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PART V-B (iv)

MALLAH OF DELHI

OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR GENERAL, INDIA
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FOREWORD

The Indian Census has had the privilege of presenting authentic ethnographic accounts of Indian Communities. It was usual in all Censuses to collect and publish information on race, tribes and castes.

The Constitution lays down that "the State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interest of the weaker sections of the people and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation."

To assist States in fulfilling their responsibility in this regard the 1961 Census provided a series of special tabulations of the social and economic data on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

The lists of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are notified by the President under the Constitution and the Parliament is empowered to include or exclude from the lists any caste or tribe. No other source can claim the same authenticity and Comprehensiveness as the Census of India to help the Government in taking decisions on matters such as these. Therefore, besides the statistical data provided by the 1961 Census, the preparation of detailed ethnographic notes on a selection of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in each State and Union Territory was taken up as an ancillary study.

The present study of Mallah of Delhi is the fruit of the joint effort of the office of the Registrar General and the Superintendent of Census Operations, Delhi. Mallah is notified as a Scheduled Caste in Delhi and West Bengal. Traditionally, it is a community of boatmen. The present monograph succeeds in defining the economic and social structure of the Mallahs and depicts the winds of change that are blowing among them. The community does not seem to suffer from the usual social disabilities of members of Scheduled Castes. It has considerable occupational mobility and also literacy is spreading among the members quite rapidly.

Kumari Renu Anand, S/Shri Lakhanpal, M.L. Sah and Charan Singh conducted the investigation and Shri Baldev Raj, Shri N. G. Nag and Dr. B. K. Roy Burman edited the report. To them I extend my warm thanks.

Date

A. MITRA

P R E F A C E

As an adjunct of 1961 Census, preparation of ethnographic monographs on a number of Selected Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and ethnic groups with special status and ethnographic glossaries on all Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have been taken up by the census organisation.

In India the census organisation has a long tradition of undertaking ethnographic studies. Besides, there are certain reasons why, for its own operational purposes, it is necessary for the census organisation to take up such studies. During census operation, the census organisation is required to make a complete enumeration of all the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the country. The ethnographic studies are required to establish the identity of the various communities including their segments. The social boundaries of various communities are not always rigid, they are in a state of flux. Ethnographic studies are required to keep track of these changes as well, otherwise comparison of consecutive census figures would give altogether wrong picture in respect of them. There is another aspect of study in respect of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in which the census organisation as well as the welfare and planning agencies are interested it is ethno-demography. In 1961 Census, separate tables were prepared in respect of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes on the following items:—

- (i) industrial classification of persons at work and non-workers by sex,
- (ii) age and marital status,
- (iii) education,
- (iv) religion,
- (v) persons not at work classified by sex and type of activity for Scheduled Castes,
- (vi) persons not at work classified by sex and type of activity for Scheduled Tribes,
- (vii) mother tongue and bilingualism for Scheduled Tribes.

The data available in these tables are to be analysed in respect of each Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe, so that the historical and cultural factors responsible for the demographic pattern can be identified and the impact of the emergent demographic pattern on the social structure can be determined.

The insight gained by the census organisation, through ethnographic studies of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, will be useful for interpretation of the demographic pattern for the country as a whole. Recent studies show that in India, even now, it is difficult to correctly appreciate the various social and economic processes without reference to caste. On the other hand, in the interest of ultimate national goal, caste is not being recorded in census except in case of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The insight gained through ethno-demographic studies of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is, therefore, of invaluable help for census.

At the same time, such study is very much useful for planning of development activities among the castes or tribes concerned. For instance, if the census shows that great deal of diversification of occupation has taken place among the Parayans of Kerala, it is important for the planners to know whether, the community consists of a number of disconnected segments or whether it means that a great deal of individual mobility is taking place where the main focus of community is other than traditional occupation. Again, when among the Bauris of Orissa, it is found that a very high proportion of the population is engaged in agricultural labour and next to them a high proportion is found in cultivation and also that there is considerable diversification of occupation, the following questions of sociological and practical importance arise:—

(a) What is the historical relation between the agricultural labourers and the cultivators among the Bauris of Orissa? The census data suggest one of the two possible developments, namely, (1) bulk of the Bauris were cultivators and by a process of degeneration of their economy have become agricultural labourers, (2) On the other hand, it is also possible that the bulk of them were agricultural labourers and through a process of improvement of their economic condition, many of them have become cultivators.

(b) The fact that a considerable diversification of occupation has taken place, suggests that the economy has not remained in a stagnant condition. Here it is to be examined whether the diversification is the result of upward mobility or downward mobility, or even horizontal mobility and what is the actual process by which the diversification has taken place.

(c) The social dimensions corresponding to the diversification in economic life have to be examined. It is also to be examined whether in spite of diversification of occupation, the ethos of a particular occupation, for instance agriculture, continues to be dominant. In that case, diversification might have created problems of adjustment in values and attitudes.

Instances can be multiplied, but it is not necessary. What have been stated above, are enough to bring out the significance of ethno-demographic studies for planners.

The above dimensions of ethno-demographic studies have evolved through stages. In 1960, at the instance of Shri. Mitra, Registrar General of India, a questionnaire for collection of ethnographic data was circulated among the Census Superintendents. In October, 1961, the Handicrafts and Social Studies Unit was set up in the office of the Registrar General of India to co-ordinate the ethnographic studies and a few other ancillary studies, like village surveys, handicraft surveys, etc. In December, 1961, a Study Camp was organised in Delhi, where the personnel engaged in ethnographic studies and other social and handicrafts studies and other social investigations in the offices of the Census Superintendents, participated. In the Study camp, it was considered that the ethnographic notes would mainly aim at making an objective assessment of the state of development of the different Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the context of the changes taking place in technology, economic organisation and total cultural pattern of the country. It was further suggested that the primary focus of the study should not be on the exotic elements of the cultures of the different castes and tribes. It should be on the efforts of the communities concerned to adjust to the modern conditions of life. In the light of the above decisions of the Study Camp, rapid ethnographic studies have been carried on by the staff of the Superintendents of Census Operations as well as by the Handicrafts and Social Studies Unit of the Office of the Registrar General of India, in different parts of the

country. These rapid surveys have brought out a number of methodological and operational problems. In May and June, 1966, two Ethnographic Study Camps were held at Kurseong and Hyderabad, where personnel from the office of the Registrar General of India as well as from the offices of the Census Superintendents participated. In the Study Camp held at Kurseong, the Secretary, Tribal Welfare, West Bengal, and Director, Tribal Welfare, West Bengal, also participated. In these Study Camps, an integrated frame for preparation of ethnographic notes was discussed and adopted. A copy of the same may be seen at 'Annexure'. In addition to the studies in respect of each Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe separately, a number of subsidiary studies were undertaken by the Handicrafts and Social Studies Unit of the Office of the Registrar General of India, for gaining insight into a number of problems of general nature, which have bearing on the different aspects of the lives of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of the country. These subsidiary studies are as follows:

1. Shifting cultivation in Santal Parganas of Bihar and Garo Hills of Assam.
2. Pattern of Rehabilitation of displaced tribals of Rourkela.
3. Socio-economic survey of the Scheduled areas of Rajasthan.
4. Socio-economic developments among the hillmen of North-East India.
5. Social structure and cultural orientation of Christians converted from Scheduled Castes.
6. Traditional rights of scavenging as claimed by scavengers in urban areas.
7. Grouping of castes and tribes with reference to occupation and inter-group and intra-group comparative study on the basis of the data available in earlier censuses.
8. Social mobility movements among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

On the basis of each of the subsidiary study indicated above, a separate monograph is under preparation. It is also proposed to prepare separate monographs on a few Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and ethnic groups with special status in each state. Besides, ethnographic glossaries are proposed to be prepared in respect of all Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. For this purpose about one lakh references have been indexed.

The present report on Mallahs is one of the monographs proposed to be brought out by the Census Organisation. Preliminary investigation on the community was undertaken by Shri. Kulbhushan Lakhnupal of the office of the Superintendent of Census Operations, Delhi. Later on investigation with a more comprehensive frame was undertaken by Kumari Renu Anand, Shri Charan Singh and Shri M. L. Sah of the office of the Registrar General, India. At every stage of investigation the guidance in the field was provided by Shri N. G. Nag, Research Officer, Office of the Registrar General, India. I also paid several visits to the community and from time to time elaborated the frame of the investigation. The drafts prepared by the Investigators were revised by Shri Nag. The responsibility for final editing is however mine.

In the matter of tabulation assistance was provided by Shri C. G. Jadhav and Shri K. K. Chawla of the Office of the Registrar General, India. The photos were taken by Shri H. P. Sarin of the Office of the Superintendent of Census Operations, Delhi.

I take this opportunity to express my thanks to all the colleagues who collaborated in this project.

Shri H. L. Harit, Investigator, who is looking after the compilation of information from published sources in respect of all Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and other special ethnic groups of India deserves mention.

I am grateful to Shri A. Chandra Sekhar, Officer on Special Duty, Office of the Registrar General of India, for his keen interest in the project of ethnographic studies. He has gone through the final draft and given a number of valuable suggestions.

Shri Mitra, Registrar General of India, whose far sighted initiative, is responsible for social investigations in a large number of fields, including ethnography, deserves thanks of all students of Indology. I have been benefited not only by his inspiration, but also by his valuable suggestions in connection with the ethnographic studies, as well as the other Studies, conducted by the Handicrafts and Social studies Unit. I take this opportunity to express my gratefulness to him.

B. K. ROY BURMAN

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MALLAH

Name and identity

The term Mallah is used for a person who rows a boat. According to Crooke it is purely an occupational term derived from Arabic word Mallah 'to be salt'¹ or "to move its wing as bird." He further mentions that a number of communities are included in the Mallah group. These communities are Mallah, Kewat, Dhimar, Karabak, Nikhad, Kachhwaha, Manjhi and Jalok (Crooke 1896: Vol. III, p. 460).

There are interesting stories among the Mallah elders of Delhi by which they explain the origin of the name. According to some of them the name Mallah has been derived from *mall*, meaning thereby a stalwart person. It is believed that once there was a person with the name Bali (one who has strength). He was so strong that he could stop movements of a boat by holding the same under his arm. It is as a mark of admiration for his powers that all persons plying boats came to be known as Mallahs. According to another version, in the olden days, in absence of other means of transport, merchandize used to be transported mainly by boats and the boatmen came to be known as *Mallah* (or *Mal-la* i.e., those who bring merchandize).

During the present survey in Delhi it has been found that there are Muslim Mallahs as well as Hindu Mallahs. The Muslim Mallahs reside at Jagatpur and Wazirabad, both the places being to the north of the city, on the bank of the river Jamuna. The Hindu Mallahs live mainly at Bela Estate, Silampur Colony and Okhla. All these places are also situated on the river side, either as extension of the city or in the outskirts of the city on the other side of the river.

The ethnographic study has been confined to the Hindu Mallahs.

In respect of the Hindu Mallahs again, the term is found to be used in two different senses. Firstly, it is used in a general sense, to include

a number of fishermen and boatmen castes, such as Dhimar, Karbak, Nikhad, Kachhwaha and Surahiya. Secondly, it is used for a specific caste, which is traditionally known by the name Mallah. Use of the term in these two senses—one to indicate an occupational group, the other to indicate a specific caste, with well-defined social boundaries, makes the task of ethnological analysis of Mallahs intricate and perplexing.

In Delhi, the ethnic group for which the term is used in the sense of a specific caste, advances the following evidences in support of their distinct identity:

1. Though they regard themselves as Mallahs and though their neighbours also call them Mallahs, they are not actually engaged in boating for a long time. It was only at the time of their ancestors that they were engaged as boatmen. This implies that even though, originally they might have been called Mallahs because of the fact that boating was their traditional occupation, they in course of time consolidated their social identity as a distinct caste and came to be regarded as such, irrespective of whether they continued to practise their traditional occupation or not.
2. Though Dhimars², Kahars, Kachwhahas and Karabaks are also known as Mallahs, boating is not their primary traditional occupation, it is only an associate traditional occupation in their case. The primary traditional occupations of the above communities, are as follows:

Dhimar	.	.	.	Drawing of water and domestic service in the houses of landlords.
Kachhwaha	.	.	.	Growing of vegetables on banks of rivers.
Nikhad	.	.	.	Fishing.
Karabak	.	.	.	Agriculture.

- 2 An enquiry was made among the Jhimmers (Dhimars) of Ambarhai and Palam villages of Delhi as to whether they considered themselves to be Mallahs. They answered in the negative. They also stated that traditionally they did not have connubial and commensal relations with the Mallahs. But on the other hand from the particulars that have been collected of a conference of the Mallahs, which took place more than three decades ago, it appears that two generations ago there was a tendency among some sections of the Jhimmers to pass off as Mallahs. It is not clear what was their motivation. It is to be noted that at that time, the Mallahs were treated as a criminal tribe under the Criminal Tribes Act. Normally therefore, the Jhimmers would have tried to dissociate themselves from the Mallahs even if some relationship existed among them. It is obvious that there was some other powerful over-riding factor at that time, which perhaps disappeared later on. A thorough ethno-historical study would be necessary to bring out the dynamic relations that exist among the different castes under the Mallah occupational constellation.

¹ It seems that Crooke was involved in a confusion. There are two similar words in Arabic, one means "to be salt", the other means "sailor or mariner". In the present context the latter is the correct meaning.

It is to be noted that the terms primary traditional occupation and associate traditional occupation have not been used here in a statistical sense to indicate the relative contributions of the occupations to the economy of the communities concerned. The terms have been used in a normative sense. The primary traditional occupation here means, the occupation which is traditionally considered to be the most befitting one for the community concerned; associate traditional occupation means the occupation, which the community concerned can take up in case of necessity, without loss of social identity, but which in an ideal order of things, is not the occupation which should go with the community.

The above differences are of great importance for correctly appreciating the self-image of the ethnic groups who claim themselves to be Mallah by caste. According to them, though in addition to them, there are others who are also Mallahs, in a moral order of society, they are 'more Mallahs', while the others are 'less Mallahs'. To borrow the terminology from another field, they are 'first class Mallahs', while others who also claim themselves to be Mallahs, are 'second class Mallahs'.

The informants belonging to the Mallah ethnic group state that it is difficult to identify Mallah by occupation alone, as many other communities have taken up the occupation of rowing boats and are thus known as Mallah. Though they belong to different ethnic groups. An interesting saying prevalent among them in this regard is quoted here, "Dhuna, Julaha, Khewa ghat, Mallah hogai barah bat" (Cotton corders and weavers have taken up rowing of boats at river banks and dozens of Mallah have come up).

The above is, however, a statement of the position, as seen from the point of view of those who claim themselves to be Mallah by caste. If all the constituent elements accept the existence of different categories of Mallahs at different levels, in a hierarchical model, it would imply the existence of a Mallah social order or Mallah sub-system, with primary focus on the social relations among the constituent elements. If on the other hand the different constituent elements consider the Mallahs to be existing in a segmental model it would perhaps imply the existence of

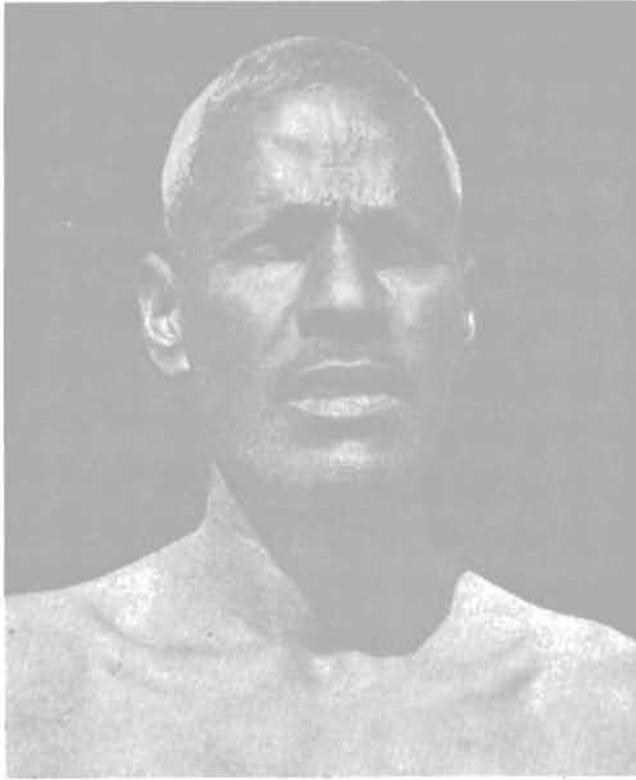
a Mallah 'culture-order' or a historical nexus giving a sense of oneness among those who come under the category of Mallah. These aspects of ethno-dynamics were not examined during the present rapid survey.

For the purpose of the present monograph, a group of persons living in Bela Estate, (which is situated both on the eastern and western banks of the river Jamuna, facing Redfort, Delhi), who claim themselves to be Mallah by caste and who are regarded as such by their neighbours belonging to Rajput, Saini, Kachhi and Chamar Castes, was studied.

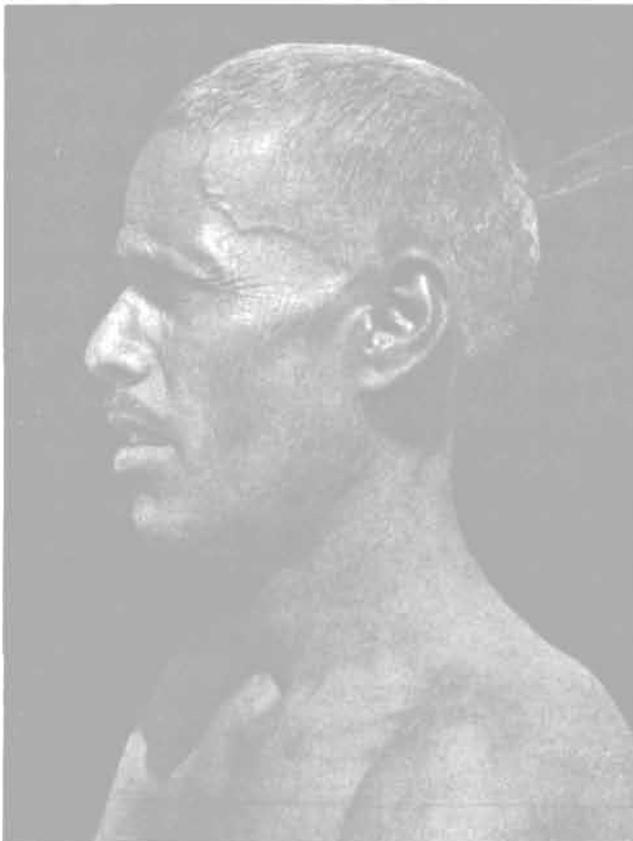
As a part of social mobility movement some persons among the Mallahs mentioned above are now-a-days claiming that their caste name is synonymous with Kewat, a well-known name of boat-men caste in northern India. But these people admit that they have only recently started to call themselves as Kewats and that many of their agnates do not claim that they are Kewats. It appears that adoption of Kewat as a caste name is a sign of the existence of a felt need among many Mallahs for a more definite identity than the amorphous one, centring round the caste name Mallah. This tendency can be described as a composite process of incorporation and alienation. It is a process of incorporation, in that, by this they are trying to link themselves with a distinct caste,—Kewat; it is also a process of alienation, in that, by this, they hope to clearly differentiate themselves from those who according to them are not Mallah by caste but Mallah by secondary association.

Origin, history and migration

The Mallahs of Delhi consider that they are the descendants of Nishad-raj of Ramayana, who treated Rama and Sita with devotion, during their wanderings. They are particular to mention that it was their ancestors who steered the boat in which Ramachandra crossed the river on his way to Chitrakut. It is interesting to note that the same belief and the same sentiment are found among the Kewats of Orissa and other States. Undoubtedly, this similarity in the projection to the past has encouraged a section of the Mallahs of Delhi in their search for new identity to claim that they are the same as the Kewats living in other parts of the country.



