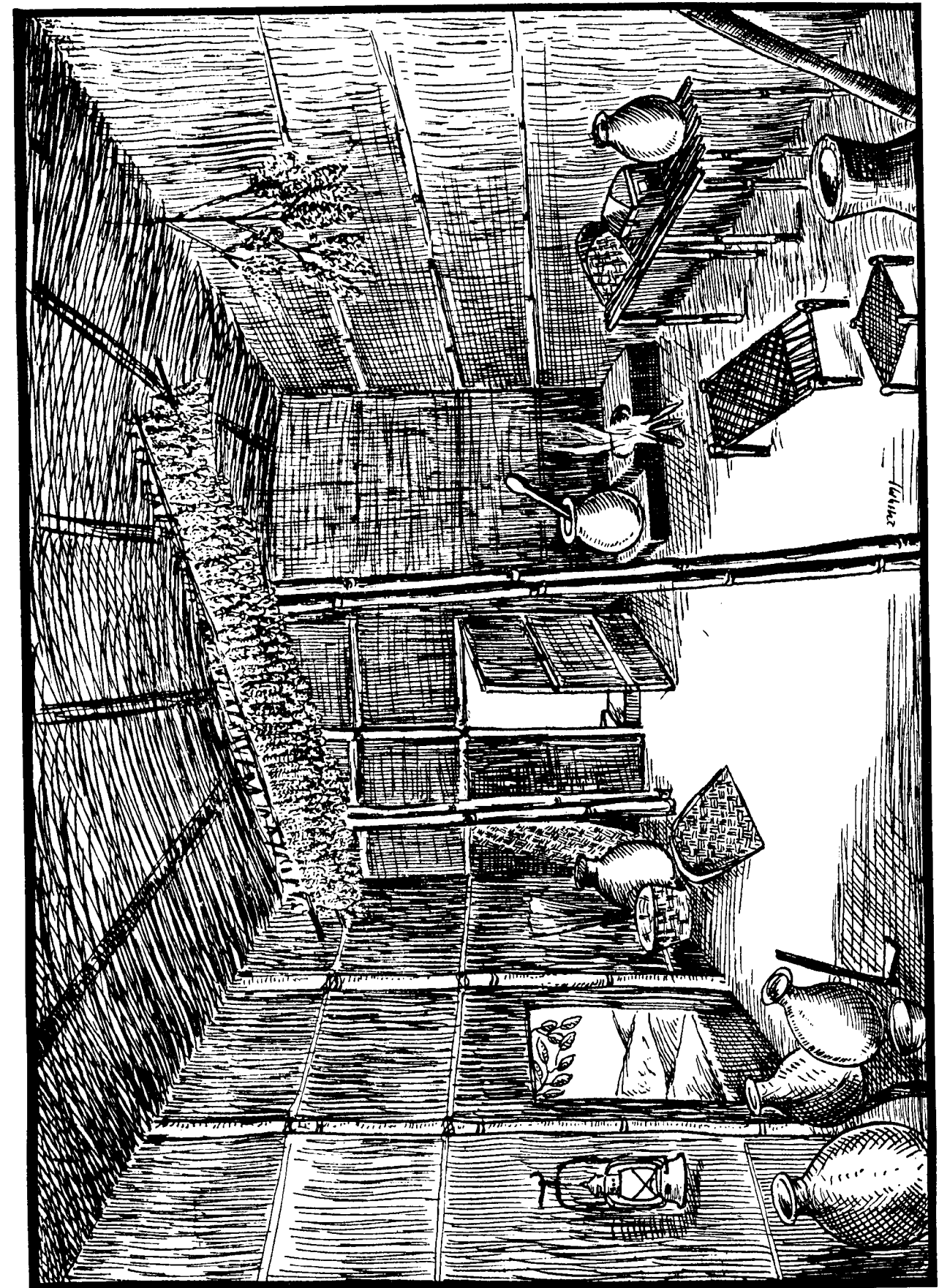
The Saurias have, through the centuries, remained isolated from the plains-dwellers. Their primitive methods of cultivation and heavy reliance on forest produce for sustenance are quite marked even today.

The language of the Saurias is *Malto* (or simply *Paharia*, as the villagers of Bathanga have returned). *Malto* is a Dravidian language akin to *Oraon*. This led to the view that racial affinities existed between the Saurias and the *Oraons*. This view has, however, been controverted as indicated in the Introduction.

The Saurias are not divided into clans. The break-up of *Paharias* into Sauria, *Mal* and *Kumarbhag* has been referred to. For all practical purposes, the three are distinct tribal communities among whom inter-marriage is not permissible.

House-type

The houses are all situated on level lands, comparatively devoid of natural vegetation except a few palm trees growing here and there. In each *tola*, there is a broad strip of land, running east to west and about 15 feet wide, which may be called the village street. Houses have been constructed facing the street on both sides. So their frontage is either on the north or the south. There are two parallel rows of houses along the street, and the remaining houses, farther away, conform to the same pattern facing the street. Thus, a regular pattern emerges. Not a single house faces either east or west. Though no spiritual or magico-religious reasons have been ascribed to this kind of preference, a similar phenomenon was observed in other Sauria Paharia villages also. The houses may be three or four deep at one point, but only two at others. Occasionally one may come across a lone representative on one side of the street.



The interior of a Sauria Paharia dwelling.

The houses are mainly wooden structures. Fixed to the ground first of all, there are the supporting logs of sal. The size of the logs depends on the size of the structure to be built. During the course of the investigation, the construction of a house had just commenced: only the logs had been put into position. Three rows of logs had been fixed from east to west, each row containing six logs. The logs in the central row were about 20 feet high as against 16 feet of the other two rows. The roof would slope on both sides from the middle. The rows were about 7 feet apart and the space between each pair of six logs in a row was about 6 feet. The walls to be constructed would leave a space of 6 feet in the front for the portico, and 6 feet at the back for the verandah, so that one post on either side of each row would be unwallled. The house would, thus, be 18 feet by 14 feet with a portico and a verandah, each 6 feet wide. The arrangement of the logs is diagrammatically represented in Illustration 1. Sal logs are brought from the forest within the boundaries of the village without any payment.

The walls are made of wattled bamboos and rarely plastered with mud. The intervening gaps are filled with dry grass. The roof consists of thatch made of *khar* (grass) resting on an underframe of split bamboos. Thus, both the wall and the roof appear to have been constructed uniformly with the same materials. The gradient of the roof is rather high: about 15 feet high in the middle, the sides of the roof are within 4 feet from the ground at the edges. No plinth is provided: it is hardly necessary on the hard and rocky surface. Usually, there are two doors in each house. One faces north and the other south. Both are situated diametrically opposite to one another. The doors do not always begin at the ground level but are about a foot higher, so that one has to cross a one-foot parapet to gain entrance. They are also made of bamboo frame covered with grass and have to be lifted and removed for being opened.

Almost every house has a covered verandah in the front. Its roof is usually constructed separately, and is elliptical in shape (see Photograph 14). Covered verandahs are also provided sometimes at the back of the house or on its sides or all around. Thus, the house in Photograph 7 has a verandah running along the side visible in the picture. The verandahs are used only for sitting or sleeping; no goods can be stored in them as they are not enclosed.

Without exception, the houses are all single-room structures: even the houses of the Sardar and the Pradhan conform to this pattern. One reason for the adequacy of such meagre accommodation is that for a good part of the year, people shift to the sites of their fields, or rather hill-slopes, on which they practise shifting cultivation. These slopes are far away from the main settlements from where it is not practical to look after the crops and carry out other agricultural operations. Thus, from *Bhado* (August-September) to *Magh* (February), or almost for half the year, people live in their temporary huts with all their worldly possessions. An example will illustrate this point. A copy of the village map printed during the last Survey and Settlement Operations could not be had from official sources as it was out of stock. Attempts were made to collect it from the villagers themselves. It was discovered that a person in the village had the map, but he had gone for *Kurwa* to his temporary hut and had taken the map also along with him.

Kul Kurias, the temporary huts, are made on the spots where crops are grown. They are scattered all over within the village boundaries. Whole families usually migrate to these huts. This is largely due to the fact that 75 per cent of the families are of the 'simple' kind. It is neither convenient nor proper to leave one's wife and children to fend for themselves while the head of the family is away. However, where the family is 'joint', the married son is often allowed to remain in the village with his wife. But he can do so only after the period of hard work in the fields is over and mere watch has to be kept.

The inside surface of the walls is usually plastered with mud up to a few feet above ground level. Thus 48 out of 63 households had the inner walls plastered with mud.

The house of Deva faces south, and is 20 feet from east to west and 10 feet from north to south. It has two doors. The inner side of the walls is partly plastered with mud. A verandah, about 3 feet wide, runs round along the four sides of the house. The front and side elevations of the house are indicated in Illustration 2.

No ceremony is attached to the selection of site for a house nor is any ceremony enjoined at the commencement of construction. But before entry, a fowl is usually sacrificed and the entrance of the house smeared with the blood of the sacrificial bird. This is believed to be an

ILLUSTRATION 1

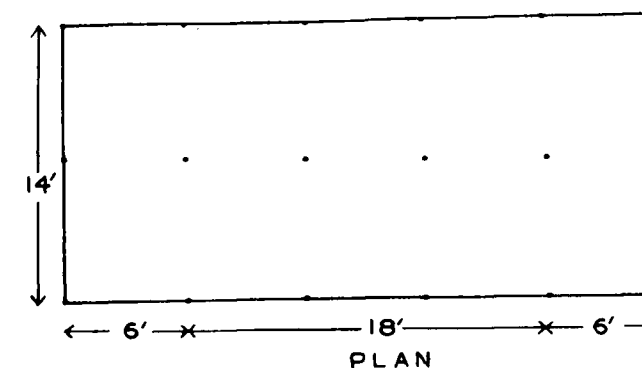
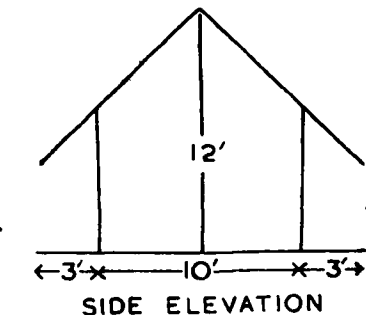
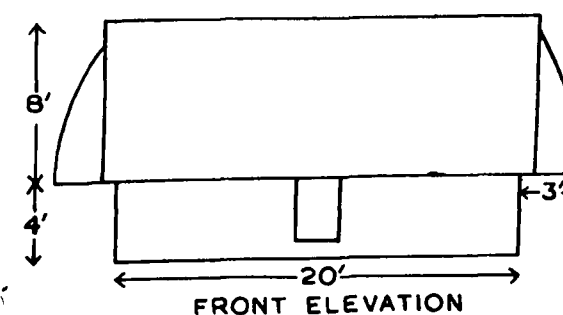
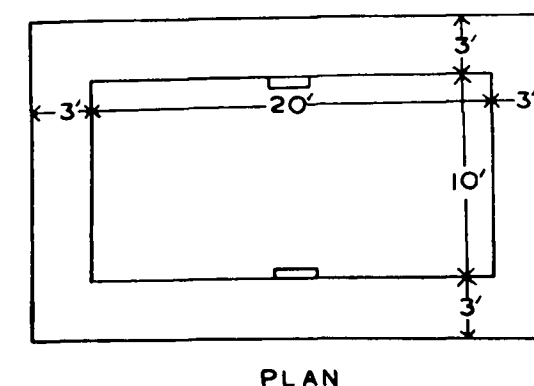


ILLUSTRATION 2

HOUSE OF DEVA





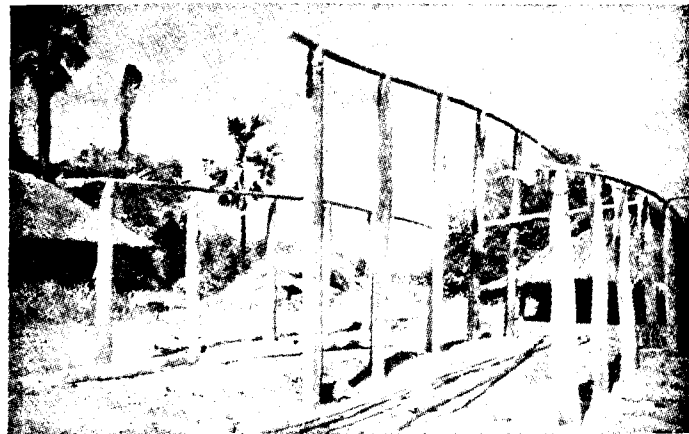
34. An unusual house with roofs sloping on four sides and covered verandahs all round. Note the grain container in the foreground



35. A grain container on raised bamboo scaffold with typical houses in the background



36. The Manjhithan. The pole in the right foreground has buffalo horns



37. Poles being fixed for a house under construction



38. A house wall with part of mud covering worn off



39. A village group in front of their houses

exhortation to the spirits for safeguarding the house and its inmates.

The houses are devoid of any decorative designs or embellishments. They are kept tolerably tidy, but the scrupulous care taken by the Santals is usually wanting.

Pig-sties are separately provided. Cattle are kept in separate sheds, usually shared by a group of families.

Requiring no elaborate skill nor any materials other than those obtainable from the forests, the houses are constructed by the people themselves with the aid of relatives. Hired labourers are seldom engaged and if at all, for short periods only. Voluntary helpers have to be offered food and drinks, and the cost on these may be as much as Rs. 20.

Dress

Although living in geographical isolation from the plains-dwellers, the villagers of Batbanga have taken to the more sophisticated clothes of their neighbours, and those worn by males are hardly distinguishable from the dress of their counterparts in the plains. The background apart, the group photograph in Photograph 28 might as well have been taken in any up-to-date village in the country. *Dhotis* and shirts are usually procured ready-made from the weekly markets. The dress, naturally, is quite different when a man is working; a shorter garment than the *dhoti* is all that he requires on such occasions. A cotton sheet wrapped round the body usually suffices to protect one from cold during the winter. The abundance of firewood is availed of to maintain almost continuous cosy fire. A person was found wearing a woollen coat of modern design, though almost in tatters, with its elbows, the collar and cuffs all frayed. Questioned about his acquisition, he proudly claimed to have been using it for 5 years, having procured it for Rs. 15 in the Boro market—obviously after it had been rejected for wear by its original owner.

The women, on the other hand, still appear to have largely preserved their traditional wear which, however, does not differ much from that of the Santals or Mal Paharias in the plains below. The lower garment, called *chimpo luggo*, is like a *sari*, but much shorter since it does not have to cover any portion above the waist. The garment is handloom-woven and generally coloured, checked or striped. It is noteworthy that even if ordinary *saris* are used, they are still

worn only around the waist, and another garment is used to cover the upper portion. For instance, the second girl from the left in Photograph 13 is seen wearing a *sari* with the surplus cloth making a bulge in the front. She has another garment for the torso. Known as *tokwaro*, it is a piece of cloth of similar quality but modern prints are not unknown. It is worn in much the same fashion as a *sari*, passing under the right arm and over the left shoulder, the ends being tucked in at the waist. Blouses are owned, but seldom worn in the village. They are reserved for outings to the market in the plains below. Incidentally, all the Mal Paharia girls of Kumarbhaja wore blouses which were supplemented by upper garments while posing for a photograph. This was not so in Batbanga. Only one out of the six girls in Photograph 13 has a blouse on and presumably because of it, she considered the use of *tokwaro* redundant. Women have no special garments for any occasion, but in Photograph 26 the bride of the Sardar—he had married on the day the photograph was taken—is seen wearing a *sari* and a blouse in the usual Hindu style: even the head is partly covered.

Children are not kept naked. Even babes-in-arms (see Photograph 14) have some kind of apparel or the other.

The use of shoes has not found its way in the village. Ordinary shoes cannot withstand the constant trekking amidst boulders and stones for any appreciable length of time. This, coupled with the general poverty of the people, perhaps explains the position.

Early accounts of the Saurias describe them as wearing their hair long. Hardly any in the village did so now. Their hair is usually kept trimmed and well-groomed.

There are no special ceremonial dresses for the religious and temporal heads. Nor, as seen in the photograph of the Sardar's marriage, is any elaborate apparel prescribed for the marriage ceremony. There is no taboo on the wearing of coloured *saris* by widows.

Ornaments

"The women wear more valuable ornaments than the lowland females of the cultivating class," observed Buchanan (as quoted by Dalton) more than a century ago, but the remark is almost equally apt today, so far as the Sauria women of Batbanga are concerned.

In fact, the quantity of ornaments often appears formidable to one not used to so elaborate an array. Some of the ornaments used are:

(i) Hairpins, used for fixing the hair. They are cheap, costing no more than half an anna each unless made of silver. The woman being married in Photograph 26 has silver pins in her hair.

(ii) Ear-rings though not of diverse patterns, are still worn in large numbers. The rings are worn to cover almost the whole of the ear (both lobes and alae being adorned), and thus the number goes up to ten. They are usually plain in design with small pendants attached to them. Made of silver, they cost up to Rs. 8 per set. Girls get their ears pierced when quite young, normally before they reach the age of five. Ear-boring is done by the parents themselves, and there is no special instrument for it. When the time for ear-boring comes, a set of rings is purchased for the girl. These are pierced through her ears and she wears them for ever. It will be noticed that even the young damsels learning the alphabet in Photograph 24 have full sets of ear-rings.

(iii) Nose-rings are equally plain (Photograph 18). Only one is worn in the left nostril. Those of brass are worth an anna or two; silver ones cost more.

(iv) The neck may be adorned simply with silver or aluminium chains or with the more costly, though less modern, necklace made of silver coins. The latter, known as *siki*, consists of coins secured to a black piece of string. The cost depends on the number and denomination of coins used, but is seldom less than Rs. 5. It will be observed that five out of the six maidens in Photograph 13 have *sikis*. Of the three having chains, only in the case of one it is the sole adornment for the neck.

(v) *Jingaris*, or chains for the waist, are made of silver and cost about Rs. 30, and weigh as much as 10–12 tolas. Very few women possess them.

(vi) The most striking ornament is the *kaddu* worn on the forearm, from the wrist upward. Usually of brass, it consists of a spiral made out of a strip of silvery metal and costs Rs. 10 per set (Photograph 15).

(vii) The *baju*, or the armlet is obviously a late addition to the ensemble and is the costliest ornament used. It is valued at Rs. 50 per pair. One of the girls in Photograph 13 is

seen wearing a *baju*, and that too only on her right arm.

Curiously enough, no ornaments for the feet were met with in the village.

The men do not wear any ornaments, except a few using a ring or two in their ears.

The ornaments are obtained from jewellers in the weekly markets on cash payment, ready money being available with the people from sale of firewood. The jewellers are caste Hindus and not necessarily the manufacturers of the ornaments. These are often brought from the manufacturers and retailed in the weekly markets. The choice of ornaments and their quality hardly seem to have changed through the generations. Out of 63 households in the village, only 4 did not use any ornaments. These were exclusively male establishments.

No one among the villagers was tattooed.

Household goods

The very nature of people's dwellings limits the range of the households good possessed by them. When a single room has to serve for all purposes—sleeping, cooking, and storage—the quantity of furniture and other household goods must necessarily be limited. Every household possesses a *khatia*, the multi-purpose item of furniture used as a chair and bed no less than as a table for spreading out and drying grains. Small stringed *machias* or low stools are also used, and were found in 13 households. A stool is possessed by the Sardar and by him alone. He is also the only person to own a battery torch, a kerosene stove and a wrist-watch. *Dhibris* or uncovered lamps are still mainly used for lighting; hurricane lanterns are possessed only by 17 households of whom 12 began to use them only within the past 5 years.

A mortar and pestle, grinding stone, pots and pans of various sizes, usually made of earth, and brass *thalis* or plates constitute other items of household goods. Those belonging to one family are shown in Photograph 23.

Food and drink

Maize and *bajra* are the chief crops grown and consumed. Maize is either ground into flour for making unleavened bread or broken up and boiled like rice. *Rahar* forms the main pulse article of food. Only such vegetables as are locally grown are consumed: usually these are beans and gourds.

Almost on every market day, a few members of the household go there to sell some



40. Santia girls in their usual attire and adornments



41. The women and children in front of a typical house



42. A village belle. Note the ornaments on the ear, nose and right hands

(Facing page 57)

fire-wood. They seldom come back with cash. A little rice and some condiments are invariably bought. Whenever there is something more to spare for food, a Sauria will bring fish. All the seven persons questioned on the point agreed that fish was a most delectable item of food. This is so possibly because fish cannot be reared on the hills they inhabit.

Not an insubstantial portion of the people's food consists of fruits, the chief being mango and jack-fruit. It was reported at Taljhari that

in season, a basket of mangoes can be had for as little as eight annas. The Sauria bringing it down the hill is thus hardly compensated for his labours. Yet, peculiarly enough; a Sauria will turn down with disdain an offer to carry luggage up the hill even for twice the sum. Roots, tubers and vegetables form a considerable portion of the diet.

The following list gives the names of chief fruits, vegetables and roots along with the seasons in which they are obtained:—

	Name	Botanical name	Paharia name	Seasons
Fruits ..	Pipal	.. <i>Ficus religiosa</i>	.. Pakari	.. Summer
	Mango	.. <i>Mangifera Indica</i>	..	.. Summer
	Indi	.. <i>Tomarindus Indica</i>	.. Tetuli	.. Summer
	Sal	.. <i>Shorea robusta</i>	..	.. Summer
	Mahua	.. <i>Bassia latifolia</i>	.. Madagi	.. Summer
	Asan	.. <i>Terminalia tomentosa</i>	..	..
	Bair	.. <i>Ziziphus jujuba</i>	.. Ilkirdu	.. Winter
	Piar	.. <i>Bachanania latifolia</i>	.. Kotipare	.. Summer
	Sahjana	.. <i>Moringa pterygosperma</i>	.. Sarjori sage	.. Summer
	Janun	.. <i>Eugenia Jambolana</i>	.. Jambo	.. Summer
	Tar	.. <i>Borassus Flabellifer</i>	.. Tahui or Tar	.. Rainy
	Kela	.. <i>Musa sapientum</i>	.. Kaladi or Kela	.. All seasons
	Bel	.. <i>Aegle marmelos</i>	.. Kote or Bail	.. Summer
	Sarifa	.. <i>Annona Squamosa</i>	.. Atta or sarifa	.. Winter
	Khajoor	.. <i>Phoenix dactylifera</i>	.. Kanjree or Khajur	.. Summer
Vegetables ..	Beans	.. <i>Dolichos lablab</i>	..	.. Summer
	Pumpkins	.. <i>Lagenaria vulgaris</i>	..	.. Rainy-Summer
	Brinjals	.. <i>Solanum Melongena</i>	..	.. Summer
	Tomato	.. <i>Lycopersicon esculentum</i>	..	.. Winter
Roots ..	Aali	..	..	.. Summer
	Chandia	..	.. Sanhra	.. Summer
	Chalangi	..	.. Kundri	.. Rainy
	Koma	..	.. Kandra Sag	.. Rainy
	Marhari	..	.. Oneara	.. Rainy

The flowers of the mahua tree are fleshy and sweet. They are eaten either raw or after boiling. The distillate produced is the infamous mahua liquor. The mahua fruit (*korchra*) finds various uses. Its outer coat is eaten raw; the inner coat is dried and ground to make flour. The kernel yields an edible oil, which is also used as an article of toilet and for lighting purposes.

