

Chapter III

PEOPLE

POPULATION

Population figures for the district as such are not available from previous censuses. Derived from the data of the 1971 Census the district had 7,61,953 persons (4,05,117 males and 3,56,836 females). Bhiwani ranks eighth among the 11 districts of the State. On the basis of the 1961 Census its population was 5,75,870 persons. In the decade 1961—71, there was an increase of 32.31 per cent.

The population variation in 3 major towns, Bhiwani, Charkhi Dadri and Loharu, for which census data are available, is shown below since 1901

Census Year	Population	Variation	Percentage increase (+) or decrease (—)
1	2	3	4
Bhiwani			
1901	35,917		
1911	31,100	(—) 4,817	(—)13.41
1921	33,270	(+) 2,170	(+) 6.98
1931	35,866	(+) 2,596	(+) 7.80
1941	43,921	(+) 8,055	(+)22.46
1951	52,183	(+) 8,262	(+)18.81
1961	58,194	(+) 6,011	(+)11.52
1971	73,086	(+) 14,892	(+)25.59
Charkhi Dadri			
1901	7,009		
1911	5,713	(—) 1,296	(—)18.49

1	2	3	4
1921	6,582	(+)869	(+)15.21
1931	7,260	(+)678	(+)10.30
1941	8,712	(+)1,452	(+)20.00
1951	8,795	(-)83	(+) 0.95
1961	13,839	(+)5,044	(+)57.35
1971	19,484	(+)5,645	(+)40.79
Loharu			
1901	2,175		
1911	2,343	(-)168	(-)7.72
1921	2,339	(-)4	(-)0.17
1931	2,956	(+)617	(+)26.38
1941	4,023	(+)1,067	(+)36.10
1951	3,438	(-)585	(-)14.54
1961	4,465	(+)1,027	(+)29.87
1971	5,579	(+)1,114	(+)24.95

The major portion of the increase in population occurred during the years 1931—71. The year 1910-11 was marked by ravages of disease and drought which took a heavy toll of the population by death and immigration. During 1911—21 occurred the great influenza epidemic of 1918. The decade 1921—31 was generally healthy and resulted in increased population. It expanded faster in 1931—41. The decade 1941—51 witnessed a shifting of population consequent upon the partition of the country in 1947. The Bhiwani town showed an increase of 18.81 per cent which may be regarded a normal increase for the period. It may be safely assumed that the number of Muslim emigrants from Bhiwani town almost equalled the number of Hindu immigrants. The Charkhi Dadri town recorded a nominal increase of 0.95 per cent while there was a decrease of 14.54 per cent in the case of Loharu town. This means that the number of Muslim emigrants from these towns was more than the Hindu immigrants. The years 1951—61 were free from disease, and public health measures taken by the Government reduced the death rate while the birth rate went up. In Bhiwani, Charkhi Dadri and Loharu the percentage

increase in population during this decade was 11.52, 57.37 and 29.87 respectively. The population increase during the decade 1961—71, may be attributed to extension in agriculture, irrigation and industrialisation, particularly during the second half of the decade, i.e. after the formation of Haryana State.

Density.—For the 1961 Census the number of persons per square kilometre in the district was 113. The density increased to 150 in 1971.¹ The district ranks tenth in density of the districts of Haryana. Tahsil-wise density in 1971 was :

Tahsil	Density (Population per square kilometre)
Bhiwani	184
Bawani Khera	141
Dadri	169
Loharu	93

The urban density of the district works out to 5,500 as against the rural density of 1,228. Bhiwani has the highest density of 8,058 followed by Charkhi Dadri (4,320), Loharu (2,154) and Tosham (1,946).²

Distribution of population.—There are 474 villages, 469 inhabited and 5 uninhabited. In 1971 the inhabited villages had 6,58,765 persons (86.46 per cent of the total population). The remaining 1,03,188 persons (13.54 per cent) lived in towns.

The average number of persons per inhabited village in the district was 1,445. However, the rural population could be grouped in different units as follows³ :—

Unit of population	Number of villages	Total population
1	2	3
Less than 200	20	2,561

1. *Statistical Abstract of Haryana, 1974-75*, p. 7.

2. Notified Area Committees were established at Siwani and Bawani Khera in August 1971 and June 1973 respectively. As such these two towns have not been included in the above description of towns which appertains 1971.

3. *Statistical Abstract of Haryana, 1974-75*, p. 11.

1	2	3
Between 200 and 499	53	19,895
Between 500 and 999	136	1,02,595
Between 1000 and 1,999	176	2,37,499
Between 2000 and 4,999	71	2,07,245
Between 5000 and 9,999	12	76,459
10,000 and above	1	12,511
	469	6,58,765

Sex ratio.—In 1971, the district had 881 females per 1,000 males.¹

Literacy.—In the 1961 Census the percentage of total literates in the district works out to 17.2 per cent and of males and females to 27.5 per cent and 5.4 per cent respectively. There was a marked increase in the number of literates during 1961-71.

The percentage of literacy rose to 24.4 per cent and that of males and females to 35.8 and 10.2 per cent respectively. There was a growth of literacy by 7.2 per cent. In 1971, 42.24 per cent of the urban population and 21.53 per cent of the rural population was literate as against the literacy ratio of 51 per cent for the urban population and 21.24 per cent for the rural population for the State as a whole.

LANGUAGE

The Bhiwani district speaks Hindi in various forms. Haryanvi is the main dialect, although there are many variations of it. In the Bhiwani and Bawani Khara tahsils, people generally speak Haryanvi. In the Loharu tahsil, Haryanvi is slightly dominated by Bagri dialect as it is influenced by the neighbouring State of Rajasthan. In the Dadri tahsil, the dialect of the people, besides Bagri, has been influenced by Braj dialect due to the visits of the inhabitants to Braj areas in the past. *Kit gaya tha* of the Haryanvi dialect, is pronounced, as *kit gaya tho* or *kit gayo tho* in the Dadri area and *kathe gayo tho* in the Loharu area. The special tendency of ending with 'o' in the word *tho* in place of 'a' in the word *tha* is a main feature of Bagri influence while the adoption of 'yo' in the word *gayo* in place of 'ya' in the word *gaya* is the

1. *Statistical Abstract of Haryana, 1974-75*, p. 7.

influence of Braj dialect. With the expansion of educational facilities and means of communications, the use of standard form of Haryanvi dialect is on the increase.

Immigrants from Pakistan have had little impact on the dialect of this area, rather they themselves have picked up the local dialect. In government offices and educational institutions Hindi is spoken by the majority. The Devnagari script is used, but the businessmen mostly use Mahajani script (*laude*) for their accounts books. The Roman script is also found on display boards of business houses and other institutions in the towns, but this is not a script of the masses. Urdu is used only by the older people and the younger generation prefers Hindi and English.

RELIGIOUS LIFE

RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Religions in 1974 were :

Religion	Number	Percentage
Hindus	8,13,368	94.65*
Jains	35,135	4.00
Sikhs	1,509	1.35
Muslims	1,774	
Total :	8,51,786	

HINDUS.—They form 94.65 per cent of the total population and pre-dominate both in rural and urban areas. Most of the Hindus follow traditional Hindu beliefs and practise Sanatan Dharma. They believe in Shiva, Vishnu, Brahma, Rama and Krishna. The Vedas, Upanishads, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are their religious books. Places of worship of Santan Dharmis are *mandirs* and *shivulas* where the idols of gods and goddesses are kept. Although Hindus believe in various gods and goddesses, they accept the unity of God and make Him responsible for everything that happens in this universe. The local deities such as Bhumia or Khera, shrines of Pirs

1. The figures are tentative and subject to change on the availability of actual figures from the Census Department.

2. It includes 15 per cent Scheduled Castes.

(Muslim saints) and local saints are worshipped including benevolent deities such as Pitras and Satis by some families. The practice of observing *shrad-dhas* in commemoration of dead ancestors is common. These are performed for 15 days before the commencement of *navratis*. Brahmans are fed on the *tithi* (date) on which the ancestor died. *Khir*, *halwa*, etc., are given to them. No member of the family takes meals before the performance of *shrad-dha*.

Shiva.—The religious practices of the Hindus are identical all over Haryana. Shiva temple or Shivala is found almost in every village and provides glimpses of old architecture. People visit Shivala, generally on Mondays, and worship the deity by pouring milk and water on the *Linga* (symbol of the god). The jogis (priests), generally of the Kanphara (pierced ear) class take the offerings. Gauri Shankar Mandir at Bhiwani and Shankar Bhagwan Mandir at Dadri deserve mention.

Rama.—Rama is worshipped by all Hindus as the incarnation of Vishnu. The idols of Lord Rama, Lakshman and Sita are placed in temples known as Thakudvaras. Rama is worshipped on the occasion of Dussehra when Ram Lila, the story of the *Ramayana* is staged in various parts of the district. Ram Lila keeps the folk-theatre alive.

Krishna.—In the Dadri tahsil the worship of Lord Krishna is widespread. A number of villages like Dwarka, Nandgaon, Gokul and Bindrahan of this tahsil have been named after places connected with his life. Especially, the Ahirs of this tahsil are Krishna's staunch followers. They used to visit Mathura and Vrindaban, the sacred places connected with Lord Krishna, even in days when there were no means of communications except carts or camels. Moreover the name of Lord Krishna is very dear to every Hindu of the district as elsewhere in the country and temples to him are found in villages and towns of the district.

Hanuman.—Hanuman, the monkey god, is also the object of veneration after Shiva. There was the custom of creating a Hanuman temple before digging a well to avert accidents during the construction, especially during the sinking of the well cylinder, because Hanuman is considered the god of strength. A difficult work is started after saying *Jai Bajrang Bali*. The deity is worshipped on Tuesdays. In the Bhiwani town a big temple is situated outside the Hanuman gate, and at Dadri *Hanumanji Ka Bara Mandir* is located in Kikar Basian Basti. Another Hanuman Mandir at Dadri is situated near Mathura Ghati.

Minor deities.—Curiously enough most of the malevolent deities are

worshipped by women and by children. Some Muslim pirs are also worshipped, particularly the malevolent type, for it is argued that there can be no harm in worshipping them, while they may be troublesome if not propitiated.

Jambha Jee.—The Bishnoi community reveres Jambha Jee and believes that he was an incarnation of Vishnu. The name Bishnoi seems to be derived from the worship of this god, but they say that it is derived from the 29 (*bis no*) tenets of their creed as prepared by Jambha Jee. Jambha Jee's main preaching was not to harm animal life and trees. He was also against all types of intoxicants. The birth anniversary of Jambha Jee is celebrated by Bishnois in temples dedicated to him and they also worship him at home. The place of pilgrimage of this saint is at Mokam¹ in Rajasthan. The religious and social practices of Bishnois are different from other Hindus. Their religious functions are performed by their own priests and not by Brahmans.

Sun god.—This is the god whom the people chiefly delight to honour. No shrine is ever built to this god, but Sunday is the day sacred to him. The more pious among his devotees keep the fast (*barat*) in his honour on that day. This means eating only one meal with one sort of grain and abstaining from salt. Water is offered towards the sun, and when the devotee first steps out of doors in the morning he salutes the sun.

Bhumia or Khera.—Bhumia, the god of the homestead or the village itself, often called Khera, is an important god. Bhumia is worshipped on Sunday. People light a lamp and offer a cake of bread at the shrine, and feed Brahmans. This is done twice a year, after the harvests are gathered in, and also on other occasions. Bhumia is also worshipped at marriages. The bridegroom, before proceeding to the bride's house, takes a round of his own village and worships Bhumia, and again worships the god before he enters his house along with his bride. When a woman has had a son, she lights lamps, and affixes with cowdung five culms of the *panni* grass called *beon* to the shrine. So too the first milk of a cow or buffalo is always offered to Bhumia. Women commonly take their children to worship Bhumia on Sunday. The Brahmans take the offerings.