1. Front view of a Malla'h.



2. Profile of a Malla'h.



3. *Front view of a Mallah woman*



4. *Profile of a Mallah woman*



5. *A group of Mallah men at Bela Estate.*



6. *A group of Mallah women and a child at Bela Estate.*

The myth centring Nishad-raj has another dimension, which may be termed as metaphysical sublimation. It is stated that after crossing the river, Ramachandra offered his precious ring to Nishad-raj, as reward; but the latter politely declined to accept the same. He said that both of them belonged to the same profession; one was carrying people across the physical river of flowing water, the other was carrying people across the spiritual river of the flow of birth and death; both were Mallahs; and a Mallah should not accept payment from another Mallah. Thus, the Nishad-raj in a subtle manner imparted to his profession the glow of the master of the world; and Ramachandra, who in Hindu mythology is accepted as the incarnation of God, gave his seal of approval to the position asserted by him. It is not known how old is this part of the story; but it is easy to see that this magnificent interpretation of the past has great potentiality of inspiring men and women of the present and the future towards deeper spiritual strivings and higher social ambitions. In this connection, it is significant to note that during the survey while narrating the above story, the narrator with glowing face used a metaphor "Mallah is second to Allah (God)".

As regards the origin of the Mallahs, certain logical possibilities derived from their special relation with the Dhimals, Kachhwahas etc., deserve consideration. As mentioned earlier, there are two categories of Mallahs,—one the specific caste, the other, the constellation of ethnic groups, associated with the occupation of boating. Analytically, this structure would suggest the origin of the two categories of the Mallahs in one of the following manners:

1. The different ethnic groups belonging to the Mallah constellation were distinct communities from the very beginning. In the early stage of their coming together, there was a specific caste among them, which had boating as its traditional occupation; the others had other allied occupations. In course of time, with the expansion of trade and commerce, as well as army movements, boating became more important, requiring additional manpower, particularly on the occasions like flood, war etc. The communities which were having allied occupations were required to provide manpower for plying boats on those occasions. Thus, through this occupational nexus, these distinct communities were brought under a common social orbit in certain matters. This, in its turn, created an orientation

for acceptance of a legend of common origin in the past. In other words legend of common origin which have been found by various authors to prevail among these communities served a social need; it is a reflection of the recognition of solidarity at a certain stage of history, and need not necessarily be taken as the evidence of common origin in the past.

2. It is also possible that, in the past, all the communities who have boating as one of the permissible traditional occupations, constituted the same ethnic group. But they were having a constellation of occupations, rather than any particular occupation, as their legitimate field of economic activity. For them, occupation was not the nexus. The nexus was their common origin. Later on, with the stratification of the social structure and increasing specialisation of occupations, there developed fissions in the occupational constellation of the common group. The fission was, however, never complete. Hence though boating was considered to be the prescribed occupation of a particular section, it was not debarred for others. It was within the permissible range for the other sections also. Corresponding to the partial fissions in occupation, there were partial fissions of the community structure. The original ethnic group was differentiated into a number of separate ethnic groups; but this differentiation was never complete. Hence, though the section which ultimately took up boating as the main occupation came to be known as the core Mallah group, others also continue to be recognised as associated Mallahs.

It is not known which of the above two processes has actually taken place. A thorough study in the model of cultural geography may throw light on this question.

Distribution and population trend

In 1911 (C.I. Vol. XIV-Punjab, Part I, p. 271), 329 Mallahs were enumerated in the union territory of Delhi. In 1921 (C.I. Vol. XV-Punjab & Delhi, Part II, pp. 234-235), their number was 236 and in 1961 (C.I. Vol. XIX-Delhi, Part V.-A) it was 774. The above figures show, erratic trends of growth of the community. During 1911 to 1921 the population of the community went down by 28.27%. But during 1921 to 1961, it increased by 227.96%. Obviously such fluctuations cannot be the result of natural growth. These show that either the enumeration was not correct in one or more of the censuses or that the size of the population has been affected from time to time by in-migration and out-migration.

The bulk of the Mallahs live in urban area. In fact, in 1961, 710 persons were enumerated in

urban area and only 64 were enumerated in rural area. A table giving zone-wise distribution of the

Mallahs of Delhi, is furnished below:

Table showing zone-wise distribution of the Mallahs as per 1961 Census

Sl. No.	Tract/Zone	Total	Males	Females
1	2	3	4	5
1	Rural Delhi	64	37	27
2	Urban Delhi	710	434	276
	(i) D.M.C. Urban	649	385	264
	(a) Zone I Shahdara	9	7	2
	(b) Zone II City Sadar Paharganj	426	239	187
	(c) Zone III Karol Bagh, Patel Nagar	76	48	28
	(d) Zone IV Civil Lines, Subzimandi	54	43	11
	(e) Zone V Transferred area	51	30	21
	(f) Zone VI South Delhi	30	16	14
	(g) Zone VII West Delhi	3	2	1
	(ii) New Delhi	56	44	12
	(iii) Delhi Cantonment	5	5	..
	TOTAL	774	471	303

From the above table, it is found that though the Mallahs are found in 9 Zones within the city of Delhi, they have high concentration only in one zone, viz., Sadar-Paharganj. They have mentionable concentration in another four zones viz., Karol Bagh, Patel Nagar, Civil Lines, Subzimandi, Transferred Area and New Delhi. In the remaining zones they are found in very insignificant number, with less than 50 persons in each.

Out of the 774 Mallahs enumerated in 1961, 471 are males and 303 are females, the sex ratio being 643 females per 1,000 males. This low sex ratio seems to suggest that a number of males have settled in the union territory of Delhi, leaving their females outside. Further, confirmation of this interpretation is obtained, if the age distribution of the males and females is considered. A table giving the same is furnished below:

Table showing the sex-wise distribution of Mallahs by age groups as per 1961 Census

Age group	Males	Percentage	Females	Percentage	Total	Percentage	Females per 1000 males
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
0—14 infants and children	134 (28·4)	17·31	143 (47·2)	18·47	277 (35·8)	35·78	1067
15—44 adults	289 (61·4)	37·34	129 (42·6)	16·67	418 (54·0)	54·01	446
45 and above	48 (10·2)	6·20	30 (9·9)	3·88	78 (10·1)	10·08	625
Age not stated	..	..	0·03	0·13	1 (0·1)	0·13	
TOTAL	471	60·85	303	39·15	774	100·00	643

The table shows that in the age group 15—44 there are only 446 females per 1,000 males; and in the age group 45 and above, there are only 625 females per 1,000 males. On the other hand, in the age group 0—14 there are 1,067 females per 1,000 males. The fact that among the infants and children, the females preponderate, but among the adults they are slightly above 50% of the male adult population, leave no doubt that a large number of adult males have settled in Delhi, without their female counterparts. In fact, during the present survey, a group of such persons could be traced to be living on the bank of the river Jamuna. These persons were engaged in the construction of a bridge over the river. The ratio of the population in the different age groups also deserves some mention. Out of the total population, 35.8%, 54.0% and 10.1% are found in the age-groups 0—14, 15—44 and 45 and above respectively. The above pattern of distribution shows that there is preponderance of adult population and that there are comparatively smaller number of infants and children. But if considered in respect of males and females separately, a different picture emerges out. Among the males, only 28.4% are found in the age-group 0—14, 61.4% are found in the age-group 15—44 and 10.2% are found in the age-group 45 and above. Thus among the males, preponderance of the adults is a much more dominant feature, than among the general population. But in case of the females, the position is the reverse. Among them 47.2% are found in the age-group 0—14; 42.6% are in the age-group 15—44 and 9.9% are in the age-group 45 and above. Thus among them there are comparatively large number of infants and children; the adults are comparatively less in number. It is possible to interpret the pattern of age distribution among the females as the outcome of one or both of the following factors:—

1. There has been out-migration of small number of adult females in the age-group 15—44.
2. There has been birth of comparatively larger number of female children in recent years.

During the field study, no evidence in favour of the first hypothesis was obtained. In fact all the informants were emphatic that no such out-migration of adult females has taken place. It seems that the preponderance of female children

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is the outcome of a natural swing, which may or may not be a persistent pattern.

Clan organisation

The Mallahs who were interviewed stated that they have innumerable *gotras*. But when asked to name the *gotras*, they could mention only 20.

These are as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. Gorakhia | 11. Phulpuria |
| 2. Karenjua | 12. Chhenchhwar |
| 3. Yadvansi | 13. Tenguria |
| 4. Essaiya | 14. Baria Rawat |
| 5. Kharbansi | 15. Guariya |
| 6. Gahlot | 16. Raipuria |
| 7. Morethia | 17. Teharia |
| 8. Shikarwar | 18. Suria Rawat |
| 9. Chandervansi | 19. Kharia Rawat |
| 10. Gwalvansi | 20. Bankatia |

It is found from the above that their *gotra* names are based on more than one principle. Some of the names like Gorakhia, Phulpuria, Raipuria and Teharia seem to be derived from the names of the territories with which they were associated at certain stage of their ethnic history. Some others like Bankatia, Baria Rawat, Chandervansi, Gahlot, etc. seem to be associated with names of ancestors or have derived from other sources; for instance Gahlot—a well known Rajput clan name—seems to have been borrowed from the Rajputs.

Family

Family composition and other particulars have been collected in respect of 14 households living in Bela Estate. A statement giving the break-up of the 14 households with reference to the nature of composition is furnished below:

Table showing composition of households

Nature of composition	Number of households
1. Self, wife and unmarried children	5
2. Self, wife, unmarried children, married son and son's wife and children	6
3. Self, wife, unmarried son, married son, son's wife and widowed mother	1
4. Self, with married son, son's wife and children	1
5. Self and widowed mother	1
TOTAL	14

The above statement shows that out of 14 households, 5 are nuclear households, 7 are extended households and 2 are other types of households. It is to be noted that all the 7 extended households are of linear type, there is not a single collateral type of extended household. Out of the two households, which belong to other types, one can be described as nuclear household with adhesion. Here the head lives with his married son, son's wife and children. The other is a broken or incomplete household, where the head lives with his widowed mother.

It would be obvious from the above that though slightly more than ½rd of the households are of nuclear type, the ethos in the matter of family organisation is that of extended type. During group discussions, the Mallahs indicated that their orientation towards extended type of household is very strong. This has withstood even the strain of bifurcation of the places of residence. Many of the Mallahs living in Bela Estate have additional shelters at Silampur Colony but rarely it has affected the unity of households. While according to convenience some members of the households concerned sleep either at Silampur or at Bela Estate, generally they take their meals together and carry on economic activities together. Besides, it is not permanently fixed who would stay at Silampur and who would stay at Bela Estate. From time to time, there is interchange of members and it is not infrequent that all the members live together in either of these two places in different parts of the year.

An inquiry was made whether they had close relations like father's brother, brother etc. who were living separately either at Bela Estate or at other places. One head of household stated that his father's brother was living separately at Bela Estate. Five stated that they had married brothers who were living separately. Out of all these five cases, only in one case the married brother was living in the same locality; in the other cases they were living in different parts of the city. Three stated that their married sons were living separately in Silampur Colony. In these three cases, there was not only residential bifurcation but also break up of economic ties. In one case the head of the household stated that his father's elder brother's son's son was living separately in a different part of the city. Only four heads of households stated that they did

not have close relations living separately. An enquiry was made about the circumstances of separation. Two heads of households stated that the separation with father's brothers took place when their fathers were alive. Five heads of households stated that they decided to live separate from their brothers when their fathers died. Three heads of households stated that their sons separated from them, as on the one hand they did not have adequate lands, and on the other their sons got employment in the city which motivated them to set up separate establishments of their own.

Eight heads of households stated that in spite of separation they were having close social bonds with some of their lineage members. Out of these eight persons, three referred to their sons living separately, four referred to brothers living separately and one referred to his father's brother living separately. In all these cases, frequently they performed the family rituals together. Besides, the eldest male member of the lineage was considered to be the head for many formal matters; and if he decided to intervene in any matter it was very difficult to ignore him. Head of one household stated that it was not having closer bonds, as apart from others, with any of the lineage members living separately. In this case, father's elder brother's grandsons were living separately. In another case two brothers of the head of the household were living separately and while closer bonds were being maintained with one of the brothers, there was practically no connection with the other brother.

Settlement and dwellings

The Bela Estate settlement on the two banks of the river Jamuna is the largest concentration of the Mallahs of the Union Territory of Delhi. It is said that most of the lands of this estate were under the occupation of the Mallahs even during the Mughal period. At that time the Mallahs were mainly engaged as boatmen to carry merchandize as well as the armies of the Mughal rulers. Many of them seem to have accumulated considerable wealth through their occupation and invested the same in land.

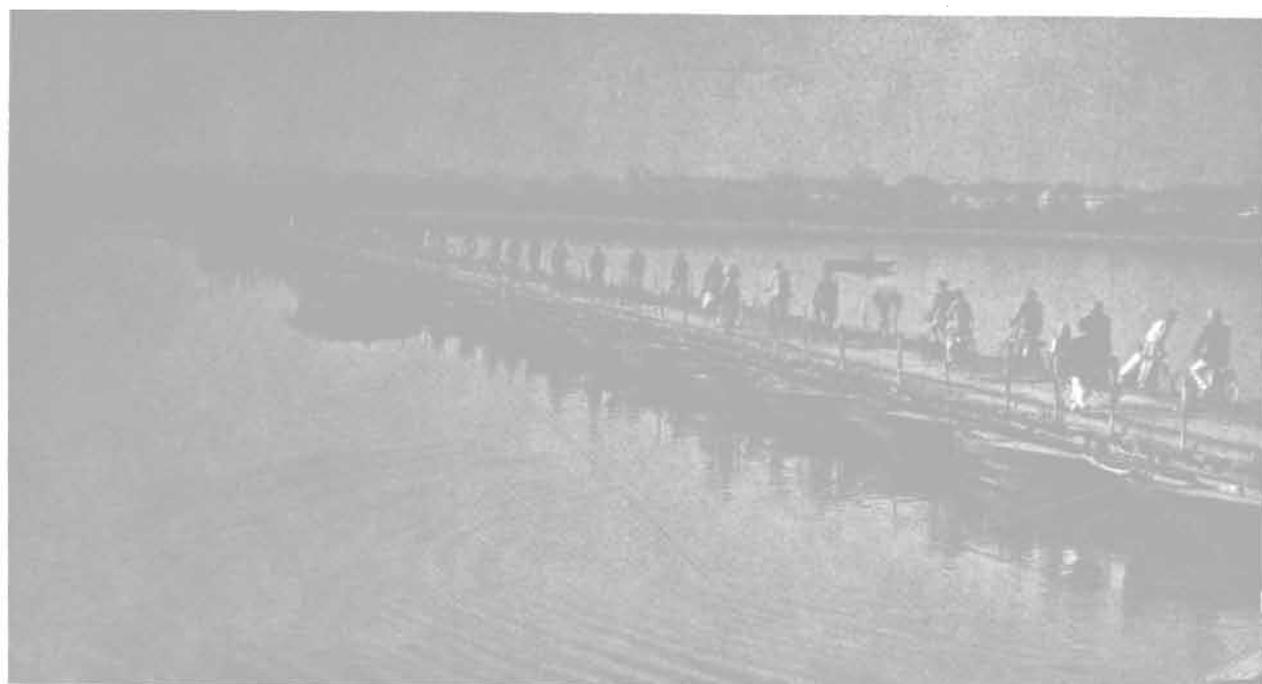
After the Sepoy Mutiny (1857 A.D.) they were dislodged from their habitat at Daryaganj. Many of them settled at Maragpur, Kotla Feroz Shah and Jatwara area; some also settled at Silampur



7. *A part of the Mallah settlement at Bela Estate; the cultivated plots can be seen in the foreground.*



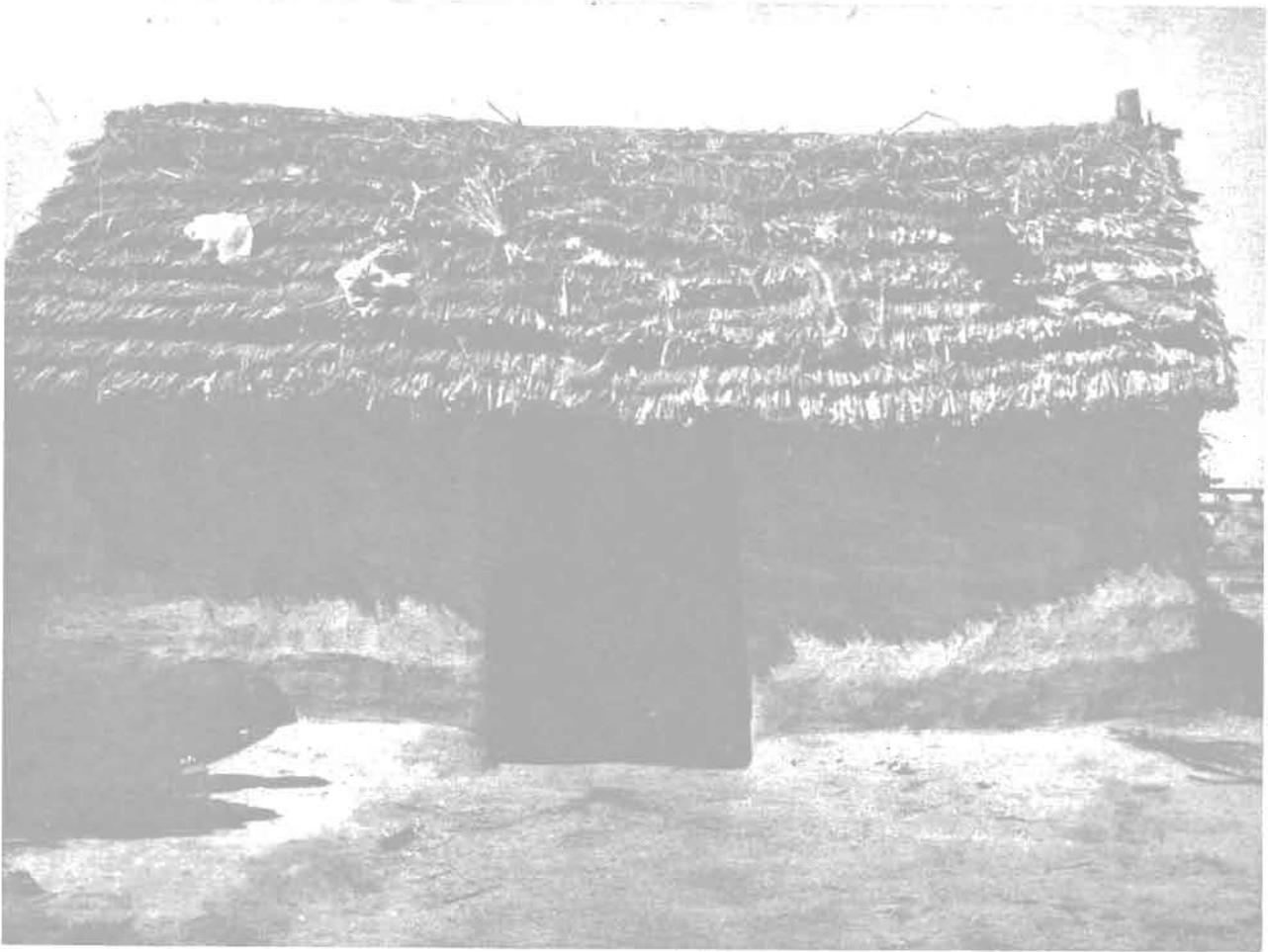
8. *A section of the Mallah settlement at Bela Estate locality in Delhi.*