The tender leaves of *Kondia* (*baubhinia purpurea*) are consumed as pot-herbs. The green-fruit of the jack tree (*artocarpus integrifolia*) also affords a nourishing food. It is eaten boiled.

Rice is the favoured grain. As it has mostly to be bought for cash, its use is naturally restricted.

The villagers are all non-vegetarian. Formerly they even ate the flesh of dead animals, but this practice is said to have been given up decades ago. This seemed quite possible because

Batbanga being the headquarters of the Sardar of the Bungalow, its inhabitants have for some time past been in direct contact with their neighbours in the plains. Some informants gave out that even the consumption of beef had been reduced to negligible proportions. This observation, however, seemed to have been motivated by a desire, first, to disown a habit looked down upon by others, and second, by a vague idea that the slaughter of cows had been legally banned. It may be noted that the Bihar Preservation and Improvement of Animals Act, 1955 prohibits the slaughter of cattle except by special licence restricted to animals less than 15 years old. Fowls, pigs, goats and cattle are eaten, particularly on festal and ceremonial occasions. Eggs and milk are seldom consumed.

The people usually take two meals a day, one in the morning and the other after sunset. Only 5 out of the 63 families reported taking 3 meals a day.

It was found that 57 households took sugar regularly and only 6 did not. People do not, however, drink tea or coffee. The drink that also serves as food for them is *pachwai* made by the fermentation of any grain, be it rice, maize or *bajra*. While it is difficult to assess the frequency of its consumption, the Saurias in Bathanga, like tribals elsewhere, find it impossible to do without *pachwai* in any social meet or gathering. Narcotics are not taken by any one. The smoking of home-made *bidis* from *kend* leaves and raw tobacco purchased from the market, is also not very popular, and women seldom take to it.

Birth

A prospective mother goes about her normal household chores almost right up to the time of delivery, though for a few months before the delivery she desists from fetching water or collecting firewood. Unlike some other tribal societies, there is no belief in the village that *pachwai* may cause abortion or miscarriage and there is no special restriction on its consumption. Even in the earlier stages of pregnancy, a woman will avoid being alone at places believed to be visited by or abodes of malign spirits. If at all she goes to the spring or the forest, she is invariably accompanied by others.

No separate structure is made for a woman's confinement but, if possible, a portion of the verandah is partitioned off to ensure a little privacy during the child-birth. The gentleman with a coat on had lately had a child. It was born on a verandah about a month back. An elderly local woman, distantly related, attended on the parturient mother and was paid Re. 1 for her labours. Accouchment takes place in a sitting posture. The attending woman cuts the umbilical cord with a bamboo knife specially prepared for the purpose. The placenta is buried in the backside of the hut. No special foods are given to the mother.

Child-birth is believed to cause pollution. Both the mother and the father are, by tradition, cast in a sympathetic social ostracization. This kind of sharing by the husband of the sense of being a temporary out-caste has been ascribed to a belief that as a result of this dual ostracization, the malign spirits would not harm the mother and the child. No villager, however, could put forward an explanation as to why the father shared the segregation enjoined on the mother.

The mother is considered unclean and is segregated. The father is also not allowed to go into the houses of his co-villagers, join any religious function, offer sacrifices or even engage in his normal work of cultivation until the purificatory ceremonies are undergone.

The period of pollution lasts for five days during which the couple are treated as untouchables in every sense of the word. The father is also prohibited from getting his beard or head shaved. He does so only on the fifth day. No barber is employed. The mother bathes, and thus is the screen of segregation cast away. The child's head is also shaved.

A nominal feast is given. The particular informant, whose child was born more than a month earlier, stated that he would give a feast to ten persons of the village "in the next moon".

The child is given the name of either the grandparents or the uncles or the aunts. There is no special ceremony for it.

Children are breast-fed up to the age of one or one and a half years. There is no feeling of shame attached to the exposing of the breasts for suckling children in the presence of others. Semi-solid foods begin to be given after teething commences and the child starts toddling about.

Barrenness is looked down upon and provides a sure ground for seeking divorce. The marital bonds are not particularly rigid in any case.

Though premarital sex relations are tacitly recognised, there was little to indicate that contraceptive drugs or herbs are known to the villagers. If an unmarried girl conceives, forced abortion is resorted to. Physical methods like applying pressure on the lower part of the abdomen are in vogue. Some herbs are also believed to be efficacious for this purpose. Should the ministrations be unsuccessful, the parties have no alternative but to expose their act and suffer the consequences.

The existence of a youth dormitory has been reported among the Saurias in the past. In Bathanga, however, as in other villages in the area, there is no such institution. Its disappearance has been ascribed to a desire on the part of the people to discard the social customs and usages which the Hindus look down upon.

When an adolescent girl begins to menstruate, a fowl is sacrificed to the household deities so that the ill-boding influences may not



43. On the threshold of womanhood. A well-ecked girl



44. Camera-shy of apprehensive. The lure of ornaments starts early in life



45. Mother and child



46. A Sauria in his native dress and hair style

affect her. Despite the fact that menstruation is known to be a biological phenomenon, the secretion of blood produces a feeling of inexplicability and awe. As in other phases of life, supernatural aid is, therefore, sought on this occasion as well. There are no corresponding puberty rites for boys, as this phase of their lives is not marked by any noticeable occurrence as in case of girls.

Marriage

The Saurias do not have any engagement or betrothal before the actual marriage. Marriage is a social necessity and it usually takes place when the partners have crossed the age of puberty. In the village itself, the average age of marriage for the boys was 20 and for the girls 18. However, one male remained unmarried up to the age of 29 and a woman till the age of 23. On the other hand, the earliest ages for marital union were 14 for boys and 12 for girls.

The Saurias do not have any clan or even occupational divisions in the tribe, much less endogamous units. Being essentially an endogamous tribe, mates are selected with a view to maintaining kinship marriages of a close degree. Generally, marriage is prohibited within three generations, both from mother's and father's sides. There are no named lineages among the Saurias. The following observations by Steward (The Maler: 1963 by Prof. J. Vidyarthi) are pertinent:—

Professor Vidyarthi's detailed analysis of the Maler lineage raises some interesting questions. The lineage is reckoned through only 3 generations, and it consists of an average of 3.8 nuclear families. Each family has an average of 3.8 persons—a total of 15.2 lineage. These lineages are very small as compared with lineage segments or primary lineages elsewhere.

While the proposition regarding avoidance relations for marriage holds good in theory, it wonders if it is always observed in practice. It is found that territorial endogamy rather than lineage endogamy was the general rule. As many as 44 out of 56 marriages were contracted in the village itself. This view is also strengthened by the observation: it was found difficult to prepare a genealogy with the intention of finding out the reasons for decline in the number of lineages as compared to the position at the beginning of the century, when the last survey and census operations were carried out. People could not mention the names of their

great-grand fathers. As there are only a dozen names or so common to all people, it becomes impossible to have a clear picture of the genealogy. No consanguineous marriages were, however, reported in the village.

While preferential matings with cross-cousins, parallel cousins, and mother's sister's daughters are ruled out, both levirate and sororate are permissible. A man has the first option of marrying his elder brother's widow, and may also marry his wife's younger sister. Cases of bachelors marrying the widows of their elder brothers did not come to notice. In practice, not a single person in the village was found to have two wives at a time, though even a generation ago, polygamy was prevalent to some extent. Thus Deva (father of the present Sardar) had three wives, all living. After his death, the eldest widow got married at Sahibganj, the second died soon afterwards, and the youngest got married in Batbanga itself. Bhola Sardar is the son by the third wife; the second wife did not have any issue; a daughter from the first wife is married in Batbanga itself. Thus the Sardar's mother and step-sister, duly married, are both living in the village.

As observed earlier, more than three-fourths of the marriages have taken place among co-villagers. These have mainly resulted from a lifelong acquaintance developing into intimacy. Though a bride price is paid, varying from Rs. 20 to Rs. 50, settlement through marriage-brokers becomes largely redundant.

A young man who was married in a different village, about 6 miles away, narrated how he met his prospective bride in the weekly market and was drawn towards her. They would often meet in the markets, and the girl would be given trifling presents worth few annas. According to him, the attachment was strictly platonic; and physical union came only after the marriage ceremony. A bride price of Rs. 35 in cash was paid, and also a maund of maize and a pig.

Conventionally, negotiations are initiated by the boy's father through mediators (who are co-villagers and perhaps, also relatives) adept in the art of conversation. The mediator, known as *Sithu*, first obtains the formal approval of the boy for negotiating with the parents of the selected girl. He then goes to the village of the girl and takes the formal permission of the local Pradhan before approaching the girl's father. The Pradhan is presented with a bottle of liquor specially brought for the purpose.

The girl's father or guardian is apprised of his mission by the *Sithu* and, subject to preliminary agreement, presents a piece of fine cloth of the size of a towel. The girl's father (or some other relative) takes the cloth to the girl and explains its significance. If she accepts the cloth in token of her agreement to the proposal, the *Sithu* offers trifling presents to her.

The bride price consists of cash (paun) and kind (bandi). The paun varies from Rs. 30 to Rs. 50, and the bandi consists of such quantities of grains and clothes as may be mutually determined. A pig is invariably included. The bride-price and the date of marriage are determined by mutual agreement in a subsequent visit made by the *Sithu* to the bride's house.

In practice, the parties to a marriage are never strangers to each other. If residing in different villages, they have ample opportunities of meeting in the weekly markets or at the time of festivals.

Occasionally, when a person has only daughter, he gets a son-in-law to live in his house and the latter takes the place of a son. In this case, there is a price for the groom and not the bride. One Rama, brother of Surja, became *Ghar-Jamai* in village Dhabra Gora and it was stipulated that Rs. 21 would be paid by the girl's father to the boy's guardians. The amount, however, was still due.

Marriage by service is an acknowledged system but there were no such cases of marriage in Batbanga. According to this, a man works for his future father-in-law for a stipulated period in lieu of payment of bride price.

The marriage ceremony takes place at the house of the bride. If the groom is of another village, the marriage party reaches the girl's village on the night preceding the date on which the marriage is scheduled. It varies in number from 10 to 25 depending upon prior agreement. Women also join in it. The party is ceremonially received and entertained to a feast, drinks and communal dances.

In the actual ceremony, the couple sit face to face (see Photograph 26). The paun is handed over by the groom's father to the bride who passes it on to her father. The bride's brother then formally hands over his sister to the groom. Then the *Sithu* helps the groom to daub the bride's forehead and the parting of hair with

vermillion. This is done five times. Finally the couple share a common meal consisting of boiled maize and pig's meat. Both the husband and the wife put five mouthfuls in the mouth of the other. This completes the ceremonies.

Evidently religious considerations do not weigh at the time of marriage which is more a social contract than a religious sacrament. Priests are not required to officiate. The temporal heads are, of course, invariably invited to participate in the joyous festivities.

Widowed and divorced persons select their own mates. The bride-price is lower if the woman has been married before. The scale of festivities is also reduced.

Adultery is a social offence punishable with a fine of Rs. 10 to Rs. 20, a pig and a hen. It is a valid ground for obtaining divorce. Fear of wives going astray is a factor weighing in the migration of whole families to the temporary huts during the period of cultivation.

Divorce is permissible in most tribal societies but its incidence is rare. The Saurias do not, however, appear to have great compunction in this matter. Divorce among them is both common-place and well-accepted. There were 4 divorcees at the time of the survey. Of them only one was a male. These figures are, however, not indicative of the extent to which divorce is prevalent, as the divorcees are quite prompt in getting remarried. Among the married persons, 10 women and 6 men had been divorced before.

Rama Malto, a handsome young man of about 22, was married 3 years ago and had a two-year old daughter. About a year ago, his wife Surji left him since he accused her of habitual slothfulness. The divorce was effected and it was agreed that the bride-price and other incidental expenses totalling Rs. 40 be repaid by Surji's father to Rama. The payment is still due. Surji got married again with Dorob of different village. Rama averred that she did not get along well with her new husband either. On being prodded by those present, he coyly admitted that Surji would probably come back to him. Meanwhile, the daughter remained in the care of her father.

There is no elaborate procedure for securing a divorce. Usually, a *de facto* separation is only given the formal approbation by village elders. It is symbolised by the tearing of a *sal* leaf.

Widow re-marriages are frequent. As many as 11 men and 8 women now married had earlier passed a period of widowhood. It has been aptly remarked,

To say that there is no widow in the Sauria society may not be an exaggeration. The border-line between widowhood and remarriage is so close and coalescing—merging together—that the above statement may be taken as an axiom. Remarriage is a common phenomenon among them and widow remarriage is also a part of the same. In this connection, it may safely be said that wife is an asset in their society whether she is a 'second', 'third' or a 'widowed' wife. The value of widow also varies to the extent of her being the first or the second widow and presence or absence of offspring. (Varma, B. B., *Bulletin of the Bihar Tribal Research Institute*, Vol. 1, Number 1).

A person who has lost his spouse is, however, prohibited from remarrying until the final death ceremony is concluded after a year.

Death

The Saurias appear to be a declining race. When Batbanga was revisited a year after the initial survey, the number of deaths during the period was quite surprising. As many as 11 adults had died. The flame of life quite often goes out in youth. The average age at death for the four males was 42 and that for the seven females 30. It appeared that the villagers had got so much used to death that they spoke almost non-chalantly about it, even though it concerned their friends and relatives.

It has been suggested by Dalton that the Saurias have a kind of belief in the transmigration of the soul: to put it more simply, they believe that a person will be reborn after death in the shape of a human or other being. No such idea was expressed in Batbanga. Yet, their affinities with the dead are, perhaps, greater than in modern societies. As soon as the physical remains are disposed of, it is assumed that the spirit of the deceased will come and live in its old house. The kin spirit is held to be benign. On every occasion of joy or festivity for the family or the community, the propitiation of ancestral spirits constitutes an inevitable, if not paramount element.

The Saurias believe that death may be caused untimely by evil persons, called *jokhin* (witch). When this is suspected, the *Demano* (a sorcerer of spirits) lets himself get "possessed".

In this state of "exultation", he names the persons, if any, responsible for causing the death. Woe to the person who is thus named. As rumours go, he is at times so severely belaboured that he succumbs to the injuries wrathfully inflicted upon him. Naturally enough, the people were too reticent to enumerate examples.

Three plots of land in the village are earmarked for the dead who are normally interred. These are recorded as such in the Survey and Settlement records. Shrouded in luxuriant hill-vegetations, the grotesqueness usually associated with such places is not there. One cannot help thinking that the hillman, in his eternal repose, is as close to nature as he was in his earthly existence.

The corpse is taken for burial soon after the death, and usually on the same day. It is bathed, dressed in its best clothes, and placed on a cot. Alongside are placed its worldly possessions such as plates and ornaments, as well as the bow and arrows which may earlier have tasted blood on many occasions.

The grave is dug earlier, east and west, and the body is placed in it with the head to the west. Even in death the body is not kept in direct contact with the soil. A bed of twigs and leaves is first prepared inside the grave. A covering of the same materials is provided afterwards. It symbolises, as it were, the fact that the forest was, perhaps, closer to the man than the soil in his life's journey. The grave is then filled, but only after the material goods (except the cot) have been placed alongside. Each member of the mourning party throws a clod or two of earth. The cot is placed on top of the grave, and a fencing three feet high is made with split bamboo pieces. Along the sides, big boulders of stone are placed so that animals do not disturb the grave-dweller. A ceiling, also of bamboo, is provided above the fencing; and finally, a straw roof sloping north and south. In one of the graves, one earthen pitcher was kept under the cot and another on the ceiling. The structure thus made is quite imposing and is found on every grave. No steps are, however, taken for its maintenance. Within a year or so, hardly any signs of the structure remain. Two graves can be seen in Photograph 6. The one on the left is obviously new; the other on the right is in shambles. The actual burial does not require any specialised service and no religious ceremonies are enjoined at the time. A fowl is, however, sacrificed at the site on the third day.

It is followed by some feasting and drinking in which the Sardar and the Pradhan must participate.

While the practice of burial as described above holds good generally, infants are simply kept in a large-mouthed earthen pot and buried. Those who die in epidemics are, however, taken to the jungle and left there. If the *Demano* dies, he is left at the mercy of the nature. His spirit is too dangerous to be fettered and is, therefore, allowed to roam about freely.

There is no exhumation or secondary disposal of the remains of the deceased.

When the funeral party returns, its members do not bathe themselves but merely wash their

hands and feet. The pollution associated with death does not appear to be as potent as that associated with childbirth. A bath is a 'must' in the latter case.

A purificatory ceremony is held on the fifth day after death or as soon thereafter as practicable. A pig is sacrificed on that day and the relatives are feasted. After a year, the *Bhauj* ceremony is held, often jointly by groups of a number of mourning families. Eating and drinking follow on a grand scale. The eligibility of the bereaved spouse now to get married acts as a signal for free mixing of the sexes even in contravention of customary laws.

Land and forest

Batbanga has been described as a stipendiary hill, and there is little 'land' in the usual sense of the term. A definite area of the hill and the foot-hills has been earmarked as constituting Batbanga Pahar. Every clump of trees can easily be identified by the villagers in regard to its ownership. The land used for cultivation, and settled and assessed to rent is about 2,000 acres, being classified as follows:—

Dhani (Paddy land)	..	13 acres
Bari I Ordinary	..	40 acres
Bari I Sabai	..	40 acres
Bari II Ordinary	..	124 acres
Bari II Kurwa	..	1,662 acres
Others	..	182 acres
		2,061 acres

Dhani land is negligible in quantity. It is situated at the foot of the hills and is owned by the village Pradhan. Bari lands are uplands, class I being superior to class II. Bari I Ordinary is the land adjoining the houses. It is cropped twice a year. Bari I Sabai is used for growing Sabai grass which is utilised in the manufacture of paper. At the time of survey, however, no Sabai grass was grown in the village. A Sabai plantation may have a long life, but its outturn remains satisfactory only for about 15 years. After that, the yield diminishes and the plantation is naturally neglected with the result that the jungle re-establishes itself. This is what has actually happened in Batbanga. Second Class Bari, known as *dangal bari*, is inferior land away from the village site and single-cropped. It may be noted that more than eighty per cent of the available cultivated land in the village consists of Kurwa lands on which shifting cultivation is practised.

Statistically, there are nearly 10 acres of land per head. But the yield is poor, and all land cannot be simultaneously cultivated. Indeed, it is hardly correct to classify the Sauria Paharias of Batbanga primarily as cultivators, so great is their dependence on the products of the jungle. The entire hills of the area are covered

CHAPTER III

ECONOMY

with forests which contain timber and fruit trees. These have the most vital and sustaining influence on the economy of the village.

Livestock

Plough farming is practised principally on Bari I lands. Neither ploughs nor draught animals are owned by many people in the village. Table I shows the number of animals and birds reported at the time of the Survey.

TABLE I
Livestock

Item	Number of	
	Households owning	Live-stock
Milch cattle	.. 8	22
Draught cattle	.. 14	40
Goats	.. 20	60
Fowls	.. 9	32

Total number of households—63

Milk is not consumed at all since the cattle are undersized and do not yield much. Only one household in eight possesses milch cattle. The number averages at about 3 per household owning milch cattle. Almost twice as many households own draught cattle, the average number per household again being 3. Goats are suited to the hilly tract, and nearly one-third of the households own these animals. Their number comes to three per household keeping goats. Poultry-keeping is not as popular. Only 9 households have 32 birds. Poultry is often sold in the market and the villagers have a very fair idea of the price to be had. On one occasion, a good-sized bird was sold in the village for Rs. 3.50. This was not less than the usual market price. The cattle and goats graze in the undergrowth of the jungles.

Factors influencing economic life in the village

There is little scope for improving the farming practices. Almost the entire agricultural operations are meant to eke out some crops from the hill-slopes. Improved maize seeds were tried but the plants that grew up could not get enough sustenance. They became top-heavy due to the large-sized corns; and the experiment proved a failure. The nature of kurwa cultivation is

such that natural manures are provided but artificial fertilisers and irrigational facilities cannot be thought of.

Of industries, there is no trace in the village. Even in tribes such as Birhors, some of whom are still in a nomadic state, manufacture of ropes and wooden vessels constitutes an important source of economic gains. But the Saurias still cling to their traditional disdain of labour in any handicraft or household industry. They, however, make ropes and fibres for their own requirement.

Communications to the village are most primitive and likely to remain so far some time to come. This is, however, no great impediment to contact with the towns and villages in the plains. The weekly markets provide the much-needed contact centres. Except for the infirm and disabled, hardly any person fails to attend these markets in the plains at least once a week.

The villagers have taken good advantage of loans available in cash and kind through Government agencies such as the Co-operative Society and the Welfare Graingola. But beyond temporarily alleviating the financial stringency, the loans cannot go far and certainly do not provide the foundations on which a solid economy can be built.

Livelihood classes and working force

In the Census of 1951, the entire village was shown as dependent on cultivation and agricultural labour. The picture remained much the same a decade later. Of the economically active persons, all except two were engaged in agriculture, that is, cultivation of lands owned by them. Two males were returned as engaged in trade and commerce. Apparently this relates to the collection and sale of fuel.

Table 2 below gives the number of workers and non-workers by sex and age-group.

TABLE 2

Age-group	Workers and non-workers by sex and age-group								
	Total population			Workers			Non-workers		
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
0-14	103	51	52	20	11	9	83	40	43
15 and above	155	79	76	152	78	74	3	1	2
Total	258	130	128	172	89	83	86	41	45

While only 20 per cent of the people below 15 years of age are economically active, almost every adult, whether male or female, contributes his mite to the family economy. A significant feature is the equal participation of women in economic activities of the villagers.

The working population is largely confined to agriculture. Only 4 out of 172 workers are engaged in business, viz., sale of forest produce. Of them, 3 are women. The latter activity is discussed subsequently.

The following table lists the activities of non-workers by age-group and sex:-

TABLE 3

Non-workers classified by their activities, age-group and sex

Description of activity	Age-group		Total
	0-14 years	15 years and above	
(i) Full-time students—			
Males	5	1	6
Females	2	..	2
(ii) Engaged in household duties—			
Males	..	..	..
Females	..	2	2
(iii) Dependents, infants, children not attending school and disabled—			
Males	35	..	35
Females	41	..	41
Total number of non-workers			
Males	40	1	41
Females	43	2	45

Thus the only adult male non-worker is the one who attends the school. There are two adult females who attend only to household duties; others apparently engage themselves in some other economic activities (qualifying them to be classed as workers) in addition to performing household chores. The bulk of the non-workers consists of those who are unable to work because of young age.

In terms of households, 61 out of 63 households are engaged in cultivation as well as business (of selling fuel, etc.). Only 2 households—one in each—are engaged exclusively in agriculture and business. There has presumably been no change in the occupational pattern during the last several generations. However, as many as 12 persons now aspire for occupational change for their progeny. They would have their sons educated to enable them to procure salaried jobs.