Smallpox sisters.—Mata is worshipped for protection against smallpox. The important shrine of one of the deities is at Dhanana village in the

1. Mokam is a small village that lies at a distance of 16 kilometres from Nakkha mandir in the Bikaner district of Rajasthan. The village has been in existence for more than five centuries. Twice a year a fair is held in commemoration of saint Jambha Jee who died here and was buried. Bishnois from all parts of the country come to pay their homage to the illustrious founder of their sect. (*Bikaner District Gazetteer*, 1972, pp. 116, 421-22).

Bawani Khera tahsil. Of the seven sisters, Silla Mata is supposed to be the greatest and most virulent and is worshipped here on 7th of Chaitra which is called *Silli Satam*. Besides this, *phug*, the day after the Holi festival, and any Monday, especially in Chaitra or Asadha, are favourable days. Children and women participate in the worship. In spite of the preaching of the Arya Samaj such worship continues among women.

During an attack of smallpox, no offerings are made, and if the epidemic has once seized a village all offerings are discontinued till the disease has disappeared, otherwise it is believed the evil influence would spread. But, so long as Mata keeps her hands off, nothing is too good for the goddess, for she is one of the great dreads of Indian mothers. The dread is based upon the high incidence of deaths caused by the disease. However, with increased facilities for vaccination, a material reduction in mortality has been achieved. Yet people still have undiminished faith in the smallpox goddess. Sedh Mata, Basanti Mata, Kali Mai, Gurgaon Wali Mata, Motali Mata and Khehni Malni Mata are other *matas* who are also revered.

Gugga Pir.—Gugga or Jahar Pir, though a Muslim, is supposed to be the greatest of the snake-kings. Gugga is worshipped everywhere. The 9th and 15th of Bhadra, especially the former (considered as Gugga Naumi), are dedicated to this Pir, and generally the 9th of any month and all Mondays are his days. His shrine usually consists of a small one-room building with a minaret at each corner and a grave inside. It is called a *mar*i and is marked by a long bamboo with peacock plumes, a coconut, some coloured threads, and some *hand-pankhas* with a blue flag on the top. On the 9th of Bhadra the Jogis take this fly-flap, known as *chhari*, round the village to the sound of *deroos* and the devotees salute it and offer *chamars*. The Balmikis sing devotional songs known as '*Pir Ke Solle*' in his honour to the accompaniment of *deroos*. Beating of *deroos* is the exclusive privilege of the Balmiki community, others may take part in singing, dancing or simply offer *charhawa*. It is believed that the spirit of Gugga temporarily takes abode in the devotee dancer who proves this fact by beating himself occasionally with a bunch of iron chains called *chabuk*. Gugga Pir is also the subject of folk-songs.

The description of fairs in honour of Gugga Pir is given under sub-head Festivals and Fairs.

Other saints.—Chamars of the district worship Guru Ravidas, a great saint born at Mandur village near Kashi in Uttar Pradesh. Guru Ravidas was against the caste system. Temples for his worship have been erected in towns. The birth anniversary of the guru is celebrated on the *purnima* of Magh month.

(February-March). On the occasion *jhankies* from the life of the *guru* are taken out in procession to the accompaniment of *Bhajan mandalis* singing devotional songs.

Balmiki community reveres Maharishi Balmiki, the composer of the *Ramayana*. It is said that from a dacoit he rose to the position of a great saint poet. His birth anniversary is celebrated with enthusiasm in the month of October.

Arya Samaj.—The *arya samaj* has influenced the life of people in the district especially in the Bhiwani tahsil. As stated in the *Hisar District and Loharu State Gazetteer (Hisar District)*, 1915¹, an orphanage was established at Bhiwani in 1899 by the Arya Samaj. This saved the lives of some 1,000 children who were taught handicrafts in addition to reading and writing. The uplift of Harijans, widow marriage, eradication of illogical and superstitious beliefs, protection of cows and propagation of Hindi are some of the activities of the Arya Samaj.

JAINS.—They are mostly in Bhiwani, are of the Aggarwal community who have adopted the Jain faith. They worship Lord Mahavira and the images of Tirthankaras. They celebrate the *parvas*, i.e. the festivals connected with the life of Lord Mahavira and Tirthankaras. Jains abstain from meat and are protectors of animal life.

MUSLIMS.—Some Muslim families are in the villages of the Bhiwani and Loharu tahsils. They have a well kept mosque in Loharu where they practice *namaz* and celebrate religious festivals.

CHRISTIANS.—Christians, though in small numbers in the district, started missionary work in Bhiwani in 1887 and the church was organised in 1903. Medical, educational and orphanage works were started by the Mission at Bhiwani. A church was built in the Naya Bazaar, Bhiwani, in 1935. The Christian community gather here on every Sunday for prayer.

SIKHS.—Sikhs, a minority community in the district, have a *gurdwara* on the Railway Road, Bhiwani, which was built in 1930.

SUPERSTITIONS

The masses generally cling to many traditional superstitions in performing ordinary acts of daily life. Some of the commonly practised superstitions are listed below :

1. Ibid, p. 64.

If a black cat crosses one's path, it is a sign of failure in work. If some one sneezes, it is a bad omen for going out or beginning a job. A woman with an empty pitcher, coming from the opposite direction and crossing one's path, is considered inauspicious. If the pitcher is full of water, it is regarded as a lucky sign. While going out on an auspicious work, it is generally considered inauspicious to come across a Brahman or a person carrying a bundle of firewood.

The astrologer is invariably consulted on every important occasion, e.g. on the birth of a child, for fixing the dates of marriage or any other important occasion, for proceeding on a distant journey, opening a new shop or factory, checking favourable stars for love, litigation, examinations, careers, etc.

The local tutelary gods and saints are still worshipped by the people, and education has had little influence in weaning away people from such practice.

FESTIVALS AND FAIRS

Haryana revels in festivals and it is through them that the spirit of the community finds expression. The common festivals celebrated by the Hindus are Holi, Diwali, Teej, Gugga Naumi, Raksha Bandhan, Dussehra and Janam Ashtami. Other festivals are Shivratri, Bhaya Duj, Ram Naumi, Satipuja, Durga Ashtami. Some festivals are celebrated only by women. In this category fall Karwa Chauth, Nirjala Ekadshi and Hooe. Karwa Chauth is celebrated for the long life of husband. The principal festivals are celebrated by the Hindus here as in other parts of the country. It is, therefore, not necessary to give a detailed account of their observation. Vaisakh Purnima, Kartika purnima, Krishna Janam Ashtami, Durga Ashtami and Devi Fairs are of local importance.

Vaisakh Purnima and Kartika Purnima.—People from far and near flock to celebrate these two fairs at Tosham. They take a bath at the sacred *kund* at the Tosham hill. About 10,000 persons attend these fairs. It is said that there was a great saint who had four or five disciples. Baha Moongi Pa, one of the disciples possessed supernatural powers. After his death a small temple was raised in his honour and people began to worship him. There are five *kunds* (reservoirs) differently named with a pacca tank and dharmasala existing here. A bath in the *kunds* (though four of them are filled with earth and are dry) is considered as sacred as a dip in the Ganga.

Krishna Janam Ashtami.—In the Haryana region, the town of Bhiwani

is known as the little Kashi of India, for its temples. Krishna Janam Ashtmi is celebrated on the 8th of Bhadra (August) with great zest. Celebrations in Gauri Shankar temple start a number of days before the Janam Ashtmi with illuminations and other decorations, exhibition of *jhankis*, *bhajan-kirtan* and *pūja*. On this day all other temples in the town are decorated and *han-dolas* and *jhankis* are displayed. People from far and near visit Bhiwani to see the decorated temples. Janam Ashtmi is also celebrated at Charkhi Dadri, Bond Kalan and Kari Dharni (Dadri tahsil).

Durga Ashtmi.—Birth of Durga or Durga Ashtmi fair is also held at Bhiwani on 8th Badi of Chaitra (March). Durga temples are decorated on this day. The villagers flock to have darshans of *Durga mata*. The idol of Durga is taken out in a decorated chariot and people in thousands follow it in a procession.

Devi Fairs.—At Devsar (Deosar), about 5 kilometres from Bhiwani, in the Bhiwani tahsil, a fair is held twice yearly in Chaitra (March-April) and Asuj (September-October) in honour of Devi. It is said that a Mahajan of Bhiwani had a dream that if he built a temple for the goddess at Devsar, he would amass huge profits. Consequently he got a temple erected and a regular fair began to be held. Another legend says that bad days begot a rich man. He asked for a boon from the goddess. She later removed his hardships and he got a temple constructed in her honour. According to yet another version, a speaking image of Durga Bhawani riding a tiger appeared here. This temple of Devi is on a hillock close to the village. About 10,000 persons from adjacent villages attend this fair. Offering of clothes, coconuts and sweet meats are made. The first hair-cut ceremony of a child is also performed here by believers.

At Pahari, in the Loharu tahsil, two fairs are held, where the object of veneration is also Devi. These fairs take place in the months of Chaitra (March-April) and Asuj (Sep.-October) on a hill at a distance of about 16 kilometres from Loharu. It is said that during the battle of Tarain between Prithviraja Chahamana and Muhammad Ghuri, some Rajput soldiers under the command of a princess were camping on the hillock. The princess received the sad news of her husband's death in battle. She lit a funeral pyre and burnt herself to death. The people called the princess a goddess, constructed a temple in her honour and installed an idol. Another version is that sometime in the undated past, somebody installed an idol of Durga here which is still worshipped. About 10,000 persons attend this fair. Even persons as far away as Bombay and Calcutta pay a visit to this fair. Offerings of ornaments, cash and sweetmeat are made.

Mela Sitla Mata.—There is a shrine in honour of Devi Sitla (the Small-pox goddess) at Dhanana in the Bawani Khera tahsil. It has a small idol (about 15cm) of Devi Sitla in a room, where generally women and children worship and offerings of sweetmeats, loaves and bangles are made. People from all parts of Haryana attend this fair. The hair-cutting ceremony of children is also held here.

This fair is also held at Dhana Ladenpur, tahsil Bhiwani.

Hanuman Mela at Imlota.—In Imlota village of the Dadri tahsil, a fair in honour of Hanuman is held on the 10th of Phalgun (February). People of 10 to 15 adjacent villages come to attend. Wrestling is popular on this occasion and the winners are given prizes.

Gugga Naumi.—It is a religious festival connected with snake worship observed on Bhadra 9(August). To commemorate Gugga Naumi, fairs are held at his shrine every year on this date. Some people go out in search of holes that might have snakes; and serve them *kachcht-lassi* (diluted milk) and *serian* (cooked vermicelli).

Gugga Pir's shrine is distinguished by its square shape, with minarets and a domed roof, and is always known as a *marf*. Some of the places where this festival is celebrated in the Bhiwani district are Bajina, Bamla, Sidhan (tahsil Bhiwani), Bond Kalan, Berla, Badhara, Kadma, Un-Mustil-Badhawan, Gudana, Jhojhu Kalan, Mankawas, Sanwar, Khatiwas, Patwas, Badwana (tahsil Dadri), Sidhenwa, Budhera, Pahari, Jhumpa Kalan and Bahl (tahsil Loharu).

SOCIAL LIFE

SOCIAL GROUPS

Significant social groups found in the district are Jats, Ahirs, Brahmans, Rajputs, Aroras, Baniyas (Aggarwals or Mahajans) and Backward Classes. Gujjars, Bishnois and Rabaris have also been mentioned because of their peculiar features. Aroras comprised the displaced population, who settled in the district as a consequence of the Partition in 1947. Jats, Ahirs, Rajputs, Gujjars and Bishnois form the agricultural backbone of the district.

Jats.—Jats, who are in large numbers, are of two types, Deswalis and Bagris. Deswali Jats claim to be original Haryanvi and Bagri Jats are immigrants from Rajasthan. Inter-marriage now takes place between Deswalis and Bagris. Bagri Jats of the Loharu and Bhiwani tahsils have by and large adopted the culture of the Deswali Jats of this area.