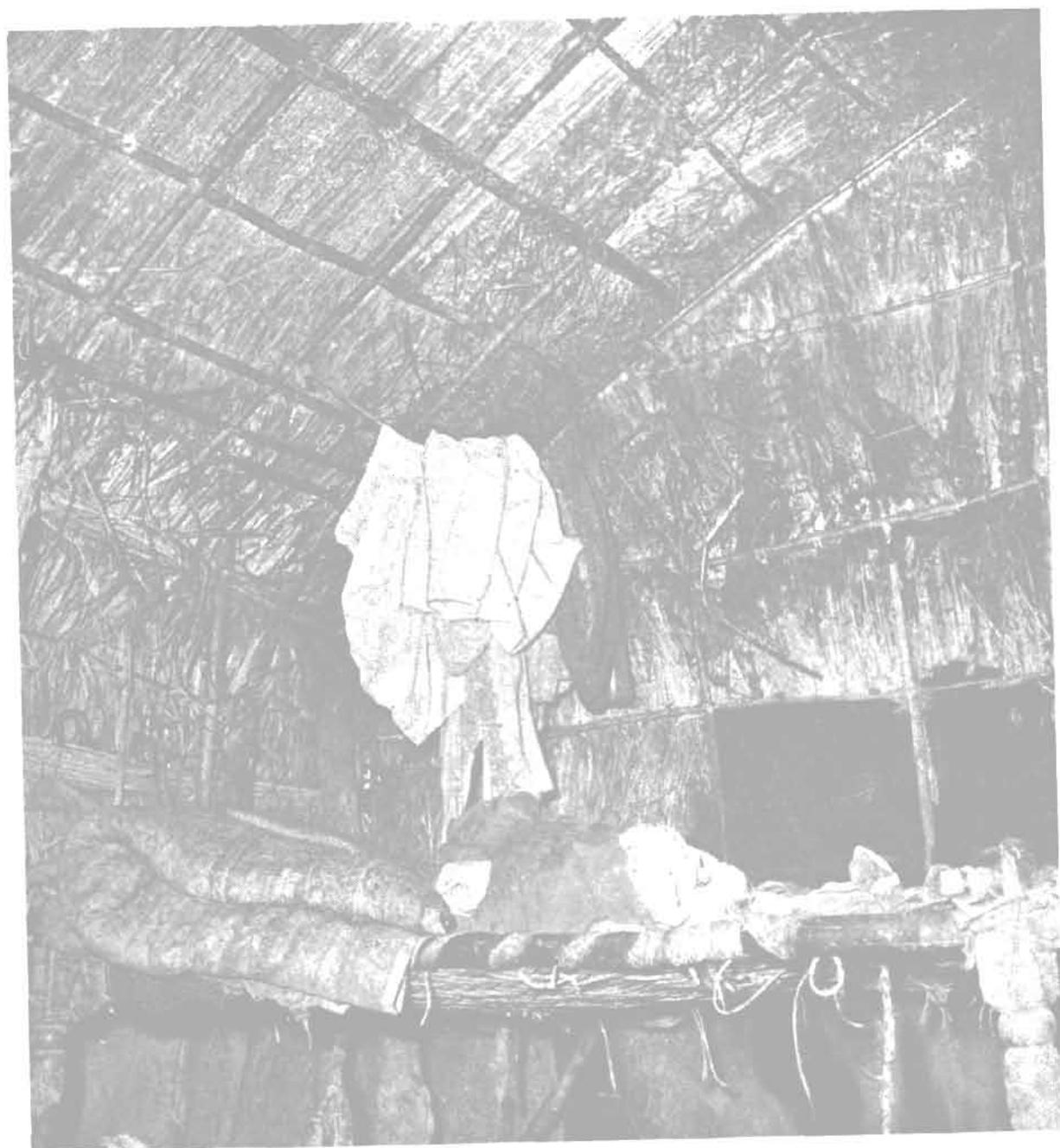
9. *Another stream-cyclists crossing the boat bridge by the side of Mallah locality.*



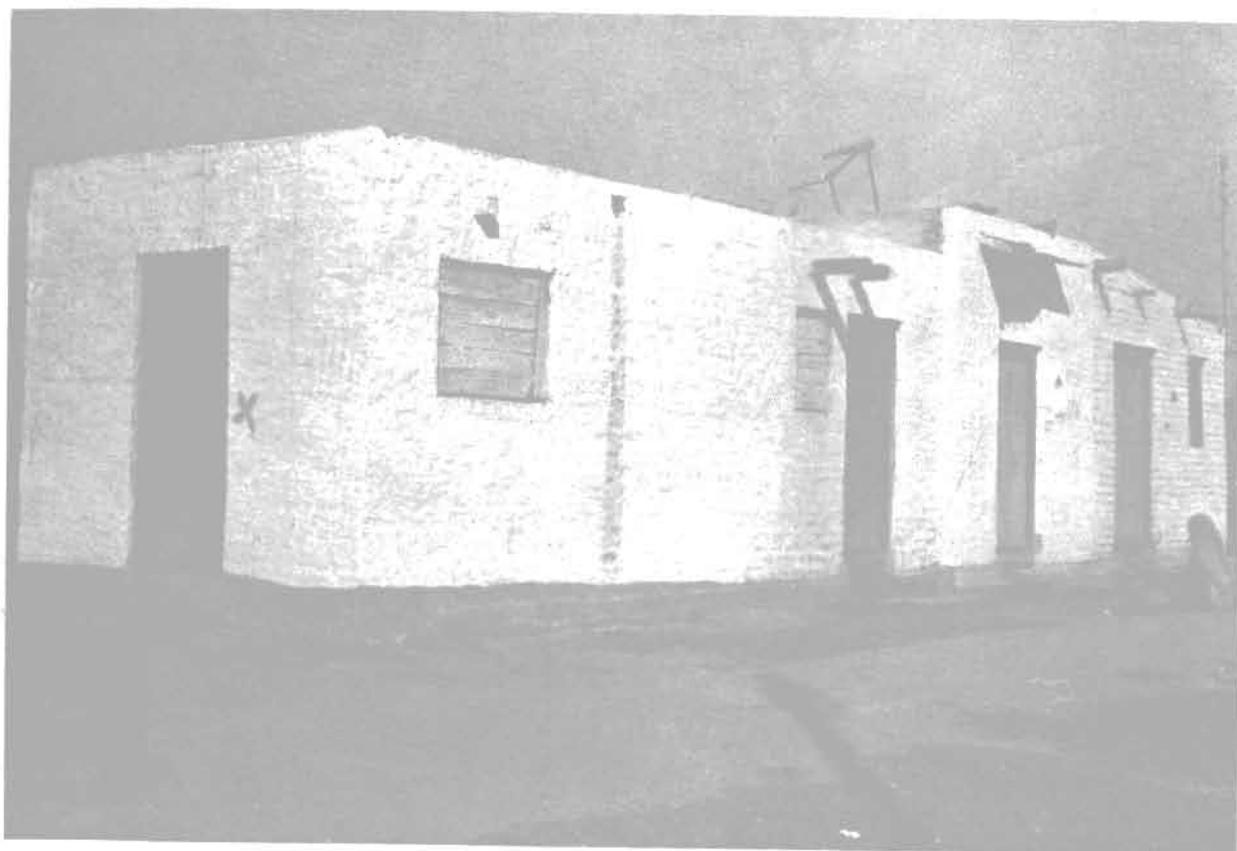
10. *The side view of houses of Mallah.*



11. A Mallah house with thatched roof.



12. Interior view of a Mallah house.



13. A section of the Silampur II colony showing three pucca houses of Mallahs built on 25 sq. yards plots.



14. Two Kuecha houses of Mallahs at Silampur II colony.



15. *A house of a well-to-do Mallah in Silampur I colony built on a 80 sq. yards plot.*

on the other side of the river. They were dislodged for the second time when the capital of the British Government was established in Delhi during the early part of the present century. While some of them receded to the more out-laying areas of Uttar Pradesh, others came down to live at Bela Estate on permanent basis. Thus a change has taken place in the land utilisation pattern in Bela Estate as a result of the change in the land utilisation pattern of the city. Previously the lands at Bela Estate were almost solely used for agricultural purpose; now the same came to be used for the mixed purpose of residence as well as cultivation. The after-effect of the construction of the railway bridge on Jamuna, towards the end of the last century, also seems to have facilitated the mixed pattern of land used by the Mallahs in Bela Estate. It is considered that after the construction of the bridge, the silting on the river bed has gone up and the course of the river has also undergone a change. As a result, except during the peak period of flood, more land is now available for cultivation and habitation on the bed of the river.

Along with the Mallahs, a number of other communities also live at Bela Estate. They are Chamar, Saini, Kachm etc. The different communities live in more or less distinct clusters of their own. Utilisation of land at Bela Estate both for residential and agriculture purposes, however, has peculiar problems of its own. During the peak periods of flood, the area is totally submerged by water and the people are required to vacate their houses. Until recently on such occasions they used to take shelter with their relations scattered over the different parts of the city and outside. But obviously this is a very unsatisfactory arrangement; in 1961—63 the Municipal Corporation allotted lands at Silampur to the people affected by periodical floods for construction of residential houses. At present many of the Mallahs living at Bela Estate have additional shelters at Silampur Colony and, as will be discussed later this has provided interesting dimensions to their family complex.

Certain special features of the settlement at Bela Estate deserve mention here. It is on the river bed, just to the east of the 'bund', facing the back of Red Fort. Physically, it is a part of the city, but as one visits it, one cannot but have the impression that it is completely cut off from

the city life. There is no electric connection; no tap water not to speak of other conveniences. In terms of civic amenities it is a 'non-place'. But a more thorough enquiry would show that the outward appearance is misleading. The settlement is very much part of the city life. The postman visits it, though not frequently; the adult members of the community are in the voters list of the Municipal Corporation and they are conscious of the privileges that the franchise confers on them; the health visitor and other functionaries from the city visit them from time to time. Above all, the *kaccha* road that passes through Bela Estate and then over the boat bridge connecting the two sides of the river Jamuna, provides an additional dimension to the estate. The commuters by cycle from the places on the eastern side of the river to the city, move like a tornado during the peak hours and leave in their trail not only the dust raised by the cycles but also the dream of an enchanted life,—a composition of the darkness and the dazzle of the city life.

The houses of Mallahs of Bela Estate are generally clumsy structures. These are mostly single room tenements with low mud walls and roofs made of twigs mixed with mud, which are supported by wooden posts. No separate provision is made for kitchen; normally a small portion of the hut is partitioned to serve as kitchen. A few small holes are made in the walls to serve the purpose of ventilators. These, however, are not adequate and the inside of the huts are generally dark and dingy. Some open space is kept in front of each hut, this is utilised as courtyard. The floor of the courtyard is smeared with cow-dung and kept neat and clean; otherwise not much care is taken for the maintenance of the hut.

The houses at Silampur Colony are constructed differently. But before describing the same it would be necessary to give some idea of the residential pattern at Silampur.

The Silampur Colony is situated on the eastern bank of Jamuna, near Shahdara. It is just by the side of the road leading Delhi to Meerut. Here the people of Mallah and other communities live in two sectors which are named as Silampur I and Silampur II. There are two types of plots

at Silampur I. One type is about 80 sq. yards and the other type is 25 sq. yards in size. Altogether there are about 400 plots, out of which 10 were allotted to the Mallahs. Six out of the ten plots are bigger in size; these were allotted in 1960-61, the remaining four are smaller in size and were allotted in 1962-63. Most of the allottees at Silampur I were in the past living in the premises of Kishan Chand's dairy near Gandhi Nagar.

At Silampur II, all the plots are sized 25 sq. yards each. As in Silampur I, here also there are about 400 plots out of which, 86 were allotted to the Mallahs. Most of the allottees were previously having houses at the premises of Tejpal's Bageechi in Bela Estate.

In both the sectors of Silampur Colony *pukka* houses have been constructed by the allottees on the land allotted by the Delhi Corporation. Other facilities provided by the corporation include tube wells with hand pumps and *pukka* latrines which are serviced by Bhangis. Besides, a primary school has been provided by the Municipal Corporation in Sector II. There is also a Mission School in Sector II.

The allottees of the plots sized 80 sq. yards each are required to make a monthly payment of Rs. 8.50; the allottees of the smaller plots are required to make payment at two different rates; those who have records of authentication pay at the rate of Rs. 4.50 per month, others are required to pay at Rs. 6.50 per month. In both the sectors of the colony, the Mallahs live interspersed with others, belonging to Gujjar, Chamar, Khatik, Chuhra and other castes. There are also a few houses of Brahmin and other castes. Most of the houses of the Mallahs in both the sectors of the colony are *kaccha* huts with roofs thatched with grass. There are, however, a few houses made of cement and mortar, without much ventilation. The surroundings of the houses cannot be said to be much clean and hygienic.

It is to be noted that many of the persons living at Silampur have also houses in Bela Estate. As a result, certain questions of social dynamics at the community level as well as the household level have emerged out. At the community level, the important question that deserves

attention is whether the people consider Bela Estate to be their primary habitat or Silampur to be their primary habitat, for social and ritual purposes. A study of the question reveals that Bela Estate is not considered to be just a geographical area at the same level as Silampur, but is considered to be the inseparable physical nexus for many of their life situations. For instance, during marriage, the bridegroom's party is received at a more or less fixed spot, at the entrance to the estate near the railway bridge. No such behavioural norm at the community level has yet grown up around Silampur. At the household level also, the house in Bela Estate appears to be considered to be the home and the house at Silampur is considered to be just a shelter. The head of the household generally stays in the house in Bela Estate; other members also frequently spend their day time in Bela Estate. In the night only, some of the adult males sleep in the house at Silampur for keeping watch. It does not mean that the houses at Silampur are considered to be redundant by the Mallahs. In fact, they consider these as inadequate. They are most anxious to have permanent houses in a more convenient place, where they can take shelter during the floods, which are occurring more than once almost every year. It is also not unlikely that they are actuated by other motives as well; for instance, many of them not only feel uncomfortable but small when they are to take shelter in the cramped hovels of Silampur during the floods. Many of them also appear to be conscious of the absence of modern amenities in their houses in Bela Estate; they would like to combine the advantage of the open space of Bela Estate and the comforts and amenities of the localities inside the city. If they get such accommodation somewhere, they would like to convert the houses in Bela Estate into farm houses. For obvious reasons, the prospect of realisation of their aspiration, however, seems to be bleak.

Dress, ornaments and personal decoration

The traditional dress of the grown up Mallah males consists of a white *dhoti* and a *kurta* (full sleeved shirt). Now-a-days, many of them wear Gandhi caps as headgears. The young boys of school-going-age wear shirts and pyjamas.

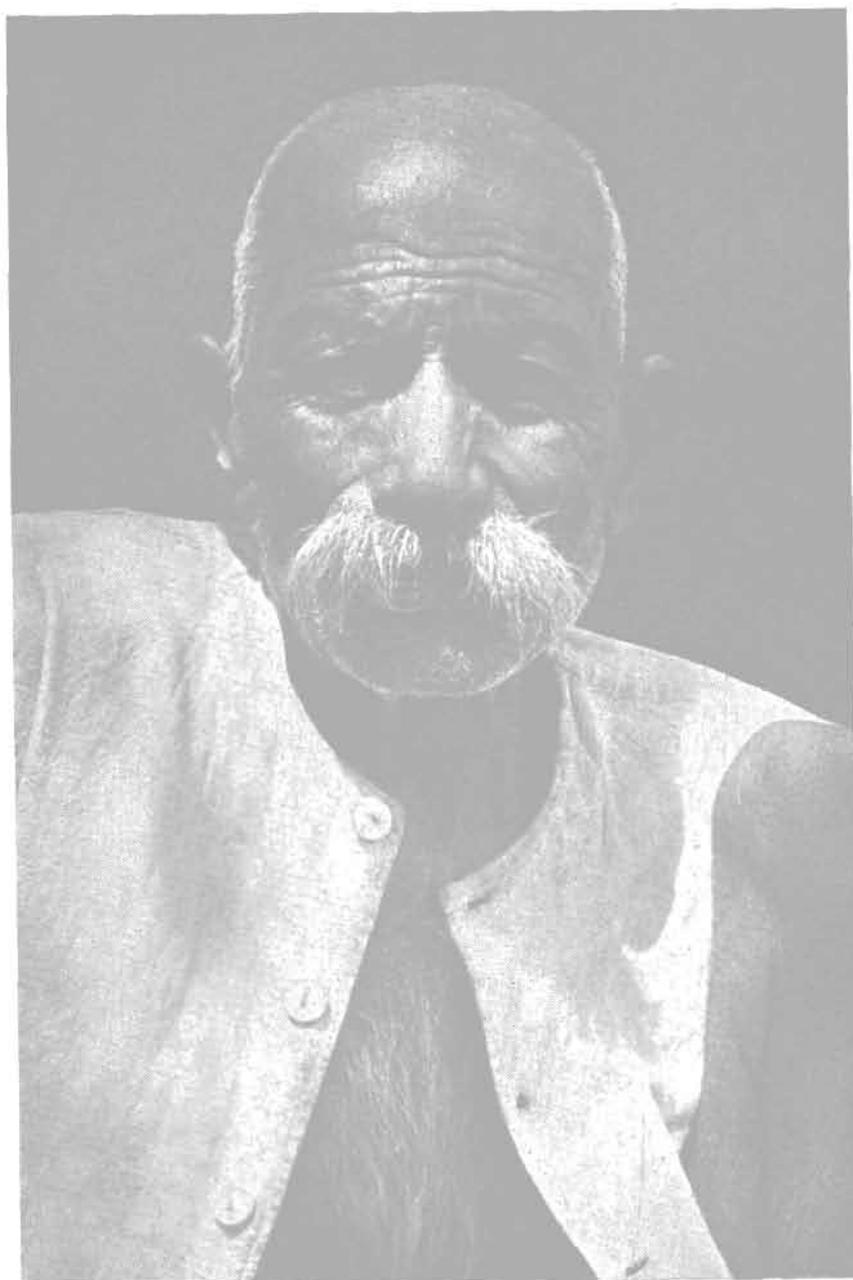
During the winter, an ordinary Mallah would wrap himself with a thick coarse cotton *loi*