Ownership of land

All the families except one possess land. The extent of holding varies from 5 to 50 acres. The average is 30 acres. *Kurwa bari* is often leased to others for a year, and the crops are shared equally. *Kurwa* cultivation can be



47. A coy smile in midst of household chores. The wall of wattle and daub in the left foreground is of the village



48. Ornaments are very popular



49. Reminiscing



50. A couple with their household goods. The two girls on the right are pounding grains



51. Even girls are eager to learn

practised only at intervals (usually of 3-7 years) in any particular patch of land. So, even with an average of 30 acres per family, roughly 8 acres only are available for actual cultivation annually.

Tenantwise ownership of land is noted in the revenue records. But the land is not classified into *Kurwa* and others for each tenant.

The population of the village has been declining steadily. It is not surprising, therefore, that 20 households reported having gained land since the death of their former heads. The tenants have occupancy rights but are prohibited from alienating their lands. The village pays about Rs. 200 annually as rent.

Agriculture

More than eighty per cent of the agricultural land consists of *kurwa bari*. In 1823, Government considered that *Kurwa* land on the hillsides should not be subject to payment of revenue. Thus, the Paharia hill villages were excluded from the scope of the first Settlement of the district completed in 1879 by Mr. Wood. Later, the Paharias themselves preferred to get their villages settled and about 200 such villages came under settlement in 1903. The record of rights regarding *Kurwa* or *Kurao* cultivation (1904) reads as follows:—

In the village the undernoted areas have been set apart as Kurao bari for the period of the present settlement. The Paharia raiyats (tenants) of the village may practise Kurao within the Kurao bari without the permission of the Deputy Commissioner, provided that if they unlawfully practise Kurao beyond the prescribed limits, or if, within the prescribed limits, they practise Kurao in such a way as to cause damage by fire to the remaining forest of the village, the concession hereby granted may be withdrawn.

Till then, *Kurao* lands were unassessed and mauzawar boundary survey of hill villages had not been done. The next Settlement in the 1920's demarcated the village boundaries, settled the lands with the owners, and fixed the rent payable by them.

Kurwa is practised only on sloping hill sides. A particular patch of land is cultivated continuously for two or even three years though, occasionally, only one crop is harvested. Thereafter, the land is left fallow for about five years and then the cycle is repeated. On an average, therefore, a farmer has an effective annual acreage of only two-sevenths of the total *kurwa bari* owned by him.

Not long after the last crop has been harvested, the people begin to prepare the next patch of land in February. The forest is hewn down with axes, paid labour seldom being employed. The trees are cut from a foot or two above the ground level and the trunks, along with other plants, shrubs and creepers, are left to dry. Dried wood is sold, and the remnants burnt. When rains set in, the top soil, recently supplemented by incinerated vegetable matter, is covered with weeds and grass which are then uprooted and left to provide a layer on the calcareous subsoil. Crops are sown in *Sawan/Bhado* (July-August). Holes are dug in the ground with the *Khanta* (locally known as *jugri*) which is a pointed stick with an iron piece at the lower end. A person digs the holes while standing. Seeds are placed in the holes, maize, *ghangra* (*Vigna Catjang*) and *rahar* being thus sown while millets are simply broadcast.

Weeding is not usually practised, and except when the growth of plants is endangered by unwelcome vegetation, it is hardly done at all. As soon as the plants grow up, i.e., from September onwards, people shift to the sites of *kurwa* and make their temporary huts in order to protect the coming crops from depredations by animals. Porcupines, wild boars and deer have to be guarded against. Often watch is kept continuously from raised platforms constructed in the midst of the standing crops. Proficiency in archery is a great practical asset in this work. The crop ripens in December-January, and is harvested with sickles.

There is no sex restriction in *kurwa* operations or in clearing the field, sowing and harvesting. The entire family works as a harmonious unit. Even youngsters lend a helping hand. *Kurwa* cultivation acts as a bulwark in the struggle for existence. It is natural, therefore, that at every stage, adequate measures are taken to seek spiritual blessings. Before beginning to clear the land for cultivation, the presiding spirit of the *kurwa* land is invariably worshipped. An egg, a fowl, or a goat is sacrificed, depending upon the means of the person.

Sowing is preceded by the communal sacrifice of a pig at the *Manjhisthan* by the Sardar. The pig is bought with money raised by common subscription and the meat is shared by all. This is followed by individual sacrifice of a fowl or an egg at the site of cultivation. Similar sacrifices are repeated before harvesting.

Bari I lands and paddy lands are ploughed before sowing. The ploughing is done before

the commencement of rains. Maize is sown in May or June and the crop harvested in September. There is little difference in the yield between *kurwa bari* and *Bari I* lands. Ploughs and bullocks are often taken on hire @ Re. 1 per day from those possessing them. The majority of villagers render reciprocal aid in agricultural practices for nominal payment.

An idea of the total agricultural produce of the village during the year of the survey can be had from the following figures:—

Name of product	Quantity produced (in maunds)
Paddy	60
Maize and Bajra	644
Rahar	45

The yield per acre is approximately 7 maunds in *kurwa Bari* land. The entire produce is locally consumed except for small quantities which may be sold in times of need to fetch ready cash.

Besides the *jugri*, axe (*maso*) and sickles (*tatro*) are used in the agricultural operations. Cattle are used for threshing. Protective measures against crop-diseases and pests are unknown. The seed required is usually obtained on loan.

Forestry

The lands settled with the villagers are forested to an appreciable extent. The people have full rights over the entire forest produce. No royalty or other charges have to be paid for them. As observed earlier, the preparation of *kurwa* fields entails the hewing down of trees. This provides firewood which can be sold.

Outside the settled areas, forests are deemed to be reserved. The reservation is not by the height or girth of trees, but by their variety. The following 23 species of trees are reserved:—

Name of tree	Botanical name
1. Sal	<i>Shorea robusta</i>
2. Satsal	..
3. Kusum	<i>Schleichera trijuga</i>
4. Kohwa	<i>Terminalia arjuna</i>
5. Gamhar-Kasmar	<i>Gmelina arboria</i>
6. Murga	<i>Pterocarpus Marsupium</i>
7. Nim	<i>Melia indica</i>

Name of tree	Botanical name
8. Mango	<i>Mangifera indica</i>
9. Tamarind	<i>Tamarindus indica</i>
10. Jam	<i>Eugenia Jambolana</i>
11. Kend	<i>Diospyros melanoxylon</i>
12. Mahua	<i>Bassia latifolia</i>
13. Hog-plum	..
14. Rola	..
15. Jack tree	<i>Artocarpus integrifolia</i>
16. Asan	<i>Terminalia tomentosa</i>
17. Hesel	..
18. Tilai	..
19. Horo	..
20. Palas	<i>Butea frondosa</i>
21. Teak	<i>Tectona Grandis</i>
22. Sissu	<i>Dalbergia latifolia</i>
23. Tal	<i>Borassus flabellifer</i>

The villagers, however, enjoy the privilege of obtaining tree and timber of even the reserved species for their own use on payment of a royalty equal to half the current rates payable by others. They are allowed to graze their cattle free within the protected forests. They can also fell, convert and remove to their homes, free of charge, all trees and timber of the unreserved species for their own use. They also have the special right to sell timber and forest produce in authorised local *hats*.

To a Paharia of Batbanga, sale of firewood is as important as *Kurwa* cultivation. At the beginning of this century it was remarked that "in many parts they (Paharias) have not enough to live on..... and this is no new feature. Over twenty years ago the Subdivisional Officer of Godda stated that he searched fifty Paharia houses and did not find so much as the food for the evening meal. All were waiting for the return of the women who had carried firewood for sale in the market and would bring back food". The situation may not be as bad now, but the essential dependence on forest produce is well brought out by this observation. When the harvested crops have been consumed, a similar predicament is not difficult to imagine even now in Batbanga. The Survey, however, was carried out in January when the harvested maize was being brought in.

A person from every family usually goes to the market twice a week with firewood collected and made into a convenient bundle which sells for twelve annas to a rupee. Rice, spices,

pulses and fish are bought in the market, depending on the money obtained and other immediate requirements. Fruits are also sold in season.

Income and Expenditure

Rough computations give the figure of Rs. 2,500 as the total monthly income of all the 63 households of the village. The calculation is based on the value of crops and forest produce available to them. There were 258 persons in the village. The *per capita* annual income, therefore, works out to Rs. 116 only, which may be taken to be a fair estimate. The distribution of income, like that of land, is not generally disproportionate, as the following figures will clearly show:—

TABLE 4
Distribution of Households by Income-groups

Income-group (Monthly income)	Households	
	Number	Percentage
Below Rs. 25	7	11.1
Rs. 25 to Rs. 50	48	76.2
Rs. 51 to Rs. 75	4	6.3
Rs. 76 to Rs. 100	2	3.2
Rs. 101 and above	2	3.2
Total	63	100.00

Three households out of every four have an average monthly income of Rs. 25 to Rs. 50. At least one in ten earns even less than Rs. 25. Only one in every eight households has the distinction of earning more than Rs. 50 per month.

The statistics furnished by the villagers tend to show that more than 70 per cent of the income is derived from agriculture, and the remainder mainly from sale of forest produce. The contribution of agriculture may not, in fact, be so high. At least that is the impression one gains after probing into the village economy.

The average expenditure per household is about Rs. 50 per month. It works out to Rs. 3,150 per month for the village as a whole, giving a deficit of more than Rs. 500 per month or Rs. 10 per household. The expenditure is distributed on items of food and drink which take up almost 70 per cent, clothing and light-

ing 10 per cent, and professional pursuits the remaining 20 per cent.

An interesting facet of the expenditure returns is that the cost on drinks is as much as the amount required for cultivation—one-fifth of the total income.

Indebtedness

There is naturally considerable indebtedness in the village. According to statistics collected, eighty per cent of the households are in debt, the average amount being Rs. 39 per household. The incidence of indebtedness is common to all households irrespective of the income-group to which they belong. Debts are taken for cultivation. Often by the time the sowing season arrives, there are no grains left for being used as seeds, and recourse has to be taken to loans. The total amount of loan is Rs. 1,944, of which Rs. 1,320 (including interest) is due to the Co-operative Society, and 36 maunds of paddy have been borrowed in kind from the grain-gola. The total amount of outstanding loan would seem to indicate that the income of the villagers computed earlier had been somewhat under-estimated. The practice of obtaining loans from money-lenders in the market was said to be on the decline. They charged exorbitantly high rates of interest which went up to 75 per cent per annum in some cases. Members of the Co-operative Society are advanced loans on the security of their land at an interest of $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent per annum. The rate of interest for paddy advanced by the grain-gola is 25 per cent per annum.

A Co-operative Society styled as Bartalla Multi-purpose Co-operative Society was set up in 1956. 38 out of 50 members of the Society are the Saurias of Batbanga. The Secretary of the Society is also the Vice-Sarpanch of the Gram Panchayat and the Treasurer is the Pradhan or Manjhi of Batbanga village. The share-capital of the Society in January, 1963 was Rs. 217. Loans totalling Rs. 1,320 (including interest) were overdue from the members from Batbanga. The amount of loan per head varied from Rs. 15 to Rs. 90. It averaged at Rs. 35 per member. The maximum amount of loan was taken by the Secretary of the Society.

CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE.

Trend of population

Batbanga is a declining village. It had 88 families 40 years ago. In 1951, there were 77 occupied houses having 322 persons. In 1961, the number fell to 63 households with 266 persons, i.e., a decline of nearly 18 per cent in its population.

During a period of one year from January, 1962 when the village was first surveyed, as many as 11 adults had died in the prime of their lives. Of them, four were males aged 29, 39, 45 and 59 years, and seven females aged 21, 26, 26, 28, 34, 34 and 44 years. Thus the average age at death was 42 for males and 30 for females. There had been no epidemic in the village and the deaths were ascribed only to vague illnesses. It would thus appear that the death rate is appreciable.

Another sign indicating a declining population is the small number of children. It is considered that for a population just to continue its existing numbers, there must be two children per family. In Batbanga, however, it was found that the average number of offsprings per family was only 1.7.

There is no emigration from the village. In fact, the people do not like to descend to the plains. The Saurias are a patri local people, and it is only rarely that a man leaves his village to take up residence with his in-laws as a *ghar-jamai*. Three families settled in the village

during the present generation. Two have been staying for more than a decade. One person settled a year back. He married in the village and set up his own house, though he works on his father-in-law's cultivation.

Age and sex distribution

The following table gives the age and sex distribution of people in Batbanga:—

TABLE 5

Age-group	Number of			Percentage to total population
	Persons	Males	Females	
0—14 ..	103	51	52	40
15—24 ..	49	25	24	19
25—59 ..	98	50	48	38
60 and above ..	8	4	4	3
Total ..	258	130	128	100

Males and females are very evenly distributed in the total population as also in each of the age-groups. Non-adults constitute as much as 40 per cent of the total population. Curiously enough, this percentage indicates a 'progressive' population. Apparently few live to a ripe old age. Mortality is high among the adults owing to the hard struggle for existence.

Marital status

The table below gives the relevant statistics:—

TABLE 6

Marital Status by Age-group and Sex

Age-group	Persons				Males				Females			
	Total	Un-married	Married	Widowed	Total	Un-married	Married	Widowed	Total	Un-married	Married	Widowed
0—14 ..	103	101	2	..	51	50	1	..	52	51	1	..
15—24 ..	49	17	31	..	25	12	13	..	24	5	18	..
25—59 ..	98	..	91	5	50	..	47	3	48	..	44	2
60 and above ..	8	..	6	2	4	..	3	1	4	..	3	1
All ages ..	258	118	130	7	130	62	64	4	128	56	66	3

NOTE—1 female in the age-group 15—24, and 2 females in the age-group 25—59, are divorced.

Out of 258 persons, 140 were married at one time or the other. Of the remaining 118, as many as 101 belonged to the age-group 0—14. Thus, only 12 males and 5 females remained unmarried after the age of 15. It is noteworthy that not a single person over 24 years of age in the village has remained unmarried.

Only 3 divorced women have been shown in the table. This figure represents only those women who were living separately at the time of the survey. Divorcees or widowed persons who remarried subsequently have been treated as married.

Education and Literacy

Only 3 males from the village were returned as literate in the Censuses of 1951 as well as 1961. A Primary School had, however, just been started in the village, as also a night centre for adult literacy. At the time of the survey, there were 22 literate persons including 2 females. 3 had passed the Primary standard. The percentage of literacy is below 10. Even so, Batbanga is considered to be one of the 'advanced' villages in the area.

Disease and medical care

Maternity cases are never hospitalised nor are the services of a qualified physician called at the time of illnesses. There is a medical centre at the Block headquarters of Taljhari where a qualified doctor is available for consultation.

The brother of a young man, himself "Primary passed", was found to be suffering from tuberculosis. The patient had been examined in the nearest Mission Hospital at Taljhari and also given some treatment. But the person could not afford the prolonged treatment necessary in such cases. At the time of the Survey, he approached the Investigator to enquire if necessary funds could be provided from official sources. This shows that the people are not at all averse to modern medical treatment but have to go without it because of their abject poverty.

No indigenous system of medicine with any acknowledged expert seemed to exist, but herbal remedies for common afflictions are almost universally known. Diseases, particularly epidemics, are usually ascribed to the neglect of enjoined sacrificial offerings to spiritual deities.

Family structure

Households are generally small in size, the average number of persons per household being

4 only. The table below gives the distribution of households by number of persons and sex. Nearly one household out of every three consists of 2-3 members or even less. The largest number (37), however, belongs, to the category of households with 4-6 members.

TABLE 7

Households by the number of Persons and Sex

Category	House-holds	Persons	Males	Females	Average number per household
Single member households	3	3	2	1	1
Households with 2-3 members	19	51	24	27	3
Households with 4-6 members	37	174	86	88	5
Households with 7-9 members	4	30	18	12	7
Total ..	63	258	130	128	4

48 households, or nearly 76 per cent of the total, are of 'simple' type, i.e., consisting of husband, wife and unmarried children. Three households belong to the intermediate category, i.e., consisting of a married couple with unmarried brothers/sisters and parents. Only 12 households appertain to the 'joint' category, i.e., consisting of married couple with married children/brothers/sisters. Thus, joint families constitute a bare 19 per cent of the total number.

Usually a person sets up his own establishment on getting married and there are no economic ties that bind the relatives together. In their very nature, the economic pursuits do not envisage joint enterprise. Indeed, *Kurwa* cultivation is perhaps the easiest from the point of physical labour involved. The collection and sale of firewood is also an individual enterprise. In spite, however, of a large number of separate small families, the village itself is a well-knit entity preserving its traditional form of social Government and village functionaries.

Intra-family relationships

It has been observed that marital ties are not very binding and far from the sacramental association of marriages in orthodox Hinduism and Christianity. The marital life is none the less blissful because it is insecure. For a people

who live from hand to mouth and for whom there is hardly any security in regard to the satisfaction of basic material wants, insecurity in social life is hardly deserving of any consideration. As long as man and wife live together, they are happy and as soon as they fail to pull on well, they just separate. The system is unique and effective in its very simplicity. Children are well cared for and treated fondly. Just as the wife is a full partner in the economic pursuits of the family, so the husband lends a helping hand at home, and looks after the children. There is no hard and fast line of demarcation of duties between the husband and the wife. Ordinarily, a Hindu wife would be agreeably surprised, if not shocked, if her husband offered to clean the household utensils. It is normally considered to be her exclusive duty, and perhaps privilege. Not so among the Paharia women.

On one occasion, sitting and chatting with a young man, and feeling hungry, the Investigator took some *choora* (unleavened rice) and offered some to the young man also. But the latter did not join in the repast. On being asked why he did not, he intimated that he would keep it for his two-year old daughter who would relish it. A handful of *choora* was carefully tied up in a corner of the napkin he was carrying, and the knot seemed to symbolise his abundant affection for his child. What made the situation more poignant was that only half an hour earlier, the young man had refused a tip of four annas for taking the Investigator round the periphery of the village settlements.

Inheritance of property

As in other patrilineal societies, only males inherit among the Sauria Paharias of the village. A father usually assigns a portion of the family land to his son for his maintenance after he gets married and separates, but the formal right to the land accrues only after the father's death. A son gets the family hut, land and such articles of the house as are not consigned to the earth along with the deceased father. When there are two or more sons, the house goes to the eldest since on him devolves the duty of looking after the widowed mother and unmarried sisters till such time as they do not find homes of their own. The dependants are lodged in this hut: the son usually has his own house already. The eldest son also gets a larger share in the landed property. It is one and a half times the share of each son. Thus, if 7 acres of

land have to be divided among 3 sons, the eldest will receive 3 acres and the others 2 acres each. No share is kept aside for the widow or daughters. The extra bit given to the eldest son is meant to provide for their maintenance. A daughter inherits the property only if she is the sole surviving issue, and if she settles down in her ancestral home with her husband. A further limitation on inheritance by daughters is that there should be no male collaterals surviving; otherwise they get preference. In the absence of any heirs, the property vests in the village, and the village officials determine the question of its reallocation.

Religion

The villagers, in common with the majority of Sauria Paharias, returned themselves as Hindus. In the past, they were described as animists and according to Risley, "the religion of the Maler is animism of the type common among Dravidian tribes".

Some of the villagers described *Bhagwan* (God) as the supreme being, but their concept of God was vague. Apparently, the Hindu terminology has been borrowed without assimilating its true meaning or significance. Goddess Lakshmi is supposed to reside in people's homes. Goddess Kali is also worshipped. Living at the headquarters of the Sardar, the villagers have apparently been more influenced by the beliefs of Hinduism than the people of other Sauria Paharia villages. Reports relating to such villages do not mention about the acceptance or worship by the Sauria Paharia of deities of the Hindu pantheon.

The basic religion of the villagers has, however, remained virtually unchanged. There are the essentially benign spirits (*Gosains*) and the ancestral spirits (*Jiwe Urkkya*) to whom sacrificial offerings are made whenever crops are reaped, or major agricultural operations begun, or any crises arise. The term *Gosain* is of Sanskrit origin. But apart from the nomenclature, the essential beliefs and ritual practices are largely unaffected by any extraneous influences. Some of the *Gosains* are: *Beru Gosain*, *Bilpu Gosain*, *Bindke Gosain*, *Raksi Nadu* and *Singpate Nadu*.

The first three are represented by the Sun, the Moon and the stars: no images representing them are installed, nor are idols made for *Raksi* or *Singpate Nadu*. Uncarved stones



52. Preparing for a goat sacrifice



53. Application of vermilion marks: the forging of the marital bond



54. Swaying in the rythm to the haunting kunes of the flute



55. A group of villagers

(Facing page 71)

represent these two deities. The Raksithan and the Manjhiasthan are their respective abodes.

Goddess Lakshmi was reported as the household deity by 57 households: Maya by the remaining 6. However, no images are installed. The deities are worshipped along with the ancestral spirits, for whom a small corner of the room is set apart.

The superstition is that failure to propitiate the Gosains properly may lead to calamitous results. The bhuts (malign spirits) always bring disaster on their victims who can be cured only by trained gurus, aided by proper sacrifices.

Finally, there is great belief in witchcraft. A woman may acquire the powers of controlling evil spirits, having learnt the art from another witch, and may cause disasters on her enemies. Actual cases of alleged practice of witchcraft could not, however, be ascertained.

There are four main sacred spots in the village. The Manjhiasthan or Manjhithan, also known as Singhasthan located in the middle of lower tola, is the chief sacred spot. Stone pieces are kept here, symbolising Singpate Nadu, the Gosain specially venerated in the Bandana festival. This place is symbolic of the poverty of its devotees heretofore as it is of walls or even a roof.

At the Kankithan, on the eastern extremity of the village open to the air and the sun, sacrifices are offered in the month of Agahan after the maize crops are harvested.

Charkhathan is the abode of Charkha Gosain, who is paid homage after an epidemic of smallpox has subsided. There are two wooden posts about 25 feet high joined by a horizontal bar, like a goal post. A cow is sacrificed and the sacrificial blood offered at the two bases of the posts by the Gurait. The sacrifice is made on community basis, and all the villagers contribute to the cost. Devotees also move around the horizontal bars as a mark of respect. Now pigs are preferably sacrificed.

Raksithan is the abode of Raksi Nadu, who is worshipped in the month of Bhado. The stone-pieces are cleaned, anointed with vermilion and offered libations of liquor and arwa rice. A fowl, a pig or a goat is sacrificed by the village as a whole. The Gurait officiates at this function.

The village priests are the Kando-Manjhi or Manjhiye (not the temporal Manjhi or the

headman), the Kotwar or Gurait or Pujahar who performs the actual sacrifices and is assistant to the Kando Manjhi, and the chalwe who is an assistant to the Kotwar. None of the functionaries attain their positions by inheritance, but have to be selected by the village according to certain rituals. Incense is burnt at the house of the Pradhan and the candidate for any of the posts that have fallen vacant comes and offers more incense. If all this burns well and up to expectation, he is accepted to the post aspired for. Notwithstanding their special position in the spiritual life of the village, the functionaries are treated as equals in day-to-day life.