The *Hisar District and Loharu State Gazetteer (Hisar District)*, 1915¹, gives another division of Deswali and Bagri Jats commonly recognised throughout the district, viz. Shibgotra and Kasabgotra Jats. The Shibgotras are so named from the fact that their ancestor is traditionally said to have sprung from the matted hair of god Shiva. The Kasabgotras, on the other hand, claim that their forefathers were originally Rajputs, who took to agriculture and the marriage of widows, and so sank in the social scale. The Shibgotras, however, assert that they are *asal* (real) Jats, and do not claim Rajput origin. There are said to be 12 *gots* of Shibgotra Jats. The tradition as to their origin is : One Barh, a Shibgotra, made himself master of a large portion of Bikaner. He subsequently founded a town named Jhausal and from his 12 sons sprang the 12 *gots* of Shibgotra, of whom only three or four are to be found in this district. This difference of traditional origin may well point to a real difference in descent, and the Shibgotras may have been originally non-Aryan aborigines, whose chief deity was Shiva, and with whom the less militant tribes of the Aryan invaders inter-married, adopting at the same time some of their social customs and worship, thereby also getting to their social level and becoming Jats. This would also account for the prevalence of the worship of Shiva among the Jats.

The principal clans of Bagri and Deswali Jats in the district include Sangwan and Shorans, Ghatwals, Puniyas, Duhans, Panghals, Phogats, Booras, Leghas, Kalkas, Lore, Mahran, Potalya, Lather and Kundu. Some of these are described below :

Sangwan and Shorans.—They claim that their ancestors Sanga and Shora were Chauhan Rajputs of Sirsa.

These Chauhans migrated into the Dadri and Loharu tahsils. In the Dadri tahsil, Sangwans have settled in 40 villages as these were held by Sanga, their ancestor. Shorans are in 75 villages of the Loharu tahsil, which had been held by their ancestor Shora. They settled down and married Jat women, and so became Jats.²

Ghatwals.—Ghatwals are Deswali Jats known as Malaks. They claim to be Siroha Rajputs, and have come from Garh Gazni in Afghanistan. Ghatwals are scattered over the whole district.

Puniyas.—Puniyas belong to the Shibgotra section of the Jats, being

1. Ibid, pp. 87-88.

2. Ibid, p. 90.

descended, as they state, from Puniya, the eldest son of Barh. They do not claim Rajput origin.

The Jats are a tough and sturdy community. To-day they are more liberal in social relations. Though generally agriculturists, they now do not confine themselves to this and have turned to other professions with success. A large number of Jats of the district are serving in the armed forces, and civil departments of Haryana.

Ahirs.—The term Ahir may be variously explained. One view is that the Ahirs are a pastoral caste, their name being derived from the Sanskrit *abhirā* (milkman). This traditional view was explained by the circumstance that Krishna, a Hindu *avatar* (incarnation of God) of *Dwapar* was a Ahir and Ahirs are devotees of Lord Krishna. The Ahirs, therefore, identify themselves with Abhiras.

Ahirs of this district call themselves Yaduvanshis (Lord Krishna was also of Yaduvansh) and they are mostly agriculturists. They are good cultivators and are of the same social standing as the Jats and the Gujjars. Many of them are in the army and make good soldiers.

Brahmans.—There are four sections of Brahmans in this district, i.e. Gaur, Khandelwal, Dakaut and Chamarwa. They are divided into various *gots*. Gaur is in the majority. They were brought by various immigrant agricultural tribes for performing religious ceremonies. Very few Gaur Brahmans are now engaged in the discharge of these functions; they have adopted agriculture as a profession. They, however, retain an instinct of superiority and do not socially mix with other castes except Mahajans and Sunars. Khandelwals state that they are a branch of the Gaur and are engaged in the discharge of religious functions.

Dakaut Brahmans revere Shani (Saturn). Saturday is associated with Shani and the Dakauts on this day take offerings of iron, sesame (*til*) or *urd*, black clothes, oil and *satnaja* (seven types of grains mixed). They have mostly shifted to other activities, as their traditional family religious profession is not adequate as a source of livelihood.

Chamarwa Brahmans have their own story. They claim to be Gaur Brahmans. They say that their ancestor went to perform the birth ceremony of Guru Ravidas, a great saint from Uttar Pradesh about 500 years ago. Ravidas was a Chamar by caste and the *purohit* (priest) who performed the *havan* ceremony at the birth of Ravidas was declared outcaste by his fellow

Brahmans. Since then the descendants of that *purohit* (priest) have been officiating in the religious ceremonies of only Chamars. They will not accept offerings from any other caste. They are also called Gorra Brahmans and mostly found in Bhiwani.

People still regard Brahmans with a degree of superstitious reverence, based on the traditional beliefs of ages. In ancient times Buddhism and Jainism were the first to protest against the Brahmans for giving religious sanction to the caste system, and performing rituals for their own advantage. Modern education, the influence of western thought, centralised administration and the rapid means of communications are some of the important factors which are breaking down the caste system based on the superiority of Brahmans. The secular practices of the Constitution of India is a legal basis for change in the same direction. Much that remains of the Brahman's former glory is now witnessed only at the time of ceremonies associated with birth, marriage and death.

In the Bhiwani district, the Brahmans are not wholly dependent upon their *jajmans* (clients) and have taken to agriculture, trade and service.

Rajputs.—The term denotes a caste or sect of warlike traits and they claimed superiority over all castes. Rajputs of the Bhiwani district migrated from Rajasthan to settle here. Thereafter they adopted the culture of Haryana. Their customs are therefore different from the customs of Rajputs in Rajasthan. The important clans of Rajputs in this district are Panwars, Jatús, Sheikhavatis, Chauhans, Tanwars and Bhattis. Panwars are in the Dadri tahsil and Jatús are in the Bhiwani tahsil. Sheikhavati and Bhatti Rajputs are found in the Loharu tahsil.

Rajputs were known for their valour, chivalry, loyalty, horsemanship, swordsmanship and friendship. Rajputs in the district retain the martial instinct of their ancestors and prefer an army career to agriculture. A large number of Rajputs have joined the armed forces and have proved their worth as soldiers. Bapora and Tigrana villages of Rajputs top in the military service. They still retain the superiority of descent and their pride of being a Rajput is depicted in their separatist tendency visible in dress and customs.

Banias (Aggarwals or Mahajans).—The word Bania is from the Sanskrit *banij* which simply means a trader, and it is more the name of a class or occupation than of a tribe. The three divisions of this caste are Aggarwals, Oswals and Mahesaris. Aggarwals are the most plentiful in this

district. They are said to have come from Agroha (Hisar).¹ The most popular surname among them is Gupta whose origin can be traced back to the founder of that dynasty. Oswal and Mahesaris, the two other divisions of Banias trace their origin to the Rajputs of Rajasthan.

The Banias constituted the backbone of the village economy by controlling rural finance. At present, they constitute the backbone of industry. They control the commerce and trade and operate most of the privately owned public utility projects. Many of the Banias in the past left Bhiwani villages and established business in other parts of the country particularly at Calcutta and Bombay. The Aggarwals have also shifted towards service and politics. They are strict in the observance of caste rules and do not easily mix with other castes.

Gujjars.—Gujjars in this district are efficient cultivators. They are of good physique and have equal social status with Jats and Ahirs. Cattle-keeping was their main profession in the past but now they have adopted agriculture. They are also keen to join the army.

Their main clans are Basih, Karhan, Karu, Brar, Mohmor, Bocheh-wari, Rawat, Majsi and Janeja. They are found in the Bhiwani, Dadri and Bawani Khera tahsils. Like Ahirs, they are devotees of Lord Krishna.

Aroras.—They came to Bhiwani mostly from Multan and Dera Ghazi Khan districts of Pakistan after the partition of the country in 1947. They have largely settled in the urban areas, i.e. Loharu, Bawani Khera, Charkhi Dadri, Bhiwani, Tosham and Siwani. They are hardworking, energetic and enterprising. They are engaged in shop-keeping, trade, government service and agriculture. During the last 30 years, they have made their mark in all these spheres. Their culture has influenced the local people of Bhiwani. They have liberalised the traditional custom of purdah and also influenced rituals. They have a progressive outlook and are known for modern trends in dress and dwellings.

Bishnois.—Bishnois derive their name from Vishnu as they lay great emphasis on his worship.² They are the followers of Vishnu incarnated in Jambhaji. Originally the Bishnoi sect adopted a cosmopolitan spirit and threw its gates open to persons belonging

1. Agroha was founded by Aggarwals after Raja Aggar Sen. The town was raided by the Muslims after which the Aggarwals dispersed to the south and east.

2. Maheshwari, Hira Lal (Dr.), *Jambhaji, Vishnoi Sanpradaya Aur Sahitya*, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1970 (D. Litt. thesis for the University of Rajasthan).

to any caste or creed, and mostly Jats, Brahmans, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas joined them. They sink their tribe in their religion and merely give their caste as Bishnois. They have migrated from Rajasthan and have settled in Siwani, Jhumpa and Lilus in this district. They retain their characteristic language and dress which separates them from other castes. They are strict in the observance of caste rules and they do not inter-dine even with Banias, Jats and Brahmans. The use of tobacco and meat is forbidden. They abstain from taking animal life and cutting trees.

They are cultivators and landowners. Modern liberal ideas have not influenced them. They are backward educationally and remain aloof socially.

Rabaris.—Rabaris are immigrants from Rajasthan. They had left their homes during famines and settled in various parts of Haryana. In the Bhiwani district they are found at Bawani Khera, Paluwas and Biran. They claim Rajput origin and state that they have socially sunk due to poverty. The influence of Rajasthan is still noticed in dress and dialect. Their main occupation is the camel trade. They are distinguished from others by long beards and moustaches.

BACKWARD CLASSES

There are 36 Scheduled Castes, 6 Vimukhat Jatis and 61 Other Backward Classes scattered in the district.¹ Balmikis (Churas or Bhangis), Chamars and Dhanaks among the Scheduled Castes and Kumhars and Khatis among the Other Backward Classes are in greater numbers as compared to the others. These are briefly discussed below. Although Lohars (one of the Other Backward Classes) are not numerous, they are also described because of their local importance.

Balmikis (Churas or Bhangis).—Balmikis were the scavengers and even now follow this profession. They are found both in rural and urban areas. However, in the rural areas they are cultivators or agricultural labourers and do not work as sweepers. They also rear pigs, goats and sheep. They maintain that they are descendants of Maharishi Balmiki, author of the *Ramayana* epic. Education has not made much headway among this caste.

Chamars.—Chamars of the district are divided into 4 sections :—

(1) **Chandors or Deswali Chamars.**—Scattered throughout the district.

1. For their detailed classification, see Chapter on 'Other Social Services'.

(2) **Koli.**—Mostly found in Bhiwani and Jhumpa.

(3) **Bhambhl.**—They are in Siwani and Raipuria Bas.

(4) **Jatia or Jatav.**—They are only in Bhiwani.

There are now no social barriers among these sub-castes and inter-marriages take place.

The term **Chamar** is an occupational term. Besides their old profession of leather and shoe-making, they have shifted to agriculture and services. In the Loharu and Bawani Khera tahsils they own land, but in the Dadri and Bhiwani tahsils they cultivate land as tenants. This community is politically conscious. It has progressed much after Independence and its members now occupy important positions in the services.

Dhanaks.—Dhanaks are also scattered in villages and towns of the district. Their old profession has been menial work and weaving. A large number have now shifted to cultivation as agricultural labourers.

Kumhars.—Kumhar is an occupational term connected with pottery. Many distinct tribes are included in it. Kumhars of the district are divided into Mahar, Gola, Magrichi, Bidwati, Nagori and Bhandia. These are not separate clans. The Kumhars have abandoned pottery and taken to agriculture. In towns, they keep donkeys for carrying soil for house construction. Their economic position is better than that of their agriculturist counterparts.

Khatis.—The term khati is the name of an occupation and it developed into a caste later. They trace their origin to Brahmans and call themselves Jangra Brahmans. Khatis prepare wooden implements for agriculture. The village Khatis are not technically trained in their occupation and they are only capable of making furniture for villagers. They have also taken to cultivation in addition to carpentry.

Lohars.—Lohar is also an occupational term. The men of Jat and Rajput origin took to blacksmith's work due to poverty and became Lohars. This is proved by the fact that their *gots* are identical in name with those of Rajputs and Jats. These Lohars are called Deswali Lohars and they are scattered in the rural areas. Lohars have not confined themselves to blacksmith's work and have also adopted the agricultural profession.