16. *A Mallah man in his day-to-day dress.*



17. *A Mallah woman in her day-to-day dress.*



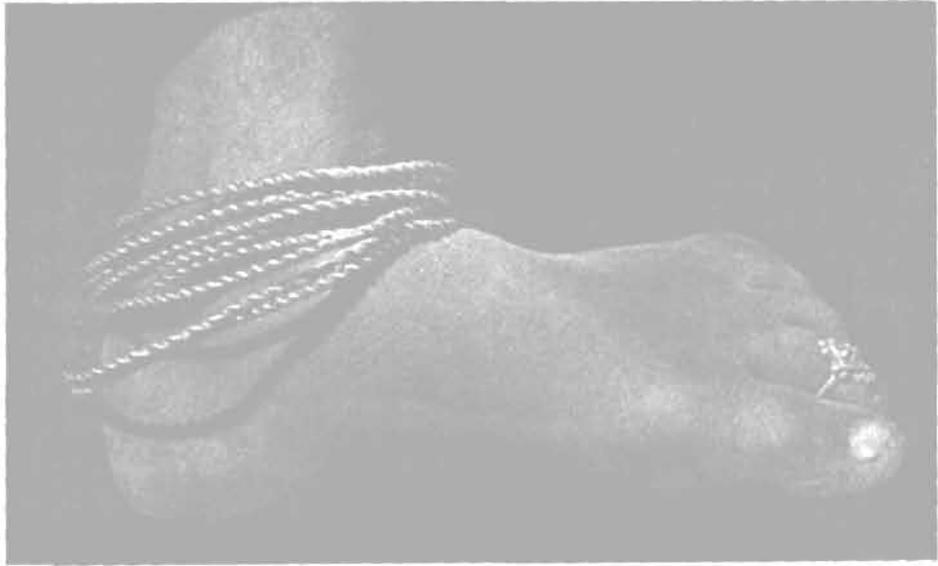
18. *An old Mallah wearing a Jacket.*



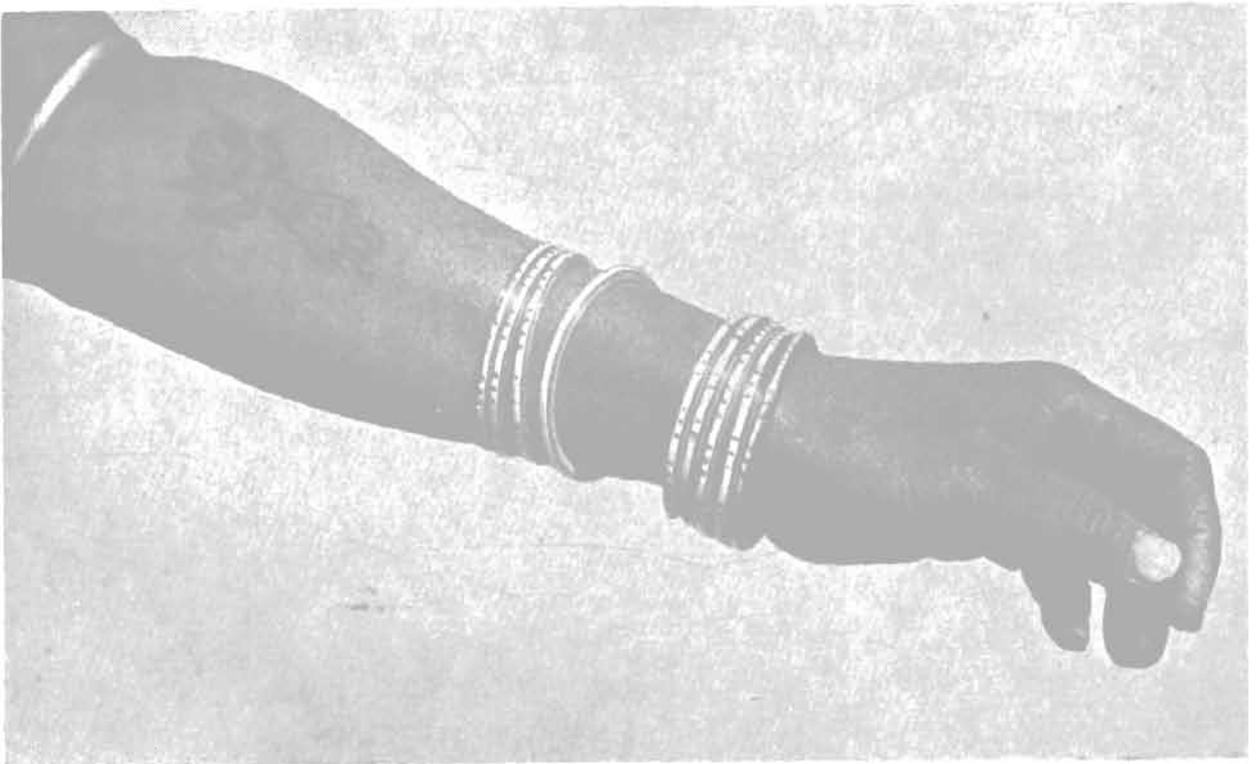
19. A Mallah woman wearing hensli on her neck.



20. Ornaments put on by a married Mallah woman.



21. *Silver anklets and toe-ring worn by a Mallah woman.*



22. *Fore-arm of a Mallah woman showing tatto-marks.*

(shawl). Hand woven Khadi is also popular and is now being used by many of them.

The women-folk wear coloured *ghagra* or printed sarees (6 to 7 yards in length and 1 to 1½ yards in width) and *bundi* (a sort of loose blouse). The bridal dress also consists of saree and *bundi*, but these are of finer materials,—mostly raw-silk and of bright colours, such as deep yellow or red. Sometimes, young girls are seen wearing *salwar* (baggy trousers) and *kamiz* in the fashion of the Punjabi communities of the city. Here, it is to be noted that in this matter the Mallahs fall in line with the trends of change that are taking place among the other communities of the region.

Frequently, the Mallah females are found to carry tattoo marks on their bodies. Sometimes, even the males have tattoo marks. Generally the males get some sacred symbols tattooed on their arms. The females have tattoo marks on their cheeks, arms and backs of hands. During the investigation, physical check up of 15 women was made to find out whether they had tattoo marks on their bodies. Out of them, all, excepting a married girl aged 13, were having tattoo marks on the left side of their noses; besides many were having tattoo marks on their arms and other parts of their bodies.

The tattoo marks are of different types. On cheek and chin dot marks are given. On arms are given floral as well as dot marks; on back of hand are generally put designs indicating the letter 'Om' in Devnagri Script. The women expressed their ignorance of the symbolic meanings of the various designs. Some of the elderly women, however, told that the tattoo marks were insignias of some sort and the same continued in some ethereal form even after death. Once a woman died without tattoo marks on her body and she had to return from the gate of heaven for getting it done, before she could be admitted there. It is difficult to say how deep is this mystique belief. But it can be safely assumed that such belief is not the only source of motivation for getting tattoo marks on the body. According to an elderly woman the tattoo marks add to the beauty. But perhaps all the younger women of the community do not share her aesthetical appreciation. Besides, they are aware that tattooing is out of fashion.

R.R., who was married last year at the age of 13, does not think that she can add beauty to her face by getting tattoo marks. During the investigation, she was found to have tattoo marks on her hands only. She said that unless very much pressed by her mother-in-law she would not have tattoo marks on her face.

During group discussions, the Mallah males would say with indulgent smile that their women wear a number of ornaments not only for enhancing their beauty, but also for gaining in status. Previously, the Mallah women used to wear heavy and old fashioned ornaments of gold and silver; now light ornaments are more in favour. Following is the list of the ornaments usually put on by them:

Part of the body where worn	Name and description of the ornaments
Nose	<i>Koka</i> (nose stud, usually made of gold).
Neck	<i>Hansli</i> (a stiff ring put around the neck and made of silver). <i>Locket</i> (a long necklace made of gold).
Upper arm	<i>Anand</i> (an armlet of silver).
Wrist	<i>Churian</i> (bangles made of gold or glass).
Ankle	<i>Pajeb</i> (anklet made of silver).

When asked whether there are certain ornaments by which Mallah women can be differentiated from the women of the neighbouring communities, all the informants answered in the negative.

Food and drink

There are two facets of the food habit of the Mallahs. One is the traditional and ideal one; the other is the actual habit. Traditionally, the Mallahs are vegetarians. When asked about their food habits, their first reaction would be to say that it is beneath their caste position to take non-vegetarian food. But in actual practice many of them have no compunctions to take meat or fish. It is quite possible that in mental configuration they do not look upon this as a contradiction. When they state that they are vegetarians by tradition they indicate their behaviour pattern at the level of community ideal. Even though

many deviate from the ideal pattern, it does not necessarily establish a new norm for the community. It only means mutual accommodation of the deviants at the individual level; but at the same time in the community level the old norm persists. It is unthinkable for them that in any of their communal rites non-vegetarian dish could be served. When analysed in this manner, tradition of vegetarianism is found to persist among them with full vigour.

Chapati (unleavened flat bread) of wheat or millets is the main item of food of the Mallahs. Generally they take pulses with chapatis; but sometimes they take a curry instead. A study was made of food actually taken in 5 households of different economic status for three days.

In all the five households food was prepared twice a day, early in the morning and in the evening. Meals were, however, taken thrice a day; food prepared in the morning was taken in the noon as well. In all the households, in addition to chapati, only one item was served in each meal. This item consisted of either *dal* (pulse) or vegetable curry. The medium of cooking in all the households was mustard oil. The vegetables like potato, gourd etc. were fried in oil first; later on salt, spices and water were added. No oil was used in cooking *dal* by any of the households. In one household *raita* was prepared one day. For this purpose a green vegetable, *bathua* was boiled and then added to butter-milk along with salt. In four households chapati of wheat only was prepared and in one household, which is poor, chapati of barley and gram mixed was prepared. Two techniques were observed in the preparation of chapatis. Mostly the chapatis were prepared by rolling a round rod on a flat surface; but occasionally it was prepared by beating with two palms.

In all the households, the hearths where the food items were prepared are inside the main huts. There is no separate kitchen in any of the houses.

Except in one household, in all the households food was prepared by the wives of the respective heads. In the one household, which was an exception, the head had a married son and his wife. During the period of the study, it was the

latter who prepared the food, though mother-in-law helped her occasionally.

In all the households, the married women took food inside their respective huts. The adult males took food either inside the huts or outside near the thresholds; the children generally took food outside the huts.

Minor children were served food first in all the households. The grown up children mostly took food along with their fathers. The married women took their food after the men. In the family where the daughter-in-law prepared the meals, it was observed that she took food after serving all other members.

An enquiry was made, whether there was any bar against husband and wife taking food together. It was stated that there was no such bar and that sometimes, though not very frequently, the husband and wife took food together. In all households, during the period of observation, food was served by the grown up female members.

It was enquired from the heads of five households, whether according to them they were getting sufficient amount of nutritious food. Three replied in affirmative; two replied in an evasive manner that they were anyhow able to fill their stomachs.

An enquiry was made about the consumption of alcoholic liquor by the males and females of the community. When asked in a general manner their stock reply was that consumption of liquor was looked down by the community as a moral lapse. But when asked about the actual habits of the people, they gave a different picture. On the basis of the same, it can be stated that illicit distillation of liquor is done by quite a few persons among the Mallahs. The ingredients used for the purpose are *gur*, *nausadar* (ammonium chloride) and bark of *keekar* (Mimosa) tree. One bottle of liquor is sold for Rs. 4. It is said that one of the persons, who is known to be an inveterate illicit liquor trader, was once advised by the elders of the community to give up the profession, as his daughter was growing up and it would be bad if undesirable persons attracted by trade got an opportunity to mix with her. This advice was, however, not heeded to.

Not only that some persons carry on illicit distillation of liquor, but also consumption of such liquor is quite common among the male members of the community. It should, however, be noted at the same time that in their community performances, there is no place for liquor. If some persons take liquor on such occasions, they do the same privately, outside the place of common performance.

Mallahs of both the sexes are very fond of chewing betel nut; besides, it has an important place in the rites connected with marriages. When marriage invitations are sent to friends and relations a few pieces of betel nut are also sent along with the same. On the day of the marriage at the time of reception of the *barat* (groom's party), a few pieces of betel nut as also sugar candy

and cardamom are offered to them. A person who does not offer betel nut on this occasion is considered to be very mean and close-fisted.

Among the hobbies of the Mallahs, mention may be made of smoking of *bidi* (indigenous cigarette). Sometimes boys of school-going-age also smoke *bidi*; no such hobby was, however, observed among the females during the survey.

Education and Literacy

The Mallahs have shown somewhat higher progress in literacy, than most of the other scheduled castes of Delhi. According to 1961 Census, their percentage of literacy is 31.26 as against 20.9 among the scheduled castes as a whole of this Union Territory. The following table gives the educational standards attained by Mallahs:

Table showing educational standards obtained by Mallahs as per 1961 Census data

Area	Illiterate			Literates without educational level			Primary or Junior Basic			Matriculation and above			Total		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Urban	246	229	475	158	41	199	15	5	20	15	1	16	434	276	710
Rural	30	27	57	6	..	6	1	..	1	..	..	..	37	27	64
TOTAL	276	256	532	164	41	205	16	5	21	15	1	16	471	303	774

The statement shows that there is considerable difference between the rural and the urban areas in the spread of education. The percentage of literacy in the rural area is only 10.94 whereas it is 33.18 in the urban area. If the males and females are considered separately, it is found that there is no literate among the females living in the rural area; in the urban area also the percentage of literacy among them is only 17.03. The percentage of literacy of the males is 18.97 in the rural area and 43.52 in the urban area.

There are certain interesting features of the education level which are worth noting. There are only 21 persons who have read up to primary or junior basic level. But as against this narrow base of primary education, the number of persons who have gone up for higher education is surprisingly high. There are ten males and one

female, who have passed matric or higher secondary; there is one male who has obtained university degree or post-graduate degree other than technical degree and there are four males who have technical degree or diploma, equal to degree or post-graduate degree. It appears from these figures that those who can cross the threshold of primary education try to go up further. There is another sociological implication of the narrow base of primary education and proportionately high number of persons going up for higher education, which deserves mention. It appears that two distinct strata have come into existence in the community. One stratum, consisting of a small section of the population, not only goes in for primary education but also for higher education; the other consisting of the bulk of the population, do not care to complete even their primary education.

An enquiry was made among 11 Mallah households, having children of school-going-age (6 to 14), about the various aspects of the education of their children. Out of the 11 households, 3 households have boys only, 2 households have girls only, and 6 households have both boys and girls. Out of the 3 households having boys only, 1 household did not send any of the boys to school, 1 household sent only the eldest boy to school and the remaining household sent all the boys to school. The 2 households having girls only did not send their girls to school. Out of the 6 households having boys and girls, 5 households sent all or some of the boys only to school and 1 household sent all the boys and girls to the school. In the households where none of the boys and girls ever attended schools, enquiry was made about the reasons for their non-attendance. In one household the son, who was the first born child, was not attending the school and the head of the household gave out poverty as the reason. The same reason was given in 1 household where the son concerned was the second child and in 1 household he was the third child. In one household where the son concerned was 2nd in order of birth, distance and heavy traffic on the road were given as reasons for his non-attending school. The same reason was given in two households where the sons concerned were the third born children of the respective households. In one household where the son concerned was the 4th born child of the household, heavy traffic and distance of the school were also given out as the reasons. In case of the girls, the households concerned gave other reasons. Four heads of households stated in respect of their daughters, who were their first born children, that they did not send them to schools, as after their marriage they would go over to the houses of their in-laws and would not be able to make any use of the education that they might have received in schools. They also stated that it was beyond their means to give education to their daughters. Out of these four households, two made a mention of the distance from the settlement to the school as an additional factor. The same reason was given by four households whose girls concerned were the second born children of their respective heads. One head of household stated that the assistance of the daughter was required for managing the affairs of household and that he could

not send her to school without causing inconvenience to the mother.

An enquiry was made about the reasons for discontinuation of studies, after the boys and girls were admitted to schools. In case of a boy aged 8—11, long distance of the school was given out as the reason; in case of three boys aged 11—14, physical illness and lack of interest and truancy were given out as the reasons; in case of another boy aged 11—14, poverty and pre-occupation with agricultural work were mentioned as the reasons. In case of a girl aged 11—14 the need of her assistance in looking after the younger children was given out as the reason.

Particulars of home life of seven boys and girls were collected. One each is a boy and a girl aged 11—14. The boy aged below 10 generally did not undertake any economic activity in home. In case of two boys it was stated that boys occasionally helped their parents in operating the Persian wheel and collecting fodder and vegetables and other crops from the fields, but normally they played about with toy wheels and carried on other indoor and outdoor games. In respect of the boy aged 11—14, it was stated that he helped his parents in agriculture during the peak season, though in off-time he also was more busy with indoor and outdoor games. In respect of the girl, it was stated that she helped in the household works as well as in agricultural pursuits in the field. Occasionally, she also participated in indoor games. Particulars of the activities of 22 boys and girls, not going to school, were collected; their distribution by age and sex is as follows :-

Age	Sex	
	Male	Female
6—10	6	4
11—14	6	6

Out of the 6 boys aged 6—10 years, 5 did not participate in any economic activity, 1 boy of the same age group assisted in the agricultural pursuits of the family. All the 6 boys aged 11—14 also helped in agricultural activities and other economic pursuits of the respective households. One of these six was working in an Optician's establishment. All the boys belonging to different age-groups participated in outdoor

and indoor games. Out of the 6 girls, 1 did not participate in any activity, 1 helped in household work as well as agricultural pursuits. All the 6 girls aged 11—14 also rendered assistance in household as well as agricultural pursuits. Out of these six, four became economically active even when they were aged less than 10 years, the remaining two became economically active after they were aged 10 years.

Data relating to age of admission to schools were collected in respect of 11 boys and 2 girls. The same are furnished below:

Out of 11 boys, 3 were admitted to school when aged 5 or less. Among the siblings they belonged to the birth orders 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively; 2 boys were admitted to school

when aged 6, their birth orders were 1st and 3rd respectively among the siblings; 4 boys were admitted to school when aged 7. Out of these 4 boys, 2 were 1st, 1 was 2nd and 1 was 3rd in birth order among their respective siblings. One boy was admitted to school when aged 8; his birth order among the siblings was 3rd. Another boy was admitted to school when aged 10, his birth order among the siblings was 1st.

Two girls were admitted to school when aged 6; in terms of birth order among the siblings 1 was 1st and the other one was 2nd.

In respect of the above boys and girls the classes up to which they had read at the time of the survey, were recorded. The same are furnished below:

Table showing educational standard attained by boys and girls

Birth : Order:	Boys								Girls							
	Number who read upto class															
	I	II	III—IV	V—VI	VII—VIII	IX—X	Matric	I	II	III—IV	V—VI	VII—VIII	IX—X	Matric		
1st	1	1	2	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
2nd	..	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..
3rd	3	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
4th	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

The statement shows that 4 children had read up to class I. Out of these four, 1 was the first born child of his parents and 3 were 3rd born children of their respective parents. Two had read up to class II. Out of these two, one was the first born child of his parents, and the other was the second born child. Three had read up to class group III-IV. Out of these three, two were the first born children of their respective parents and one was the third born child. Two had read up to the class group V-VI. Out of these two, one was the first born child and the other was the second born child of their respective parents.

Out of the two girls, one had read up to class I. She was the first born child of the family, the other one had read up to class IV, she was the second born child of the family.

Along with the children of other scheduled castes, the Mallah children are entitled to certain

privileges and facilities. They are exempted from tuition fee and get stipends at the following rates.

Class	Stipend per annum (in rupees)
V—VI	30.00 P.A.
VII—VIII	40.00 P.A.
IX—X	50.00 P.A.
XI	60.00 P.A.

A few case studies were made of the Mallahs who had read beyond Higher Secondary stage, the same are furnished below:

1. C.S., aged 20, son of P.C., Bela Estate, had passed Higher Secondary. He married when he was studying in class VIII. After passing the Higher Secondary examination in 1966, when he was 19, he was searching for a white collared job; but till the time of the survey in April, 1967, he did not get any. He was finding some

difficulty in obtaining scheduled caste certificate so that he could avail of the benefit of reservation in services. In absence of any other job, he was helping his father in agricultural pursuits, though half heartedly.

2. J.K., son of S.R., is a graduate and at the time of the survey was living in Tish Hazari locality. He was serving as Sub-Inspector of Police, under the Delhi Administration.

3. K., son of R., who has read up to Higher Secondary stage, is now living in Silampur Colony and is working in the city in the capacity of a clerk.

In addition to the studies in respect of specific individuals and households, some group discussions were held with the Mallahs so as to know their attitudes towards education.

It appears that the older generation do not care for the formal education of their daughters, as they consider that after their marriage education will not be of any use for their domestic activities. They lay more stress on the practical training of the daughters in household duties. Even about education of boys, they are not much enthusiastic. They consider that through school education their sons develop only snob values. They would much prefer their sons to spend their time in agricultural activities; they are not unaware of the spirit of the time. If not for practical value, even for prestige value, many of them send their children to schools at least for some time.

Occupation and economic life.