Women are debarred from ritualistic observances and prohibited from being present at religious performances. This is not indicative of a lower status given to them, but is caused by the belief that women excrete impure blood during menstruation and are not fit for the ennobling rituals. Even the husbands of menstruating women are debarred from participation. Women are not eligible to worship even the family deities at any time.

The religious beliefs and festivals of the villagers are not much different from those of their dominant neighbours—the Santals. Hinduism as such does not seem to have cast a great influence in the village. One important reason seems to be that, being situated far and high up, the contact with others outside is somewhat limited. There is hardly any participation by the people in the major Hindu festivals.

Community festivals

The ritualistic performances in many cases end in feasting and merry-making, in dancing and drinking. Yet the one important festival is Bandana which lasts for four days. It is observed in December/January. A red fowl is first offered by the Pujahar to Raksi Nadu. Then the orgy of uninhibited enjoyment follows. Friends and relatives of both sexes come from distant villages to add to the gaiety of the occasion. The dates for the festival are fixed so as to avoid clash with the neighbouring villages. Young women seem transformed due to the care bestowed on their sartorial and personal presentation. The men, not to be out-done, attire themselves in their best clothes, and put on garlands, combs and chains specially for the occasion. Drinks flow freely. There is gay abandon as the bodies sway to and fro to the rythm of the drums in an almost continuous

round of dancing. Old lovers meet and new bonds are forged. For once, there is no 'forbidden' fruit.

Intra-village relations

As observed earlier, the religious functionaries are treated on par in everyday life of the village. Similar is the case with the secular heads. There is no occupational diversity nor vast difference in incomes. If the Sardar does not himself go to collect fire-wood, he loses respect. Whatever may have been the impression of earlier observers, the people hardly deserve to be called slothful or lazy, though steeped in tradition they are.

There are two *tolas* in the village. They are adjacent to one another and, for all practical purposes, constitute a single unit. Only the ossuaries are separate, but there is no hard and fast rule about this either. All religious and social ceremonies are performed by the village as a whole, and not *tolawise*.

Village Administration

Sardar. Batbanga is a constituent village of Brindaban Bungalow. The Sardar of Brindaban and Taljhari Bungalows is a resident of Batbanga, and has an extensive jurisdiction. He is paid a stipend of Rs. 10 per month by Government. He can be removed from office. In 1911, a report was filed with the police that a corpse was found hanging from a tree. On reaching the spot, they did not find the corpse. It was said that jackals had eaten it up. Since the duties of the Sardar included proper reporting of crimes, the then Sardar was removed from office for dereliction of duty. All the *Manjhis* of the area were called to select a new Sardar. 63 out of 71 *Manjhis* attended the meeting, but could not decide on whom to select. It could be done only later. Ordinarily, however, a son succeeds to the father's post. Thus Bhola Singh, the present Sardar, is the son of Deva who was the Sardar before him.

Manjhi. The *Manjhi* or the *Pradhan* is also appointed by Government which, however, only gives its approbation to the popular will. Thus, in the last settlement record of the village, it is mentioned that "The *Manjhi* is Messa son of Surja with whom all the raiyats are satisfied. He is confirmed in this appointment."

The *Manjhi* collects rent from the villagers and deposits it with the Government. He is

entitled to a commission of 8 per cent but never gets it since payments are not made in time.

The Sardar and the *Manjhi* are the temporal lords of the village, and the chief guardians of the social code.

Panchayat. There is a statutory Gram Panchayat, known as Batbanga Gram Panchayat, with a jurisdiction over 11 hill-villages and 3 plains-villages. The former are inhabited almost exclusively by Sauria Paharias and the latter by Santals. The Panchayat was established in 1954, and in the first election one Matla Hansda, a Santal of village Gangatia (a plains-village) was elected Mukhia. However, in the next election held in July, 1962, not only was Bhola Sardar of Batbanga elected Mukhia, but the entire Panchayat was dominated by the Saurias. Bhola Sardar contested against the previous Mukhia who stood for re-election. It was reported that the latter could secure only 45 votes and thus lost. It was also averred that the majority of Santals, dissatisfied with the previous Mukhia, voted for Bhola Sardar. The Saurias as a body refused to descend from the hills for casting their votes. The Vice-Mukhia and the Vice-Sarpanch are also Saurias of Batbanga. The Sarpanch is a Santal. And thereby hangs a tale. It was stated that Jita Jabra, the Sauria Vice-Sarpanch actually wanted to file his nomination paper for election to the office of Sarpanch. Being trustful, though unlettered, he asked a person of the opposite camp to write out his nomination paper which the latter did but instead of mentioning "Sarpanch" as the office he wanted to contest for, he wrote "Panch". Thus he was elected only as a Panch, and made Vice-Sarpanch later by the group of the elected Panches.

It is thus seen that the Saurias have made their presence felt in the Panchayat and their members are adequately represented in that body. Further, it is one of the few instances in which the offices of the Sardar or the traditional leader of a group of Sauria villages and that of the Mukhia are combined in a single person. The Vice-Sarpanch (of Batbanga) is also the Secretary of the Bartalla Multi-purpose Co-operative Society, the bulk of whose members are from Batbanga.

The Sardar is an unpretentious young man of 30, keenly interested in the development of the area under his charge and rather alive to the possibilities of State help in that direction.

The present group of Panchayat leaders has had little time to prove its worth. Already some

differences were reported between the Mukhia and the Sarpanch, the latter a Santal. The Panchayat Sewak (a paid Government employee) could not produce the papers relating to the number and nature of cases referred to the Sarpanch as, according to him, the Sarpanch was deliberately keeping them with him and hampering the work of the Panchayat.

Grain-gola. There is a Kalyan Grain-gola at Taljhari under the Welfare Department of Government. Paddy is given by it on loan to the villagers on 25 per cent interest per annum. It is optional for the loanee to return the loan

in cash or kind. In 1963, 19 villagers had taken 36 maunds of paddy, which were presumably used for consumption as the people have little paddy land in their possession.

Library. A library has started functioning in the village since December, 1962: books worth Rs. 50 have been given to it free of cost by the Block. These consist mainly of literature for neo-literates. The library and the social education centre, which strive to promote literacy among all sections of the population, are being looked after by one Mahesh Kumar Malto, a middle-passed boy yet to settle in life.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Level of Social Awareness

Though the number of formally educated persons in the village is rather negligible, the inhabitants of Batbanga are moving with the time. All but 10 heads of households know about the Anchal and Thana headquarters, and well above half, the Subdivisional and District headquarters. Living in the Damin area under the special protective care of Government throughout the British rule, people have not been benefited by recent land reforms measures. There never was an effective zamindari in their area.

The Community Development Block is there, but the range of its activities becomes very limited in Batbanga. Agricultural practices can hardly be improved in the terrain for which the existing method of cultivation is well suited. Its main achievements are the setting up of a school and a co-operative society. Measures to improve the water-supply met with failure due to the rocky land. More than half of the family heads are members of the Co-operative society. Lack of money for initial investment, and vague suspicion are among the reasons why others have not joined. These are likely to be overcome in the not-too-distant future. A good

deal of interest has been evinced in the statutory Gram Panchayat.

Recent social enactments regarding untouchability, succession and adoption are quite unknown in the village.

Conclusion

A few lines can hardly sum up the joys and sorrows of a community so vibrant with life and yet decadent in spirit. Morose and glum countenances are evidence of the continual struggle for existence that is their fate. The secluded hill-top which is their abode, the rocky slopes from which they must perforce extract whatever crops they can, the arduous journeys that take them to the markets and back to their homes, are all aspects of the well-nigh crushing and cruel environments. The story of man and civilization is largely a record of his triumph over environments, but the villagers of Batbanga have no modern instruments and appliances wherewith to make life more livable. All this has obviously resulted in a gradual shrinking of its population. One only hopes that the trend will be checked in time, if only to preserve a unified segment in the midst of larger and more exciting variety that is India.

Monograph on Village

JAMKANALI

(In Pakur Subdivision : District Santal Parganas)

Field Investigation and First Draft

CHANDRESHWAR PRASAD SINHA, M.A.

INVESTIGATOR

Supervision, Guidance and Final Draft

R. N. MISRA

OF THE BIHAR CIVIL SERVICE,
DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT OF CENSUS OPERATIONS, BIHAR

Editor

S. D. PRASAD

OF THE INDIAN ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE,
SUPERINTENDENT OF CENSUS OPERATIONS, BIHAR

PHOTOGRAPHS S. D. Prasad.
 Shyamlanand.
 Public Relations Department, Patna.

MAPS A. K. JHA

Period of field survey—March|April, 1962

CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER I : THE VILLAGE	
Introducing the village	81
Location	81
Physical aspects	81
Flora and fauna	83
Size and number of households	83
Residential pattern	83
Communications	84
Important public places	84
Sources of water	84
History of the village	84
CHAPTER II : THE PEOPLE AND THEIR MATERIAL EQUIPMENTS	
Ethnic composition	86
Language	86
Housetype	86
Dress	88
Ornaments	88
Household goods	89
Food and drink	89
Birth	90
Initiation into the tribe	91
Marriage	92
Death	94
CHAPTER III : ECONOMY	
Land	97
Forest	97
Agricultural land	97
Other lands	98
Ownership of land	98
Livestock	98
Factors influencing economic life in the village	99
Livelihood classes	99
Agriculture	100
Blacksmithy	101

	PAGE
Income and expenditure	101
Indebtedness	101
CHAPTER IV : SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE	
Age and sex distribution	102
Growth of population	102
Marriage	102
Disease	103
Education and literacy	103
Family structure	103
Inheritance of property	104
Leisure and recreation	105
Religion	106
Festivals	106
Intra-family relationship	107
Organs of democratic decentralization	107
Voluntary organisations	108
CHAPTER V : CONCLUSION	
Conclusion	109
INSET TABLES	
1. Households by tola and community	83
2. Number of Santal households by sept	86
3. Distribution of houses by the number of room and family members, communitywise.	87
4. Age at marriage	92
5. Distance of marriage	93
6. Area of the village by different kinds of land	97
7. Area under each kind of seasonal crop	97
8. Distribution of households by the size of their holdings	98
9. Livestock	98
10. Distribution of workers and non-workers by community, sex and age-group	100
11. Distribution of households by income group	101
12. Average income per household by income-group	101
13. Expenditure	101
14. Age-structure by sex	102
15. Marital status	102
16. Size and composition of households	103

PHOTOGRAPHS

1. A village street (Kamartola)	86
2. Santal Houses	86
3. Decorations and embellishments in a house	87
4. Decorations—close up	87
5. Decorations—close up	87
6. Santal girls showing tattoo marks	89
7. A group of young women	88
8. With the bow and arrows	89
9. A Santal girl showing her tattoo marks	89
10. Ripe in age	90
11. Preparing the mixture for house repairs	90
12. Village group	91
13. Grains being dried in the sun before being ground	91
14. In the courtyard. Note the style of dress	91
15. Mealtime is quite informal and joyous	92
16. Even humbler dwelling with straw roofs, and mud walls are well cared for	92
17. Contemplation and appraisal	92
18. A hair cut	92
19. Household utensils	93
20. Ornaments	93
21. Care of hair is important to all women	102
22. Poultry is popular	102
23. The neglected Manjhisthan	103
24. A village dance	103
25. A marriage party	106
26. The bride and the groom	106

LAY—OUT OF THE VILLAGE

JAMKANALI

(NOT TO SCALE)



REFERENCES

- RIVER.....
ROAD.....
SETTLEMENT AREA.....

A. K. JHA

CHAPTER I

THE VILLAGE

Introducing the village

Among the scheduled tribes of Bihar, the Santals are the most numerous. Their population is 1,541,141 comprising 36.65 per cent of the total tribal population. Even among the scheduled castes, none except the Chamars has larger number. The Santals are found not only in Bihar, but also in West Bengal, Assam and Orissa. Among the scheduled tribes in India, the population of the Santals is second only to that of the Bhils.

In Bihar, the chief home of the Santals is the district of Santal Parganas which is named after them. This district was constituted as a separate administrative unit in 1855 and even today special laws, particularly regarding tenancy rights, are in force there. More specifically there is an area of about 1,500 square miles, known as *Damin-I-Koh* which was demarcated as far back as in 1837, and administered as a Government estate having certain special safeguards for its predominantly tribal population. In the beginning, its inhabitants were mostly Paharias. From the end of the eighteenth century, however, the Santals began to infiltrate into this area, so much so that now the *Damin-I-Koh* is predominantly Santal. The Damin area falls in four Subdivisions, namely Dumka, Pakur, Godda and Rajmahal. There are ten Anchalcum-Development Blocks (to be called Anchal for short) covering this area. These are Kathikund and Gopikandar in Dumka Damin, Amrapara and Littipara in Pakur Damin, Sundar Pahari and Boraijor in Godda Damin, and Borio, Taljhari, Barhait and Pathna in Rajmahal Damin.

Village Jamkanali was selected for the present Survey as a Santal village. It lies in the Damin area, where the Santals have been most successful in retaining their traditional institutions. Its inhabitants are predominantly Santals.

Location

Jamkanali is situated at Latitude 24° 35' North and Longitude 87° 37' East. It lies in Parerkola Bungalow of Amrapara Anchal and Police Station in Pakur Subdivision. A 'Bungalow' consists of a group of villages presided

over by one *Parganait*. As an administrative unit, it is now practically obsolete. It is, however, a factor still in the social life of the Santals.

By road, Jamkanali is about 11 miles from the Anchal headquarters at Amrapara. It is 3 miles to the south-east of Parerkola which is on the 40th mile of the Dumka-Pakur road and about 8 miles from Amrapara. The Subdivisional headquarters at Pakur is 27 miles away towards the north-east. Dumka, the district headquarters, is 43 miles south-east. The nearest railway station is at Pakur which lies on the Kiul-Burdwan section of the Loop branch of the Eastern Railway.

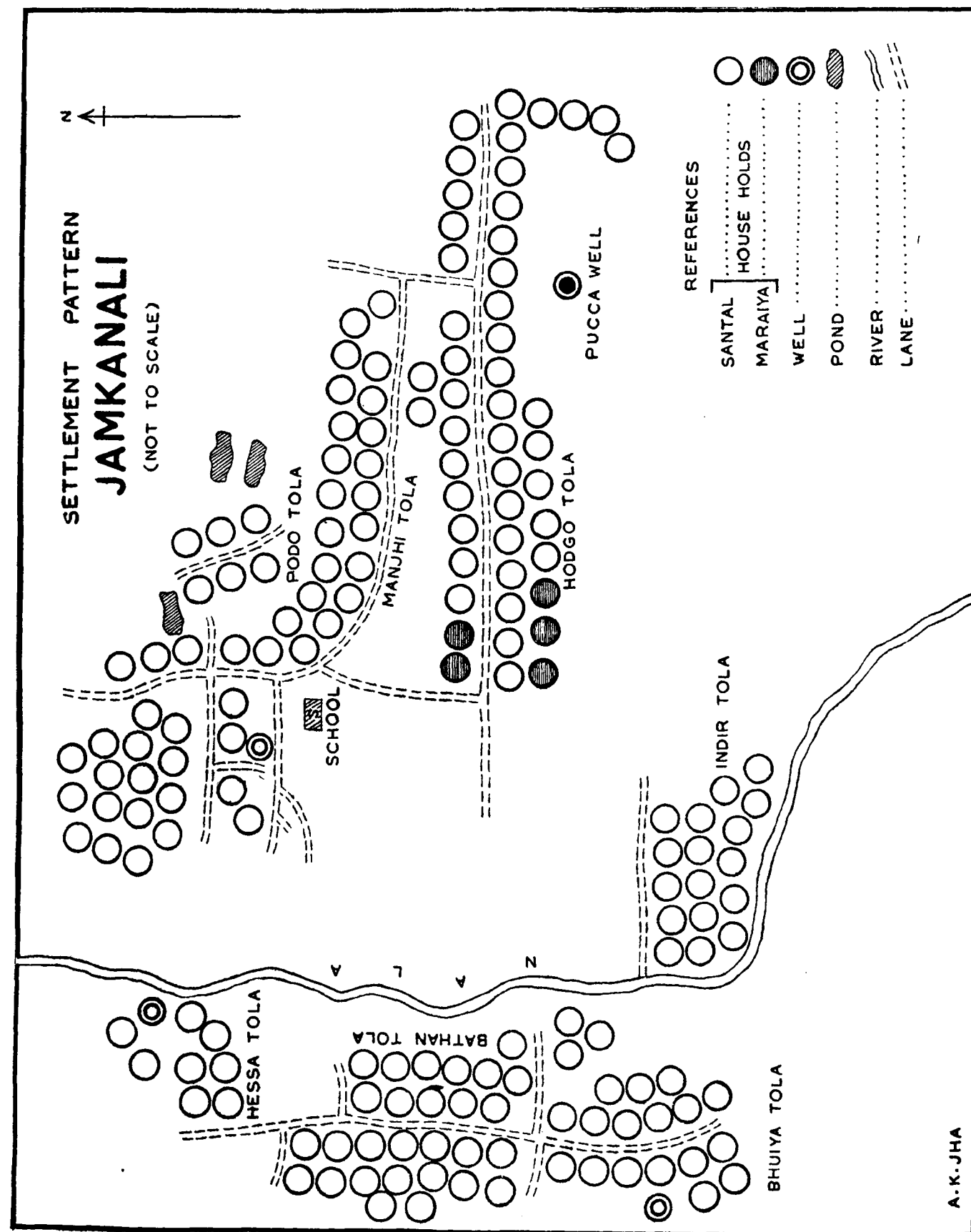
Weekly markets (*hats*) are held on every Wednesday at Parerkola. The average attendance is about 2,000 persons. The market at Amrapara is held bi-weekly on Tuesdays and Saturdays while the one at Littipara, about six miles from Parerkola towards Pakur, weekly on every Monday.

The area is mostly hilly. The undulating expanses are inhabited largely by aboriginal tribes. Modern institutions are conspicuous by their absence. Amrapara has a High School, and Dumka a College.

Physical aspects

Although there are hills rising to about a thousand feet in the west, Jamkanali itself is situated on an undulating surface, whose average elevation is only about 300 feet above the mean sea-level. A stream passes through the village flowing from north to south. It divides the village into two parts. The low-lying paddy fields, which are naturally the best, are found on either side of the stream.

The settlements are distributed in different *tolas* and are situated on higher land. Though there is no forest in the immediate vicinity of the village, trees are found everywhere. Not only are they interspersed among the paddy fields, but many clusters can be seen even in the main areas of settlement. The soil is not of uniform character. It is laeferitic and reddish in colour in some places, and clayey with blackish appearance in others.



The total annual rainfall (as recorded at Amrapara) was about 111" in 1959, 99" in 1960 and 75" from January to September, 1961. The rainy months are from June to September.

Flora and Fauna

Wild animals are not found in or near the village although hunting parties are organized on occasions. Hares and wild boars are the main games. These are hunted with bows and arrows. Pigeons, Pandooks and *Havials* are some of the birds which find a place in the villager's menu.

Size and number of households

The area of the entire revenue mauza, Jamkanali, is 1,818 acres or nearly 3 square miles. The population, as returned during the present survey, consisted of 909 persons in 173 households. The density of population, therefore, works out to 320 persons per square mile which is only a little below the density of the district as a whole.

Out of 8 villages constituting the statutory Gram Panchayat, Jamkanali is the largest in area and biggest in population. Only 2 of the constituent villages have an area of more than 1,000 acres each.

Residential pattern

The houses are distributed in seven tolas or hamlets. Proceeding south-east from Parerkola along the District Board road (which passes through Jamkanali and extends up to the village Bara Paharpur), the first tola to be met is *Manjhi-tola*, also known as *Sarak-tola*. It came to be known as *Manjhi-tola* since the house of the *Manjhi* or the village headman was formerly located here; now he lives in *Hessa-tola*. The houses of this tola are situated on both sides of the road; hence the alternative name, *Sarak-tola*, meaning the hamlet on the road.

A little to the north of this tola is *Podo-tola* which contains only six households. Proceeding from *Manjhi-tola*, about a quarter mile away, there is a road branching off west from the District Board road. Along this village road, on either side of it, lies *Hodgo-tola* or *Kamar-tola*. It owes its name to the existence of *Kamar* or *Maraiya* households in it. About a mile to the south-west by road lies *Indir-tola*. This came to be so called on account of the existence of ditches (known as *Indir* in Santali) at its site in the past.

While the aforesaid four tolas lie to the east of the stream, the remaining four tolas are to its west. Proceeding from Parerkola, one has to cross paddy-fields to reach *Hessa-tola* which is situated in the north-western corner of the village. This tola, consisting of eight households, derives its name from the abundance of *Hessa* (or *Peepal*) trees in the area. It was earlier known as *Hissaghutu*. Further south-west on foot-paths across the fields, one finds a village road a little before reaching *Bathan-tola* where formerly *Bathans* or cow-sheds used to be located. Going along the road, at a distance of about half a mile to the south, lies *Bhuiya-tola*. It is believed that the Bhuiyas, who inhabited the village before the advent of the Santals, resided there. No Bhuiyas live in the village now.

According to some old villagers, the tolas to be settled first by the Santals were *Manjhi-tola* and *Hodgo-tola*. The other tolas sprang up later as the number of inhabitants grew. However, none of the tolas was reported to be less than fifty years old. Not one was founded during the lifetime of any of the living villagers.

The following table gives the number of households in each tola community-wise:—

Name of Tola	Number of households		
	Total	Santal	Maraiya
Podo Tola	6	6	..
Manjhi Tola	46	46	..
Hodgo Tola or Kamar Tola	48	43	5
Indir Tola	17	17	..
Bhuiya Tola	20	20	..
Bathan Tola	28	28	..
Hessa Tola	8	8	..
Total	173	168	5

Evidently, the village is comprised almost entirely of Santals, there being only five households of Maraiyas or Kamars in *Kamar-tola*. The two oldest tolas, *Manjhi-tola* and *Kamar-tola*, contain more households than the six others put together. The hamlets do not appear to have been formed on clan or lineage basis.

Communications

The internal roads of the village are all *kutcha* paths about 10 feet wide. Only *Manjhi-tola* and *Hodgo-tola* are accessible by road from Parerkola. There is another road running from the northern end of *Bathan-tola* to *Bhuiya-tola*, but it is not connected with any other road.

According to the statistics collected, there are 3 bullock carts in the village. Parerkola is well connected by bus with Amrapara and Dumka in the south-west and Littipara, Hiranpur and Pakur in the north-east. Both the State Transport and private buses ply regularly on this road.

Important public places

Near the middle of *Manjhi-tola* on the western side of the road there is a *Manjhi-than*. It consists of a small hut about 8 to 10 feet square of which only the wooden frames were standing at the time of the survey, the thatched roofing having given way. It contained a platform with two small stone pieces facing west, that is, away from the road. It was reported that offerings are made at this place by the *Manjhi* on festivals. The stone pieces represent the *bongas*. They are also described as symbolic of the original couple which produced the race of Santals.

There is no other place of worship except the *Jahir-than* which is simply a cluster of *sal* and *kend* trees. It was left intact and uncleared at the time of the original settlement in the village. The *Jahir-than* is the abode of various *bongas* who are mostly malevolent and so precautions have to be taken against their wrath by regular propitiation. It was found that all the houses of Santals have their entrance away from the road, that is, none of them open on the road. It is believed that if an entrance is provided towards the road, the *bongas* will find easy access to the house.