Suthars, another type of Lohars, are also found in very small numbers.

in the district. Suthar tribe has a tradition¹ that 12,000 of them were taken to Delhi by Emperor Akbar, and there forcibly circumcised and made to become blacksmiths. These men trace their origin to Sindh (Pakistan) where they say, they held land. They are usually called Multani Lohars in contradistinction to the Deswali Lohars and are sub-divided into two-sections, the Bara and the Bhatti. They are now carpenters in this district.

Gadiya Lohars are so called because of the cart of peculiar shape in which they carry their belongings. They claim Rajput origin and wander from village to village in search of blacksmith's work. They pitch their tents on the fringe of villages. These gypsy type people are eyed with suspicion by the locals who remain aloof from them.

INTER-CASTE RELATIONS

Though the caste system is losing its rigidity under the pressure of economic and social forces, aided by liberal laws, it persists in the rural areas of the district. Jats and Aroras are more liberal in inter-caste relations and this attitude is bound to influence the social behaviour of other people. Hatred and scorn for Harijans has decreased, but people do not mix with them on social occasions. Inter-dining is only occasional. Inter-caste marriages are not common.

During national crisis people have been demonstrating their unity by ignoring cast or religious distinctions. In political campaigns cast still plays a somewhat prominent role.

JOINT FAMILY SYSTEM

The family is locally known as *kunba*. A group of families having common ancestors is called *thola*. Two or more *tholas* are jointly called *pana* or *patti*. It is common for several brothers, and occasionally for cousins to live together and farm the land jointly. More often the land is managed jointly while the owners live separately. The most important characteristic of the joint family system is that the income of all its members is pooled and spent for the benefit of all the members, whether or not they have actually earned any part of it. The basis for the system is to insure the maintenance of all descended from a common ancestor, father or grandfather or great grandfather. The widows or orphans, the children, young boys and girls and elderly or decrepit or physically incapacitated

¹1. *Hisar District and Loharu State Gazetteer (Hisar District)*, 1915, p. 93.

members of the family, all receive attention of the head of family and are supported and maintained out of the joint family funds.

The joint family system which has been a distinguishing feature of Hindu society since time immemorial, is breaking up under the stress of the changed economic and social conditions. Various factors are responsible for this change. The competition for earning a living, the tax-structure, the increased cost of living, the mobility resulting from the requirements of service and, above all, the growing spirit of individualism, spell the doom of this ancient institution. It is no longer possible for one earning member of a family to feed and support a host of relations and dependents. Even in the family where every member is earning, it is difficult to make both ends meet. Another factor which has assisted in the dissolution of the system is the growing tendency of late marriages both for boys and girls. When boys and girls marry at a comparatively advanced age, they prefer to live independently. A new pattern, with an individualistic bias, is steadily emerging. Usually the branch of the family which earns more money separates from the poorer branch. Those who enter service, have naturally to go wherever they are posted and help to loosen the hold of the joint family.

While these changes are more marked in urban areas, the joint family system is disappearing even in the villages, where people depend almost entirely on agriculture. The average holding is too small to support a joint family. It is therefore inevitable that some members of the family should move out in search of service to the towns or elsewhere to supplement the family income. In this way the migration of rural population to the towns in search of a living—whether in business, industry, service or some form of labour—has vitally affected the structure of the joint family. Those who migrate to the towns get allured to modern amenities and try to settle down there with their families. They leave the farm to those members of the family who stay behind in the village. A village youth moving to town, after a while gets so attuned to urban ways of living that he dislikes the thought of going back. Even the trend of the latest legislation on inheritance has hardly been conducive to the continuance of the joint family system.

INHERITANCE

The law of inheritance that prevailed in the past as given on pages 208-09 of the *Hisar District Gazetteer*, 1915, applicable to Bhiwani and Bawani Khara areas, was :

"Inheritance in all cases follows the rule of representation, i.e., if an heir who would have been entitled is dead, his male heirs will succeed

to his interest. The main object of rural customs in regard to present and reversionary rights in property is to keep it in the agnatic group or family, and thus in all but a very few cases only agnates can succeed.

"The main rules of inheritance are as follows : succession goes first to the sons and sons' sons, per stripes with representation, i.e. if a son has died the share which he would have taken goes to his sons and so on. If a son has died leaving a widow, she takes a life interest in the share which would have come to him. The nearer male descendants do not thus exclude, the more remote, but all share according to the position which they occupy in relation to the deceased. As between sons by different mothers, the usual rule is that the distribution is equal among all sons, i.e. *pagvand* or *bhainbat*, and not by mothers, *chundavand* or *maionbat*.

"In other words no regard is paid to uterine descent. The higher castes in towns generally follow, however, the latter rule. In the absence of sons a widow takes a life interest in the deceased's estate, but where sons succeed she has a claim to suitable maintenance only. On the death of the widow, or in her absence or on her remarriage, the father, if alive, succeeds. This of course rarely happens, as it is not often that the son separates from his father during the latter's life time, and still less often does a separated son obtain a separate part of the family land on partition before his father's death. The father's succession is confined practically to cases in which a separated son has acquired land subsequently.

"After the father the succession goes to the brothers and their descendants per stripes and by representation; if a brother has died leaving a sonless widow, she takes a life interest in the share which would have gone to the deceased brother. In the absence of the brothers or brothers' sons or widows the mother of the deceased takes a life interest similar to that of the widow. In the absence of any of the above the succession goes to the nearest agnate branch per stripes and by representation.

"Daughters and their issues have no customary right to succeed : they are entitled to maintenance and to be suitably betrothed and married."

Since the Dadri tahsil was previously under the Jind State, the laws of inheritance prevailing in the then Jind State were applicable to the Dadri area and were as under :

1. *Phulkian States Gazetteer (Patiala, Jind and Nabha)*, 1904, p. 333.

"As a general rule the son or sons, natural or adopted, are entitled to the inheritance on the father's death, on his abandoning the world and becoming faqir, or on his changing his religion. In default of a son the widows ordinarily succeed to their husband's estate; or in case there is no widow, the mother and father succeed. The mother has the prior right, though, as she and the father ordinarily live together, no partition is, as a rule, required. If neither parent has survived the deceased, his brother or brothers or his brother's sons within seven degrees succeed in turn per capita. A daughter receives no share, but if she is unmarried a share is reserved to defray the expense of her marriage. This share is fixed by the court according to circumstances and depends on the means of the family. As a rule, sons, whether by the same or different wives, share equally. The above rules are in accordance with section 1, 2 and 5 chapter 4, of the State *Qanun* Diwani and the *Tamhid* (introduction), and section 2 of the *Nazul Hidayat*. By custom a widow is not allowed to alienate the estate so as to deprive the reversionary heir of it; but she can do so on the occurrence of any special emergency, e.g., in order to pay off debts, defray wedding and funeral expenses or preserve the family honour. The general custom of division in the State is according to the rule of *pagwand* but *chundawand* partition is practised in some villages in the Sangrur and Dadri tahsils, and in some special cases, though very few families follow this rule. Among Muhammadans, even of the cultivating castes, there is a special custom whereby daughters in some places receive shares in land. The eldest son is entitled to succeed to a lambardar or chaudhar or, if the eldest son be unfit, the younger one or his son is entitled."

Now according to the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, sons and daughters, the mother and the widow along with other heirs¹ of the deceased, inherit the intestate property simultaneously. A daughter has as good a claim to her father's property as a son, provided the father does not debar her by law (in case of his self-acquired property only). However, in spite of the right conferred by law, it appears to have become a general practice for the girls not to claim any part of the intestate property. In the absence of a brother, a girl may some time give her land to her near relatives, though in such cases she usually retains her right to property.

MARRIAGE CUSTOMS

Preliminaries.—After the betrothal, the *sawa* or *lagan*, i.e. an auspicious date for the wedding is fixed by the Brahman or *purohit* of the bride's

1. Specified in Class I of the Schedule vide Section 8 of the *Hindu Succession Act*, 1956.

family. The bride's father sends a letter written on paper stained yellow, to the boy's father, which announces to him the date or *lagan* fixed for the wedding. In the past this function was performed by the family *nal*. Now the *nal* is rarely used. A day before the marriage, the maternal uncle of the boy or girl brings the *bhat*. This consists of presents and necessarily includes the wedding suits for the bride or bridegroom. The people on the boy's side then get together and *neota* is collected.

Wedding.—On the day when the *baraat* is to start, the boy is dressed in his wedding suit brought by his maternal uncle. The *kangna* or seven-knotted sacred thread is tied on his right wrist. His head-dress consists of a crown or crest over the turban, and a *sehra* covering the face.

After receiving blessings from mother and aunts, the bridegroom is made to sit on a mare's back. This ceremony is popularly known as *ghur-chari*. The barber leads the decorated mare with the bridegroom on its back, while women follow singing songs peculiar to the occasion and the mother or aunt or an elderly woman carries a utensil containing water. His sister puts her wrap over her right hand, and on it places rice which she flings at his crown as the bridegroom goes along. He now worships the god of the homestead. Thereafter the *baraat*, usually comprising relatives and friends, set out midst music. In some cases, *gurchari* is performed a day earlier.

If both the parties reside in the same place, which sometimes happens in a town, no arrangements for the lodging of the *baraat* are necessary. If, on the other hand, the *baraat* comes from out-station, it is received by the bride's side usually at the railway station and if by bus, at some pre-agreed spot in the case of a town or on the outskirts of the village, from which the party is taken, sometimes in procession, to *jandalwasa*, *dharmasala*, *chopal* or any other place where arrangements have been made for the *baraat* to stay and to be entertained. In the evening, the *baraat* proceeds in procession with the bridegroom on the mare, towards the bride's house with pomp and show. The groom's friends dance before the mare to the accompaniment of the band. Such dancing in a marriage procession is a new feature of recent origin prevalent only in towns and is not common in villages of the district. The marriage party is received by the relatives and friends on the bride's side. The first ceremony to be performed is called *barotti* or *milni* when the boy's father and the girl's father embrace each other and the latter gives some money to the boy's father. At the door stand women singing and *jaimala* is put by the bride around the neck of the bridegroom and vice versa. After this colourful ceremony the bridegroom is taken into the house and the *baraatis* are

then entertained to a delicious and sumptuous dinner midst merriment and festivity.

The actual marriage ceremony always takes place after nightfall at the bride's house in the *angan* for which a canopy is erected. The Brahmins, *purohits* or family priests of both the parties are present. The Brahmin makes a *chawk* and lights the *hom* or sacred fire. The girl's Brahmin then calls upon the girl's father to perform the *kanyadan*, i.e. formal bride-giving. The latter then puts some money or a gold ring into the boy's hand and the girl's Brahmin pours water on them; the father then says that he gives his daughter as a virgin to the bridegroom who accepts her in a form of words called *susat*. The girl's Brahmin then knots her *ornna* to the boy's *dopatta*, and the *phera* or binding ceremony then takes place. The girl and the boy both circle slowly four times round the fire, keeping their right sides towards it. Among the Deswali Jats the girl leads in the first three *phas* and the boy in the last. The Bagris reverse this; with them the boy leads in the first three and the girl in the last. The latter is followed generally by all other communities. After the fourth *phera* the boy and the girl sit down, their positions, however, being changed, the bridegroom now sitting on the girl's right. If marriage is performed according to Vedic *riti*, the number of *phas* is seven.

While the *phas* are going on, the Brahmins of both parties recite their respective genealogies. The parents thus give away their daughter in marriage and usher her into the new world of *grihastha*. The ceremony normally takes between two to four hours primarily depending upon the ingenuity, skill and knowledge content of the priest. If he is content with reciting the holy *mantras* and restricts himself to the bare rituals, the ceremony is over in two hours especially when he is unostentatious and believes in an economy of words. If, however, he is in a mood to parade himself and make a show of his learning, then he will go into the how and why of each ritual and will wax eloquently by on the duties of husband and wife quoting copiously both from mythology and scriptures.