It has been stated earlier that boating is the traditional occupation of the Mallahs but not even one among the Mallahs, who were contacted for the purpose of the present study, is engaged in boating. According to them, after the establishment of Mughal rule in the country, their ancestors were squeezed out of their traditional occupation, as some sections of the Muslims took up the profession of rowing boats and began to

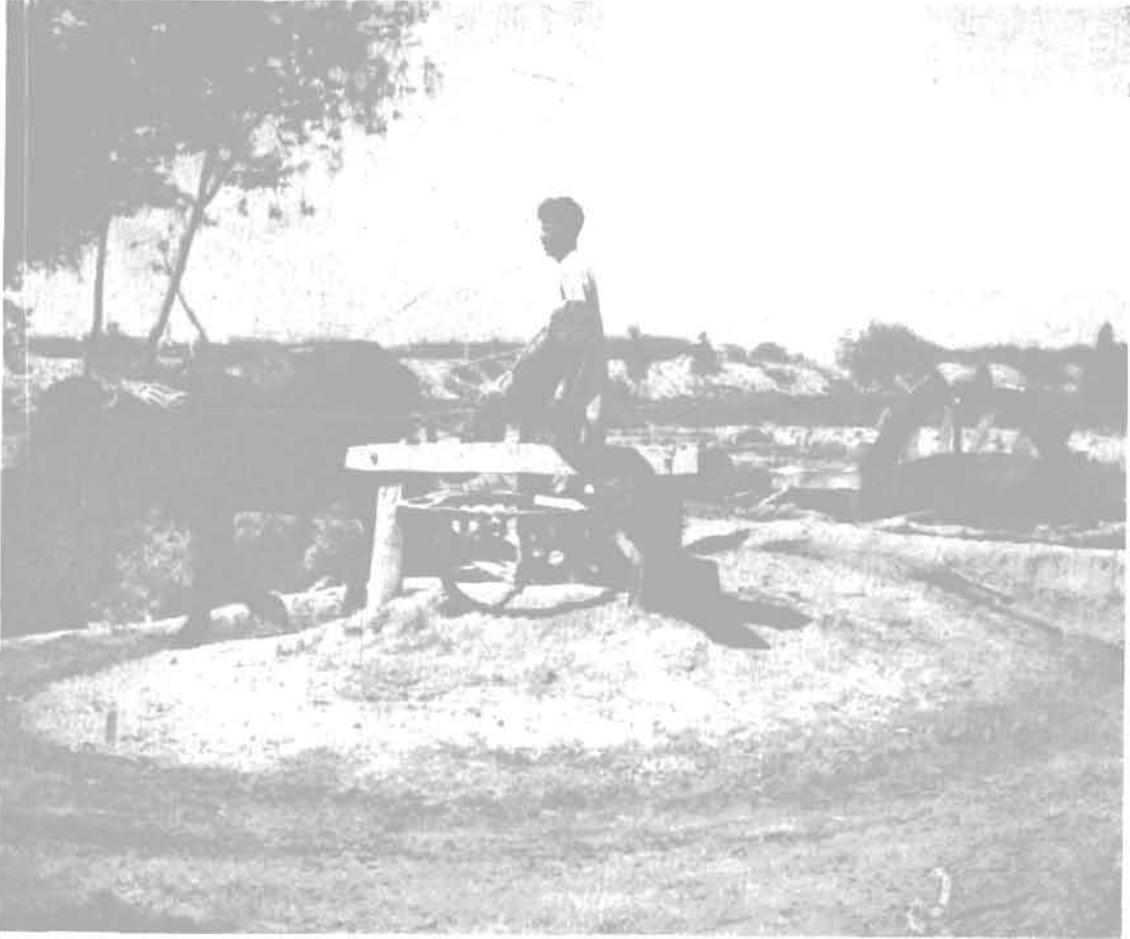
call themselves as Mallahs.¹ Besides, with the construction of large number of bridges on the rivers, during the Mughal rule, prospect of this occupation diminished very much. It could not provide satisfactory livelihood to many persons. Even then, some Mallahs continued to precariously hold on to their ancestral occupation; but with the construction of the rail and road bridges on the Jamuna during the British period, there remained no chance for the Mallahs to earn anything significant by rowing boats. Agriculture became the main occupation for most of them.

It is to be noted here that even before their dislodgement from boating, many of them were carrying on cultivation; but due to the availability of alternative source of income, agriculture was not taken up very seriously. Those who continued to cultivate a particular plot of land for more than a decade, acquired some sort of occupancy right over the plot², but others who carried on cultivation off and on did not acquire any such right. At the time of construction of the bridge, the British Government acquired the site on lands on the two banks of the river, near about the spot selected for the construction of bridge. They paid compensation to the persons who had occupancy rights, but others who did not have occupancy rights and were carrying on cultivation on the basis of temporary arrangements were stopped from doing so.

After the construction of the bridge, it was found that much of the lands acquired by the British Government would not be put to any new use. The Mallahs and others, who were dislodged, demanded that in view of the loss of their traditional occupation, they should be allowed to continue the cultivation of these lands. The demand was acceded to but the erstwhile land owners were required to pay as rent, double of what they were paying previously. At first they were required to deposit the amount directly to the government treasury. Later on, through auction, right of collection of rent was vested upon middlemen or contractors who in their turn leased the lands for cultivation to Mallahs and others. It is alleged that contractors were paying round about Rs. 15 per *pukka bigha* (3,024 sq. yds.) to the government but were charging

¹. An enquiry was made about the background of the Muslim Mallahs. They reside in the villages Jagatpur and Wazirabad near Timarpur. There were some Muslim Mallahs of the village Jagatpur who believed that they were originally Rajputs, living in Saharanpur district of U.P. and that they were converted during the time of Akbar. Others are, however, not so categorical in their belief.

². In local terminology such right is called *moros*.



23. *The persian wheel operated by a buffalo—a usual sight at Bela Estate locality of the Mallahs.*



24. *Not so common a sight in Delhi, a persian wheel operated by a camel.*



25. *A Mallah ploughing his fields at Bela Estate.*



26. *Mallah women and children working in the field.*

about ten times more from the lessees. In 1949, this system of giving out the right of collection of rent to the highest bidder was stopped and a co-operative society was set up to take the land on lease from the government and distribute the same among the farmers. At present, the society leases out lands to farmers after charging Rs. 9 extra per *pukka bigha* over the revenue that they are to pay to the government.

The society charges the farmers at the following rates for different categories of land.

Types of land	Rate per <i>pukka bigha</i>
	Rs.
(1) Irrigated with well—in 1948	51·00
(2) Land without well—in 1949	41·00
(3) Newly recovered land from river bed	30·00

The above rates include the establishment charges.

Mallahs are of the view that the rates introduced by the Co-operative Society are much more favourable to them than the rates which were charged by the contractors in the past.

The crops mainly grown by the Mallahs are sugarcane and vegetables, like carrot, radish, cauliflower, cucumber, brinjal, peas, turnip, onion, gourd, cabbage, etc. All these are grown mainly for the market. Besides, some quantity of wheat is also grown; but it is mainly for their own consumption.

For manuring the fields, the Mallahs and their neighbours use *khatta* (city rubbish) to a considerable extent. But they consider that it is beneath their caste dignity to physically handle the *khatta*. They, therefore, claim that they engage Bhangis to transport *khatta* by carts and spread the same on the fields. It is, however, not unlikely that sometimes they are not too fastidious about such matters and while engaging one or two Bhangis occasionally, as cover, do the job themselves.

According to the Mallahs, *khatta* has certain advantages as manure. Firstly, it is a slow acting

agent and its effect lasts for two or three seasons. Secondly, it requires less water. But there are certain disadvantages as well. The very fact that it is a slow acting agent is considered to be a drawback by many, as unlike in case of chemical fertilisers the yield is not very high during the first year. This means that the period of waiting for getting the maximum benefit out of the outlay is longer in case of *khatta*.

Now the use of cow-dung as manure is on the increase. Besides, chemical fertilizers, like ammonium sulphate and calcium phosphate, are also frequently used. Five informants who were asked to indicate the source from where they first came to know of these chemical fertilizers, stated that their first source of information was the co-operative society. The Mallahs were also specifically asked whether they started to use the chemical fertilizers after seeing the results in the fields of others or whether they started to use the chemicals fertilizers as soon as they came to know of the advantages of the same. They stated that they did not wait for seeing the actual results in the fields of others, but when they heard from various sources, including the cultivators of other areas, that the chemical fertilizers augment production, they had trials on their own fields on small scale. But even at the time of the study they were not using fertilizers on all fields.

The Mallahs of Bela Estate consider that the introduction of chemical fertilizers has changed the conditions of their agriculture. They are now in a position to grow much more than what they used to grow in the past. Among the chemical fertilizers, they prefer calcium phosphate to ammonium sulphate as the latter acts too quickly and requires more irrigation. There are crop-wise differences in the matter of use of chemical fertilizers. In case of vegetables, about 200 kgs. of chemical fertilizer is used in one *pukka bigha*, but in case of cereals about half of this quantity is good enough. Through experience, the Mallahs have found that though the chemical fertilizers quickly induce increased production during the first year, they also exhaust the natural productivity of soil. To neutralise this harmful effect, they use *khatta* along with fertilizer.

Another aspect of the chemical fertilizers deserves mention. Though it was introduced among

them by the co-operative society, at present most of them purchase the same from private dealers.

For irrigation purpose, many of them have wells with persian wheels. Some of the Mallahs on the western side of the river Jamuna make use of sewage water, which, according to them, has high manurial qualities. In fact, if conveniently available, they prefer to use sewage water or river water, rather than well water. They think that the sub-soil water supplied from the wells does not have the manurial properties which the river water or the sewage water has. In fact, on the western side of the river, even those who have wells with persian wheels also store sewage water in the same by connecting them with the help of small channels.

Though after shifting from their traditional occupation the Mallahs took to agriculture, the transition was not smooth. It appears that at the earlier stage of transition, many Mallahs found themselves unable to pick-up new avenues of livelihood. Some of them took to crime. According to the admission of the Mallahs themselves, they were notified as a criminal tribe a few decades back. The relevant details would be furnished while discussing the social life.

It seems that by this time, the Mallahs have been able to stabilise their position. According to 1961 Census, 43.15% of the total Mallah population are workers and 56.85% are non-workers. In the rural area, 57.81% of the population and in the urban area, 41.83% of the population are workers. Further insight is obtained about the structure of the working force, if the sex distribution of the workers in rural and urban areas are considered separately. In the rural area, out of 37 males 31 and out of 27 females 6 are workers. In other words 83.78% and 22.22% respectively of the males and females living in the rural area participate in active economic life.

In the urban area, 289 out of 434 males and 8 out of 276 females are workers. In other words 66.59% and 2.90% of the male and female population respectively living in the urban area participate in active economic life. In the above two sets of figures, the great difference between the rural and urban areas in the matter of contribution of the females in the working force is very much striking. It appears that the females remain almost completely aloof from economic activities in the urban area. One would be interested to know, what they actually do. The Census data relating to the distribution of the non-workers among the Mallahs by activities, have not been compiled separately. Some observations were, however, made in Bela Estate. There, though most of the females are engaged in household activities, they are also gainfully occupied. All the households are practising horticulture and the females undertake outdoor activities along with the males in connection with horticulture. When, therefore, a large number of Mallahs in the urban area return their females as non-workers, it appears that they consider it more prestigious to give out that they are engaged in household duties only and do not undertake outdoor activities. In the rural area also, majority of the Mallahs appear to have the same attitude. But their proportion is much smaller than that prevailing in the urban area. Thus, the rural-urban difference in the participation rates of the females in the working force seems to reflect more the difference in the attitudes of the population concerned towards outdoor economic activities, rather than any real difference in the extent of participation in economic activities.

Industrial Classification of the persons at work

A statement giving the industrial classification of the persons at work, is furnished below:

Table showing the industrial classification of Mallah workers as per 1961 Census data

Sl. No.	Industrial category	Males	Females	Total
1	2	3	4	5
1	Cultivators	21	4	25
2	Agricultural labourers	1	2	3
3	Mining, quarrying, livestock, forestry, fishing, plantations, orchards etc.	18	..	18

Table showing the industrial classification of Mallah workers as per 1961 Census data

Sl.No.	Industrial category	Males	Females	Total
1	2	3	4	5
4	Household industry	8	1	9
5	Manufacture other than household industry	94	2	96
6	Construction	8	..	8
7	Trade and Commerce	51	1	52
8	Transport, storage and communications	20	..	20
9	Other services	99	4	103
TOTAL		320	14	334

The statement shows that the industrial category accounting for the largest number of workers is "other services". There are 103 persons in this category, out of which 99 are males and 4 are females. The next most important industrial category is, "manufacture other than household industry". There are 94 males and 2 females in this industrial category. Trade and commerce, accounting for 52 workers, is also of some importance. There are only 25 persons, including 21 males and 4 females, in the category of cultivation and only 3 persons, including one male and 2 females, in the category of agricultural labour.

The present survey, however, tends to show that the census data do not correctly reflect the importance of cultivation in the economic life of the community. In Bela Estate alone, all the Mallah households, numbering about 50, have agriculture and horticulture either as their main source of livelihood or as subsidiary source of livelihood. It appears that during the last few years agriculture, including horticulture, has become more important in the economy of the Mallahs of Delhi because of two factors. Firstly, there has been a steep rise in the prices of the agricultural commodities, secondly, because of the use of chemical fertilizers and manures, it has become possible to bring more lands under horticulture with profit. But the differences in the picture of the economy of the community as provided by the Census and as found out by the present survey are not entirely due to the changes that have taken place during the last few years. The differences are also partly because of the differences in the nature of the data. The Census data indicate the main occupations of the workers; the survey gives the main and subsidiary

means of livelihood of the different households. As noted earlier, in many of the households agriculture or horticulture is only the subsidiary means of livelihood. Even in many of the households which during the survey mentioned agriculture as the main source of livelihood, it is more likely that actually more income is fetched from other sources. There are a few households where the head of the household has agriculture as primary occupation and other members have other primary occupations, but also undertake agricultural activities during the peak seasons. It appears that if the classification of the workers by industrial categories is supplemented by information about their subsidiary occupations a picture comparable to that provided by the present survey would be available.

Some information about the actual occupations falling in the industrial categories other than cultivation and agricultural labour were collected. The persons engaged in other services are generally working as peons, watermen, etc. in government offices and other establishments in Delhi. A few persons belonging to the industrial category of "manufacture other than household industry" are working in small printing presses in the city. A number of Mallahs belonging to the industrial category of trade and commerce are having tea stalls and vegetable shops in the city. Again, a few are hawkers who sell groundnut, sugarcane and varieties of fruits by moving about in the different parts of the city.

The occupational histories of all the members of ten households were collected. It was found that three men had changed their occupations once. Two of them were aged above 30, one was aged about 50. One out of the three had

started his career as a mason; he changed over to the job of cleaner of printing machine in a press. The second one had previously agriculture as his main source of livelihood. He is now almost wholly engaged in selling milk. The third person was previously owning land and working as cultivator. Now he is working as a gardener in Edward Park.

It was enquired whether there is a tendency for different types of occupations being clustered in certain kin groups. No such tendency could, however, be discerned.

PLACE OF WORK AND OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION IN RESPECT OF VARIOUS OCCUPATIONS

A. NON-AGRICULTURAL OCCUPATIONS

Particulars were collected for about 10 persons working in offices, factories, etc. The same are furnished below:

(i) *Type of job, age and education.*—All the ten persons working in offices, factories, etc. belong to the age group 15—44. Out of them four are illiterate and six have read up to primary standard. All the four illiterate persons are working as labourers in the power-house in the city. Besides, three persons, who have read up to primary standard, are also working as labourers in the power-house. Of the remaining three persons who have read up to primary standard, one each is working as an employee in a printing press (doing the jobs of carrying papers and cleaning machines), a private industry (being required to deliver goods on order) and a cinema hall (as a gatekeeper).

(ii) *The distance of places of work.*—The seven labourers employed by the power-house work in different zones. Out of them four are working in the zone which is situated at a distance of 2 to 3 kms. from their respective houses. Two work in the zone which is at a distance of 6 to 8 kms. and one works in a zone which is at a distance of 20 kms. from their respective houses. The places of work of the persons employed by the printing press, private industry and cinema hall are within a distance of 2 to 3 kms. of their respective houses.

(iii) *Conveyance and hours of work.*—Except for 2 persons, who go on foot, the rest go to the places of their work by cycle. Out of the 2 persons who go to the places of work on foot, one is an employee of a printing press, the other is an employee of a private industry.

The 7 labourers engaged by the powerhouse work from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. One person employed in a printing press works from 9 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.; one person working in a private industry (for delivery of goods) works from 9.30 a.m. to 7 p.m. The remaining one person who is working as a gate-keeper of a cinema hall also works as a booking clerk in the same concern. His working hours are from 11 a.m. to 12 in the night.

(iv) *Remuneration with reference to the type of work, nature of job and educational qualification.*—A statement giving the remuneration of 10 workers with reference to the type of work, nature of job and educational qualification is furnished below:

Table showing the categories of workers, qualifications, nature of duties and remuneration

Employment	Nature of job	Number who are	
		Illiterate and having remuneration per month	Primary and having remuneration per month
Delhi Electric Supply Undertaking.	Labourers (erecting poles and repair work)	4 persons (Rs. 140)	3 persons (Rs. 140)
Printing Press	Paper lifting and cleaning of machines	..	1 person (Rs. 75)
Service in Private industry	Delivery of goods	..	1 person (Rs. 70)
Service in a Cinema Hall	Gatekeeper/Booking Clerk	..	1 person (Rs. 75)

The statement shows that the labourers engaged by the Delhi Electricity Supply Undertaking get a monthly remuneration of Rs. 140 each. The persons working in a printing press and cinema hall get a monthly remuneration of Rs. 75 each, whereas the person working in a private industry gets a monthly remuneration of Rs. 70.

B. (i) *Cultivation and related activities.*—Already information about land and some of the practices connected with cultivation have been furnished; other relevant data are given here.

Though the Mallahs grow a number of different types of crops, generally they grow them mixed up together. For instance, one person is trying to grow wheat along with sugarcane on the same plot.

They consider that growing of vegetables like brinjal and cucumber is more profitable because these come up quickly and are disposed of readily. Besides, the chances of damage are much less in case of vegetables, than in case of other crops.

Some times the crops are damaged by insects. The Mallahs are using insecticides extensively. For this purpose they obtain the spraying equipment from the Block Office situated at Krishna Nagar, and spray D.D.T. and other insecticides under the guidance of the Agricultural Extension Officer of the Block. In case of other agricultural operations, however, they prefer to be guided by the experienced farmers belonging to their own community and the neighbouring communities. Sometimes, they are advised by the marketing agents of their agricultural products. The co-operative society and the dealers from whom they purchase fertilizers are also important sources of dissemination of information about new agricultural practices. It is less frequently that they depend on the advice of the extension staff of the Block.

The Mallahs remain most heavily engaged in connection with their agricultural activities during the months of October and November and February to May. In the months of December and January and June and July also they have got some activities. But they have fairly slack time beginning from July to the middle or the end of September. In the months of October and Novem-

ber, they remain busy with harvesting of sugarcane, tilling of land and sowing of wheat and a number of vegetables. Later on, they remain busy with transplantation of vegetables, weeding, irrigation, picking of vegetables and harvesting of wheat. Out of the busy period, covering six months or about 180 days, they remain engaged in their agricultural activities for about 160 days. During the remaining six months they remain busy for about another 70 days or so. During the peak period, sometimes they work for 12—14 hours a day. Otherwise, normally they work for about 10 hours a day. But during the slack period they work for about 2 to 4 hours a day.

During the summer, generally the Mallahs, like the other cultivators of the region, work in two shifts—early morning to about 10 a.m. and late afternoon to dusk. During the other months they work at a stretch from morning onwards.