The *Charagah* or grazing ground is a distinctly marked and reserved area in the village. It extends over 162 acres. It was recorded as *Gochar* land in the record-of-rights prepared at the time of the last Survey and Settlement Operations about 40 years back. It cannot be appropriated by any person for his own use. The entire village has the right of grazing their cattle on this land.

There is no fixed cremation ground or graveyard. The disposal of the dead is done by

both the methods. It is usual for persons to cremate the corpses near the bank of the stream. Burials preferably take place near it. Graves are not meant to be permanent. Indeed the passage of a few years leaves little or no trace of the interred bodies. Since burial invariably takes place in barren land, there is little possibility of the graves being desecrated.

There is a Primary School in the village. Its building was under construction in *Manjhi-tola*. At the time of the survey, it was being run in the court-yard of a villager of *Hodgo-tola*. An adult literacy centre is functioning in *Bathan-tola*. It is supervised by the teacher of the Lower Primary School.

There is also a Co-operative Society in the village. The headquarters of the Gram Panchayat and the Halka (charge under the Village Level Worker and Karmachari) are at Chandpur.

Sources of water

Water is obtained from wells, tanks and the stream. Surface wells are known as *Jharna*, while those of artesian type in the depressions as *Dari*. These are generally located in lowlands and water is available almost throughout the year. There are 8 *Jharnas* and 5 *Daris* which are perennial, while 3 others become dry during summer. One *pucca* well was under construction in *Manjhi-tola*; only its platform remained to be constructed. It was aided from the funds of the Community Development Block, and meant to be used primarily for irrigation purposes. There is no restriction on the use of any of these wells.

Of the three tanks in the village, two are being renovated under the auspices of the Community Development Block. The tanks and the stream are mostly used for washing and watering the animals.

History of the village

All the households except one were settled in the village for more than five generations. This observation applies to the Maraiyas as well. It appears, therefore, that the village was constituted into a Santal settlement about 200 years ago, and must have been one of the earliest villages to be settled by them in the locality. It was said that before the Santals came, the Paharias and the Bhuiyas inhabited it though they were few in number. While there is no trace of the former, the name *Bhuiya-tola*, perhaps, testifies to the previous existence of

Bhuiyas in the village. The village was said to be known as *jhakator* in those times. Although it was claimed that the Santals came and purchased the land from the earlier settlers, it is more likely that the latter took shelter in the seclusion of the hills and forests when faced against a stronger horde of virtual invaders.

The name Jamkanali is derived from *Jam* or *Jamun* and *Kamali* meaning boundary, that is a village bounded by *Jamun* trees.

No legends concerning the origin of the village came to light. There is, of course, a legend about the origin of the Santals. The essential part of the story recounting the beginning of the human race from the original couple created by *Jiu Thakur* (the supreme God) seemed to be known but considerable extraneous interpolations appeared to have crept in. Thus the *ex-parganait* of the *bungalow*, in recounting the story, stated that after the couple were created they were entirely innocent and made nothing of their nakedness. It was only after the women had partaken of a forbidden fruit that the concept of shame crept in, whereupon God sent clothes to them. This is probably derived from the Christian story of Adam and Eve. A former resident of the village, now a teacher in a school at Amrapara and settled there, mentioned that after children were born to the original couple, each child selected particular items of food prepared in a feast. The castes and tribes emanated from them in

accordance with the nature of the food selected. This idea has apparently been taken from the Paharia legend concerning the origin of mankind; otherwise, the story of *Marang Buru* appearing and providing intoxicating liquor to the original couple after which they co-habited and produced children, was recounted as told in several texts. The seven sons and daughters of the original couple paired off and gave rise to seven septs among the Santals. Four septs were added subsequently.

Regarding the Maraiyas, no precise information could be gathered. Four septs were, however, mentioned among them. These are—Soren, Tudu, Sanr Matarwa and Som-kata Magahia. From this it would appear that the Maraiyas are simply Kamars (Lohars). If the last named sept has any significance, it must have originated from Magadh of the past. They have been in this area for long, as is evidenced by the existence of the sept names, Soren and Tudu, which are common among the Santals as well. In any case, the Maraiyas do not have any strong affiliations with the Santals. It is very unlikely that they are a part of the Santal community. Even now they have a distinct language which is a corrupt form of Hindi and is easily intelligible to a Hindi-knowing person. Moreover, their mode of worship has a likeness to the worship of *Bhagwati* by orthodox Hindus. The altar consists of three successive platforms of earth, built one upon the other and anointed with vermilion marks.

CHAPTER II

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR MATERIAL EQUIPMENTS

Ethnic composition

Jamkanali is an almost entirely Santal village. The only other community is that of the Maraiyas who constitute a bare 2.6 per cent of the village population.

The physical characteristics of the Santals have been described by Col. E. T. Dalton (1) in the following terms:—

The Santals are noticeable for a great vagueness in the chiselling of the features, a general tendency to roundness of outline where sharpness is more conducive to beauty, a blubbery style of face, and both in male and female a greater tendency to corpulency than we meet in their cognates. Their faces are almost round: cheekbones moderately prominent; eyes full and straight, not obliquely set in the head; nose, if at all prominent, of somewhat a retroussée style, but generally broad and depressed; mouth large, and lips very full and projecting; hair straight and coarse and black. Mr. Mann notes of them, and I concur in the remark that their cast of countenance almost approaches the Negro type. The females, he says, have small hands and feet, and are ox-eyed, and these are characteristics which the tribes linguistically allied to them do not possess. Mr. Hunter describes them as about the same height as the ordinary Hindu, but I should feel inclined to consider them as rather below that standard; he further well characterises them, as "created to labour rather than to think, better fitted to serve the manual exigencies of the present than to speculate on the future or venerate the past."

According to H. H. Risley (2), *In point of physical characteristics, the Santals may be regarded as typical example of the pure Dravidian stock. The proportions of the skull, approaching the dolicocephalic type conclusively refutes the hypothesis of their Mongoloid descent.*

The Santals, in common with most other tribes of Bihar, are racially a branch of the proto-Austroloid family.

With the Mundas and Hos, the *killi* or sept is often the basis for the setting up of a village. The Santals of Jamkanali, however, have as

many as eight septs. These are indicated below:—

TABLE 2

Number of Santhal households by sept

Name of Sept	No. of Households		
Murmu	..	..	46
Hansda	..	..	33
Tudu	..	..	23
Soren	..	..	22
Marandi	..	..	16
Kisku	..	..	11
Hembrom	..	..	11
Baski	..	..	6
Total	..	..	168

Language

The Santals have their own language known as Santali. It was reduced to writing for the first time in the latter half of the last century by the Christian missionaries working among them. Among the Austro-Asiatic languages of Bihar, Santali has been classified by Grierson as a dialect of Kherwari in the Munda Branch of the Austro-Asiatic sub-family of languages. It is believed to be the richest and the most expressive among the tribal languages of Bihar. Santali can be offered as a subject in the High School examinations. The literature is available in Devanagri as well as Roman scripts.

The Maraiyas are distinctly lighter in complexion than the Santals. Their mother-tongue is a corrupt form of Hindustani.

Housetype

The villagers are very particular about their houses which are looked after and maintained with the greatest care. They are planned as of old and, generally speaking, cannot be said to be very satisfactory from the point of view of ventilation. It is worthy of mention that a Santal spends most of his time in the open air.



56. A village street (Kamartola)



57. Santhal Houses



58. Decorations and embellishments in a house



59. Decorations—close up



60. Decorations—close up

(Facing page 87)

The walls are made of hardbaked mud, about a foot wide. They are always trim and neat, being plastered with mud to a high degree of smoothness. They are often painted with charcoal, the black stripes contrasting effectively with the grey of plastered clay. Simple, yet decorative, designs are often made on them in white or red (see Photograph 3). All the houses in the village have mud walls except one, the walls of which are made of wattled bamboos. It is owned by a lone widow who lives on other people's doles. There is not a single brick-walled house.

The roofs are usually made of thatched grass (or stalks of paddy) placed on rafters of bamboo and supported by wooden posts. Country-made tiles of the semi-circular variety are seldom used; but if used at all, they are superimposed on the thatched roof. This is in direct contrast with the tribal houses of Chotanagpur in which only tiles are used. The use of Raniganj tiles, which are rectangular in shape, has found its way in the village, and as many as 21 houses have roof made of Raniganj tiles (see Photograph 24). When these are used, the straw or thatch grass is not required at all.

The doors are usually made of pieces of bamboo, but the inner apartment is securely fixed with wooden door which also has suitable locking device.

The houses lie along the village lanes but the entry is always provided away from the road. Standing in a lane, therefore, one sees only the backs of houses. Walled courtyards are not common. There is some open space near every house-entrance, and often three or four houses are constructed in a manner so as to leave an enclosed space in between for common use. This is utilised by the women folk for their much cherished privacy.

The accommodation provided in the houses is rather scanty. Almost fifty per cent of the houses consist of only one room each. This room is thus used as the store as well as the kitchen. Household goods are stored in a verandah, running along one side only of the house and enclosed by walls. About thirty-eight per cent of the houses are two-roomed and less than twelve per cent have more than two rooms each. Table 2 gives the distribution of houses by the number of rooms and family members, community-wise:—

TABLE 3

Distribution of houses by the number of rooms and family members

Sl. no.	Community	Total no. of households	Total no. of rooms	Total no. of family members	Households with one room		Households with two rooms		Households with three or more rooms	
					No. of H.H.	No. of members	No. of H.H.	No. of members	No. of H.H.	No. of members
1	Santal	168	281	885	81	315	65	394	22	176
2	Maraiya	5	8	24	3	10	1	6	1	8
	TOTAL	173	289	909	84	325	66	400	23	184

It is seen that while the average number of family members is 3 per room, the average in single-roomed houses is 4, in two-roomed houses 3 and in others 2 only. There are 18 houses with 3 rooms and only 4 houses with 4 rooms each. The Maraiyas are not much worse off than the Santals from the point of available living space.

Writing about a Santal village, Bradley-Birt remarked (3), "No two houses are alike. Each, built at the whim and fancy of its owner, has its own individuality, limited though the Santal's idea of architecture and the variety of material to hand must necessarily be". This observation is equally true of Jamkanali. Yet,

in diversity, there is also an unmistakable element of uniformity in the design of houses.

The Manjhi of the village has a one-roomed house, measuring 18 feet by 8 feet, with a 3 feet wide verandah along the side containing the door. The house of a villager with two rooms also had a 3 feet wide verandah along one side, the rooms measuring 20 feet by 8 feet and 20 feet by 6 feet. No windows were provided, and even during the day a lamp had to be lit to see what lay inside.

Separate cowsheds are always provided. The one attached to the two-roomed house mentioned above measured 20 feet by 6 feet and had low walls, not more than 4 feet high.

A fire had broken out sometime before the village was first visited in April, 1962. 8 new houses had lately been reconstructed. It was found that traditional designs were adhered to in all cases.

Dress

The Santal is generally held to be industrious by nature. Historically, this virtue helped him in finding a strong foot-hold in an alien land. Yet, he never apparently learnt to make clothes for himself. A Santal even today has to depend upon whatever he can purchase in the market for meeting his dress requirements.

The usual dress for men is simply a loin-cloth (*dhoti*) or perhaps even a shorter garment (*gamcha*). These are worn well above the knees. Bodies are usually bare, and even in winter a person looks more to the warmth of his smug, cosy and fire-lit (albeit smoky) bedroom than to any elaborate clothing. In Photograph 24, persons can be seen wearing *dhoti* and *gamcha*, but there is the third man in trousers and a T-shirt. Such dresses are, however, more of an exception than the rule. A turban of white cloth, or sometimes just a *gamcha*, is put on as head-wear.

Dalton has described the dress of Santal women as follows (4):—

The women wear ample Saris, a large thick cloth not less than six yards in length with a gay red border. One half of this forms the lower garment secured at the waist, but not so as to impede the free action of the limbs; the other half is passed over the left shoulder, leaving the right shoulder arm and part of the breast free, and allowed to hang down in front. It is not, as with Hindu maidens, used also as a veil.

Saris, as described above, are hardly in evidence in Jamkanali. As in the Mal Paharia village of Kumarbhaja, a Santal woman's dress consists of two garments. The lower one (*parahan*), about 2½ yards in length, is wrapped round the waist and reaches just above the ankles. The upper garment (*panchi*) is of similar dimensions. It covers the breasts and the left shoulder, and a part of the back, the two ends being tied in the front. All the girls in Photograph 7 are seen wearing this dress; so also the women in Photograph 24. Only one woman in the latter plate (third from left) is seen in a

Sari and blouse. In this respect, therefore, the Santals of Jamkanali are not so sophisticated as the Mal Paharia women of Kumarbhaja. It may be noted that the two girls in Photograph 6 have arranged their *panchis* so as to show their tattoo marks; this form of wearing *panchis* is not usual.

Children begin to wear some clothes after the age of 2-3 years. The girls follow their mothers' sartorial pattern. For the boys almost anything to cover their nudity suffices.

Any kind of footwear is hardly ever used.

Ornaments

The average weight of ornaments sustained by a Santal woman was estimated by Dalton to be about twelve pounds. This is not inconsiderable by any standard, though the ornaments may be made mostly of brass and bell metal.

A belle of Jamkanali is, however, not so well supplied with ornaments. It even appeared that she was not much given to personal adornment with ornaments. A few flowers tucked in the hair seemed to make greater appeal than the scanty ornaments worn by the maidens in Photograph 7.

A few typical ornaments are shown in Photograph 20. These are mostly made of silver and were brought out as the proud possessions of some affluent households. These are, from the left:—

(i) Hairpin used for fixing the bun of hair at the nape of the neck. Only the circular portion is visible from the back, when fixed.

(ii) An anklet (*baink*), belonging to a young girl. No designs are engraved. The ornament is of brass.

(iii) *Hansuli*, worn round the neck and hanging over the breasts. Made of silver, it has designs hardly different from *Hansulis* used elsewhere.

(iv) Wristlets (*Sankha*) have to be screwed open for wearing; are quite heavy.

(v) *Harhari*, or a silver chain worn round the waist.

Some other ornaments are:—

(i) *Pagra* and *putki* or rings worn in the lobes of the ears.

(ii) *Makuri* and *nothia* or rings for the nose. Plain in design, they are worn in the left nostril.

(iii) *Sikris* or chains and garlands of beads and *munga* for the neck; and



61. Santal girls showing tattoo marks



62. A group of young women



63. With the bow and arrow



64. A Santhal girl showing her tattoo marks

(iv) *Baju* or armlet.

Brass bangles are also worn, not only by women but also by some men for whom this is the only ornament in use.

The following figures give some relevant information about the use of ornaments:—

Number of households—		
(i) Using ornaments	..	109
(a) both men and women using	..	27
(b) only men using	..	3
(c) only women using	..	79
(ii) Using no ornaments	..	64
Total number of households	..	173

Women get themselves tattooed when quite young, always before reaching puberty. One reason advanced for the young age at which tattooing is got done is that the portion above the breasts is also tattooed. This must, therefore, be got done before the girls grow up. Tattoo marks can be seen on the person of the girl on the left in Photograph 6. The chests only are tattooed.

A Maraiya girl aged about 6 years was found having six circular tattoo marks along the clavicles. Each design consisted of a circular filled in mark with 16 radiating spokes. Her parents had to pay twelve annas to the tattooer, an itinerant woman, for this.

The design for tattoo marks is first made with a small pointed piece of wood and soot-ink, and a needle is then used to prick along the pattern. Turmeric is applied on the treated part and the wounds heal up within a fortnight.

Household goods

The platforms built along the outer wall of every house on the road-side serve as convenient sitting place and render chairs quite superfluous. Low stringed stools or *machias* are, however, possessed by almost all households as also low wooden seats known as *pirhas* and stringed cots. There is nothing else by way of furniture in any of the houses.

Lanterns are now widely used. Only about one-fourth of the households still stick to earthen lamps or *dibris*. Torches, petromaxes, kerosene stoves, radio sets and even bicycles are unknown. Mosquito-nets and toilet soaps are also unheard of.

Every household has a *jata* or stone grinder and *dhenki* or pounding implement. These are usually kept in the enclosed verandah. No household can do without *hasua* or slicer and *silaut* or stone grinder for condiments. The cooking vessels are usually of earthenware but for eating and drinking, brass utensils are invariably used. These generally have high rims. Some utensils and household goods have been shown in Photograph 19.

Food and drink

The *Santal Parganas District Gazetteer* (5) gives a list prepared by Mr. Boddington of the kinds of food taken by the Santals. These are:

- (i) Cereals (19 kinds), besides a large number of varieties of rice;
- (ii) Vegetable curries composed of—
 - (a) leguminous plants (14);
 - (b) cultivated vegetables (18); and
 - (c) leaves of wild plants and trees (19);
- (iii) Mushrooms (24);
- (iv) Resins (10);
- (v) Fruits (wild or cultivated) (65);
- (vi) Tubers (25);
- (vii) All domestic animals except dogs, horses, cats, and wild animals including tigers, leopards, jackals, foxes, five kinds of rats, etc. (30);
- (viii) Snakes (2);
- (ix) Lizards (1);
- (x) Tortoises and crocodiles (6);
- (xi) Birds with eggs of every bird eaten (72);
- (xii) Fishes (at least 30);
- (xiii) Wild grains, fruits, etc., eaten during times of scarcity (21);
- (xiv) Oil-seeds and kernels (16); and
- (xv) Ordinary Indian spices.

Notwithstanding the vast array of items that a person may partake of, much of the forest produce mentioned is no longer available in sufficient quantities and the people have to rely more upon what they grow or breed than what they can gather from the forests.

Rice is the chief crop of the area and therefore, the main cereal consumed. Maize, millets and pulses are also eaten, but not what

Cereals are boiled and prepared as *bhat* and eaten with some vegetable or meat curry. These grains also provide the much cherished alcoholic brews called *pachwai*.

Meals are taken twice a day—one at about noon and the other on return from work in the evening just after sunset. Only 3 Santal households reported taking more than 2 meals a day. They are comparatively much better off; indeed, one of them had promised in January, 1963 to contribute Rs. 500 to the National Defence Fund. Parched grains (*muri*) are partaken of as snacks.

Pig's meat is the most relished item of food, and is preferred to beef or mutton. It forms an essential dish in most feasts. It is also sold in the Parerkola market at Re. 1 a seer. Cows are not usually milked. Animal fats are supplemented by oil from the oilseeds grown by the people. The habit of taking sugar has not yet made its way, but molasses are used.

Pachwai has, perhaps, the most sustaining influence on people's lives. It is prepared from any cereal to which *bakar* or herbs are added. Often, when the cereals have been exhausted, a drink of *pachwai* serves as a meal. Fermented toddy, *khajur*-palm juice and liquor prepared from *mahua* are the other intoxicants used.

Tobacco chewing is universally prevalent among adult males. Raw tobacco is mixed with lime, pulverised on the palm and sucked by placing the mixture between the lower lip and the gum. *Chutis* are the local brand of cigarettes. They are made of whole *sakhua* (sal) leaves stuffed with raw tobacco, and are giant-sized.

Birth

The prospective arrival of a new member in the family becomes apparent from physiological changes in the mother. Soon after, the head of the family seeks supernatural blessings through the *naike* or the village priest. A fowl, some *arwa* rice (made from paddy which has not been pre-boiled) and vermillion are offered to the *bongas* and the *naike* with a special exhortation for bestowing care on the mother and the life being fostered within her. The anxiety for the well-being of the woman is thus symbolised, and it extends to the avoidance of hard physical labour in later stages of pregnancy, particularly in the case of the first issue. Yet, the

normal household chores continue to be cheerfully borne by her and she manages to maintain her health despite the fact that no specially nutritive foods are provided. No restrictions are enjoined on the father before the child is born.

Children are born in the family residence, separate structures not being improvised for the purpose. A woman usually stays in her husband's place. If there are no female relatives to look after her, she may go to her father's house. The midwife is a local elderly woman, a veritable repository of the experience of generations. Though old-fashioned in her methods, she is nonetheless efficient in her job.

Boys are preferred to girls and this is reflected in the traditional remuneration for the midwife. It is a piece of cloth three cubits long, a wristlet and a maund of paddy for a boy. The last item is reduced to half a maund in the case of a girl. Notwithstanding the customary remuneration for the midwife, she gets much less nowadays. She may even be paid in cash only. An informant mentioned having paid Rs. 3 only for all the labour put in by the midwife.

The birth of a child pollutes the entire village and it becomes ceremonially unclean; so no communal worship can be performed until the period of pollution ends. The entire family is rendered unclean, and no villager will eat or drink in the house. And finally, in the family itself, the mother and the child are segregated until the purificatory ceremonies are concluded.

The *naike* is summoned after a child is born. He is informed of the event by the presentation of a cupful of mustard oil. The cup is made of *Sakhua* (sal) leaf. It is then the *naike's* job to propagate the news throughout the village.

Ceremonial cleansing is traditionally enjoined on the fifth day for a boy and on the third day for a girl, but it may take place also on the day of birth itself or on the seventh day for a child of either sex. The villagers, particularly the village officials, are invited on that day and a barber shaves the beards of all present, starting with the *naike*, proceeding along the line of village officials and ending with the host-father. Finally, the child is brought by the midwife who also brings two leaf-cups. One contains water and the other is meant to keep



65 Ripe in age



66. Preparing the mixture for house repairs



67 Village group



68. Grains being dried in the sun before being ground



69. In the courtyard. Note the style of dress

the child's hair. The entire head of the child is then shaved. The midwife ties a piece of thread on the arrow with which the child's umbilical chord had earlier been cut by her. The father then brings mustard oil in a leaf-cup and the persons present go to the stream, anoint themselves with oil, and bathe. The midwife heads the women who similarly anoint themselves and bathe. The leaf-cup containing the child's hair is set afloat in the stream. The midwife brings a pot of water from the stream, mixes a little rice-flour in it, and sprinkles some with three mango-leaves in the room of confinement and on the breasts of the men and women present. The order of sprinkling is maintained as at the time of shaving. The women are treated according to the social gradation of their husbands.

After this, *neem-da-mandi* is prepared. It consists of *arwa* rice boiled with tender leaves of *neem* tree. It is then kept in five leaf-cups. A cup each is offered to (i) *Marang Buru* (the great hill), (ii) the paternal grand-father, (iii) collaterals of the grand-father, (iv) father, and (v) the ancestral spirits of the original home. These are all relatives of the child's father, who makes the offerings. The contents of the leaf-cups are added to the pot of cooked rice and partaken of by the invitees. Thus, the defilement is wiped out.

The child is named on the same day. The names given are those of grandparents according to the following scheme:—

Birth-order of the child.	Relative of the child whose name he takes.
1. First son ..	Father's father.
2. First daughter ..	Father's mother.
3. Second son ..	Mother's father.
4. Second daughter ..	Mother's mother.

Those who come afterwards get the names of brothers and sisters of the father or the mother, as the case may be. The name given is announced by the midwife.