The ceremony is highly colourful, picturesque, and at times interesting also. There may, however, be noticed minor variations among certain castes in the performance and observance of these ceremonies.

Social mores and folkways change like fashions. There was a time when dancing girls were invited to the wedding, their songs and dances provided fun and frolic to the guests, especially in rural areas, which had no other source of entertainment. The cinema has changed all this. The practice of inviting dancing parties has virtually gone out of fashion. In villages,

then entertained to a delicious and sumptuous dinner midst merriment and festivity.

The actual marriage ceremony always takes place after nightfall at the bride's house in the *angan* for which a canopy is erected. The Brahmins, *purohits* or family priests of both the parties are present. The Brahmin makes a *chawk* and lights the *hom* or sacred fire. The girl's Brahmin then calls upon the girl's father to perform the *kanyadan*, i.e. formal bride-giving. The latter then puts some money or a gold ring into the boy's hand and the girl's Brahmin pours water on them; the father then says that he gives his daughter as a virgin to the bridegroom who accepts her in a form of words called *susat*. The girl's Brahmin then knots her *ornha* to the boy's *dopatta*, and the *phera* or binding ceremony then takes place. The girl and the boy both circle slowly four times round the fire, keeping their right sides towards it. Among the Deswali Jats the girl leads in the first three *phas* and the boy in the last. The Bagris reverse this; with them the boy leads in the first three and the girl in the last. The latter is followed generally by all other communities. After the fourth *phera* the boy and the girl sit down, their positions, however, being changed, the bridegroom now sitting on the girl's right. If marriage is performed according to Vedic *riti*, the number of *phas* is seven.

While the *phas* are going on, the Brahmins of both parties recite their respective genealogies. The parents thus give away their daughter in marriage and usher her into the new world of *grihastha*. The ceremony normally takes between two to four hours primarily depending upon the ingenuity, skill and knowledge content of the priest. If he is content with reciting the holy *mantras* and restricts himself to the bare rituals, the ceremony is over in two hours especially when he is unostentatious and believes in an economy of words. If, however, he is in a mood to parade himself and make a show of his learning, then he will go into the how and why of each ritual and will wax eloquently by on the duties of husband and wife quoting copiously both from mythology and scriptures.

The ceremony is highly colourful, picturesque, and at times interesting also. There may, however, be noticed minor variations among certain castes in the performance and observance of these ceremonies.

Social mores and folkways change like fashions. There was a time when dancing girls were invited to the wedding, their songs and dances provided fun and frolic to the guests, especially in rural areas, which had no other source of entertainment. The cinema has changed all this. The practice of inviting dancing parties has virtually gone out of fashion. In villages,

gramophones fitted with loudspeakers have taken their place. A marriage in a village is a gala occasion and the entire community is regaled to popular tunes and song-hits of the film-world. In cities, marriage celebrations have virtually become standardised with the assistance of specialised contractors. The house of the bride is lit with multicoloured lights, *shamianas* are put up and the passage is adorned with paper-flower decorations. Film songs are played through loudspeakers. The *baraat* approaches at the fixed time, heralded by incandescent lights, and a band playing hot music to which the young boys and girls do twist dancing. The feeding of the *baraat* is usually undertaken by a separate contractor. All these elaborate and expensive arrangements are made just for one night. This standardised system is gaining currency in Bhiwani and other towns.

Previously, the *baraat* used to stay at the bride's place for 3 days but here also custom has changed under the stress of economic forces. Now the *baraat* returns the same or the next day. The bride's maternal uncle escorts the girl, followed by women singing, to the *rath* (bullock cart) or bus or car in which she is to travel. The bride follows the bridegroom during this short walk. A few small coins are thrown over the heads of the couple as a mark of good wishes and the procession starts back for home.

In the old days, *muklawā* (consummation of marriage) took place after a long time as girls were married at an early age before they attained puberty. These days since the boy and girl are married at a fairly mature age, this ceremony is performed on the day following the marriage and is termed *patra pher*. But among Harijans and in a few other communities, *muklawā* is still observed as before. After the *muklawā* or *patra pher* the bride finally settles in the bridegroom's house, and they live as husband and wife.

Peculiar customs of marriage prevail in the Bishnoi community. Among Bishnois the proposal for a betrothal comes from the bridegroom's relatives and not from those of the bride, as in the case of other Hindus. Another feature is that no *phas* are performed; the binding ceremony is *pīrl badal* or exchange of stools by the bride and the bridegroom, who also take each other's hands (*hathlewa*).

Anand Karaj prevails among the Sikhs. The distinction between *anand karaj* and the Vedic marriage is that in the former the bride and bridegroom instead of going round the sacred fire, go round the holy *Granth*. Some verses from the sacred book are recited and though they are originally meant to describe in figurative way the union of human soul with the Supreme Being, they are made to serve the purpose of sanctifying the union of bride and bridegroom.

Civil marriages can be performed by the Marriage Officer of the district who is the Deputy Commissioner but these are rare. Marriages under the Hindu Marriage Act are also performed by registration in the office of the Tahsildar who is Registrar for Marriages under this Act. Such marriages are also rare, as the registration certificates of marriages are obtained only by persons going abroad or require such certificates for income tax and such purposes.

Amongst the Hindus, there were certain restrictions on marriages, the most common being that no marriage could take place between families of the same *gotra* or where the *gotra* tallies either on the paternal or the maternal side. The Hindu Marriage Act has now removed the restrictions as far as marriages among families of the same *gotra* are concerned, but marriages among *spindas* are still totally prohibited by law as well as custom. Inter-caste marriages are not socially approved either.

Dowry System.—The dowry system prevails everywhere. After Independence it was mostly practised by the Banias, but now it has become necessary for all castes to give dowry to their daughters. In the past the girl's father out of love and affection for her, used to give some daily necessities of life, i.e. *palang*, utensils, bedding, clothes and some ornaments as presents. But now this system has changed and the boy's father or the boy himself demands cash and other valuable gifts. In some cases (mainly in Bania community) a definite amount to be given by the bride's father is negotiated before the marriage is settled. The amount so settled is paid either at the time of settlement of the marriage or that of betrothal, and the balance at the time of various ceremonies which precede the actual marriage. It has become increasingly difficult for a poor father to marry even an able daughter without money. Even the dowry legislation of 1961 has not succeeded in achieving its object. People by-pass the law.

Marital age.—Early marriages were a normal feature in the past. There is a change during the last two to three decades. The Child Marriage Restraint Act enforced from April 1, 1930, provides penalties for the celebration of marriages of males under 18 and females under 14 years of age. There has in fact been a tendency to postpone marriage beyond the age specified in the Act. The general marital age at present is 18—20 years in the case of boys and 14—16 years in the case of girls in rural areas, in urban areas it is higher.

Widow marriage.—*Karewa* is a simple sort of a marriage for widows. It is in essence, the Jewish Levirate; that is to say, on the death of a man

his younger brother has first claim to the widow, then his elder brother and after them other relations in the same degree; though *karewa* cannot be performed while the girl is a minor, as her consent is necessary. But it has been extended so that a man may marry a widow whom he could not have married as a virgin, the only restriction being that she is not of his own clan. In Jats it has been prevalent for centuries and other castes except Rajputs, Brahmans and Banias, followed the Jat tradition. The father of the widow gives one rupee to the brother of her daughter's deceased husband as a mark of giving the daughter to him. On a fixed day before the assembly of relations the man throws a red wrap over the woman's head and puts wristlets (*chura*) on her arm. Such a marriage generally does not take place within a year of the husband's death. Among Rajputs, Brahmans and Banias, the *Karewa* has also made its appearance recently.

Punar vivah is more common than *karewa* among Rajputs, Brahmans and Banias. When none of the brothers accept their sister-in-law as wife, *punar vivah* is performed anywhere in their caste. The important ceremony in *punar vivah* is putting *jai mala* (garland) around each other's neck. Under no circumstances can a woman perform the *pheras* twice in her life. But in case the husband died shortly after marriage and the girl has not lived with him or if she has no issue, she is re-married with all the ceremonies usual at marriage. This type of *punar vivah* is mostly adopted by the Banias.

Kara is another form of widow marriage. It is marriage of a widow outside her husband's clan. There is no ceremony attached to *kara* and a mediator helps in the marriage. A woman married by *kara* is socially regarded as lower than other women, as she is brought for rearing her new husband's children and as a life companion in middle age.

Widows who do not wish to marry live on the property left by their husbands. In urban areas, however, the educated ones take up employment or engage in some kind of paid or honorary social work.

Divorce.—Divorce is not prevalent on any scale. There is a general tendency to suffer hardship resulting from ill-matched marriages rather than practise divorce. Society prefers to lead a miserable life rather than to dissolve the marriage. Another way out has been to leave the girl with her parents for good. Earlier divorce was possible through a panchayat. But widow marriage and divorce are looked down upon in almost all the castes. However, with the coming into force of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, a few

cases of divorce are being instituted in law courts :

Year	Cases instituted			Divorce granted	Petitions dismissed	Cases compromised	Cases pending
	Pending cases	New cases	Total				
1973	—	7	7	1	—	—	6
1974	6	9	15	1	2	—	12
1975	12	7	19	5	9	—	5
1976	5	27	32	4	12	—	16

OTHER RITUALS AND CUSTOMS

The daily life of the people, their inter-communications, and their general behaviour are some of the deciding factors in rituals. The birth of a child is an occasion to celebrate, particularly that of a son. To announce the birth of an infant, a brass plate (*thali*) is rung in the room where the delivery takes place. The anxious relatives waiting outside consider it auspicious and congratulate each other. Superstitious ceremonies accompany the birth of a child. The mother and the infant are kept in a separate room for 40 days. The door and the windows are always kept closed even in the hot and sultry weather. A small dung cake fire is kept smouldering outside the room as a protection against evils. A branch of the margosa tree is hung on each side of the room as an auspicious sign. On the tenth day the whole house is cleaned. The Brahman comes to the house for *hom* or sacred fire. He sprinkles the whole of the house with Ganga water. After *hom*, the Brahman consults his *patra* (book concerning astronomy) and announces four names beginning with the same letter. Of these, only one name is to be adopted. But the latest trend is not to adopt any of the names announced by the Brahman if it does not meet the liking of the parents. In such a case, the first letter of the names announced by the Brahman is made a basis for adopting another name for the child. The Brahman receives *neg* (present) for performing *hom* and naming the child. Then the Brahman, the relatives and friends are entertained to a feast.

Among Bishnois, the house is cleaned after 30 days. But the ceremonies are performed by Gayans, i.e. their religious priests and not by Brahmans. Gayan, the priest, performs the *hom* ceremony by burning the sacred fire and chanting mantras of the Bishnoi faith, and the child is received into it :

“Vishnu mantar Kan Jal Chhuwa
Shri Jambhguru Ki Kirpa Se Bishnoi Gua”

After listening to the Vishnu mantra from Jambhaji's Sakhi, the child is converted to Bishnoism.

Among Aroras, the *chhati* (sixth day) is celebrated, but the chola is an important ceremony, which is celebrated on the 15th or 17th day of the newly born son when new clothes consecrated by their own Brahman are worn. A feast is provided for friends and relatives.

Muslims summon a *kazi* who repeats *azan* in the infant's ear. On the sixth day, the mother takes a bath, and sweetened rice is distributed. The name is given on the 40th day by opening the Koran.

Almost all Hindus perform the *mundan* ceremony when the boy is a few years old. On this occasion, his hair is cut and head shaved for the first time and friends and relatives are entertained to a feast.

Hindus and Sikhs cremate their dead. On the third day the knuckle-bones and other small fragments of bone (*phul*) are collected. If they can be taken to be immersed in the Ganga at once, well and good, but they must not be brought into the village in any case and be hung up till finally taken to the Ganga or any other stream. Other post-cremation rites include 12-day (*bahra*) or 13-day (*tehra*) mourning, locally called *angaari*. Children under 8 years of age are buried without ceremony. Muslims, Christians and Bishnois among Hindus bury their dead. Earlier the Bishnois used to bury their dead in the *poli* (entrance of the house) but now they use a separate burial ground.