Ten Mallahs engaged in cultivation were asked whether they were in a position to take up more work. All of them stated that during the slack season they had enough time on their hands to take up more work, but during the peak season they were fully occupied with cultivating the lands they were already having. It appears that while during certain seasons they are under-employed, during other seasons they are either fully employed and even sometimes find it difficult to cope with the pressure of work.

Some of the Mallahs engage hired labourers during the peak period of the agricultural season. Generally, a male labourer is paid at the rate of Rs. 3.25 per day and a female labourer is paid at the rate of Rs. 1.50 per day. The differences in the rates are because of two facts, namely the difference in the nature of occupation as well as the level of efficiency. The males generally undertake activities like hoeing and preparing the seed beds. The females help in sowing, weeding etc. The labourers are occasionally served with *bidis*; meals and tea are supplied very rarely. Sometimes the cultivators work under the system of mutual aid. On such occasions, no cash remuneration is given but the person working for another cultivator is provided with meals in the house of the latter, and the same would be reciprocated when the latter would work in the field of the former. Sometimes, labourers are

engaged under the system of sharing of crops. For instance, during harvesting of wheat, the labourer is given 1/20th portion of the day's harvest.

(ii) *Marketing of the agriculture produce.*—

Generally, the Mallahs consume the entire wheat and barley produced by them. On the other hand, the vegetables grown by them are mostly sold in the market; only small quantities are consumed in their respective households. The vegetables are taken to *Subzi Mandi* at Daryaganj, for sale. There are a number of *artias* (commission agents) in the market who serve as middlemen in the trade. Each cultivator is attached to one or the other commission agent, more or less on a permanent footing. It is only rarely that they change from one *artia* to another. The *artias* operating in Daryaganj, *Subzi Mandi* belong to different castes. Some of them are Sainis or people belonging to the traditional vegetable growing caste; others are Rajputs and Muslims. These *artias* sometimes advance money to the Mallahs for carrying out their cultivation. Mostly they are bound to sell their commodities only through the *artias* to whom they are attached. Case studies were made in five Mallah households to find out the amount of advance taken by them from their respective *artias*. Three persons stated that they had taken Rs. 300—600 as advance from their respective *artias* with 12½% interest. One stated that he was cultivating the land of an *artia* under the share cropping system. Only one stated that he did not take any advance from any *artia*. He took loan of Rs. 400 with 12½% interest from a fellow Mallah and was free to sell his produce as he would like. As regards the interest, it is to be noted here that it is charged only for six months. In other words the interest per annum is 25%. The case studies show that amount received from the *artias* are generally utilized for purchasing seeds, manures, etc. Rarely, these are spent for meeting day-to-day expenses or domestic needs. Sometimes, however, loans are taken from the *artias* for meeting expenses connected with marriage, death etc. In addition to the professional bond that exists between a cultivator and his *artia*, other types of social bonds also are found to exist occasionally. Some of the *artias* in *Subzi Mandi*, Daryaganj had appointed people belonging to Mallah caste as their assistants. These persons exercise considerable influ-

ence over other kins and persuade them to carry on their transactions through the *artias* employing them. A few cases of change of *artia* by the Mallahs were examined. 'R' stated that before the formation of the co-operative society, he was cultivating the land of 'X' who was a revenue contractor as well as an *artia*. His relation with 'X' was not very satisfactory. After the formation of the co-operative society, 'X' ceased to be a revenue contractor and 'R' began to carry on his transactions through another *artia* 'Y'. Once 'Y' failed to give him advance for cultivation, so he discontinued his connection with 'Y'. He established new connection with another *artia* 'Z'. For the last 9 years he was continuing his connections with 'Z'. 'G' was previously having 'X' as his *artia*. As 'X' was a revenue contractor before the establishment of the co-operative society, he was under pressure to carry his transactions through 'X' only. After the establishment of the co-operative society he has been released from the pressure of 'X'. Now he is not attached to any particular *artia* and sells his produce according to his convenience through any *artia* who gives him more satisfactory service.

The stage by stage activities in connection with the sale of agricultural produce are as follows:

Generally the commodities are taken to Daryaganj, *Subzi Mandi* by carts or tempos (three wheeled vehicles), owned by persons belonging to different communities. The Mallahs are to pay 35 paise for a basket containing one maund vegetables. More frequently, they transport commodities on carts which can be taken directly up to the field. The charges in case of carts normally are 30-35 paise per basket containing one maund of vegetables, depending on the location of the field. Some of the Mallahs living on the western bank of the river carry their produce to Daryaganj Market as head loads; occasionally, they employ labourers for the purpose. After the commodities are taken to the market they deposit the same with the *artias*. The *artias* arrange auction of the commodities. After the auction is over, they charge 5% commission and hand over the balance to the cultivators. At this time they also adjust the amounts advanced earlier.

Ten Mallahs were asked about the relations with their respective *artias*. They stated that on the whole the relations are satisfactory. They

trust their *artias* and rarely the latter try to cheat them. Sometimes, however, disputes arise between a cultivator and his *artia*. On such occasions influential *artias* and cultivators get together and try to conciliate.

Earlier, mention has been made of the Delhi Peasants Co-operative Multipurpose Society which is playing an important role in the economic life of the Mallahs. Before closing this discussion on the economic life of the Mallahs, some particulars of the co-operative society deserve to be furnished.

As noted earlier, the lands near about Bela Estate used to be given on lease to a contractor through annual bidding by the Delhi Development Authority. The contractor in his turn used to sub-lease most of the lands to the peasants, charging a few times more than what he was paying to the Delhi Development Authority. In 1949, at the initiative of some political leaders belonging to other communities, the Delhi Peasants Co-operative Multipurpose Society Limited was established. The Mallahs who were interviewed in connection with the present study reported that the society has been of immense benefit to them. It has saved them from the exploitation of the contractor. Some of the Mallahs, however, feel that the persons who are more closely connected with the co-operative derive more benefits out of it. They allege that there is some favouritism in the matter of allotment of fresh lands for cultivation, and that sometimes the society goes on charging rent for lands which have been eroded by the river. In spite of these alleged drawbacks of the society, except for a few, all the Mallahs have become members of the Society. One Mallah stated that he did not become member of the Society, because he did not have money to purchase share and take land on lease. He is working as a sharecropper with another person who has taken land on lease. Two other persons stated that they did not become members, because they were recent immigrants to Bela Estate and that due to shortage of land it would be difficult for them to get allotments.

One important point to note about the society is that it is a multi-ethnic organisation. Along with the Mallahs, the cultivators belonging to the other communities of the neighbourhood also are its members.

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But in the functioning of the organisation, sometimes the different castes constitute distinct corporate groups and operate as such. In the matters of allotment of land and obtaining other facilities, one Mallah, P.B. serves as their spokesman. He has not been formally assigned this role by the Mallahs; but because of his personal qualities, the Mallahs look upon him as their spokesman; the management of the society also looks upon him as such.

Occupational aspirations.—During several group discussions the Mallahs, were asked about their occupational aspirations. It appears that one predominant aspiration among all of them is to be the owners of the lands tilled by them. At present they are taking lands on lease from the Co-operative Society, but they are not satisfied with the same. They want to have absolute and permanent rights on the lands under their occupation.

Five Mallahs were further asked to indicate their ideas regarding the future of their sons and daughters. One of them wanted his son to work in the Police Department; his son has read up to Higher Secondary and is possessing good physique. The others wanted their sons to remain in cultivation. They gave two reasons for this; one was that in these days of rising prices agriculture would at least ensure them regular supply of food; the other was that if the sons remain in agriculture they would be under the control of their fathers, and the fathers would feel more secure in their old age. One of the five interviewees, however, had a second submerged aspiration for his sons. He wanted them to acquire skill in technical lines, so that they could work in factories and workshops. When asked how they would be able to carry on both agriculture and factory work simultaneously, the old man stated that he did not want his sons to remain away from home. They would, after returning from the factories and workshops, look after household cultivation as well.

In contrast to their aspirations in respect of their sons, all the interviewees stated that they would like their daughters to be good housewives. One of them further stated that the daughter was the property of her in-laws, and she should do whatever they wanted her to do. Four out of these five persons also stated that

they were not in favour of educating their daughters as it would make them bad house-wives.

When asked whether their sons and daughters agreed with the ideas that they had in respect of their children, all the five Mallah fathers stated that their sons and daughters were in complete agreement with them. The sons and daughters were not separately interviewed to find out their own views. It is, therefore, difficult to say whether there is inter-generational ideological rapport in this matter.

The fathers were asked what they were doing for fructification of their ideas relating to their children. The father who wanted his son to be in service had got him educated up to Higher Secondary, and was approaching various officials to arrange a job for him. The father who wanted his son to take up some technical job had got him admitted in a pin manufacturing factory as an apprentice. During the period of apprenticeship the son would get a nominal remuneration. The father was expecting that after acquiring sufficient skill in the job, the son would be absorbed in the factory. Simultaneously, he was carrying on household agricultural activities also. The Mallahs who wanted their sons to be exclusively engaged in agriculture were already utilising the services of the sons for agricultural activities, even though they were of school-going age only.

LIFE CYCLE

Birth. Barrenness is regarded as a misfortune by the Mallahs. In case a woman does not deliver a child within a few years after marriage, they seek help both of God and doctor. An aspirant mother would visit the temple of *Gurgaon-wali Mata* or some other shrine and tie a piece of rag or stone and take a vow to come again and worship the deity if she is blessed with a child. If there is no early sign of the favour of the deity, the woman is taken to the doctor for medical advice.

Sometimes barrenness leads to disruption of married life. During the course of the present study a barren woman, aged about 30, was found, who was married to a man outside Delhi about 10 years ago. When she failed to conceive within 3-4 years of her marriage divine intervention was sought through a number of rites; she was also

subjected to allopathic treatment but there was no result. Then her husband deserted her and married a second wife. He is having two children by his second wife. The unfortunate first wife is staying with her brother and helping him in agricultural activities.

An inquiry was made to find out to what extent the Mallahs are oriented towards family planning programme. Special questions were put by the lady investigator to 10 Mallah women. One woman informed that her husband had undergone sterilization operation. At the time of the birth of her 7th child, both herself and the child fell seriously ill. The child died within two days after the delivery. At that time she was admitted to a maternity hospital where one of her relatives was working as a compounder. Under his advice the husband got himself operated. Two women stated that they were aware of the existence of contraceptives. But they did not know the other details. The other women who were interviewed were not even aware of the existence of modern contraceptives. None of the women had any knowledge of the existence of any indigenous method of prevention of birth. They, however, knew that unwanted birth could be prevented through forced abortion; but they considered it to be sinful. Most of the women considered two sons and two daughters to be the ideal number.

They were also asked whether they would prefer to have sons or daughters. All of them replied that it was better to have sons as they would continue the family line. Here it is to be noted that the preference for a son is sometimes manifested in the manner of announcement of the birth of the child as well as in the subsequent rituals. It is not infrequent that when a son is born, there is a great rejoicing in the house, whereas when a girl is born the news is just circulated quietly. A woman in Bela Estate who has given birth to seven children stated that at the times of the births of her sons big feasts were arranged, whereas at the times of the births of the daughters, there were no elaborate feasts. It, however, appears that the above practice is not universal. One of the interviewees stated that she had celebrated the births of her sons and daughters on the same scale.

All the members of the household as well as close kins on the father's side are considered to

be ritually impure for six days after the birth of a child. The close kins on the father's side include father's brother, father's brother's son etc. even though they may be living in separate households. While this is the customary position, in actual practice the kins living in separate households rarely attach much significance to the ritual impurity connected with birth of a child. The members of the household, however, refrain from entering kitchens of others during this period. Even among the members of the household those who enter the lying-in-room of the parturiant, are considered to be specially polluted. They do not enter the kitchen or touch the utensils, even in own household without taking bath.

Normally, the delivery takes place in the place of the husband. The enceinte is expected to be aided by an indigenous nurse belonging to Bhangi Caste. But sometimes she is aided by some of her elderly female relations.

Three case studies of birth of children and associated rituals are furnished here.

Case No. 1.—About 20 years ago K.M. of Bela Estate gave birth to her first child. At that time she was about 16 years old.

The birth took place in her husband's house. Her mother-in-law was at that time alive and was staying with them.

She worked the whole day and in the night prepared dinner for the family members and herself. At about 2.30 a.m. she was having labour pain, and the *dai*, who was staying in the neighbourhood, was sent for. After the delivery the *dai* cut the umbilical cord with a kitchen knife. When the placenta came out, it was buried in the house near the *charpai* (cot) on which she was lying.

For six days a slow fire of cow-dung cakes was kept burning day and night, on the place where the placenta was buried.

Sometime after the delivery the mother and the baby were washed. The mother was given *gola* (dry coconut) and *gur* (jaggery) to eat. On the second day, she was given *khicherry* (preparation of rice and pulse) and *halwa* (preparation of cream of wheat and sugar) to eat.

On the sixth day, the whole house was cleaned and rinsed with cow-dung solution by the mother-in-law. All the utensils were also cleaned. Then all the members of the household took their bath. At about 12 the mother-in-law sat on the floor and K.M. sat by her side with the child in her lap. The mother-in-law worshipped the deity called *Nagarshan* by burning cow-dung cakes and offering a few pieces of *puri* and some quantity of *ghee*. After the worship was over both the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law prostrated in front of the fire.

On this day it is customary to worship *chhatti* but K.M. did not do it, as she had earlier lost a daughter when the latter was aged four months. Her father-in-law suggested that this time she should not worship *chhatti*, she should do it when the new born baby reached the age of one year and three months. It is, however, to be noted that afterwards also the worship of *chhatti* did not take place at all, as the father-in-law of the K.M. died before the baby reached the age indicated above.

On the 10th day they performed a rite called *dasutan*. On this day a Brahmin priest was called. All the members of the household sat on the floor of the room where the child was born. In the centre of the room, some quantity of sand was spread on which a fire sacrifice was performed with the recitation of chants from the religious books. After this, the priest consulted his book and suggested four names for the child, out of which one was selected. In fact, this name was selected by the expecting parents even before the child was born, and the Brahmin priest was careful to include this among the four names suggested by him. The Brahmin priest was given remuneration of $1\frac{1}{4}$ *seer atta* (flour), one *pao* (quarter seer) pulse and Rs. 1.25 in cash.

On the 40th day, another rite was performed in the house. The floor and courtyard of the house were cleaned and smeared with cow-dung. All the utensils were also washed. After that the mother took a bath and with this, she was completely freed of ritual impurity.

Case No. 2.—Three years ago, a daughter was born to R.B. of Bela Estate in the month of September. When R.B. was feeling labour pain early

in the morning, she informed her husband, who went to call the *dai* belonging to Bhangi Caste, staying at Silampur Colony. But as the *dai* was very busy she did not come. So R.B. was assisted by her own younger sister.

The delivery took place at about 9.30 a.m. The umbilical cord was severed by R.B.'s sister with kitchen knife which was first cleaned with ash. After the umbilical cord was severed, the knife was again cleaned with ash and used in the kitchen. When the placenta came out, it was placed in a small pit which was dug inside the room near the place where the parturient was lying on a cot; after that the pit was covered up.

About 2 hours after the birth, the mother took hot milk with *halwa*. In the evening also she took *halwa*. From the second day she started taking *chapati*, and *mung ki dal* (a variety of pulse). On the sixth day, the *chhatti* rite was performed. Early in the morning, R.B. was given a bath by her husband's sister. After that the child was also washed. Then both the mother and the child were given new clothes to wear. At about 5 p.m. *chhatti puja* was performed with offering of *halwa*. At the time of the *puja* a gunny bag was spread, on which R.B. sat with her new born baby in her lap. This was her 7th child. Along with her, sat her husband, the children excepting the first two sons, and her husband's sister. The *thalies* (brass plates) containing some quantity of *kari* (a preparation of sour curd and gram flour) and *halwa* and a few *chapaties* were brought to the place of worship. Then R.B. drew on the floor, with turmeric powder, a square with the image of a human being inside. R.B.'s husband also made a similar drawing with red powder, purchased from the market. After that R.B. and her husband took a *thali* each and offered some food from the same to the above figures, R.B. offering to the one drawn by her and her husband offering to the one drawn by him. After that both prostrated before the figures and then others followed. The food remaining in the plates after the offerings were made, was taken by R.B.'s husband's sister. Till the completion of the rite, R.B. and her husband observed fast. Now they were free to take food.

On this occasion, R.B.'s husband's sister brought one frock and one under garment and R.B.'s

younger sister brought one frock and one *chunni* (light head cover) as presents for the baby.

It is to be noted that till the *chhatti* day, R.B. was considered to be ceremonially unclean. She was not allowed to enter the kitchen. Even the children who were touching her could not enter the kitchen. During this period the cooking was done by her husband's sister. After the *chhatti* the husband's sister left for her own home and R.B. began to cook herself with the assistance of her eldest daughter.

On the 10th day the *dasutan* rite was performed. In the morning, the whole house was coated with cow-dung, and then all the utensils in the kitchen were washed. Even the utensils which were already clean, were ceremonially washed at this time. Then all the members of the household took their bath. The eldest daughter of R.B. cooked food consisting of *puri*, *kheer* and *kari*. At about 10 a.m. a Brahmin priest, who hails from Bagar area of Rajasthan, and who was staying at Silampur, came to perform the rite. The members of the household placed some quantity of sand on the floor of the room in which the delivery had taken place. The Brahmin priest performed the *havan* (fire sacrifice) on the sand by burning some pieces of wood, feeding the fire at regular intervals by offering incense; and by chanting some *mantras*. After the *havan*, the priest consulted a book brought by him and suggested five names for the new born baby; but none of the names was acceptable to the members of the family. The eldest son of R.B. selected the name which was ultimately given to the girl. The Brahmin priest was given a remuneration of Rs. 1.25 as well as the food cooked by the eldest daughter of R.B.

After *dasutan* rite, no other rite in connection with birth of the baby was performed in the family.

Case No. 3.—A son was born to R.M. of Belapar (on the eastern bank of Jamuna) about six months ago. He is her first child. As R.M.'s husband's father and mother were staying in the same household, the husband's mother did not allow R.M. to do any strenuous household chores before the birth of the child. She, however, continued to do light works till the last day.

At the time of the delivery, a Muslim *dai* from Silampur was called to assist R.M. She severed the umbilical cord with a kitchen knife and buried the placenta near the cot on which R.M. was lying. Shortly after the delivery, R.M. was given some quantity of *gur* (jaggery) to eat. From the second day onwards she was given *dalia* (a sweet gruel of wheat). On the sixth day the *chhatti* ceremony was performed. In the morning R.M. was given a bath by the *dai*. After that she was given new clothes to wear. Her mother-in-law cleaned the whole house and rinsed the same with cow-dung. All the utensils were also washed. After that all the members of the family took their bath. The new born baby was also washed and draped in new clothes. Then the mother-in-law prepared food consisting of *puri*, *halwa* and *pakwan* (a preparation of wheat flour). At the same time, the sister of R.M.'s husband made a swastika mark with turmeric on one side of the door and placed a rounded lump of cow-dung on the other side. On this cowdung lump she fixed six sticks of a broom vertically. This practice of making swastika mark and placing cow-dung with six sticks is called *Satiya*. After the initial preparation was made, members of the household as well as some of the neighbours sat together to perform the worship of *Bai Mata*, who is supposed to be the original female principle from whom human beings came into existence. R.M. made a figure of *Bai Mata* with turmeric on one of the legs of the *charpai* on which the delivery took place and put a silver *hasli* (a neck ornament) on the same. R.M., who sat nearby, took a branch of *beri* (plum) bush and fixed the same to the leg of the *charpai*. The other women took small rounded balls of dough representing small *bers* (berry fruit) and attached the same to the bush. Nobody could, however, throw any light on the significance of this rite. They stated that they were just following the custom. Then each of the participating women took a small quantity of *halwa* and *puri* in her hand and offered the same to the figure and prostrated before it. After that *batasas* (sugar candies) were distributed among all those present.