Initiation into the tribe

O'Malley (6) states in his Census Report of Bengal, 1911, "The Santals have a solemn ceremony called *Chacho Chhatiar*, by which the

Santal is formally recognised as a member of the community. There is no age fixed for the ceremony, but it must precede marriage. If it has not been performed, a Santal can neither be married nor cremated but has to be buried."

The essential feature of this ceremony was the education of Santal children in their traditional history. It was done by a *guru*, a designation borrowed from the Hindus but adapted to suit the Santal society. A Santal *guru* is a man who is supposed to know certain things, e.g., what should be recited at certain ceremonial functions, and who is able to act as a reciter when called upon to do so. The story of the Santals as recounted by a *guru* named Kolean was recorded in Santali in 1887 by Rev. O. L. Skrefsurd, translated into English by Rev. P. O. Bodding and published by the Oslo Ethnografiske Museum in 1942, in the "Traditions and Institutions of the Santals". But the practice of handing down the traditions from generation to generation orally was reported by Skrefsurd to have fallen into disuse as far back as in 1887. Now the idea of imparting knowledge of the traditional history at the time of *Chacho Chhatiar* has almost completely vanished. As for its instructional value, it may well be compared with the *Upnayana* ceremony among the Brahmins which marks the initiation of a Brahmin boy into his caste, but which usually leaves him as blissful and ignorant as before. Indeed, an educated school teacher of Jamkanali, working elsewhere, reported that often the *Chacho Chhatiar* is held when a child is less than a year old. As a matter of practical expediency, a person gets the ceremony performed for a number of his children at a time. Sometimes, several persons pool their resources together and a common ceremony is gone through for all their uninitiated children. When a person decides to get the ceremony performed, he invites the *Manjhi*, offers him *pachwai* and informs him of his desire. The village messenger or *Gorait* is then sent to summon the villagers who assemble at the person's house. All the invitees are anointed with oil and turmeric, starting from the *Manjhi* and his wife who are seated on a mat. This is done by some unmarried village belles. Then *pachwai* is served in as many rounds as the number of children undergoing the ceremony, each round consisting of four leaf-cups. To this is added the *pachwai* brought specially by the grandparents of the children. With their spirits thus elated by the exhilarating beverage, the people begin to sing and dance.

A song recorded by Skrefsurd (7) is given below:—

Along here, along in this direction are Nilgai tracks,

Along here, along in this direction are Nilgai hind tracks.

Track, track the Nilgai tracks,

Follow, follow the Nilgai hind tracks,

On the tank embankment are Nilgai hind.

On the river bank are tracks of Nilgai hind.

Tie on him (her), O motha, a golden bell.

Fasten on him (her) O mother, hollow sounding bells.

Now the guru recites the ancestral story. When it is concluded, he asks the people to admit the children to their brotherhood. He pleads on their behalf (in the words of Kolean) (8):

Now we beseech you, on the day of cleansing at birth, the day of social initiation, the day of dying, the day of death, we shall work and earn to squeeze out the beer, we shall work and earn to draw water, we shall work and earn to stitch the leaves together. We are imploring you, the village people, we were like crows, we have become white like paddy-birds; you village people be witnesses.

The villagers signify their approbation by indulging in another round of beer almost as a mode of ratification, and the ceremony concludes with further singing and dancing.

There are no youth dormitories among the Santals, and no formal training is imparted to the children. Nevertheless they pick up the knack doing things.

Marriage

The villagers lead a rather uninhibited life both sexually and otherwise. Various kinds of marital unions have been socially recognized to provide, as it were, for all kinds of contingencies. There is no practice of betrothal in vogue. Statistics relating to the age at marriage are given below.

TABLE 4

Age at marriage

Age at marriage		Santal		Maraiya	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
1. Average	..	25	22	24	21
2. Minimum	..	17	14	22	20
3. Maximum	..	30	25	25	23

A Santal is born into the sept of his father and it is decreed that he must choose his mate from a sept other than his own. Generally, persons connected up to three generations cannot marry. This debars mating between cross-cousins and with sister's daughter. Levirate is permissible, and one of the cases of polygynous marriages sprang from this custom. Lal married his elder brother's widow when pressed to do so by his guardians but he had earlier set his heart upon another girl of his choice and hastened to marry her also soon afterwards. Marrying a younger sister of one's wife is also permissible.

Monogamy is the general rule, there being only two persons in the village with two wives living. Of them Lal has been mentioned already, and Munshi (also the *Jog Manjhi* of the village) is the other. Here again, Munshi's second wife was his personal choice.

The following kinds of marriages are recognised:—

(1) Ordinary marriage (*bapla*), also known as *Kiring-bahu* (buying a bride), in which formal negotiations precede the marriage for which a bride-price has to be paid. This is the most common method of marriage.

(2) *Tunki-dipil* is the poor-man's marriage, in which the girl is brought to the boy's house and much of the paraphernalia and expense of an ordinary marriage are dispensed with.

(3) *Ghardi-jawae* is a marriage in which the boy is virtually adopted by the girl's family with whom he comes to reside.

(4) *Nirbolok*, literally meaning running in, is of two kinds. If a boy and girl have become of one mind and the former hesitates to marry, the girl informs the *Jog-Manjhi* who tries to fix up the union, the marriage ceremonies of a normal *bapla* being undergone. Again, if a girl has been left in the lurch after a period of great intimacy and physical union, she approaches the *Jog-Manjhi*; and if he can persuade the errant boy to marry, so much so good. The marriage is then performed in the usual way; otherwise, fines are realised from the errant youth's father.

(5) *Itut* or *iputut* implies application of *sindur* by a boy to a girl's forehead without the co-operation of the village community. This may occur if the couple are agreed but anticipate parental objections. On the other hand, a doubtful suitor may also seek recourse to this method rather than pursue the affair which may not possibly culminate in success.

(6) Marriage by elopement occurs when a couple flee to another place to live as man and



70. Meal-time is quite informal and joyous



71. Even humbler dwelling with straw roofs and mud walls are well cared for



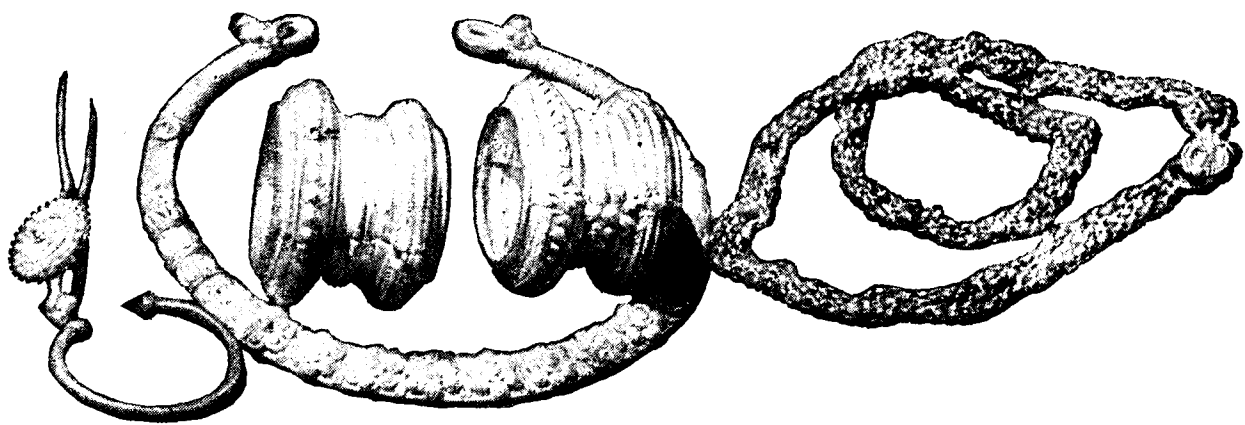
72. Contemplation and appraisal



73. A hair-cut



74. Household utensils



75. Ornaments

(Facing page 93)

Life. A woman elopes to avoid social ostracization and does it only if she cannot lawfully marry her paramour. She may be married already, or belong to the same sept as the man or even be related to him. If such a couple are caught, double the bride price is payable by the man as a fine, but only if the marriage is otherwise permissible. In case they are related, it is enjoined upon them to separate failing which they and their progeny are outcasted for ever.

(7) Finally, there is the marriage of divorced and widowed women. Bachelors marrying such women have to pay only half the customary price. The marriage is no real marriage, being known as *Sanga* or temporary hire.

Despite the existence of various methods by which a man may seek his mate, recourse to any but the ordinary *bapla* has seldom to be undertaken. Resistance by villagers or parents is rare when the boy and the girl have become of one mind. Indeed the ex-Parganait of the Pargana which includes village Jamkanali could not (or perhaps, would not) cite any case of marriage being performed by other than the usual *bapla* method. An educated Santal of the village, however, married in *Ghardi-jawae* form. He stays with his parents-in-law and is a school teacher at Amrapara.

There is no village exogamy, and almost one-third of the marriages have been contracted in the village itself. More than ninety per cent of the marriages have taken place within a radius of 15 miles as the following table will show:—

TABLE 5					
Distance of marriages					
Distance from village		No. of marriages		Percentage of total marriages	
		Santal	Maraiya	Santal	Maraiya
Same village	..	63	..	31	..
Up to 3 miles	..	40	..	20	..
4—6 miles	..	26	..	13	..
7—9 miles	..	46	2	22	40
10—12 miles	..	15	1	7	20
13—15 miles	..	6	1	3	20
Over 15 miles	..	9	1	4	20
Total	..	205	5	100	100

There have been no consanguineous marriages in the village.

Sex relations are not very rigidly restricted. Girls who get a child while unmarried are called *cupi chadur* or tail divorced, and only half the usual bride-price is payable for them though the marriage is performed as between a bachelor and a spinster.

It has been said that “to strive after the possession of a married woman and to elope with another man’s wife is customary” (8). Comments are uncalled for.

An account of the negotiations for marriage and the ceremonies attendant thereupon is given below:

The boy’s father begins to look out for a suitable bride for his son as soon as the latter is eligible. But usually the boy finds a girl for himself, and his preference becomes well known. Even so, the formal procedures are customarily followed. The girl’s father is approached through a mediator called *raibar*, who merely puts forward the proposal. Final agreement is reached at a joint meeting of the parents and male and female relatives of the boy and the girl, who are also present. The meeting usually takes place in a market unless both the parties belong to the village itself. The amount of bride-price is mutually agreed upon. It was said that till ten years ago, the usual bride-price was Rs. 12. Now the minimum is Rs. 18, and higher amounts are realised if the bride has some exceptional attributes.

A few days afterwards, the girl’s father and other senior relatives visit the boy’s house. The boy is presented with a *Dholi* and a turban by his future father-in-law. Others give some money. The visitors are received with great courtesy and depart only after having been treated to the choicest food and drink the host can produce.

The date of marriage is even now fixed as in old times. The groom’s father sends a knotted string to the girl’s father. The number of knots indicates the number of days which will elapse before the ceremony. One knot is untied as each day passes so that there is no confusion.

A marriage shed (*Mandwa Khunti*) supported on four bamboo posts is erected in the bride’s house by some youngmen, and is decorated by young maidens. A wooden pole rising about 6 feet above the ground is fixed near the entrance of the house. Leaf-cups containing paddy are kept in them. If the grains sprout after a few days, the omen is favourable: it foretells that the bride’s

will bear fruit; or else, her married life may be doomed to barrenness.

The boy comes to the bride's house on the appointed day with a party of relatives and friends of both sexes, known as *bariatko*. He is attired in new clothes and is well-groomed. Before going to the bride's place, he is taken round the houses in the neighbourhood. The ladies of these houses are ready with *gur* (molasses) which the groom tastes as he goes from house to house. Thus the newcomer is welcomed. The good wishes of the people are symbolised in the sweetness of *gur*.

The boy is then taken to his bride's house and made to sit on a wooden *pirha*. His mother-in-law and other elderly female relatives rub mustard oil and turmeric on his body. As this is concluded, the girl's younger sister or cousin makes a pretence of shaving the groom and paring his nails. She tries to make a fool of him and cuts jokes. After this the groom is bathed and given new clothes.

The actual marriage ceremony consists of application of vermilion on the bride's head and forehead by the groom, amidst cries of "Haribol" (*speak Hari*: take the name of God). Elders shower paddy grains on the couple during the ceremony. The couple, who are supposed to have fasted during the whole day, now sit down together to share a meal. This symbolises the severance of the bride's sept-affiliations to her father and the forging of new bonds with her husband.

There is no place for the village priest in the marriage ceremony except, of course, as an honoured guest. The institution of marriage has little spiritual or religious import.

The *bariatko* is entertained to the best ability and means of the host. The occasion is one of merriment and revelry in which the host-villagers participate with full co-operation.

Death

Beliefs concerning death show signs of assimilation of foreign ideas among the Santals. According to these, the *Thakur* ordains the life-span of each person in this world. After death, a person is transported to "the other world, where he (*Thakur*) judges about our good and bad deeds and gives us a place in accordance with them."

In the words of Kolean (9), "when I lived in the village Asonlea in the Pandra country,

I was dead for three days, after having been ill..... When I died, I went to the other world, to a bad place. There was a very large door into that prison-house. When I had gone inside, they at once shut the door. I saw a very large house, big like a country. I saw places for inflicting different kinds of suffering. I saw a cavity like an immense trench for cooking. There was fire in this, and in this fire cavity a countless number of persons were thrown down. Climbing with hands and feet they were trying to get up and out of it, but *Marang Buru* was stabbing them, meeting them with an iron fish-spear; thereby they were getting still more suffering.

"Seeing this I became awfully afraid and was fidgeting to get out; I was unable to get out, because the door was shut, and soldiers were standing at the door. Just then they opened the door to bring a new person in. O mother, I saw that from my body and outside a thin thread was stretched out: Catching hold of this thread I at once crossed under their feet and came out. I escaped, I ran all I could; I came back to the world; I got well."

One hopes that the brief purview that Kolean had (in a delirium?) of the life awaiting him hereafter was not in the least deserved by him. However, the vivid description of the tortures lying in store for the wicked can hardly fail to strike a note of similarity with the punishments detailed in Hindu mythology for each kind of offence against the social code.

It is still generally believed that death can be caused by witches. Cases of persecution and beating of witches, sometimes even to death, are not unknown even at present.

When death becomes imminent, the doors of the house are kept open. A way is thus provided for the spirit to depart in peace and leave the family residence rather than continue to haunt it. This appears to be in direct contrast with the practice prevalent among the Mundas and the Asurs, who recall the spirit of the dead and give it an honoured place among the plethora of household spirits that are venerated on all ceremonial and festive occasions.

The dead body is usually cremated. Information about the death is given to the village headman who asks the *gorait* to summon the villagers. They come armed with axes to be used to procure fuel for the cremation.

The body is anointed with oil, draped in new clothes and placed on a cot. The earthly

possessions of the deceased are also kept by his side. These include clothes, utensils, bow and arrows, axe, flute, and other implements belonging to him. A nominal amount of money is also kept. Meanwhile, the women of the house prepare a powder consisting of ground turmeric, roasted cotton-seed and paddy. This, along with a fowl, a burning rope of straw, and some thatching grass is kept in a worn-out *soop* (winnowing fan), and carried to the cremation ground.

Four persons, usually close relatives, carry the cot on their shoulders to the end of the village-street where two roads meet. Here all the women of the house and of the village anoint the deceased with oil and turmeric and put a *windur* (vermilion) mark on the forehead. Henceforth, men only participate in the funeral ceremonies. The *Ojha* exorcises the dead one with the fowl that has been brought, waving it three times over him.

The body is then carried to the cremation site. If the deceased owned a pond or a tank or a low rice-field with running water, he is preferably taken there. If not, the bank of a river serves the purpose, for cremation must take place near water. Wood is brought and a funeral pyre running north to south is constructed. The logs are kept together by four poles, one in each corner. Then the hands, the feet and the face of the heir of the deceased are washed. The body is lifted, carried round the pyre three times and placed on it with the head towards the south. (The Hindus cremate their dead with head lying to the north). The clothes, the ornaments and other possessions are then removed for being auctioned subsequently. The genitalia are covered with a branch: pieces of wood are kept on the breast, stomach, waist and feet. The villagers gather round the pyre and the *Ojha* exorcises them by waving the fowl thrice. Then the fowl is nailed to the south-west corner post of the pyre, and the *Ojha* completes his work by breaking the cot on which the body was carried.

"Thereupon, the heir breaks off a sedge-culm and, uncoiling some threads of the fringes of the cloth of the dead one, he twists this round the edge. Having kindled this, he sets fire to the mouth of the dead, while looking away to another side. It is called *ag mukh* (*ag* means fire and *mukh* mouth, both Hindi words). After this all the relatives, and then others, throw a branch of firewood on the

pyre, and proceed to kindle it. The men recite: "Here then, we have all of us given this a branch of firewood; do not keep in long: go like the wind."

While the pyre is burning, the villagers get themselves shaved. When the cremation is concluded, the heir rinses the remaining bones with water and pours turmeric water and milk on them. Three pieces of bones, of the skull and collar bones, are kept in a small earthen pot which is covered with a potsherd. This has a hole in it so that the deceased may breathe. A crab-straw or special kind of grass is inserted in the hole so that the spirit can wander in and out through it. The remaining bones and ashes are thrown into the water.

The winnowing fan in which the fowl and the burning straw rope had been brought is placed upside down at the centre of the pyre site. The carriers of the body stand on it in turns and dig round it. The last one to do so hacks the winnowing fan and leaves it there. The remaining powder of the roasted cotton seed and paddy is sprinkled at the site, as also some cowdung mixed with water.

The vessel containing the bones is carried to the copse outside the village and buried there. After bathing, the mourners congregate at the end of the village street. A small fire is lit in which *sal* resin is thrown, and the people are fumigated by it. Thus purified, they proceed to their houses. The belongings of the deceased are sold at half or less price, or sometimes auctioned. The proceeds are utilized for providing refreshments in which all villagers except the family members of the deceased partake. A castrated goat or pig may be purchased but often the preference is for exhilarating beverages.

A purification ceremony, called *tel nehan* (literally meaning "oil bathing", and taken from Hindi) is held on the fifth day. The villagers gather at the house of the departed and the men are shaved. Then they proceed to bathe in two groups separately of men and women. The men take with them three cakes made of pounded and flattened rice boiled in oil, *sal* leaves and tooth-brush twigs, as also some earth (used as soap for washing their hair) and oil. The *sal* leaves are placed on the edge of the water. An oil-cake and a tooth-brush twig are kept on each leaf. The leaf and some soapy earth are then offered with the left hand first to the dead, then to *Pilchu Haram* and *Pilchu*

Budhi (the original couple) and *nally* to *Marang Buru*. The latter are exhorted to look after the dead person who is now under their care.

The people then return to their homes and after taking food, reassemble at the dead person's house. The spirit of the deceased is invoked and a person gets "possessed" by it. Simultaneously, two other persons also become "possessed", one by *Marang Buru* and the other by *Pilchu Haram*, and they give out their assumed identities. The one possessed by the spirit of the deceased is, however, silent until some water is sprinkled on him and he receives a pat on the back. On disclosing his identity, he is asked how he met his end. If he has died a natural death, he says: "I have died of my own accord". If, however, a witch has been responsible for untimely death, he replies, "there was no room for me in the eyes of the people; therefore, I went". The curiosity of the assembly thus satiated, drinks are offered first to the possessed, then all round. Finally, the deceased is informed that his remains will be consigned to the Damodar River and he assures a safe journey. The spirits then depart.

After this, the people make a bag out of some of the dead persons' clothes and assemble at the end of the village. The women carry water, milk and turmeric in brass cups. They proceed to the place where the bones had earlier been buried and fetch the pot. The bones are taken out and the women pour water, milk and

turmeric on them. The bones are then placed in a new pot by the heir and brought home.

In the evening, people sit down to eat. First a leaf cup each of rice, fish or fowl curry, and water is tied in a sling at the spot of the deceased person's death. It is meant for him to partake. Then others are served. They make a show of eating with their left hand, which is in extremely bad taste in ordinary circumstances. At this time water is sprinkled on them with *khus khus* (*andropogon maricatus*) root to purify them spiritually. In the morning the leaf cups in the sling are examined. If any crumbs remain, the deceased is held to have partaken of the offerings, but not otherwise.

The next ceremony is the consignment of the bones to the Damodar. It is done as soon as convenient but since the river is quite far, even a year may elapse. People from neighbouring villages, who also have to perform the journey, constitute a party. When the banks are reached, oblations of earth, twigs and rice are made to the original couple. The heir takes the bones into deep water and facing east, takes a dip into the water and lets the bones go.

The finale is the *bhandhan* ceremony. After having shaved and bathed, the villagers assemble at the dead man's house. As before, three persons become possessed and are offered drinks. Goats and pigs are sacrificed to the dead and feasting follows. It is only after the conclusion of the *bhandhan* that the veil of pollution is really lifted and the family is free to offer sacrifices, get a member married, or use *sindur*.

CHAPTER III

ECONOMY

ECONOMIC RESOURCES

owal, *bahal* or *jol*, includes lands on the lower levels, which are protected by their natural situation, by springs, or by the small embankments which the people construct across the dips and hollows. The best of the first class rice lands are those which are fed by perennial springs, from which moisture oozes even in the hottest months of the year. Second class *dhani*, called *doem*, *kanali* or *sakrat* consists of the rice fields on the smaller undulations and the lower terraced fields, which have been cut out from the slopes and have only small *als* or ridges to retain rainfall. *Bari* lands are untterraced high lands on which maize, mustard, millets, pulses and other miscellaneous crops are grown. They are usually divided into two main classes:—(1) first class *bari*, i.e., the land round the village site or on the banks of streams, which is usually cropped twice a year and (2) second class *bari*, known as *dangal bari*, i.e., inferior land away from the village site, which is only cropped once a year." (10).

The bulk of the land cultivated in the village is *dhani*.

The seasonal crops are *Aghani*, *Bhadai* and *Rabi*. The first two derive their names from the months in which they are harvested. *Rabi* crops are harvested in April. The following table shows the area under each kind of seasonal crop:—

TABLE 7

Area under each kind of seasonal crop			
Seasonal denomination	Area in acres	Names of crops	Area in acres
<i>Aghani</i>	716.27	(a) Paddy	639.48
		(b) <i>Kurthi</i>	63.82
		(c) Oilseeds	10.86
		(d) Vegetables	2.11
<i>Bhadai</i>	142.71	(e) Paddy	5.10
		(f) Maizo	115.56
		(g) Others	20.60
		(h) Vegetable	1.45
<i>Rabi</i>	108.77	(i) Gram	36.22
		(j) <i>Khesari</i>	50.63
		(k) <i>Rahar</i>	20.81
		(l) Vegetables	1.11
Total	967.75		

a total area of 1,818 acres comprising the *mauza* Jamkanali, less than half is

An idea of the distribution of the different kinds of land can be had from the following details:—

TABLE 6

the village by different kinds of land	
Kind of land	Area in acres
Uncultivable—	
Forest	26.10
Cultivable waste	279.33
Homestead and other land put to non-agricultural uses.	200.11
Water	162.10
Total	667.64
Cultivated—	
Cultivable waste	81.13
Old fallows (2—5 years)	16.11
Current fallows	187.14
Total	284.38
Cultivated	866.40
GRAND TOTAL	1,818.42

101.35 acres of land are double-cropped; the effective acreage sown is 967.75 acres.