POSITION OF WOMEN

The ancients never even thought of an unmarried daughter, or of the economically independent wife, or of married widows, problems with which we are now concerned. "The daughter was legislated out of existence; the wife became part of the husband's family and the widow was presumed to have died."¹ The Hindu religion, however, never discouraged education among women, and we meet in ancient history women poets and scholars. Education of women, as for most men, was confined to Brahmins or royal and noble families.

During the medieval period the position of women became even worse. *Pardah* now became a necessary evil. Women were denied education, property and sometimes even fresh air. In the beginning of the present century, the Arya Samaj was the first to take up the cause of women's emancipation

1. Panikkar, K.M., *Hindu Society at Cross Roads*, 1955, p. 33.

by preaching against purdah, propagating women's education and widow marriage. Gandhiji also championed the cause of women's emancipation. Now the Indian Constitution gives equal rights to women. Numerous rights like that to property, maintenance, divorce, etc., have been granted to Indian women through various enactments. Even abortion has been legalised. Women are now by law required to be treated with respect and have been given equal status with men in almost every sphere.

Despite all the efforts to dispel the prejudice against women, the people in the district feel more happy on the birth of a boy than a girl. Women are considered primarily useful for the home. People in rural areas are still not in favour of imparting higher education to their girls. They hold that the girls have to set up homes after marriage and take care of children. It is not necessary for them to earn their own livelihood. It is the responsibility of their husbands to provide for them.

People are hesitant to spend money on girls' higher education. Another problem in the case of highly educated girls arises in finding suitable matches. Most girls after studying for a few years in school, are put to work at home. The elder girls take care of the smaller children and also help their mothers in various household duties.

Women, particularly those that are married, however, take their full load of domestic and field work. This includes cleaning the house, fetching water from the well or village common tap, cooking meals for the family and even carrying these to the men at work in the fields. Women also help their men in almost all agricultural operations like hoeing, harvesting and weeding except ploughing, driving of carts and building the well.

Purdah is still practised, but not so rigidly. Married women cover their faces when moving among the elderly persons in the house or out in the village or to the fields.

In the matter of education the position is far from happy. A small number of girls reach the middle or high classes. The girls studying in higher classes can be counted on the fingers.

The position of Rajput women is somewhat different from other communities. They observe very strict purdah and do not go out to the fields to help their menfolk or go to the village well to draw water. All these jobs are done by the men. Educationally also Rajput women are more backward.

Harijan women and those of other backward classes do odd jobs with

their men in the fields of landlords on daily wages during harvesting or weeding. Some of them also work on repair work or construction work on roads and canals. They supplement the family income by doing jobs for other communities economically superior to them.

The status of women in the urban areas is comparatively much better. Education has received a new impetus with the opening of numerous academic and various technical institutions. With the spread of education, social barriers against their employment are gradually collapsing. They are increasingly replacing men, or participating with them in parallel fields, such as social work of various kinds including education, child welfare, community work and arts and crafts. Working women though economically active still occupy a subordinate position in social life, but they do not observe purdah any more.

The fact, however, remains that backwardness of women has continued as a result of a deep-rooted malaise in our society tied to fundamental attitudes towards them. A change in their social and dependency conditions is necessary to improve women's position in society. Employment is a major plank for women's uplift and emancipation. Therefore, in all programmes designed to stimulate agricultural, animal husbandry and forestry activities, village and small-scale industries and the rural services sector, the consciousness of the need to increase the share of the benefits going to women has to be heightened and realized in order to uplift the submerged masses of women.

Prostitution.—Trafficking in women for immoral purpose does not exist, nor is there any organised gang of traffickers of women in the district.

HOME LIFE

Villages.—The villages of the Bhiwani district are usually built on sites which stand higher than the surrounding level. Some villages are built on heaps of debris left by previous habitations. The villages are usually surrounded by trees and some sort of a jungle called *bani*.

Every village has its *johar* or pool or a *kund* in which rain water is collected for domestic and other use. Since water is scarce, both men and cattle used the same village *johar*. During prolonged drought, water in these *johars* and *kunds* used to get exhausted. Human beings and cattle were exposed to great hardship. With the implementing of the rural water-supply schemes¹, difficulties due to non-availability of water have become a thing of the past.

1. For details, see Chapter on 'Medical and Public Health Services'.

Piped water-supply has been made available to 240 villages and 45 *dhanis*.

As a result of consolidation of holdings enough vacant land has been left round the village. It is locally called *phirni*. In this open space the villagers gather their cattle before they go out for grazing. The roads leading to the villages are now generally broad enough for their carts to move.

Dwellings, furniture and utensils.—The houses in rural areas are mostly of identical pattern. These are built with mud bricks and have thatched roofs called *chhans*. However, in the Bawani Khara tahsil, *chhans* are not seen. With changing economic conditions in the district, the thatched houses are being replaced by pakka houses. Pakka houses of modern specifications are seen in the villages along the road from Bhiwani to Kural.

Immediately after the entrance to a house, there is usually a room called *dahliz* or a big hall called *darwaza*. Besides being a drawing or meeting room, it is used particularly at the sides, for cattle and there are mangers and stables where fodder is chopped. There follows an open space or yard, variously called *angan*, *sahan* or *bisala*; at the rear of this or on either side is a verandah, called *dallan* or *bichala*, and behind this again are inner rooms for sleeping and living, called *kotha* or *sufa*. This is a fairly accurate description of the standard plan of a house, but variations are innumerable. Frequently two or three minor enclosures will be found inside the main enclosure and sub-divided by walls. Within the enclosures are the *chulahs* or hearths at which bread is baked, and each distinct confocal group living within the one enclosure has a separate *chulah*. The *hara* or oven, in which the daily porridge is cooked and the milk warmed, is generally outside the entrance, and built against the outer wall of the house in the *gali* or lane. The houses are generally single storeyed. The house tops are used for drying wood, fodder or grain, and also for sleeping in the summer. The houses usually lack bath rooms and latrines. In the past there was no special designing of houses except the few *havelis*, which had been built by Banias. The doors of these are generally carved and some also have flower decorations in brass.

There are some receptacles (*kuthlas*) for grain made of rings of adobe built up into a cylinder. This has a small hole in the bottom, out of which the grain runs and keeps full a small receptacle open in front, from which it is taken as required. Another way of storing grain is the *bukhari*, which is separated within the *kotha* with a partition wall about 1 to 2 metres high. *Kothi* is another construction within the *kotha*. It is rectangular in shape and besides foodgrains, other articles of daily use are stored in it. This has a *taki*

(small window) for the entry or exit of articles. The face of the *kothi* is decorated with colourful drawings in indigenous style.

With the spread of education and a growing demand for better sanitary and health facilities, the villagers are changing the pattern of their houses. They now often have a separate cattle shed and also take care to instal lighting and ventilation. The availability of electricity in villages has also changed the look of houses.

Dwellings in urban areas are almost always pakka. Bhiwani and Charkhi Dadri go back to the old style. Many big buildings are very well designed with exterior or interior decoration mostly murals or legendary gods. New colonies on modern lines have now also come up. The houses in these have been provided with modern amenities. These are electrified. Piped water-supply is available at Bhiwani, Charkhi Dadri, Loharu and Tosham. In Siwani, the committee has installed an electric motor on a well for supplying drinking water. Besides, 12 stand posts have been provided under a rural water-supply scheme. In Bawani Khara too, water-supply has been arranged through 10 taps from an open well fitted with a motor. There is also a rural water-supply scheme under which two standposts at separate places have been provided. The Bhiwani Municipal Committee has provided underground sewerage in the town. A sewerage scheme has also been undertaken at Charkhi Dadri¹.

There are generally few articles of furniture in a village house. These consist of bedsteads (*khat*s) made of wooden frames covered with netted string, *moorhas* of different sizes, a few small stools (*pidas*) of identical construction and a few small low wooden tables (*patras*).² In some houses a fine and strong bedstead, made of a wooden frame and netted with thin string of sunny in different colours, is seen. Articles of modern furniture like chairs and tables have started finding a place in village houses.

In urban middle class houses, chairs and tables are commonly seen. The houses of the well-to-do are tastefully furnished and decorated in the modern style. Sofas, wardrobes, *palangs*, *moorhas*, tables and chairs of different descriptions and other items of modern furniture fill the house. Possession of furniture is considered to be a sign of social status and taste. The paucity of furniture in an average home is partly offset by ordinary framed pictures and calendars.

There is no great difference in the utensils which the villagers use as

1. For details, see Chapter on 'Medical and Public Health Services'.

compared with the towns. The metal vessels consist of large narrow mouthed cauldrons (*toknas*) for storing water and cooking at feasts, smaller vessels of similar shape (*toknis*) for ordinary cooking and carrying water to the fields, still smaller ones (*lotas*, *gadwas*) for dipping into water and drinking, some tumbler-shaped drinking vessels (*gilas*), a broad shallow bowl or saucer (*kachola*, *bela*) for drinking hot liquids and eating *khichri* and *rabri*, and a tray (*thali*) to eat, a larger tray (*parant*) for kneading dough, a brass ladle (*Karchhi*), a spatula (*khurchana*) for turning bread, thin iron plate (*tawa*) for baking bread (*roti*), and some pairs of iron tongs (*chintas*), a fry-pan (*karai*) and sieve (*chhalni*) both of iron, and an iron bucket (*dol*, *balti*) for drawing water from the well. The utensils are made of brass and bell-metal (*kansi*). The earthen utensils commonly used are, the *ghara* or *paida*, a large earthen vessel in which water is carried from the well on the woman's head, the *handi* (a utensil for cooking vegetables, *dals*, etc.) and *kadhoni* (a utensil for boiling milk), and *biloni* (a utensil for churning curd). Wooden articles such as *jherni* (small churning handles) are used for preparing a mixture of ground *bajra* and pulses in boiling water for cooking *khichri*, *rai* (churning handle), iron *paliyas* are used for pouring milk and ghee. In many villages huge iron cauldrons called *karahis*, are to be found; they are used when culinary operations are required on a large scale as at wedding or funeral feast.

Utensils and decorations have undergone a change, particularly in urban areas. Side by side with the copper and brass utensils, porcelain and glass wares are finding favour. Stainless steel utensils are costly and though in use, this is not wide-spread. The use of electrical appliances like heaters and table lamps is gaining popularity. Radio receivers and transistor sets have come to be regarded as a necessity and a larger number of people, both in towns and villages, are using these. The upper class is also making use of television sets in the district.

Dress and ornaments.—The dress of rural people is simple. The everyday clothes are usually made from coarse cloth, whether mill-made or hand spun. The male dress consists of a *pagari* (turban), a shirt or *kurta*, a *dhoti* and a pair of shoes. The usual wrap is the *chadar*, and in the cold weather a thick blanket or a *razai* (a cotton quilt) is substituted. The *khes* is another type of wrap. An *angocha* (handkerchief) is used occasionally. Men in service wear pants or pyjamas while others at large generally wear *dhotis*. A complete suit of male clothes is called *jora*. With economic improvement and the spread of education, almost all castes have been affected by the change in fashion. The new generation wears pants, bushirt, shirt, coats, sweater, leather shoes or *chappals* but no headwear. This change is almost universal in urban areas.

Although in the recent past men used to wear *murkis* (small plain ear-rings), this is not in vogue now. However, a gold finger-ring is worn in urban as well as in rural areas. A full set of woman's clothes is called *teel*. The village women wear a shirt of gent's style with collar and a *ghagra* of cotton; in some parts this is called *lehnga*. This dress is generally worn by elderly women. The younger generation wears *salwar* and *kamiz*. The wrap of cotton worn over the head is called *ornha* or *dupatta*. *Peelia* (a sort of headwear, the centre part of which is of yellow colour and the rest printed multi-coloured) and *pomcha* or *chunri* are the other important items of dress. When a married women gives birth to a child, her parents make her a gift of headwear called *peelia*.

The Bishnoi woman dress differently. They wear long *ghagras* unlike the women of other communities. Their *ornha* is printed multi-coloured. It is broader as to cover the abdomen. They have a distinction in wearing *borla* (prepared from beads) on the forehead.

Harijan women dress in much the same way. The variations apply to areas and not to castes.