On the 10th day was performed *dasutan* ceremony. A woman belonging to Nai caste, who lived at Silampur, was called to give a bath to R.M. After the bath, R.M. was given new clothes to wear. In the meantime her mother-in-law

cleaned the whole house and coated the floor and the yard with cow-dung solution. She also washed all the utensils. All the members of the household had also taken their bath by this time. The mother-in-law prepared food consisting of *puri* and *halwa*. About 25—30 women were invited to attend the ceremony. They included R.M.'s husband's father's brother's daughters, R.M.'s own married sisters and so on. Nobody from R.M.'s father's family was present on this occasion. A priest from Silampur officiated in the ceremony. He performed fire sacrifice with all the participants sitting around it on the floor. R.M. and her husband sat side by side with the corners of their clothes tied together. After completion of the fire sacrifice, the priest consulted a book called *Patra* and suggested a name for the new born baby, it was accepted by the members of the family. After that the food prepared for the occasion was distributed among all present.

Even after *dasutan* the mother of the new born was not considered free to visit the kitchens of others. Some sort of ceremonial impurity was considered to continue till the 40th day.

On the 40th day, R.M. took bath early in the morning. After that she helped her mother-in-law in preparing food in the household. In the evening the adult female members of the household accompanied by some women from the neighbourhood went to a well for performing *kuanpuja* (worship of well). On their way to the well, R.M. carried a *chhaj* (winnowing fan) on her head, on which was kept the *Satiya*, which was placed on the door sill, on *chhatti* day by R.M.'s husband's sister, some quantity of oil, turmeric and *gur* (Jaggery), and a dough lamp with four wicks. The progress towards the well was enlivened with merry songs sung by the women accompanying R.M. On reaching the well, R.M.'s husband's father's brother's son's wife went on touching the base of the parapet around the well with her fingers, after immersing the same in a bowl containing turmeric powder. Then touching the *Satiya* on the head of R.M. she placed the same at the platform of the well. After that the women prostrated before the well and then returned home. On this day a number of presents were sent by the parents of R.M. These included one amulet made of half *tola* of gold, one silver chain to be worn around the loin, 8

pieces of cloth for making frocks, one quilt and one small wooden cot for the new born baby; one *kamiz*, (long shirt), one petticoat and one *sari*, one *chadder* for R.M.; One *chadder*, one pyjama, one piece of cloth for making *kamiz* and Re. 1 in cash for R.M's husband; one *chadder*, one *kurta* and Re. 1 in cash for R. H.'s husband's father; one *kamiz*, one *sari* and Re. 1 in cash for R.M's husband's mother and one *kamiz* and one *sari* for each sister of R.M's husband.

With the performance of *Kuanpuja* on the 40th day ended the rites connected with birth and the normal position of R.M. in the society was restored.

Tonsure

In the life cycle of a Mallah, the ceremony of *mundan* (first hair cut) is a very important event. Generally, the ceremony is performed by the time a child is one year old. But sometimes it is performed even later on. In Bela Estate the particulars of *Mundan* ceremony were collected in respect of 10 male and 10 female children. Out of the 20 children, *mundan* ceremonies of 14 (8 males and 6 females) were performed when they were less than 1 year old; in case of five (2 males and 3 females) it was performed when they were 2-3 years old; in case of a female child who was one year old at the time of the survey, her *mundan* ceremony was still to be performed.

The Mallahs try to take the child to the temple of *Gurgaon-wali Mata* at Gurgaon for the performance of *mundan* ceremony. But sometimes, they perform the ceremony in other places as well. Out of the 19 children whose *mundan* ceremonies had been performed, the ceremonies of ten (5 males and 5 females) were performed at Gurgaon, of one, a male child, was performed at *Karoli Devi* temple at Hindor and of eight (4 males and 4 females) were performed in their respective homes. As already noted the *mundan* ceremony of one female child was still to be performed at the time of the survey. It is the normal pattern among the Mallahs to perform the *mundan* ceremony on a Monday in the month of *Chaitra*. Out of 19 children, the ceremonies in respect of 15 (6 males and 9 females) fell in line with the normal pattern. In case of 4 females, however, the ceremonies were performed on the *Amavas* (new moon day) of *Baisakh*. It is to be

noted that even when the *mundan* ceremony is performed at home, the offerings are generally made in the name of *Gurgaon-wali Mata*. But sometimes other deities are also worshipped. For instance, out of the 8 cases of performance of *mundan* ceremony at home, in 4 cases Nagarson was worshipped.

At the time of performance of *mundan* ceremony, the barber engaged to crop the hair of the baby is paid at enhanced rate. For 18 children included in sample, the barber was paid at the rate of 1.25 Rupees each. In one case, the barber was paid 62 paisa for cropping the hair of a female child.

The hair cropped during the *mundan* ceremony is either offered in the temple where the rite has been performed or is thrown away in Jamuna. In the sample referred to, in 11 cases the hair was offered to *Gurgaon-wali Mata*; in one case it was offered to *Karoli Devi* and in 4 cases it was immersed into Jamuna. In 3 cases, the hair is reported to have been lost before final disposal.

Generally, the hair is finally disposed of on the same day on which the cropping takes place. In present sample, it is found that in four cases the disposal of the hair was deferred by nearly two months. In one case it was deferred by two years.

It is not very frequently that any feast is given to kins outside the household on this occasion. Out of the 19 cases of *mundan* ceremony recorded during the present survey, only in one case a feast was given. In 11 cases *bata-sas* (sugar candies) were distributed among the neighbours; in one case *bata-sas* were distributed only among the women who came to sing traditional songs on this occasion; in the remaining cases, nothing was offered. In the case in which a feast was given, the *mundan* ceremony was performed in the temple of *Karoli-wali Mata* at Hindore. After returning home the father of the child invited his two married sisters and their husbands to feast in his place. They were served with *dal*, *puri*, *barhas*, etc.

Here it is to be noted that during group discussions the Mallahs stated that traditionally they are expected to give feasts to kins and neighbours

during the *mundan* ceremony, but due to economic reasons they find it difficult to keep to the traditional ideal pattern. This differentiation has taken place in this matter between the ideal pattern and the expected pattern.

In another matter in which the traditional pattern seems to be scarcely followed now-a-days relates to the role of mother's father or mother's brother of the new born baby on this occasion. If asked in a general manner the Mallahs would say that on this occasion mother's father of the baby is expected to bring gifts which would include a few sets of new clothes, dolls and toys and a silver spoon. He is also expected to bring a pair of full dress for his daughter. But the actual practice is considerably different. Out of the 19 cases of *mundan* ceremony which were studied in the field, in 12 cases the kins on the mother's side of the new born baby did not give any present; in each of the remaining 7 cases, one *kurta*, with or without a *topi* (cap) was presented to the new born baby.

Sex and marriage

According to Mallahs, pre-marital sex relations are strongly disapproved by the community. If there is any such case, pressure is brought upon the parents of the girl and the boy by the caste elders to enter into negotiation and bring about regular marriage. A few years back a boy hailing from Agra developed intimacy with a girl belonging to Shergur. When their relations came to be known to the elders, an inquiry was made to find out whether their *gotras* were compatible. When it was found compatible the boy and the girl were permitted to marry. It is not always that these relations have such happy endings. Complications arise if the boy and the girl are within prohibited degrees of relationship or belong to the same *gotra* or if the girl belongs to the *gotra* of the father's mother or the mother of the boy. About 16 years ago, R.R. of Mathura was betrothed to the daughter of S.L. who belonged to Kharia Rawat *gotra*. Sometime after the betrothal, S.L. had a suspicion that R.R. might belong to his own *gotra*. He, therefore, called a panchayat, in presence of which R.R. swore by touching *ganga jal* (water of the river Ganges), that he belonged to a different *gotra*. It is only after this swearing, that R.R. could marry the daughter of S.L.

The Mallahs claim that the rule relating to *gotra* exogamy is strongly enforced by the caste panchayat and that the violation of the same would lead to ex-communication. But not a single case of actual ex-communication because of violation of the rule of *gotra* exogamy has been reported. It is, therefore, difficult to say how much the confirmation to the rule in this matter is the result of the fear of ex-communication. It is quite possible that the people abide by rule, not because of the fear of the panchayat, but because the rule has been completely internalised as a moral imperative.

As regards the age of marriage it is to be noted that out of the 134 males and 143 females in the age group 0—14 only two females are married. On the other hand, out of 289 males and 129 females in the age group 15—44, 68 males and 7 females remain unmarried. The above data show that child marriage is practically absent among the Mallahs. On the other hand, it also appears that after attaining the age of 15, the females marry quite early, otherwise there would have been many more than 7 unmarried females in the age group 15—44. The males also can be presumed to marry within a few years after they attain the age of 15. Otherwise the number of unmarried males also would have been much more than 68.

While what has been stated above appears to be true in a general way, there is a wide range of variation in the ages of marriage of boys and girls. The actual ages of marriage of boys and girls were collected in ten households. It was found that five females were married when aged 12—14, six males and twelve females were married when aged 15—17, ten males and eight females were married when aged 21—23 and 3 males and one female were married when aged 24—26. The above figures show that the statistical mode is 15—17 in the case of females and 18—20 in the case of males; but the above data also show that the range of variation in the age of marriage, is 15—26 in case of the males and 12—26 in case of the females.

The genealogies of the various households living in Bela Estate were examined to find out whether there is any trend of change in the ages of marriage of the males and females. It seems that

during the last three generations no significant change has taken place.

Monogamy is the ideal among the Mallahs, but in extraordinary circumstances, polygynous marriages also take place. A woman of Bela Estate was married outside Delhi. When she failed to bear any child within a few years, the husband married again. The woman is now staying with her brother in Bela Estate. Though now she does not have practically any connection with her husband, she is not considered to have been divorced. There are a few other cases of marriage instability and re-marriage. About six years back S.S. of Gandhi Nagar married a girl hailing from Mathura. Under influence of alcoholic drinks, he used to beat his wife. One day, her father came and took her away. After six months, she was married to a Mallah of Vrindaban without obtaining any formal divorce from her first husband. She had three children by the second husband, but later he expired. In the meantime, S.S. developed relations with a Sonar's widow and ran away to Bharat Nagar. He was called upon by the caste panchayat to explain his behaviour. But as he refused to appear before the panchayat, he was ex-communicated. After a few years the Sonar widow died. After that, the first wife of S.S., who also had become widow on the death of her second husband, returned to S.S. Currently, a controversy is going on within the community whether to accept their relationship as that of a regularly married pair.

Another case of marriage instability was recorded during the study. About 31 years ago, N.R. of Bela Estate who was already married, developed relations with a married woman of his own caste, living in the same locality. N.R. was holding an important office in the caste panchayat of community and was quite influential. He brought the woman to his home and started to live with her. He was pressed by the other caste-fellows to send her back to her husband but he refused. The close kins of the woman's husband also were reluctant to accept her. But N.R.'s wife's mother did not acquiesce to the position lying down. She took the matter to the caste panchayat. N.R. was divested of his office in the caste organisation and his son was installed in his place. Also he was required to give half his land to his wife. After he submitted himself to the above

decisions of the panchayat, he was allowed to keep the other woman in his house.

An inquiry was made whether any inter-caste marriage had taken place among the Mallahs. According to Mallah informants about 30 years ago a few persons belonging to Jhimmer caste, concealing their real caste, obtained wives from Mallah community in Mathura and Agra side. To prevent such marriages the Mallahs decided in a caste conference to indicate their social identity to outsiders by the name Kewat.

Even at present there are a few cases of inter-caste sex alliances. N.R. of Silampur fell in love with a married woman of Jhimmer caste about 15 years ago. At that time he was aged about 20 and was working in the power-house. His parents were dead, but he was staying in a joint family along with his brothers. The caste panchayat wanted N.R. to forsake the girl but he refused to do so. He set up a separate establishment of his own and brought the woman to stay with him. He was reluctant to part with her even when he was threatened by ex-communication. The woman's husband who was living in the same colony left for an unknown place leaving his wife when this trouble was going on. It is believed that N.R. had paid him some money. Even now N.R. is living with that woman and has four children by her. Though he has informal contact with some of the Mallahs, he is not allowed to participate in any formal performance of the community. Another case of alliance between a Mallah male and Sonar female has already been described.

The Mallahs of Delhi obtain their spouses mostly from the villages of Agra, Mathura and Muzaffarnagar districts of Uttar Pradesh. There are also a few cases of marriage within the Union Territory of Delhi.

The Mallahs dislike a boy and a girl of the same village marrying, even though they belong to different *gotras* and are un-related. But at the same time, they do not have the strong aversion against such marriage as is found among many of the other castes of Delhi. In fact, in Bela Estate itself one such marriage took place recently.

Marriage is generally arranged by negotiations. As soon as a boy or a girl approaches marriageable age, the parents start looking for a suitable match. Generally, some person belonging to the community, who knows both the parties, serves as a go-between. During the marriage of C.S. of Bela Estate, the go-between was a person who originally belonged to the village of the prospective bride and who at the same time of the settlement of the marriage was living in Delhi. The go-betweens are expected to enlighten both the parties about the economic position and social antecedents of their counterparts. They are particularly expected to tell about the moral characters and temperaments of the various members of the families concerned.

After the initial selection is made, horoscopes of the boy and the girl are compared. If the same tally, the parties go in for *risaka* (reservation) ceremony. Sometimes comparing of horoscopes tend to serve a convenient means for withdrawing from the negotiations without embarrassment. On the other hand, if both the parties are determined about the alliance, incompatibility of the horoscopes is not generally considered to be an impediment, which can be surmounted by performing certain rites.

The performance of the *risaka* ceremony means that both the parties are committed to the alliance. After it has been performed, the negotiation cannot be broken without loss of face. On this occasion, the girl's father gives Rs. 1.25 or Rs. 11 or Rs. 51 to the boy depending upon his economic status. He also gives sweets, copper utensils and a pair of full dress (*dhoti*, *kurta* and turban) as presents.

Though the girl's father is expected to give dowry to the boy, sometimes when the girl's father is poor and unable to incur the marriage expenses, he takes some monetary help from the boy's father. But if the amount taken by him exceeds the actual expenses he is described, by the members belonging to his community as a person who has sold his daughter. In such cases, the panchayat intervenes and forces the girl's father to return the excess amount to the boy's father. It is, however, to be noted that though this information has been furnished in a general way, actual case of money being received by the father

of the girl from the groom's side or excess money being refunded at the intervention of the panchayat could not be cited by anybody. In fact, some of the Mallahs stated that under no circumstances a Mallah father would receive money from the boy's side at the time of marriage.

The date of the wedding is fixed in consultation with a Brahmin priest who in his turn is guided by astrological reckoning. Then, the boy's father sends *pilichitthi* (yellow letter) indicating the marriage date to the girl's father through the family *Nai*. Along with 'pilichitthi' some clothes are also sent for the boy. Here, it is to be noted that during marriage ceremony, the barber has an important role to play. He serves as a messenger and is paid a remuneration of Rs. 5.25 for his services in addition to the transport charges that he may incur.

On the day, indicated in the *pilichitthi*, oil baths are given to the bride and the groom in their respective homes. In case of the groom the number of oil baths may be 5 or 7, in case of the bride, it is one less than what it is in the case of the groom.

On the day of the marriage the interesting ceremony called *ghora-charhi* is performed, when the groom, attired in his wedding dress and wearing *maur mukat* (marriage-crown), mounts on a mare. At this time, his elder brother's wife applies some *kajal* (collyrium) on his eye lashes. In return he gives her Rs. 1.25 or Rs. 5.25.

The marriage procession is received by the bride's party at some distance from the entrance to the village. For instance, during the marriage of P.B's daughter, who is living on the eastern bank of Jamuna, the *barat* was received at the western bank across the boat bridge.

The bride's party receiving the 'barat' generally consists of brother, mother's brother, other close relations, neighbours and family friends.

The marriage is solemnised by the performance of fire sacrifice (*havan*). A Brahmin priest presides over this rite. After the *havan* the bride and the groom jointly circumambulate round the *havan kund* (enclosure of the sacred fire) seven times. During the circumambulation, the groom leads the bride in the first four rounds and the

bride leads the groom in the remaining three rounds.

Next day, exchange of greetings takes place among the relations on both the sides. At this time, the relations of the bride offer small amounts to the corresponding relations of the groom. For instance, the bride's brother could exchange greetings with the groom's brother and pay him an amount ranging from Rs. 1.25 to Rs. 5. The relations involved in the exchange of greetings are generally father, brother, father's brother, mother's brother, etc. The same day, the marriage party leaves the bride's house. At that time, the presents received in cash or kind are handed over to the groom's party.

After staying in the groom's house for a day or two the bride returns to her father's house. She remains there till the performance of *gauna* (ceremony of consummation). The *gauna* generally takes place from 2 to 3 years after the marriage. But sometimes it varies depending on a number of factors. Before, however, the same are discussed, it is proposed to examine how the marriage pattern described above conforms to the actual practice. For this purpose three case studies are furnished here.

Case No. 1.—R.R. (female) aged 19, residing at Bela Estate (eastern bank), was married when she was 9 years old. Her husband belongs to Agra district. Her mother's parents also hail from the same area. It was on the suggestion of her mother's brother that the marriage negotiations started. R.R.'s father with his sister's husband went to see the boy in his village. At that time, he gave Re. 1 to the boy. Afterwards the boy's people came to the girl's house. They were five persons in the party, consisting of the boy's father's father, two village headmen, one cousin of the boy and another person belonging to the same *gotra* of the boy. They brought with them a gold *hansli* (neck ornament), a pair of *kare* (bracelet) and silver buttons for the girl. The date of marriage was fixed at that time in consultation with the Brahmin priest. 15 days before the marriage, the girl's people sent *lagan* (presents signifying betrothal) through a *nai* to the boy. The *lagan* consisted of one big brass plate, one brass bowl, one brass tumbler two small brass bowls, one sari for the mother of the boy and a *pilichitthi* (yellow letter) giving all the particulars

of the marriage, including the number of *bans* (oil baths) specified both for the girl and the boy. Some quantity of rice, sweets worth Rs. 5, five pieces of betel-nut, five pieces of *haldi* (turmeric), one coconut and Rs. 11 were also sent at this time. Three *bans* were prescribed for the girl and five for the boy. During each oil bath *ubtan* (powdered parched barley mixed with turmeric and mustard oil) was applied on the body of the girl. And then she was given a thorough wash. She was not allowed to take salt on these days. Neither, was she allowed to sleep on a cot. A *kangna* (a thread of black colour, to which a *cowri* was attached), was tied by the mother of the girl on the first day of *bans*. On the right arm was tied a piece of torn blanket.

Just one day before the marriage, the *mandha* or marriage pole was fixed. It was about six to seven feet in height. For fixing the pole, a hole was dug, in which five pieces of betel-nuts and five pieces of turmeric were put. Then the long beam of a plough was put in this hole in the vertical position. Four more pieces of bamboo were fixed in such a way that a pitcher could be supported on the same. These were connected with horizontal bamboo so as to form the structure of a booth. On that day they invited their neighbours as well as affinal relations living in the estate and outside. On this occasion, they prepared *puri*, rice, *pakori* and *kari*.

On the afternoon of the day of the marriage the *barat* (bridegroom's party) came to the village of the bride. The bride's relations consisting of brothers and uncles etc. went to receive the *barat* on the other bank of Jamuna, but her father did not go. The *pandal* was constructed at some distance from the house of the bride. Arrangements were made for their stay at that place (The place where the *barat* stays is called *janvasa*).