The area under forest within the bounds of the village is only 26 acres. It is a "protected forest". The villagers have full right to obtain fuel and fuel from it. Timber can also be obtained at half the rate at which it is available to outsiders. The villagers are not, however, allowed to confine themselves to the forests lying within the village boundaries, and can collect fruit and fuel for their use from the adjoining forests.

Agricultural land

There are two main classes of land, known as *dhani* or rice lands and *bari* or uplands. The *dhani* lands are usually subdivided into three classes, viz., first, second and third class *dhani*, this classification depending chiefly on the level of the land, the crops it grows and the amount of moisture it retains. First class *dhani*, called

It is seen that paddy is the main crop. Among others, only maize has a cropped area of more than 100 acres.

Other lands

The land under pasture is permanently fixed in the revenue records. 162 acres so constituted are village property and cannot be alienated or encroached upon. The villagers are careful about preventing the misuse of pasture land.

More than 200 acres are utilised for non-agricultural purposes. These include areas under homesteads, irrigational tanks and embankments. Almost 300 acres are cultivable waste. Actually, some portions of such land are being brought under the plough, and the bulk is expected to be reclaimed in the not-too-distant future.

Ownership of land

The Santals are migrants to the village and have been largely responsible for clearing the land and making it fit for cultivation. Since they have practically inalienable right in their holdings, the agricultural land is even now well distributed among all the households. There is only one household which does not possess any land. It consists of a lone widow who is supplied for her meagre wants out of alms from the kind-hearted.

Notwithstanding the fair distribution, the quantity of land itself is meagre. The bulk of the households, therefore, own only 1–5 acres of land and only 2 households have more than 10 acres each. The following table shows the distribution of households by the size of their holdings:—

TABLE 8

Distribution of households by the size of holdings					
Size of holding		Number of households		Percentage	
		Santal	Maraiya	Santal	Maraiya
1. No land	..	1	..	0.59	..
2. 0.5—1 acre	..	7	4	4.17	80.00
3. 1—2.4 acres	..	59	..	35.42	..
4. 2.5—4.9 acres	..	69	1	41.07	20.00
5. 5—9 acres	..	30	..	17.86	..
6. 10 acres and over	..	2	..	1.19	..
Total	..	168	5	100.00	100.00

Among the Santals, the largest number of households have 2.5 to 4.9 acres. More than 75 per cent have between 1 and 5 acres. The Maraiyas are worse off—80 per cent of them have nominal land, the size of their holdings being 0.5 to 1 acre only.

None of the households reported having gained or lost land after the death of their previous heads of households.

Livestock

There are in all 168 households of Santals and 5 of Maraiyas. A great majority of the Santal households possess milch cattle, draught bullocks, pigs and fowl. The Maraiyas are not so well placed. The table below indicates the livestock position in the village:—

TABLE 9

Livestock

Description		Number of owning households		Number of livestock owned by	
		Santal	Maraiya	Santal	Maraiya
1. Milch cattle	..	150	2	185	2
2. Draught bullocks	..	146	1	192	1
3. Goats and sheep	..	93	2	100	3
4. Pigs	..	127	2	207	4
5. Fowl	..	156	4	423	12

In an almost completely agricultural economy, cattle have a high place of importance. Thus we find that only 1 out of every 9 Santal households does not own cattle. The term milch cattle is somewhat out of place in the context of Jamkanali. Because of their poor breed and low nourishment, cows and she-buffaloes yield only insignificant quantities of milk. Unlike the Hindus, however, the Santals have no compunction in yoking them to the plough or the cart. This is often necessitated by the comparatively small number of draught cattle, which works out to an average of only 1.7 per household. The actual distribution for some households is, however, much worse than the average. The cattle are of indigenous breed and, because of their puny size, present a sad contrast to those of the North Bihar plains.

Only fifty per cent of the households in the village keep goat and sheep. The fact that there are only 153 animals owned by 95 households shows that mutton finds its way in the people's menu quite often. Goat and sheep are good, if not prolific, breeders and the number would have certainly been higher but for this dietary significance.

Pig's meat is universally relished; so pigs are reared by all who can afford to do so. About two-thirds of the households own pigs, whose number is appreciably larger than that of goat and sheep. Poultry-keeping is also quite common. Eggs are seldom consumed; it is considered more profitable to hatch and rear them.

Fishing is more of a pleasurable pastime and sport than an economic pursuit, restricted as it has to be to the short period just following the rains when there is adequate water for fishes to breed in.

Factors influencing economic life in the village

The benevolence of the earlier administration succeeded largely in safeguarding the residents of the Damin area against exploitation by landlords. So the abolition of zamindari has had no repercussions in the villages. Even the collection of land revenue has been left to the agency of traditional village officials. In this area the lack of much direct contact between the people and the field staff of the Revenue Department of Government largely precludes complaints of harassment not uncommon in other parts of the State.

Jamkanali is a constituent village of the Amrapara Community Development Block. Under its aegis a tank has been constructed and another repaired. Three irrigation wells have also been constructed. Half of the cost on all these items was borne by Government, and the other half was contributed by the beneficiaries. These schemes have helped in raising the productivity of the land. The innate ability of the Santals to reclaim waste land has received a fillip by the demonstration of new and scientific methods of achieving this end. It was said that notwithstanding the revenue records, quite an additional area of land has been brought under the plough. Only a revisional survey can prove its authenticity.

The village has a community, the Maraiyas, who are engaged primarily in blacksmithy. But

they are the only ones to be engaged in any kind of industry. The Santal is adept with his hands but he will sooner fashion a flute or scrupulously retouch the merest disarray in his house rather than engage in a paying job. Indeed, he can scarcely see beyond the ambit of his fields and pastures.

Literacy in the village is low and even now the people proudly proclaim their traditional religion. Unlike many Santal villages which have taken to Christianity and have a greater proportion of literates, Jamkanali cannot boast of any person having taken to professional pursuits other than in the primary sector of industry, viz., cultivation and forestry.

The village is far from any town of consequence. Electricity is not found even at Parerkola on the State Highway. Due to better communications available at Parerkola, the contacts of villagers with outsiders have no doubt increased. There is hardly a person in the village now unwary enough to be hoodwinked by the more sophisticated traders.

Jamkanali is a constituent village of a multi-purpose co-operative society which has provided finance to its members on loan.

Livelihood classes

The Census of 1951 returned the entire population as dependent on agriculture. While the bulk got a living from the cultivation of owned land, a mere two per cent of the population was shown as belonging to the following three classes:—

- (i) Cultivators of unowned land,
- (ii) Employed as cultivating labourers, and
- (iii) Rent-receivers on agricultural land.

It is strange that no person was reported engaged in "production other than cultivation" although the Maraiyas have been settled in the village for generations. Probably their secondary occupation, cultivation, was returned as the primary pursuit.

A decade later, the position is hardly different. Every economically active person "worker" as he has been called in the 1951 Census) among the Santals is engaged in cultivation while every Maraiya "worker" is engaged in the household industry of blacksmithy.

The following table gives the distribution of workers and non-workers by community, sex and age-group:—

TABLE 10
Distribution of workers and non-workers by community, sex and age-group

	Santal		Maraiya		Percentage of workers to total	
	Workers	Non-workers	Workers	Non-workers	Santal	Maraiya
<i>All ages</i>						
Persons	..	..	563	322	11	13
Males	..	..	275	168	6	8
Females	..	..	288	154	5	5
<i>0—14 Years</i>						
Persons	..	..	67	313	..	13
Males	..	..	34	166	..	8
Females	..	..	33	147	..	5
<i>15 years and over</i>						
Persons	..	..	496	9	98.22	100.00
Males	..	..	241	2	99.18	100.00
Females	..	..	255	7	97.33	100.00

It is seen that almost the entire adult population is economically active. Whereas among the Santals even youngsters below 15 years of age contribute their mite to the family, this is not so among the Maraiyas. The reason lies in the difference in the nature of their work. Another significant fact is the equal participation in economic activity of the two sexes. This feature is generally common in all tribal societies. The percentage of workers in Jamkanali is much above the average for the State (41.40 per cent).

The apparent stagnation in the range of economic activity is not likely to change in the near future. For none of the heads of households desired that their sons should do any work other than what they and their forefathers had done and were doing.

The people are generally sturdy and in times of economic need, they supplement their income from the traditional sources. Women often gather fuel and sell them in the markets. Neither men nor women are averse to hard manual work and often take to employment as labourers. Construction works such as on roads, buildings, wells and tanks provide employment opportunities. Men are usually paid Re. 1.25

per day and the women Re. 1. They work for 8 hours a day and begin early in the morning.

Agriculture

The effective acreage under cultivation in the village during the year of the survey was 967.75 acres. As seen earlier, the bulk of this was under *Aghani* crops, which took up 74 per cent of the sown area. *Bhadai* and *Rabi* crops were sown on 15 and 11 per cent respectively of the area.

Paddy is the main *Aghani* crop. No less than 640 acres are under it. *Kurthi* (a kind of pulse) accounts for a major part of the remaining area. Vegetable and oilseeds are also grown.

Maize is the chief *Bhadai* crop which covered 116 acres. *Marua* (a millet) and vegetables are additional crops.

Rabi crops have recently been introduced, the items grown being gram, *arhar*, *khesari* (all pulses), and *teesi* (linseed). While *Aghani* and *Bhadai* crops have been grown since ages, *Rabi* crops have been started largely due to the exhortations of Government officials. Besides providing a variety in diet, the rotation of crops is beneficial to the productivity of the land.

The average income per household in each income-group varies as follows:—

TABLE 12
Average income per household by income-group

Income-group	Total monthly income : all households		Average monthly income per household	
	Santal	Maraiya	Santal	Maraiya
Rs. 25 and below	..	197.91	45	19.79
26—50	..	4,542.72	67	37.54
51—75	..	1,807.62	75	60.25
76—100	..	146.66	..	89.33
101 and above	..	240	..	120
Total	..	7,234.91	187	43.07

It is clear that there is a wide difference between the poorest and the richest even in this remote tribal village.

Among the Santals, 70 to 80 per cent of the income is derived from cultivation in all income-groups. In the income-group Rs. 76—100, cultivation in fact accounts for 96 per cent of the income. Income from wages invariably supplement the earnings from cultivation. Blacksmithy provides 60 per cent of the income to the Maraiyas, and cultivation the rest.

The statistics below indicate the proportion of expenditure on different items:

Tribes and their main occupation	Percentage of expenditure on			
	Food, etc.	Clothing, light, etc.	Miscellaneous items	Profession
Santal—				
Cultivation	79.4	9.8	1.5	6.4
Beading	89.8	8.5	1.7	Nil
Maraiya—				
Blacksmithy	74.1	7.0	3.0	15.9

No family has any saving.

Indebtedness

Indebtedness is not widespread. From 1953 to 1959, only 10 persons took loans aggregating to Rs. 200 from the Community Development Block. These were all repaid by January, 1963. The loans given by the Co-operative Society were also promptly repaid.

At the time of the survey, 8 households were in debt. None of them had a monthly income of more than Rs. 74. The total debt was Rs. 1,174, mostly incurred for expenditure in connection with cultivation.

The agricultural tools and implements have remained largely immune from the impact of modernisation. One of the reasons for it is that modern ploughs are designed for deeper furrows. They are thus beyond the capacity of the under-sized cattle that must necessarily be employed. Bullocks and he-buffaloes are usually put to the yoke but there is no bar to cows and she-buffaloes also being used. Besides the plough and the yoke, spades (*hudi*), levelling beams made of wood (*kaiba*), and clod breakers (*agroni*) are used.

Financial assistance in the form of loan for agricultural operations is now available from the Community Development Block and also from the Co-operative Society.

Blacksmithy

Only the five Maraiya households are engaged in this work. They manufacture ploughshares, axes, sickles and other implements. Iron is bought from Mirappur at Re. 1 per seer. Charcoal is used for the fire. Bellows are made of animal skin.

Each household has a fixed client in the village. These regular customers have to be supplied with ploughshares for which no cash payment is made. Each client gives 10 seers of paddy annually for every ploughshare supplied. Other articles have to be paid for in cash.

Income and Expenditure

The produce from land is the main source of income of the villagers. In the table below, the value of the crops grown by each household has been calculated according to prices per maund current at the time of the survey. These were: paddy—Rs. 15, maize—Rs. 14, pulses—Rs. 12.50, oilseeds—Rs. 20, tobacco—Rs. 200, and chillies—Rs. 120.

The table below shows the distribution of households in the village by various income-groups. It will be seen that the majority of households fall in the income-group, Rs. 26 to Rs. 50 per month:—

TABLE 11
Distribution of households by income-group

Income-group (per month)	Number of households		Total	Percentage of total households
	Santal	Maraiya		
Rs. 25 and below	..	10	2	6.94
Rs. 26—Rs. 50	..	124	2	71.46
Rs. 51—Rs. 75	..	30	1	17.92
Rs. 76—Rs. 100	..	5	..	2.89
Rs. 100 and above	..	2	..	1.15
Total	..	168	5	173

CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE

Age and sex distribution

The sex ratio among the Santals in the village is quite favourable, as it is 998. The males outnumber the females by 2 only. The Maraiyas are very few in number, and the adverse sex ratio of 714 in the village thereby loses much of its significance.

The distribution of the population into adult and non adult is quite in conformity with the general pattern. 43 per cent of the population is below 15 years of age.

The following table shows the age-structure and sex distribution of the village population:—

TABLE 14

Age structure by sex

Age-group	Number of			Percentage to total number		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
0—14 years	393	208	185	43.24	45.51	40.93
15—24 years	93	47	46	10.56	10.29	10.84
25—59 years	335	187	148	42.35	40.92	43.81
60 years and above	35	15	20	3.85	3.23	4.12
All ages	909	457	452	100.00	100.00	100.00

But for the age-group 0—14 (in which males are significantly in excess over females), the females outnumber the males in every other age-group. So far as the distribution of the population by age-groups is concerned, the percentages are consistently similar for either sex.

Growth of population

The population of the village, according to the Census of 1961, was 909 as against 807 in 1951. Thus, there was an increase of 23.8 per cent during the last decade. This is much higher than the percentage increase for the district (15.17 per cent) and the subdivision. During the Survey, only 909 persons were found in the village. According to this, the increase in population over the decade had been only to the extent of 12.6 per cent.

Whole families seldom migrate from the area in search of employment. The discrepancy between the Census and Survey figures cannot, therefore, be accounted for by temporary migration, more so because there is a significant variation in the number of households as well. As against 190 households enumerated in census, only 173 were found in the course of survey. The discrepancy might have arisen due to an adjoining *tola* having been enumerated as a part of Jamkanali.

Figures relating to vital statistics of the village could not be obtained.

Marriage

The following table gives the statistics relating to age and marital status among the Santals:—

TABLE 15
Marital Status

Age-group	Never married		Married		Widowed		Divorced or separated	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
All ages	235	203	187	192	18	42	2	5
0—14	200	180	..	..	..	..	..	..
15—24	29	23	17	24	..	..	..	1
25—59	6	..	162	164	12	26	2	4
60 and above	..	..	8	4	6	16	1	..



76. Care of hair is important to all women



77. Poultry is popular



78. The neglected Marjhisthan



79. A village dance

(Facing page 103)

No person, male or female, below the age of 15 is married. The proportion (63 per cent) of married females in the age-group 15-24 is greater than that of married males (48 per cent). In the next age-group 25-59, not one woman remained unmarried, though quite a few (15.6 per cent) lost their partners by death or separation. Similarly, only 3.3 per cent of the males remained unmarried in this age-group. Among those aged 60 years or more, there are almost twice as many widowed and divorced persons as those in a state of matrimony.

The position with regard to the Maraiyas is not very dissimilar. As in the case of Santals, no maraiya married below the age of 15 years. The age-group 15-24 contained only 1 unmarried male and 1 married female. All persons in the next age-group 25-59 are married. No person is widowed or divorced.

Disease

There is an *Ayurvedic* dispensary at Parerkola. The medical dispensary at Amrapara is in charge of a fully qualified doctor who also visits Parerkola twice a week to attend to patients. From March, 1961 to February, 1962 as many as 64 cases came up from the village to the medical sub-centre at Parerkola. The number of cases attended to in the *Ayurvedic* dispensary must have been even larger but villagewise statistics were not available.

The people have generally adjusted their attitude to scientific methods of treatment. Even so, a belief that diseases may be caused by a witch still persists. A case was recounted when the diviner himself gave a good thrashing to his aunt since he suspected her of causing illness in his family.

There is no specific disease generally prevalent in the areas such as goitre is in the sub-Himalayan tracts.

Education and literacy

Only a decade ago in 1951, not a single villager could read or write. In the 1961 Census, 11 persons were returned as literate. The Survey disclosed 27 literates.

A single-teacher primary school was started in 1956. Though it is still functioning in the verandah of a villager's house, a new building for housing the school is under construction. There were 30 boys and 4 girls on the rolls but the average daily attendance was less than half.

The Middle School (teaching up to class VII) is situated at Parerkola. 10 boys from Jamkanali are enrolled there; of them, 6 attend regularly.

A manifestation of the efforts being made for the spread of literacy can be seen in the establishment of an Adult Literacy Centre in the village in 1961. The Primary School teacher is the instructor. He holds classes in the evening. Lighting and other equipments are provided by the Block authorities free of cost. The centre did not, however, seem to be of much use. According to reports, the people who gathered there did not make serious efforts to learn.

Family structure

A household consists on an average of 5.2 members. The largest number of people come from households containing 4-6 members. Households with 7-9 members also account for a good portion of the people. Thus households with 4-9 members contribute four-fifths of the total number of villagers. The following table shows the size and composition of households:-

TABLE 16							
Size and composition of households							
Sl. no.	Nature of households	Maraiya			Santal		
		Household	Males	Females	Household	Males	Females
1	Single member	..	..	..	5	2	3
2	2-3 members	..	2	3	2	36	48
3	4-6 members	..	2	6	5	80	199
4	7-9 members	..	1	5	3	42	166
5	10 members and over	..	..	..	5	28	28
Total		..	5	11	10	168	442

The number of single member households is not negligible among the Santals. Widowed persons without any relatives living or willing to look after them, constitute such households.

A Santal family is essentially of the simple type, consisting of the husband, wife and unmarried children. More than half the families of Jamkanali belong to this group. In the remaining, joint families (consisting of a married couple with married sons/daughters or with married brothers/sisters) are numerically predominant. Intermediate families are the least in number. These consist of a married couple

with unmarried brothers/sisters or with one of the parents. The number of different kinds of families is given below:—

1. Simple families	..	..	89
2. Intermediate families	..	..	21
3. Joint families	..	..	37
4. Other families	..	..	26
5. Total families	..	..	173

Of the 5 Maraiya families 4 are simple and 1 is joint.

It is apparent that joint families are exception rather than the rule. A young Santal couple would immediately set up a new house for themselves. The passage of time does not seem to have affected the people's views in this regard.

Inheritance of property

An account of inheritance among the Santals contained in the District Gazetteer was reproduced as an appendix in the Census Report of Bengal, 1911 (Volume V, Part I), and in the Tribes and Castes of West Bengal (1951). It is given below:—

"The family share all they have in common till the death of the father, when the property is divided equally among the sons, except that the eldest son gets a bullock and a rupee more than the others. The daughters have no right to any of the property, the idea being that a woman does not inherit, for she is expected to marry and to be supported by her husband and her sons. What she gets is a gift, customary and, therefore, demandable, but it is not inherited. Lately, however, with the sanction of the courts, only daughters have been given a life tenure of the father's land, and this virtually means inheritance by daughters. If a man dies without sons or daughters, the property passes to the father, if he is alive, and if he is dead to the brothers of the deceased by the same father (not necessarily by the same mother); if the latter are dead, their sons will succeed. In default of these, the deceased's paternal uncles and their sons succeed. The widow of a childless man is allowed one calf, one bandi (10 to 12 maunds) of paddy, one bati and one cloth, and returns to her parents' house, unless as sometimes happens, she is kept by her husband's younger brothers. If one of these keeps her, he is not allowed more than the one share of the deceased man's property, which he would get in any case. If a man leaves only daughters, their paternal grandfather and uncles take charge of them and of the widow, and the property remains in their possession.

When the daughters grow up, it is the duty of these relatives to arrange marriages for them, and to give them at marriage the presents which they would have received from their father. When all the daughters have been disposed of, the widow gets the perquisites of a childless widow and goes to her father's house or lives with her daughters. A widow with minor sons keeps all the property in her own possession, the grandfather and uncles seeing that she does not waste it. If the widow remarries before the sons are married, the grandfather and uncles take possession of all the property; the mother of the children has no right to get anything but sometimes a calf is given to her out of kindness, this gift being called bhandkar. There are special rules in cases where there is a son-in-law who has married under the ghardi jawae form. If his wife has no brothers, and the son-in-law stays on in the house and works for his father-in-law till he dies, then he inherits all the immovable property and half the movable property, the other half of which goes to the relatives of the deceased. If there is more than one such son-in-law, they divide the property between them. If there are many grandsons, or if the sons do not live happily together, especially if the father has married again and had other issue, the father and mother may make a partition. A Panchayat is called and the father divides all the land and cattle, keeping one share for himself. The son with whom the parents live retains possession of their share during their lifetime. Daughters get no share in the property, but if they are unmarried, they get one calf each, that being the dowry given them at marriage. Unmarried sons get a double share of the livestock, one share representing their marriage expenses. The cattle which the daughters-in-law received from their father-in-law at the time of marriage are not divided, but the cattle which the sons got at marriage are divided. If a woman dies while her sons are unmarried, they cannot demand a partition even if their father takes a second wife, but they can do so if they like after marriage. The father then gets one share and the sons one share each. If the second wife has no children when the father dies, the sons of the first wife can take the share their father got, but if they take it they will have to pay for the funeral of their step-mothers" (10).

A new agreement was arrived at concerning daughters and widows in 1916.

"On the 15th February, 1916 the Parganas, Demanjhis, Sardars and different other people of the Dumka district gathered in Dumka and talked about their daughters and widows. Having talked the matter over, they came to the

conclusion: It would be very good, if what is printed here below became law:

DAUGHTERS

1. If a man has only daughters, these will be his heirs when married; that is to say their husbands will get the rice and other land.

The brothers of the father will get half the cattle. The man who sets fire to the mouth of the dead will get a calf. If a girl, for whom they have brought a house-son-in-law dies without having children, the house-son-in-law gets nothing: he goes out and away with his calf.

2. When a man has sons and daughters, and the sons die without having children, the girls become the heirs, that is to say, the father or the brothers may bring house-sons-in-law for the girls, or they may bring the husband to the girl's father's home to live there.

3. If a girl is married without a house-son-in-law being brought for her she will not become heir.

4. If a house-son-in-law does not stay, his rights end.

5. If a girl for whom they have brought a house-son-in-law dies after having borne children, her children will get the rights of their mother; and the house-son-in-law will stay there until he remarries, and his children will support him. If he remarries, he will go out and away.