A Brahman or Bania woman wears a petticoat, sari or *dhoti*, *choli* (blouse), *ornha* and *shawl*.

The younger women have changed to *salwar* and jumper, sari and blouse.

The ornaments worn by women are usually made of gold and silver. They include *tika*, *singar patti*, *borla*¹ *phini* on forehead; *hansli*, *jhalra* (long hanging string of silver or gold coins), *haar*, *gulsari*, *gulubandh*, *jaumala*, *kanthimala* round the neck; *karanphool*, *bajni*, *dandee*, *kantey*, *bundey*, *tops*, *ball* on the ears; *koka*, *purli*, *nath* for the nose; *tad*, *chann*, *pachheli*, *kangani*, *chura*, bracelets, in order from shoullder to wrists; and *anguthi* (ring) on the finger. *Tagri* is worn round the *lehanga* or sari. *Ranjhol* (*jhanjhan*) *kari*, *chhail kare*, *neveri*, *tati* and *pati pajeb*, *churi* (made of silver) are worn on the legs.

A woman's social standing is generally determined by her jewels. The nose ring, the plain armlet and the *chura* or wristlet have a social significance. In the recent past, the armlets, bracelets and anklets, being solid and not easy to remove, were worn always while the rest on special occasions, such as marriages, festivals and the like. Now the use of traditional jewellery as described above has become out of date. The items of jewellery in common use include *kanthi* for the neck, *purli* or *koka* for the nose and *pajeb* for the ankles. The educated women do not use much jewellery except a chain

1. *Borla* worn by a Bishnoi woman is made of beads of different colours.

on the neck and a few bangles on the wrist. The use of ornaments save on special occasions, is on the decline.

The practice of tattooing *khinana* once common among women has almost disappeared.

After Partition, displaced persons from Pakistan brought with them their own traditions. The last three decades witnessed a significant cultural fusion between the old residents and the new. Thus the *salwar* and *kamiz* have been increasingly adopted by young girls studying in schools, and even some of the grown up women have discarded the old, graceful but heavy, *ghagri* in favour of the *salwar*. They have also almost given up the use of their heavy silver ornaments. The tall and well-built village women appear very graceful in their *ghagris* and their bright clothes lend charm and colour to the country-side. The gradual disappearance of the *ghagri* with its bright colours is perhaps not altogether welcome.

People belonging to the learned professions, officials, college students, etc., irrespective of their origin (whether rural or urban), caste and creed, generally dress in western style.

Food.—The flour preferred for cooking *rotis* (loaves) is of bajra or barley and gram mixed. The *rotis* are eaten with pulses and *karhi*. *Karhi* is prepared with gram flour and buttermilk, and is the special dish of the area throughout the year. Vegetables are usually not available. In the summer people start their work after eating *raabri*, again a special dish of the area cooked after fermenting *bajra* flour in buttermilk. It continues to be consumed through the day and is also offered to the visiting guests in the way that soft drinks are offered in the urban area. The lunch menu includes *rotis* of *bajra*, barley and gram mixed, one dish of vegetable pulses or vegetables (if available) or *karhi* and *lassi*. The evening meal comprises *khichri* prepared from *bajra* and pulses (*moong* or *moth*). *Khichri* is eaten with milk or *lassi*. The vegetables available in the rural areas are green beans of *gwar*, *matiri* (raw *matira*), *tlndsi*, wild *teends* which grow in sandy areas, *sangar* (beans of jand tree) and *rayta* of *phog* (dried flowers of *phog* plant). The *kachharas* and *matiras* are the wild fruits which grow in abundance in October/November in this area and are consumed by the people with pleasure.

In the urban areas, the food habits are slightly different. Middle class and rich people use wheat flour, pulses and all sorts of vegetables of the usual type. *Karhi* is also prepared occasionally. *Khichri* does not form an item of their daily menu as in the villages. The use of vegetable ghee is mostly confined to the urban areas.

People in villages and towns are by and large vegetarians but meat eating has started finding favour with the new generation. Some village people on a visit to the town enjoy a meat dish at the *dhabas*. The menfolk are addicted to the use of tobacco, cigarette and *biddi* smoking in towns and the hookah in villages. Women do not touch it.

So far as drink is concerned, tea as a stimulating drink has become popular with both urban and rural folk. Tea stalls are found in every town and all the big villages. In summer months some people prefer to drink a glass of *sherbat* or *lassi*. The aerated soft drinks are becoming popular with younger people and are often served to guests at social ceremonies. Local country-made liquor is consumed in villages particularly of the Bhiwani and Loharu tahsils, while whisky and the like is consumed in the urban areas. People mostly take strong drinks on festivals or ceremonies and not as a general habit.

The restaurants or *dhabas* are found only in the urban areas. Tourists or visitors, if any, to villages are served meals free of cost by the villagers.

COMMUNITY LIFE

Community life is somewhat more effectively organized in villages than in towns. A growing town cannot claim to be the nucleus of a single community. Its various social and economic groups are more exclusive than inclusive. They do not come into such frequent contact with one another. Civil responsibilities no doubt are applicable to all but these are not cohesive in their nature. And this is more true of an expanding town which is sprawled over a large area. There is a growing tendency for voluntary social agencies to establish themselves in local areas or small towns and organize community life in some form or other. They also organize mass celebration of important festivals.

The social situation in villages is different. Big and small land-owners, agricultural labourers and other workers are not far apart from each other. Numbers are small and people know each other. The limited amenities and amusements of village life are equally shared by all of them and require their combined attention. The community development programmes have given a fillip to such activities, and the panchayats have also become a nucleus of corporate activities.

FOLK CULTURE

Community life is expressed through folk-songs, dances and theatre. With fast changing conditions, urban life is gradually making an inroad into

rural life, taking away some of its inherent beauty and cultural rhythm. The gramophone record is an onslaught on the village *rāgi* and the radio seeks to replace the folk-songs and dances. But despite increasing urban influence, folk culture still continues to enliven the country-side, which hums with songs and dances on festivals and other numerous occasions. Of late, All India Radio is paying attention to the revival of folk culture and broadcasts 'Lok Manas' featuring programmes on Haryana culture.

Folk-songs.—Folk culture is preserved by woman through folk-songs. Folk-songs with their burden of love and labour have a peculiar charm of their own. These songs express hopes, aspirations, love longings, joys and sorrows of the rural people. We also hear about the changing seasons, the tinkling of bells of cattle returning home at sun set and the emotional outbursts of married couples at their union and separation.

There is a variety of folk-songs, each connected with a particular occasion. A good number of these are nature songs sung in particular months. The month of Sravana (July-August) brings ecstasy in its wake. Teej or Haryali Teej is the main festival of Sravana, falling on Sudi 3 (third of the lunar month). It is observed throughout Haryana. By this time the rains have started. On the day of Teej the women come out of their homes in colourful customs for enjoying a swing. While swinging they sing :

*Gagan barse chamke bijli re,
Paren bundiyan lagen pyari re,
Saman barkha lage pyari re,
Kare gya bagh ka mali re,
Laga gya amn ki doli re.....*

Love of brothers and sisters also becomes a key note of the songs of Teej:

*Neem ke nimoli lagi saman kad awega ?
Awe ri meri ma ka jaya,
Ke ke chiji lyavega ?*

At marriage, when the girl is taking *pheras*, her married friends remind her of their own experience and advise her to walk slowly around the sacred fire for otherwise she will become a laughing stock among her friends by revealing her impatience.

The following few lines of a song beautifully depict this situation :—

*Halwe halwe chal lado mahari,
Tane hansengi sahelariyan,
Ye moth se mat pare lado mahari.....*

After marriage when the girl departs for her in-laws, all her friends and village women gather to give her a hearty send-off in song :

*Saathan chal pari ree
Mere dab dab bhar aye nain,
Apni sahan ka main kurta sima dyun
Batanaa ki do do laar,
Aapni sahan ka main daman sima dyun
Gotya ki la dyun laar.....*

Songs of *jeeja-saali* (brother-in-law and sister-in-law) are a peculiar feature of the culture of the Bhiwani and Loharu tahsils. Whenever the boy, irrespective of his age, old, middle-aged or young, goes to his in-laws to bring his wife, her sisters and friends joke and taunt him with songs. In the following lines the sisters and friends of the wife entreat her husband not to join service away from home for that would separate them from him and leave them forlorn :—

*Hari hari baari mein bathwa ho diya
Bich mein phool chameli ka,
Nokar mat na jayee ho jeeja
Ji na lage saali ka.....*

After the birth of a son when the mother is fit to move out, she goes towards the village well, accompanied by other women, and singing. The following lines contain a request to the child's father for buying her *peela* (or *peelia*), a cloth head-cover :—

*Paanch muhar ka sabha
Peela manga dyo ji,
Koi paanch pachisi gadh bisi
Gadha maru ji, peela range dyo ji.....*

There are songs connected with festive and religious occasions and also exploits of the heroes of old like Alha Udai, Fatta Jaimal, Bhura Baddal and Gopi Chand-Bharthri. Ragani forms another type which is sung when a Swang is staged.

Folk-dances.—Folk-dancing, an outburst of surging emotions, at times accompanies folk-singing. Among the male folk-dances, *daph* dance and *dhamal* dance are prevalent in the Loharu tahsil and some parts of the Bhiwani tahsil. After harvesting, youth gather at night at the outskirts of the village

and enjoy loud singing with *dhamal* and *daph* dance. *Daph* dance is known for its vigour and fast movement. The dancing continues till late at night.

Famous among female folk-dances are *loor* and *ghumar*. In *ghumar*, more popular in the Bawani Khera tahsil, the girls dance in a circle. In the following lines of a *ghumar* song, a bride asks for different gifts from her husband in exchange for love :—

*Mera daman sima de ho, ho nandi ke beera,
Meri chundri manga de ho, ho nandi ke beera,
Tanne nyun ghunghat mein rakhu ho, ho nandi ke beera.....*

A dance, popular in the Loharu tahsil and some parts of the Bhiwani tahsil, is also associated with the Holi festival. The girl participants divide themselves in two groups and enact negotiations depicting prospective matrimonial offers.

Folk-tales.—The region is rich in legends and folk-tales, many of which form the theme of folk-theatre and the songs of village bards. The impact of folk-tales on the social life of the people is manifest in the characters from the tales forming the motifs of the facades of houses and *chopals*. Popular folk-tales of the area are of Gopi Chand-Bharthri, Nal-Damayanti, Satyawan-Savitri, Puran Bhagat, Alha Udai and the like.

Folk-theatre.—*Swang*¹ or *saung* is the main form of the folk-theatre. It owes its origin to Ram Lila. Though out of date, *swang* is sometimes arranged to raise funds for charitable purposes.

GAMES AND RECREATION

The popular games of the area are wrestling, *kabaddi*, *gindo khuli* and *gulli danda* (tipcat), the last two being usually played by children. *Gindo khuli* is the indigenous version of the game of hockey. It is played with a stick and a ball made of rags and twigs. *Gulli danda* is played in a ground outside the village and in many forms. Wrestling and *kabaddi* are, however, popular sports among the young and the middle-aged. *Kabaddi* is often played on moonlit nights during the months of Phalguna and Chaitra (February-March), as also during Teej and Raksha Bandhan festivals. Two teams take part in this game. Of a number of varieties in which the game is played, the two

1. *Swang* is a form of open-air theatre and the stage is in the midst of the audience. The formalities of drama like costumes, curtains, make-up, are hardly observed. The audience sit on all the four sides whereas orchestra takes its seat in the middle of the stage. Generally the leader of the *swang* party plays the role of hero and other actors play different roles including that of females.

types popular in this district are Haryana style and National style. Haryana style *kabaddi* is played in a circular field with a periphery of 75 feet (23 metres) with 10 players on each side while the field for national style *kabaddi* is marked as a rectangle of 13 metres by 10 metres. In Haryana type, a player of one team goes to the court of the other team repeating *kabaddi kabaddi* or *kandi kandi* in one breath. If the player after touching and encountering any player of the opposite team returns to the boundary dividing the two courts still uttering *kandi kandi* in the same breath, the particular player of the opposite team is considered to be out and that team loses one point. In case the player does not return to the boundary in one breath, he is considered to be out and his team loses one point. In the National style, the player going to the court of the opposite team may be encountered by any number of players of the other team. If he does not return to the boundary line dividing the courts, his team loses one point but if he reaches the boundary line in one breath, the other team loses points corresponding to the number of players who encountered him. The playing time for the game in both the types is the same, viz. 45 minutes including an interval of 5 minutes. The team securing more points wins.