WIDOWS

When a woman becomes a widow, she has the right to be supported from her husband's home, so long as she lives.

If she is married again, her right in the house of her first husband ceases.

Until she is married again, a widow may manage the house of her husband; but when the woman dies or is married again, all rice and other land will belong to the brothers of her husband or their heirs" (11).

In the village itself the people were unanimous in averring that the sons and widows are entitled to inherit, the sons sharing equally and the widow getting an equivalent share. The idea that daughters should inherit did not find favour at all. However, a ghardi-jamai (house-son-in-law) assumes the position of a son in matters of inheritance.

Leisure and recreation

Dancing, singing, playing the drum, blowing the flute and the horn, playing the fiddle, folk-tales, stories and conundrums, hunting in the

forest, catching fish and, last but not the least, drinking beer (*pachwai*) are the common pastimes in which people drown their worries.

There are numerous kinds of dances, some to be indulged in at all times and others reserved for particular festivals. Songs accompany many of these but not invariably so. The sword dance, the *Lom* dance and the *lauria* are performed without songs. Some of the dances and their occasions are indicated below:—

Serial no.	Name of dance	Occasion
1	Large, gulari and humti..	Any time
2	Flower dance	.. Flower festival
3	Sohrae, matwar and gunjar	Sohrae festival
4	Rinja and bhinsar	.. Karam festival
5	Don	.. At marriages and chatiar festival.
6	Dahar	.. Hot season only
7	Jhika	.. Chatiar festival
8	Pak Don and Lauria	.. Sohrae

Young men and women participate in all the dances except a few. The *Dahar* dance is meant only for girls. For the young men are reserved the *Pak Don* (sword) Dance and the *Lauria*. Except during festivals, people dance only during night time. Although both sexes participate in the dances, the girls and boys form separate groups. The girls, linked arm in arm, face the boys who, however, do not hold each other. Yet in all probability the craze for dances may be attributed as much to an intrinsic joy in the rhythm of steps attuned to the beating of drums and the attractively gyrating bodies, as to the liaisons made and nurtured after such meets. In any case, the indulgence never saps their vitality and after dancing, singing and drinking for a whole night, the people go about their usual work in the morning without much ado or misgiving.

Besides the songs associated with dances, there are some into which the women break out whilst working. The back-breaking job of transplantation of paddy seedlings loses much of its drudgery when numerous voices echo the words of a song tunefully, if somewhat monotonously.

The Santals have numerous folk tales. Several hundreds have been collected by Bodding and quite a few published. Riddles are the favourite of the younger set.

Community fishing is sometimes resorted to, the catch being shared by all participants, irrespective of who actually caught the fish.

Religion

In line with 90 per cent of the Santals in Bihar, the villagers of Jamkanali also returned their religion as Hindu. The religious worship of the Maraiyas is apparently derived from Hinduism. But the same cannot be said of the Santals of Jamkanali. Not even a picture of any Hindu deity was found in the village, much less a temple or a shrine. Some were, of course, met with in a staunch Munda village. In spite of the assimilation of quite a few Hindi words in the Santali vocabulary, the religious ideas are also not amply represented. The name *Jiu Thakur* often given to the Supreme God is, however, Aryan in origin. Further, not a few of the customs and institutions have admittedly been taken from the Hindus. Thus the return of Hinduism as the religion of these people is not entirely inappropriate, gathering as Hinduism does within its ever receptive folds diverse and often contradictory philosophies.

The supreme being is apparently known by different names among the Santals. Dalton (Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal, 1872, page 213) records *Sing Bonga* as the appellation given by the Santals of Chotanagpur. Risley (Castes and Tribes of Bengal, 1895, Vol. II page 232) refers to Mr. Skrefarud (Traditions and Institutions of the Santals) and avers that the supreme being is called *Thakur*. "Santhals and Sonthalia" (S. K. Mann) refers to the supreme being known as *Chando* or *Chando Bonga*.

In the village itself *Chando* is held to be the creator of the universe—the fountain head whence all religions stem. This is accounted for by the fact that the spirits or *Bongas* are all malevolent. It is only *Chando Bonga* who is benign and, perhaps because of this, he is elevated to the top-most position in the deital hierarchy.

With an elaborate form of tribal government among the Santals, there is often a fusion of secular and religious functions. No public sacrifice, ceremony or festival can proceed in absence of the *Manjhi*. Yet it is the *naike* (the village priest) who is the official sacrificer. He is assisted by the *kudam naike* who has to offer his own blood as a prelude to the propitiation of the high and mighty.

Festivals

The annual festivals commence in *Asarh*. They are almost invariably linked with the agricultural operations. The following calendar includes the main festivals:—

Sl. no.	Month	English month	Festival	Occasion
1.	Phagun	February-March	Baha ..	New year.
2.	Asarh	June-July ..	Erok-sim	Commencement of sowing of crops.
3.	Savan	July-August ..	Harhar-sim.	Sprouting of paddy.
4.	Bhado	August-September.	Trigungli-nawai.	Harvesting of <i>bhadi</i> crops.
5.	Agahan	November-December.	Janthar-Puja.	Harvesting of early paddy.
6.	Paus	December-January.	Sohrae	Harvesting of paddy.
7.	Paus	December-January.	Sakrat ..	Close of the month of <i>Paus</i> .
8.	Magh	January-February.	Magh-sim	Cutting of the jungle grass.

Erok-sim, *Sohrae* and *Baha* are the only festivals in which the whole village performs sacrifices publicly as well as in individual houses.

Sohrae is the great festival of the Santals. It is celebrated by the Paharias as *Bandana* which term is also used for *Sohrae*. The crops have just been harvested and threshed. People see the fruits of months of their hard labour and are in most buoyant spirits. While offering thanks to the *Bongas*, the festival combines riotous revelry with feasting, drinking, singing and dancing and, perhaps, a certain amount of uninhibited licentiousness. The dates for the festival vary from village to village. Relatives and friends are invited, and quite a few persons join in the celebrations from village to village and are carried away by the stream of joyousness for weeks together.

On the night preceding the commencement of the festival, the *gorait* takes three fowls, two white and one speckled, to the *naike*. The *naike* observes religious abstinence during the night; he sleeps on the ground and avoids sex relations. Next morning the fowls are taken by the *naike* to the bank of the stream. Meanwhile, the *gorait* has collected one fowl and half a seer of rice from each family which also he brings to the site of sacrifices. The speckled fowl is sacrificed to the



80. A marriage party



81. The bride and the groom

supreme being who is exhorted to overlook the shortcomings in the offerings and to preserve the health and honour of the villagers and guests during the festival. Fowls are then sacrificed to the various *bongas*.

The fowls and the rice are cooked together and the entire village shares in the repast which is supplemented by *pachwai* contributed by them earlier. The *Manjhi* then gives the signal for revelries to begin. The words recounted by Kolean may not now be used in their entirety but the spirit remains. Says the *Manjhi*:—

"For five days and five nights dance and enjoy yourselves, brothers and sisters; let there be no disputes, no quarrels, no covetousness, no greed; if there is any covetousness and greed, look out well, also the fenced vegetables you may pluck but not what is climbing on poles, nor what is shrivelled up, pluck not what is unripe; and the flower they have fixed with laths, have tied with thread, do not commit the sin of plucking these flowers."

The people reply

"with twelve balls of cotton we are shutting our ears up; then whatever there may be, big or small, we shun not see or listen to it."

The *Manjhi* thus allegorically prohibits men from touching women who are too young or too old, and those who are married. In reply the people assembled formally acquiesce to closing their eyes to all liaisons in the festival period. Cattle are ceremonially cared for and 'blessed' by men and women. All else is sheer exultation.

The next important festival is *Baha* which is celebrated as *Sarbul* by the Mundas and the Oraons of Chotanagpur. Using *Sal* flowers for adornment or *mahuu* flowers as food is permissible only after this festival.

On the fixed day, two structures with roofs are put up in the *jahi-than* (sacred grove). One is meant for *Jahir Era*, *Moreko* and *Marang Buru* and the other for *Gosain Era*. The area is cleansed and plastered with cowdung paste. In the evening three persons, all men, come to the house of the *naike*. They are possessed by *Jahir Era*, *Moreko* and *Barang Buru* respectively. The *naike* has earlier cleaned and stored the implements and other requisites for them. *Jahir Era* takes a necklace (the spirit is a female, though not the one possessed), a winnowing fan and a broom. *Moreko* takes bows and arrows. *Marang Buru* carries a battle axe. Thus equipped with the articles, the possessed ones, now *bongas*,

proceed to the *Jahirthan*, followed by the young people of the village. On assembling there, the *bongas* lay down the articles they carried. The *naike* washes their feet and seeks to learn of what is in store for the future. After this the spirits leave and the persons, returning to normalcy, share in the flowing cups of beverages. Dancing and singing continue for the whole night. These are in harmony with the season: "in the flower festival there are only beautiful songs; there is nothing indecent."

Next day the procedure is repeated. The *bongas* then pluck the first flowers. Fowls are sacrificed by the *naike* at the spot and later by the villagers in their homes. When the party returns to the village, there is a lot of revelry including the throwing of water on each other, which is reminiscent of the Hindu festival, Holi.

Erok-sim is the festival in which the first offering of the year is made. Every villager contributes a fowl which is offered to the various *bongas* by the *naike*. The sacrificial offerings are shared by all. Exhortations are made for ensuring good crops.

Finally, a reference may be made to the offerings to *Sing Bonga* (the Sun god). It is said that the *Sing Bonga* can cure venereal diseases which are a gift of the *Dikus* (non-Santals). For, as tradition has it, when Sita was carried off by Ravan to Lanka, she prayed to *Sing Bonga* that she be afflicted with venereal disease. Her wish was granted and thus her chastity was not violated in spite of Ravan's evil designs.

Intra-Family Relationships

A man will not take the name of his younger brother's wife or of his wife's younger brother's wife. A woman will similarly avoid taking the name of her younger sister's husband. Contact with such relations is tabooed. However, a man is on the best of relations with his elder brother's wife or his wife's younger sisters. Indeed, no social stigma attaches even to the greatest possible intimacy among such relations.

Organs of democratic decentralization

The Santals still preserve their system of tribal Government. This is particularly true of the Damin area where the traditional institutions have received the sympathetic support of the administration.

At the village level, the *Manjhi* or the headman is at the top of the hierarchy; yet, he is only the first among equals. The post is hereditary,

but if the majority of the villagers so desire, he can be removed from office. The Deputy Commissioner of the district has the power to remove a *Manjhi* but he is governed always by popular will. In secular matters, the *Manjhi* is assisted by the *Parnaik*. In Jamkanali, however, Issan Murmu, the last *Parnaik*, had died three years ago and no successor to him had been selected, indicating that the *Manjhi* no longer considered assistance essential to the proper discharge of his duties. The *Manjhi* combines secular and social functions. There is another assistant for the latter function—the *Jog Manjhi*. He is supposed to act as the *custos morum* (custodian of morals) to the young people of the village. Munsu Murmu, the *Jog Manjhi* of the village, himself has two wives. In the course of the investigation, a feast had been thrown by a villager. The *Jog Manjhi* was there, obviously dead drunk. A few youngsters played the drum and danced, vigorously and rhythmically. The *Jog Manjhi* also joined in and demonstrated a prolonged mimic of the sex act, much to the amusement of the children and accompanied by suppressed giggles of the women present. As with the office of *Parnaik*, that of the *Jog Parnaik* (Assistant to *Jog Manjhi*) was vacant at the time. The last secular village official is the *gorait*, the village messenger. The post in Jamkanali is held by Jitan Kiskut, a Santal of Hessatola.

Morehor (literally five men) is the Santali term for Panchayat. It is summoned by the *Manjhi* when he receives a complaint. The village officials mentioned above as well as any adult Santal male can participate in its deliberations. The decisions of the Panchayat are usually implemented by the parties. Inter-village disputes are referred to the *Parganait* who heads a group of villages.

The statutory Gram Panchayat of which Jamkanali is a constituent village is known as Chandpur G. P. The following villages comprise the Panchayat:—

1. Bhilai, Thana no. 3.
2. Chandpur, Thana no. 4.
3. Pondbad, Thana no. 5.

4. Bolra, Thana no. 6.
5. Balidih, Thana no. 7.
6. Barandih, Thana no. 8.
7. Sijua, Thana no. 9.
8. Jamkanali, Thana no. 18.

Both the Mukhia and Sarpanch belong to villages other than Jamkanali which contributes an elected member each to the executive and judicial wing of the Panchayat.

A peculiar case was reported in Jamkanali in which a recalcitrant refused to abide by the decisions of both the tribal and statutory Panchayats. A young girl was carried off against her will by a youth of the village from Paverkola *hat* and molested. Her father got report of this and placed the matter before the tribal Panchayat which decreed that the boy's father should pay Rs. 20 each to the girl's father and the Panchayat. The boy's father refused and the matter was broached before the Sarpanch of the Statutory Panchayat. This also imposed the same compensation to be paid to the girl's father but reduced the fine to be paid to the Panchayat to Rs. 10. Still the boy's father would not pay. Finally the girl's father went to the police, but the boy's father reportedly came to some kind of understanding with the officials and nothing more was heard of the matter. Neither the girl's father nor the Panchayat succeeded in getting any compensation for the blatant breach of the social code.

Voluntary Organisations

A Multipurpose Co-operative Society was set up in the village and registered in 1960. It has 46 members, of whom 20 are from Jamkanali and the remaining from the neighbouring villages of Balidih and Barandih. The *Jog Manjhi* of Jamkanali is also the Secretary of the Panchayat. 31 members have taken loans aggregating to Rs. 1,410. Though the average amount of loan comes to Rs. 50, quite a few have taken more than Rs. 100 each, and others as little as Rs. 25. The members of the society are prompt in the repayment of dues.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The people of the village are still largely steeped in their traditional ways of living. Yet they can no longer remain in a closed citadel: the current of events cannot leave them in a state of inertia. An important contributory factor to the people's comparative isolation is their language. Few in the village can manage without learning the local dialect. The replies to the exhaustive questionnaire for the present survey were obtained through interpreters, and the drawbacks inevitably associated with such a procedure cannot be ruled out.

Only fifty per cent of the heads of households were aware of the Anchal and Thana Headquarters at Amrapara. The Thana (police station) has been in existence since long; the Anchal is a new creation. Hence Amrapara is better known as the Thana headquarters rather than as Anchal Headquarters. The district headquarters is known to about as many people. That there exists an institution for Community Development is known by most people. What is peculiar is the lack of the people's appreciation of what has been done under its auspices. Only 1 household reported having been benefitted by a well constructed by the C. D. Block. Yet quite a few schemes have been executed by the C. D. Block, of which mention has been made earlier. The response of the people to the existence and functions of the *Jan Sewak* (Village Level Worker of the C. D. Block) and the *Panchayat Sewak* (official of the Statutory Panchayat) was equally vague. It would appear, on the very face of it, that the ever spreading arms of administration had no doubt reached the village, but could not create any appreciable impact on its soul.

Jamkanali is a village of the Santals in which there is no scope for inter-community

tensions. The Maraiyas are very few in number and do not have any aspirations which might bring them into conflict with their clientele. The Maraiyas are to be found in many of the nearby villages so that those of Jamkanali are able to develop contacts with them. Youthful liaisons are the cause of many a dispute, but no such cases occurred between a Santal and a Maraiya; at least none was reported.

The villager is in a queer state of flux. His sense of values appears to have been disturbed. In spite of an inborn hatred and fear the people have for *Dikus*, they are attracted by their material culture and seek to imitate it, particularly in the matter of dress and cosmetics. These only provide an additional drain on the none-too-happy economy. The Santals who used to wander for dozens of miles to seek flowers and fruits in the forests now prefer to travel on the road by bus though they often tend to haggle over the bus fare.

Jamkanali has not produced any outstanding leader—traditional or otherwise. It has no hero around whom legends may have grown. It has not been the *locale* of any memorable events.

The village is typical of the placid life of the Santals. There are ripples sometimes, but a Santal is rather broadminded and gets the issues peacefully decided. Sex relations with non-Santals, however, are taboo. *Bittaha* is performed if such a case is found out. Annexure I gives a description of *Bittaha*. In 1955, a crowd doing *Bittaha* in Maheshpur Anchal grew unduly violent and police-firing had to be resorted to. Many Santals were killed. From then on, *Bittaha* is held less frequently.

REFERENCES

Serial no.	Page no.	Authority
1	86	Dalton, E. T., Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal, 1872, page 211.
2	86	Risley, H., Quoted in District Gazetteer of Santal Parganas, 1910, page 101.
3	87	Bradley-Birt, F. B., The Story of an Indian Upland, London, 1905, page 247.
4	88	Dalton, E.T., <i>Op. Cit.</i> , page 219.
5	89	O'Malley, L. S. S., District Gazetteer of Santal Parganas, 1910, page, 102.
6	91	O'Malley, L. S. S., Census of India, 1911, Vol. V, part I, Report, page 449.
7	92	Bodding, P. O., Traditions and Institutions of the Santals, Oslo, 1942, page 26.
8	92	<i>Ibid</i> , page 27.
9	94	<i>Ibid</i> , page 187.
10	104	O'Malley, L. S. S., District Gazetteer of Santal Parganas, 1910, page 144.
11	104	Bodding, P. O., <i>Op.Cit.</i> , page 198.

ANNEXURE I

(From "The Matrix of Indian Culture", by D. N. Majumdar, pages 147 to 149.)

The Santhals have a particular dread for incest. In case of incest, the tribe, clan or village has a right to protest and the method by which they express their disapproval has been dramatised in the Beetla. Beetla is an atonement for the violation of their sex code regarding incest. It takes the form of a dance deliberately got up and danced in the village of the man offending against the sex code of the tribe, more usually before the hut of the person concerned. The dance is an ugly one, and an exposition of the effects of such condemned acts. The men of the offended village become aggressive, very much so, and the whole incident becomes a disgrace to the offending group and often ends in violence. The men of the offended village dress themselves in disgusting costume, dance suggestive dances, parade the village up and down and enter the courtyard of the man first, then that of the women. In the courtyard, the crowd of dancers sing erotic songs vulgar to a measure, show their buttocks and even rub them against the offenders. Skilful dancers can cover their aggressive designs in rhythmic movements without making themselves awkward but overt acts are not excluded and the complementary songs make the scene foul. Mimic acts represent the various processes of the sex act leading to the birth of the child and the woman's position in copulation and the man's approach are mimicked by the crowd. Yet such outrageous demeanour is applauded by the people, the skill of the dancers discussed and complimented and the offending couple find no sympathy from the village. After the dance is danced and the mimic acts completed, the couple need not fear

further molestation, though generations remember the incident and the people concerned live under a shadow of social disapprobation.

So long as the Santhals lived in compact areas and were numerically preponderant, the parties being Santhals, such staging of aggressive mimicry did not result in riots or bitter feuds; the party that offended submitted to such ordeals without either caring to justify their action or protesting against maltreatment or ridicule they were put to. Today the Santhals have spread far and wide and in some parts they do not constitute any numerically strong community. It is in such parts the custom has become a problem for the administration. In the Malda district, the Santhals live surrounded by the Muslims but they are quite a hardy and strong community and can compete with others better than the local population. In a case where a Muslim youth had molested a Santhal girl, the Santhals decided to hold their Beetla and they invaded the village of the Muslim youth, danced their traditional Beetla and avenged their discomfiture by killing the person concerned and injuring several others who came to the former's rescue. The other Muslims fled from the village and reported the incident to their coreligionists, the revenge was agreed on and a huge Muslim crowd marched in procession to the Santhal village, burnt every house they found, killed every Santhal they met and spread fire all over the Santhal village. The Santhals were so much frightened that they left their village some never to return again. Such a situation could not have arisen in places where the Santhals were in a majority and such aggression would not have involved them in direct action either.

LIST OF VILLAGES ON WHICH MONOGRAPHS ARE PROPOSED TO BE PUBLISHED

Serial no.	Name of village	Anchor/Block	Subdivision	District	Special Groups in the village
1	2	3	4	5	6
*1	Jojobatu	Khunti	Khunti	Ranchi	Munda Tribe
2	Kujam	Bishunpur	Gumla	Ranchi	Asur Tribe
3	Harup	Bishunpur	Gumla	Ranchi	Birjia Tribe
4	Bara Ghaggra	Khijri	Ranchi Sadar	Ranchi	Lohra Tribe
5	Bergari	Mandar	Ranchi Sadar	Ranchi	Oraon Tribe
6	Humta Bundu	Bundu	Ranchi Sadar	Ranchi	Birhor Tribe
7	Kathgaon	Dumri	Gumla	Ranchi	Korwa Tribe
8	Parba	Solebira	Simdega	Ranchi	Binjhia Tribe
9	Mero	Angar	Simdega	Ranchi	Gond and Kharia Tribes
10	Qa	Latehar	Latehar	Palamau	Kharwar Tribe
11	Chuhra	Latehar	Latehar	Palamau	Chero Tribe
12	Nazagarh	Latehar	Latehar	Palamau	Parhaiya Tribe
13	Orapat	Mahua	Latehar	Palamau	Kisan Tribe
14	Deoga	Ranchi	Hazaribagh Sadar	Hazaribagh	Bodia and Karmali Tribes
15	Orapat	Dhulagarh	Dhulagarh	Singhbhum	Bhumij Tribe
16	Blasahar	Dhulagarh	Singhbhum Sadar	Singhbhum	Ho Tribe
†17	Jamkanali	Patna	Pakur	Santal Parganas	Santhal
†18	Batbanga	Taljhari	Rajmahal	Santal Parganas	Sauria Paharia
†19	Kumarbhaja	Litipura	Pakur	Santal Parganas	Mal Paharia Tribe
20	Palasi	Jama	Dumka Sadar	Santal Parganas	Muhli Tribe
21	Khaspur	Patna Sadar	Patna Sadar	Patna	Milkmen
22	Naipura	Rajgir	Bihar	Patna	Tassar Producers
23	Pareo	Bihta	Dinapur	Patna	Variogated population
24	Manjhauri	Dumaria	Gaya Sadar	Gaya	Toddy Tappers and Potters
25	Maneri Bigha	Arwal	Jehanabad	Gaya	Weavers
26	Hathauri	Hussainganj	Siwan	Saran	Potters
27	Dokhni	Ramnagar	Bettiah	Champaran	Dhangar (Oraon) Tribe
28	Jamunia	Gaunaha	Bettiah	Champaran	Tharu Tribe
29	Asauta	Shambluganj	Banka	Bhagalpur	Variogated population
30	Sabal Bigha	Sikandra	Jamui	Monghyr	Variogated population
31	Manikpur	Bakhri	Begusarai	Monghyr	Variogated population
32	Hill Block	Surajgarha	Monghyr Sadar	Monghyr	Kora Tribe
33	Baraon	Dehri	Sasaram	Shahabad	Variogated population
34	Dehri	Rajpur	Buxar	Shahabad	Variogated population
35	Mangrauni	Madhubani	Madhubani	Darbhanga	Maithili Brahmins
36	Basbhitti	Supaul	Supaul	Saharsa	Typical Saharsa village of K
37	Khajurbari	Tarhaganj	Kishanganj	Purnea	Variogated population

*Already published
†The Present Volume