Regular tournaments are held to discover promising talent in national events.

Chopar, cards and chess are some of the indoor games which are played and enjoyed in urban as well as rural areas. Villagers playing *chopar* and cards in the *chopal* are a familiar sight. Modern games like hockey, cricket, football, volleyball and basketball are popular among students of urban areas, where there are facilities of playgrounds while games like *kho kho*, netball, etc., are popular in girls' schools. Lately, panchayats and private associations have started organising games and holding terminal and annual tournaments. Government gives grants for the construction of playgrounds and also provides coaching facilities¹.

The State Public Relations Department has supplied radio sets² to panchayats, cooperatives and schools under the 'Community Listening Scheme'. In addition to the occasional drama shows, this Department frequently exhibits films, mostly documentaries, with the help of a mobile cinema unit, both in the urban and rural areas. Gossiping and listening to the radio are common pastimes. The portable transistor set has become a fashion with everybody without distinction. A few well-to-do people in Bhiwani and

1. For details, see Chapter on 'Education and Culture'.

Charahi Dadri have installed television sets in their homes. Though not within the television transmission range, people manage to enliven their television sets with the help of boosters.

REHABILITATION

The large-scale communal disturbances that followed Independence and the partition of the country in 1947 inflicted vast suffering on lakhs of people forced to migrate from Pakistan to India and vice versa. Millions of uprooted Hindus and Sikhs from Pakistan entered what was then called the East Punjab (India). The problems faced by both government and people were immense and overcome with great courage. The areas now in Haryana State took a leading share in the resettlement of immigrants. A number of migrants from Pakistan settled in the areas of the Bhiwani district. These were mainly Aroras from Multan, Lyallpur, Jhang, Dera Ghazi Khan and Bahawalpur, as is evident from the statement below :

District of origin (in Pakistan)	Number of displaced persons settled		
	Rural areas	Urban areas	Total
Multan	1,879	19,785	21,664
Lyallpur	—	10,522	10,522
Jhang	2,757	2,407	5,164
Dera Ghazi Khan	400	3,734	4,134
Bahawalpur	—	3,837	3,837
Others	478	3,781	4,259
Total :	5,514	44,066	49,580

REFUGEE CAMPS

Initially a number of relief camps were organized; one of these was set up at Bhiwani to provide shelter to the refugees. The educational institutions, which were closed for some months up to February 1948, provided some of the accommodation. The services of the staff and students were utilized in the management of the camps. Students who rendered three months' social service in the camp were considered eligible for the award of certificate/degree of the Panjab University if otherwise ripe for it, without undergoing examinations.

A number of facilities were provided in the camp including free food-grains ration. A dispensary was opened for immediate medical relief. Fruit, multi-vitamin tablets and some special items of diet were issued to refugees on medical advice. Arrangements were made for cleanliness and street lighting. The camp thus provided much needed immediate relief to the displaced persons, and provided a breathing time to all concerned to plan their future.

Steps were taken speedily to resettle the rural refugees in villages, evacuated by the Muslims, and the urban refugees in towns.

RURAL REHABILITATION

Measures were taken for the resettlement of rural displaced persons so as to get them back to normal work and to help with the sowing of the *rabi* crop of 1947-48. Initially land allotment was made on a group basis. Persons who were near relatives or were bound by ties of friendship, formed together into groups and secured temporary allotments. All agricultural displaced persons who owned or held land and were cultivating in Pakistan, were eligible for these. These were later converted into quasi-permanent allotments in April 1948, to encourage cultivators to improve the land given to them. This was a preliminary step towards their re-settlement. Claims were invited from displaced persons, and orally verified at tahsil headquarters. Unfortunately, in spite of their sufferings, many unscrupulous displaced persons made exaggerated demands and obtained excessive allotments. To defeat these tactics, Government obtained the original revenue records from Pakistan and re-verified the claims of the displaced persons. These also showed that there was a substantial difference between the land left behind in Pakistan by the incoming displaced persons and that abandoned by Muslims in East Punjab. The latter was smaller. To overcome this problem, available land was converted into standard acres, and graded cuts were applied in making allotments to displaced claimants, the bigger holders receiving the largest slab of cuts.

Allottees of land were given assistance by way of agricultural loans for purchasing bullocks, implements, fodder, seed and for the repair of wells and houses. In order to minimise misuse, loans were advanced in kind instead of cash. The following figures show the loans advanced in the district during 1947-48 to 1951-52 :—

Year	Loan advanced
	(Rs.)
1947-48	4,600
1948-49	45,700
1949-50	11,120
1950-51	15,285
1951-52	22,100

No resettlement loan was disbursed after 1951-52.

The work of conferring final proprietary rights on allottees was taken in hand in September 1955. Bogus and excessive allotments were cancelled, and only the genuine claim of each displaced person, verified from the revenue record received from Pakistan, was admitted. Of a total of 6,800 allottees, proprietary rights have been conferred on 6,798 by March 31, 1977.

Rural housing.—Heavy rains and floods had damaged a large number of houses. According to the statistics available, there were 4,200 undamaged houses, 43 repairable houses and 410 houses beyond repair in the district. Even these houses were unevenly distributed. In some villages the number of houses was in excess of the needs of the allottees, while in others almost the entire *abadis* had crumbled and not a single house was available. Houses were allotted on a temporary basis in the first instance. Rules for allotment of these houses were framed thereafter. Records including information of the details of evacuee houses in the villages, the number of rooms, the dimensions, the general conditions and the value of the house were prepared and lists of the allottees showing the value of houses left by them in Pakistan were also made. The *halka* Revenue Officer, generally a Naib Tahsildar, did the allotment work. A list giving the order of precedence was prepared. After setting aside a few houses for common purposes, allottees were given a chance of selection according to their place on the merit list.

URBAN REHABILITATION

A number of experiments and schemes to utilise the available Muslim abandoned properties and to develop more housing were put through. All the Muslim abandoned properties were taken over under the Punjab Evacuee Property Ordinance IV of 1947, later replaced by the Administration of Evacuee Property Act, 1950. Such properties comprising houses, shops, vacant sites, *kholas* and industrial establishments were temporarily allotted to displaced persons on rent. Their permanent disposal started in 1953-54. The

properties valuing below Rs. 10,000 (below Rs. 50,000 for industrial establishments) were declared allotable, while those assessed above these figures were to be sold by open auction. Properties lying vacant or in unauthorised possession were similarly auctioned.

In the urban areas of Bhiwani, Charkhi Dadri, Loharu, Tosham, Siwani and Bawani Khara, there were 2,323 evacuee properties which were managed by the District Rent and Managing Officers. These became a part of the evacuee pool for compensating displaced persons with verified claims. Allotable properties were given away permanently as compensation to claimants against such claims. If the value of a property was in excess of his due compensation, the claimant was allowed to deposit the difference by instalments. Properties occupied by non-claimants were offered to them on annual instalments. By March 31, 1977, 2,241 properties stood permanently allotted to displaced persons out of which 80 per cent were non-claimants. This left a balance of 113 unallotted properties. The main reasons for these remaining were lack of accurate record and in certain cases dispute about their possession.

Housing schemes.—The properties abandoned by the Muslims were insufficient to provide shelter to all the displaced persons in the district. The urban housing problem was acute, following from the fact that most of the urban Muslim evacuees were labourers and artisans and, therefore, their houses were unpretentious whereas the incoming urban displaced persons were businessmen and shopkeepers, used to better dwellings. To meet the grave situation arising from the inadequate residential accommodation available, and to provide suitable shelter to displaced persons, the Government established 8-marla (cheap) housing colony and 4-marla (cheap) tenements at Bhiwani. The 8-marla (cheap) housing colony provided houses to the middle class and the 4-marla (cheap) tenements to the poorer.

SMALL URBAN AND HOUSE-BUILDING LOANS

The refugees were encouraged to restart their business, trade or other profession. A scheme for providing loans and grants was introduced in February 1948, under the East Punjab Refugees Rehabilitation (Loans and Grants) Act, 1948. The loan was limited to Rs. 5,000 to an individual, Rs. 20,000 to a group of 4 or more displaced persons and Rs. 25,000 to a cooperative society. The grants were restricted to unattached women, widows and others who were unable to repay loans but at the same time wanted monetary help for resettlement. The maximum amount of grant was limited to Rs. 500.

Small urban loans.—These loans were advanced to displaced persons to enable them to establish themselves in different vocations. All classes of displaced persons comprising traders, artisans, industrialists, students, lawyers and medical practitioners were helped. These loans carried an interest at the rate of 3 per cent per annum and the recovery of the loan was to be started after 3 years of disbursement. The loans together with interest were repayable in equal instalments spread over a period of 6 years. The loans and grants were strictly to be utilised for the purpose for which they were asked for by the applicants or sanctioned by the Government. The following figures show the amount of such loans advanced to displaced persons during 1948-49 to 1956-57 :—

Year	Loans advanced (Rs.)
1948-49	46,200
1949-50	68,750
1950-51	60,550
1951-52	—
1952-53	12,500
1953-54	—
1954-55	1,000
1955-56	7,000
1956-57	500
Total :	1,96,500

The scheme to advance small urban loans was discontinued after 1956-57.

House-building loans.—No loans for house building were advanced in this district.

PAYMENT OF COMPENSATION

Compensation was paid to displaced persons who had abandoned immovable property in Pakistan, after verifying their claims, under the Displaced Persons (Claims) Act, 1950. Interim compensation was sanctioned for certain categories of displaced persons who were in urgent need of relief. The interim scheme was later replaced by the Displaced Persons (Compensation and Rehabilitation) Act, 1954. Under it scaled compensation was prescribed. It gave proportionately more to smaller claimants,

and less to the bigger. This compensation was paid out of the compensation pool, to which the Central Government had contributed.

IMPACT OF DISPLACED PERSONS ON LOCAL POPULATION

The rehabilitation of displaced persons in the district had a long term beneficial effect in a variety of ways. It has influenced the socio-economic pattern of the people of the district, particularly those residing in the urban areas, since 88.9 per cent of the total displaced persons (49,580) in the district had settled there. However, the small number of 5,514 (11.1 per cent) rural displaced persons soon got down to hard work and gave evidence of superior skill in cultivation. In this way, they acted as an example and stimulus in improved agricultural practices.

Aroras from the districts of Multan and Dera Ghazi Khan were sharp witted and resourceful shopkeepers and businessmen. As compared with the local business community they were most energetic and their settlement in the urban areas of the district quickened processes of change. They successfully set themselves up as shopkeepers and traders and completely changed the appearance of the bazaars and to some extent brightened rural life by providing modern paraphernalia like soap, powder, mirrors, hairclips and celluloid toys.

The energy and resourcefulness displayed by displaced persons influenced the local population and helped to shake off inertia. Inhibitions against the education of the younger generation received a jolt. The mixing of refugees with locals also influenced the latter's way of living including food habits. They started realising the value of cleanliness, furniture, crockery and modern household effects. Dresses and fashions also changed. Bushshirts, trousers and pyjamas co-existed with the old types of shirts and dhotis. The *salwar* and *kamiz*, the traditional dress of the Punjabi women, was eagerly adopted by young girls, and even some of the grown up women abandoned their traditional *ghagras*. The Jat women also started discarding heavy silver ornaments like bracelets and anklets. However, there was little community intermingling and marriages continued strictly confined to the respective communities.

The culture of West Punjab too had a liberating influence on the women of the district, who emulating the example of their sisters from West Punjab started discarding *pardah*.

Displaced persons are now almost completely identified with their new habitat in the district. The process of an inter-mixture of dialects is also afoot, and the displaced persons from West Punjab can often fluently speak the local dialect.