The party stayed at the *janvasa* for some time and then started for the bride's house. The groom was taken on a *rikshaw* and the members of the *barat* followed on foot. At the entrance of the bride's house, her relations, including her father and family friends, received the *barat*. The groom's father was given a present of 2 *valtois* (big brass pitchers), 2 brass tumblers and 2 brass *lotas* by the bride's father. Besides, the groom was given Rs. 11 in cash by the bride's father.

After the reception, the groom again went to *janvasa*, while other persons of the *barat* stayed back till dinner. The groom was later on called to the house of the bride for dinner.

Immediately after the dinner, the marriage rite was performed with the performance of *havan* (fire sacrifice) by the Brahmin priest, followed by *kanyadan*, ceremonial giving of the bride to the bridegroom by her father. During the *kanyadan* the bride's relations gave her presents either in cash or kind. After the *kanyadan*, circumambulation of the sacred fire was done by the groom and the bride together seven times. During the circumambulation, a Brahmin priest presided over the ceremony. Here it may be noted that the same Brahmin priest also serves other high caste communities of the area. He was given Rs. 10.25 as remuneration for his services.

After the marriage, the *barat* stayed in the village for another two days. On the third day, they went back to their own place. At that time, the bride's father gave a number of brass utensils to the groom in dowry. Besides, each person accompanying the *barat* was given Rs. 2 in cash.

Case No. 2.—N.D. (male), aged 23, of Bela Estate (eastern bank) was married at the age of 17. Since his mother was not keeping good health and there was none to do the household work, his family wanted to have a fairly grown up girl so that the *gauna* could take place early. P.B. of the same settlement suggested a girl of Mathura whom he had seen earlier. He served as go-between in this marriage. N.D.'s father's sister's son went to see the girl and selected her. After that the girl's father accompanied by a *nai* (barber) came to see the boy. When both the parties agreed about the marriage, the boy's father sent one gold necklace, silver buttons and a pair of bracelets for the girl.

About 15 days before the marriage, the *lagan*, including the *pilichitthi* and some presents, was sent to the boy's house. The presents consisted of one *dhoti* for the boy's mother, a handful of rice, one coconut, and one rupee in cash. The *pilichitthi* gave the details of how and when the marriage was to be performed, and also the number of *bans* (oil baths) to be given to the boy and the girl. In the present case, three *bans* were prescribed for the boy and one for the girl.

One day before the marriage, the *mandha* (marriage pole) was fixed in the house of the boy. The particulars are the same as in case of the *mandha* described in case No. 1.

The *barat* (bride-groom's party) consisted of 40 persons. Before starting for Mathura by train the groom was given a yellow *jama* (a huge frock like apparel), a white pyjama (loose trousers) and a yellow turban, on which was tied *maur* (crown made of coloured aluminium foil mounted over bamboo frame) and *sehra* (flowers and glass beads hanging from the crown in front of the face). The distance of the bride's village from Mathura railway station was about 50 kms. The remaining distance was covered by bullock-cart sent by the bride's people. Just at the outskirts of the village, the *barat* was received by the bride's party, consisting of her uncles, brothers and other relatives. But her father did not come personally. The *barat* was taken to the *janvasa* for taking rest. After some time, when it became dark, the groom, accompanied by the *barat* went to the bride's house. At the main entrance of the house, the bride's father and other relatives received the party. At that time, the bride's father gave the groom a small brass pitcher and Re. 1 in cash. After that the groom returned to the *janvasa* but other members of the party stayed back. Late in the night, the groom was brought to the bride's house for dinner. After that the marriage ceremony, which was presided over by a Brahmin priest was performed.

At the time of *kanyadan* (ceremonial handing over of the bride to the groom) an amount of Rs. 150 was given to the groom. This amount was given by various relatives of the bride as cash presents. Besides, seven cows were also given as dowry. In the marriage *pandal* the cows were not however, physically brought; symbolic of the gift seven ropes were given to the groom. The marriage party did not bring the cows to the house of the groom with them. Even at the time of the survey, these remained to be handed over to the boy. It is understood that the boy was contemplating to demand the same.

Case No. 3.—R.K. (female), hailing from Bela Estate (western bank) and aged 22, was married about six years ago to a Mallah belonging to the village Jagan Pur of Agra district. R.K.'s father's *gotra* is Suria Rawat, mother's *gotra* is Bankatia

and father's mother's *gotra* is Morethia. All these three *gotras* were tabooed for the purpose of selection of conjugal partner for the girl. Her husband's *gotra* is Tilakia. He is educated up to 3rd class and is working in a butter shop. R.K. herself is illiterate.

When R.K. was of marriageable age, her father asked his relations to be on the look out for a suitable match. R.K.'s mother's brother's daughter was already married in the village Jagan Pur. The mother's brother's daughter's husband suggested the name of the boy to her father.

After the initial negotiations at the time of the final settlement of the date of marriage, R.K.'s father, accompanied by five persons, went to the boy's place. R.K.'s father gave the boy Rs. 51. He also gave Re. 1 each to about 50 close relatives of the boy. For settling the date of the marriage no horoscopes were consulted as the Pandit knew both the parties well. About 1½ months before the marriage the girl's people sent a *nai* (barber) to the boy's house. He took with him a *pilichitthi* (yellow letter) which contained all the details of the *lagan* as well as the manner of solemnization of the marriage. The *pilichitthi* was accepted by the boy's side, which implied that they agreed with all the details indicated in the *pilichitthi*. Had they not accepted the *pilichitthi*, it would have meant that the marriage date was not agreeable to them.

4th *Baisakh* of that year was fixed as the date of marriage. Seven days before that date, the girl's party sent *lagan* to the boy's house through the *Nai* containing a *parat* (plate), a tumbler and a *katora* (bowl)—all of brass, one coconut, 2 kgs. of sweet and one piece of cloth for a shirt for the boy. The number of persons that should accompany the groom in the *barat* was also indicated at that time. On reaching the boy's house, the *Nai* (barber) kept the *lagan* on the hands of the boy in the presence of about 50 relations and neighbours. The *Nai* was given Rs. 5 and some sugar-candies by the boy's father. After that some sugar-candies were distributed among those present.

The bride's father had invited 20 persons to accompany the groom, but actually about 60 persons came. They reached the bride's place on 3rd *Baisakh* at about 2 p.m. From the station they were taken to *janvasa*, where arrangements for the stay of the party were made. They were given

light food consisting of *puri*, *alu ka sag* (dry potato vegetable) and *bundi* (a preparation of curd). At about 8 p.m., the *barat* came to the bride's house. The groom came on a mare. He was wearing yellow shirt and a white pyjama over which there was a black *achkan* (long coat buttoned up to neck). He was also wearing a yellow turban on which he tied a *maur* (crown) and a *sehra* (flowers and bead strings hanging in front of the face). A band-party from the city was engaged to accompany the *barat*. When the party approached the bride's house, the relations and friends of the bride received the *barat*. At that time, the bride's father gave the groom one *lota* (small tumbler), one *sagar* (pitcher), one *valtoi* (big pitcher), one big tumbler and one bowl—all made of brass; one coconut and one handkerchief were also given. At the time when the bride's father was giving the presents to the boy, a Brahmin priest was reciting some *mantras* and the women were singing songs. After the reception of the *barat*, which they call *barothi*, the boy returned to *janvasa*.

The time for solemnisation of the marriage was fixed at 9-30 p.m. by the Pandit. An hour before that the boy was brought from the *janvasa* to the bride's house and was offered dinner. At this time the bride had also her dinner, but at a different place. In the meantime the preparations were going on for *bhanvaran* or solemnization of marriage. The *vedi* (marriage booth) was erected. The bride's father held a corner of a *chaddar* (light wrapper) which was placed on the shoulder of the groom and made him sit on a *pirha* (small flat wooden seat). The bride was brought to the same place by her elder brother. The Brahmin priest performed *havan* (fire sacrifice) with the recitation of *mantras* in the centre of the *vedi*. After that, *kanyadan* (ceremonial giving of the girl to the boy) was performed by the bride's father. At this time, all the relatives of the bride, including senior ones came to touch the feet of the bride and also those of the groom. They also offered some presents to the groom. Altogether, 42 plates, 17 tumblers, —all made of brass— two silver buttons, 21 silver finger rings and Rs. 58 in cash were given. A pair of silver *pajebis* (anklets) and 8 gold nose-studs were given to the bride also. Besides, the groom was given a cow, though symbolically. It is reported that normally the

groom does not insist on getting the cow physically. But if he so demands, a calf is given to him. In the present case, the groom did not demand any cow after the marriage.

The Pandit made the groom and the bride promise eternal loyalty and devotion to each other. After that the pair went around the sacred fire seven times.

After the marriage the groom went to *janvaya* and slept with his people. The bride stayed in her parent's place. Next morning, the marriage party was given a breakfast, consisting of different kinds of sweet preparations. Then the groom's father was made to sit in the courtyard of the house and the close relations of the bride gathered around him. They paid him cash amounts according to their means. This ceremony is called *nauta partna*. It took quite a long time. By the time it was over the lunch was ready and all had it together.

After the lunch, *milni* took place, when the relations of the bride embraced their counterparts of the groom, and paid them one rupee each. Then, the bride's father gave one pitcher of *kansa* (bell-metal), spoon, one brass plate containing rice, one brass bowl containing *bura* (ground sugar) to the groom. On the same day, in the evening, at about 5 p.m., a knot was tied on a rope and hung on the *mandha* or marriage pole. The boy was called to open the knot. Normally the boy would demand some payment for doing the job but in the present case, he did not demand anything. However, he was given a rupee in cash.

Next morning, after the breakfast, which consisted of *puri*, *kachori* and *ladoo*, the bridegroom and his party left with the bride. A horse-driven cart was hired and the groom and the bride sat on it. At the time of the departure, close rela-

tions of the bride gathered round her and gave her small cash to be taken with her. Her father and elder brother gave Re. 1 each, and mother gave 50 paise. On the 8th day after the marriage, 9 persons from the bride's house went to bring her back. They were her own and classificatory brothers. They took with them different types of sweets. When the brothers took their first food in the house of the sister, each left a rupee in the respective plate for the sister, before she cleaned the plate for the first time after her marriage. They stayed there for two days and then returned home along with her. At the time of leaving the house of the in-laws, the uterine brother of the bride paid Re. 1 to the bride's husband's father, husband's mother, husband's sister and husband's elder brother's wife each. On returning home the bride stayed with her parents for three years. She returned only after the performance of the *gauna*.

The above case studies show that in actual practice there are a good number of formalities and elaborate rituals connected with marriage. But when asked to describe the marriage rites, they tend to skip over most of the details. A thorough study is necessary to ascertain whether this indicates that in Mallah conception the various rites stand in an order of hierarchy in which certain rites are considered to constitute the core and others as adhesions.

Among the Mallahs as well as among other communities of the region, consummation of marriage takes place only after the performance of *gauna*. Generally *gauna* takes place when the girl is about 14 to 15 years old. But there are cases when the *gauna* took place even at earlier age or latter age. Particulars about the age of performance of *gauna* were collected in respect of 10 married women. They are furnished in the statement below:

Table showing age of *gauna* with reference to time of marriage

Time of marriage	Number of marriages where <i>gauna</i> was performed at the age of				
	12	13	14	15	16
	2	3	4	5	6
Within 15 years	1	2	1	1	..
15—29 years . . . . .	..	..	..	..	2
30 years & earlier . . . . .	..	1	1	..	..

For a girl of 13 years old *gauna* has not yet been performed.

The statement shows that out of the two marriages performed 30 years ago or earlier, in one case the girl was aged 13, and in the other she was aged 14 at the time of the performance of *gauna*. In case of both the marriages which took place 15—29 years ago, the girl was aged 16, at the time of the performance of the *gauna*. Out of the 5 marriages, which took place during the last 15 years, in one case, the age of the girl at the time of *gauna* was 12, in two cases, it was 13, in one case it was 14 and in another

case it was 15. It is found from the above that there has been no significant change in the age of performance of *gauna* during the last 30 years. If anything, it indicates slight lowering of the age of performance of *gauna*.

In respect of the above ten cases information was also collected about the time gap between marriage and performance of *gauna* with reference to the age of marriage. The same is furnished in the statement below:

Table showing the time lapse between age at first marriage and age at *gauna*

Age at first marriage	Number of marriages where <i>gauna</i> was performed at lapse of								
	No time lapse	Less than 6 months	6 months to 11 months	1 yr.	2 yrs.	3 yrs.	4 yrs.	5 yrs.	More than 5 years
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
14	..	1	..	..	2	..	..	..	..
13	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..
12	1	..	..	..	..	..
11	1	..	1	..	..	..	..
9	1	..

For a girl of 13 years old *gauna* has not yet been performed.

The statement shows that in one case where the age of the girl at the time of the marriage was 9, the *gauna* was performed after a lapse of 5 years; in two cases where the age of the girls at the time of marriage was 11, the *gauna* was performed after two different time gaps. In one case, the time gap was 6—11 months; in the other case, it was 2 years; in one case, where the age of the girl at the time of marriage was 12 years, the *gauna* was performed after a lapse of 1 year; in two cases, where the age of the girls at the time of marriage was 13, the *gauna* was performed after two different time gaps. In one case, the time gap was one year. In the other case, there was practically no time gap; the *gauna* was performed immediately after the marriage. In fact, in this case the ceremony was performed on the next day after the marriage. Strictly speaking it is not *gauna* at all; it is called *pattapher*. In three cases where the age of the girls at the time of the marriage was 14, the time gaps between marriage and *gauna* differed. In one of these three cases it was less than 6 months, in the remaining two cases it was 2 years.

Generally during *gauna*, the husband goes to the wife's house to take her to his place. He is accompanied by close relations and the family barber. In one case, out of the 9 included in the sample, it was, however, found that the husband came alone without any relation or barber. This case took place 15—20 years ago. Out of the remaining 8 cases, in 4 cases the husbands came with close relations as well as with the barber and in 4 cases they came with close relations only, without any barber. An inquiry was made about the amount spent in connection with the performance of the *gauna*. Out of 9 cases, in two cases, about Rs. 100 each were spent; in one case, the amount was Rs. 175; in two cases it was Rs. 200 each; in one case it was Rs. 300 and in two cases it was Rs. 500 each. In another case, the head of the household could not give any estimate of the amount spent.

An inquiry was also made to find out the time gap between *gauna* and consummation of marriage. Out of 9 cases included in the sample, in 5 cases, there was no time gap between the

performance of *gauna* and the consummation of marriage. In one case, the consummation took place two months after *gauna*. In this case, the girl was aged 12 at the time of *gauna*. In a second case, the consummation took place one year after *gauna*; in this case the girl was aged 13. In two cases, the consummation took place six months after *gauna*. In both the cases, the girls were aged 16. The particulars of the rituals performed at the time of *gauna* were collected in the three cases. The same are furnished below :

Case No. 1.—The *gauna* of R.D., who was married at the age of 9, was performed 5 years after her marriage. The date was fixed in consultation with the family priest. On that day, the husband accompanied by 10 relations and friends came to her house. All of them were males, including his mother's brothers, father's brothers and a few other fellow caste men hailing from the same village. A feast was given to them after which they left with R.D. Her father gave her at this time clothes worth Rs. 101 and five items of utensils. He also gave a piece of cloth for one pyjama and one shirt for the husband of his daughter. Besides, each person accompanying the husband on this occasion was given a handkerchief and Rs. 2 in cash. Two earthen pitchers full of sweets were also given to the party to be taken with them.

Case No. 2.—The *gauna* of N.D., who was married at the age of 11, was performed one year after the marriage. The date was fixed in consultation with the family priest. The husband came to N.D.'s house on the fixed day. As her parents were very poor, they did not give anything to her or to her husband or husband's father on this occasion. After taking their meals they left with N.D.

Case No. 3.—In the case of R.K., who was married at the age of 16, the *gauna* was performed three years after the marriage. The date was fixed in consultation with the family priest. The convenience of the husband's family was also taken into consideration. Seven days before the *gauna* the husband's family sent a *chaddar* (sheet of cloth used as wrapper) and some quantity of jaggery to his wife's house. These were brought by the barber of the husband's family.

This person gave the particulars of the time and the number of people who would be coming on the day of the *gauna*.

On the fixed day, eight persons came. All of them were real or classificatory brothers of the husband. They stayed for two days. At the time of departure, each of the persons accompanying the husband was given a *saffa* (a rectangular piece of cloth used as a headgear) and Re. 1 in cash. R.K. was given one *saree*, one blouse piece and Rs. 5 in cash by her father. Her brothers, mother's brothers etc., gave her Re. 1 each. On the 10th day, her brother went to her husband's place and brought her back. After staying for few days she left for her husband's house and finally settled down there.

Widow marriage

The Mallahs allow widow marriage. In case there is an unmarried younger brother of the deceased of suitable age, the widow is expected to marry him. If, however, there is no younger brother of the deceased, of suitable age, the widow is free to marry any other person. It is stated that even in case of marriage outside the kin group of the deceased husband no compensation is required to be paid but the Mallahs prefer that the widow should marry her deceased husband's younger brother because in that case children would be brought up in their own family and the property inherited by them would remain under the management and control of the family. Three case studies of widow marriage are furnished here.

Case No. 1.—In Hassan Pur a Mallah woman became widow with two children. Her deceased husband had unmarried younger brother, whom she married; she has two children by the second husband.

Case No. 2.—P.B.'s wife's mother became widow without having any child by her first husband. She was then married to the deceased husband's younger brother, D.R. It is through the second husband that all her children including P.B.'s wife, were born to her.

Case No. 3.—C.M. of Bela Estate lost his wife two years after his marriage. At that time, a daughter of C.S. of Okhla also became widow.

C.S. arranged marriage of his daughter with C.M. He deposited Rs. 500 in her name in a bank. It was not necessary to make any payment to her first husband's family. During the marriage no *phera* (circumambulation) or religious rite was performed.

Divorce

During 1961 Census, no Mallah was returned as divorced or separated. When asked in a general manner, the Mallahs would state that in their community divorce is not permissible. Further probe, however, would reveal that actually there are many cases of divorce or separation and re-marriage of divorced males and females. It is obvious that the Mallahs consider divorce to be socially calamitous and disrespectful. But at the same time there is the fact of life which they acquiesce to.

The separation or divorce takes place on the grounds of barrenness, immorality and incompatibility of temperament. Before the separation actually takes place, the caste elders always try to patch up the matter. But sometimes all their efforts fail and the husband and the wife begin to live separately from each other. There is, however, no formal rite or public action indicating that the pair has been separated or divorced. As noted earlier, 'X' of Bela Estate, aged 30 was deserted by her husband when she failed to bear any child within a few years of her marriage in spite of medical treatment. Now she lives with her brother and helps in family affairs. Her husband has married a second wife. The case of a woman marrying second time after separation from her first husband has also been reported earlier. S.S. of Gandhi Nagar was deserted by his wife because of his rude behaviour under the influence of alcoholic drinks. She married a Mallah of Vrindaban and had three or four children by her second husband. Later on when the second husband died she rejoined S.S.

Death rites

Among the Mallahs, the dead bodies of infants and young children are buried. The body of an infant is wrapped with a piece of red cloth and placed on the bed of the river Jamuna. There is no particular spot on the bank of Jamuna where the bodies are generally disposed of in this

manner. Children above the age of 4 or 5 years and adults are, however, cremated. The body of a male is wrapped with a white-sheet and that of a female is wrapped with a red spotted sheet. After that, the body is placed on a bier and taken to the burning ghat. The pyre is set on fire by the son of the deceased. The mourners accompanying the dead body take purificatory dip in the river before returning to their respective houses. The *phools* (bones and ashes) are collected on the next day and are latter immersed in the Ganges at Garh Mukteshwar or Hardwar, in Uttar Pradesh. The immersion takes place between the 3rd to the 13th day after the death.

On the 3rd day after the death, the first purificatory rite called *teeja* is performed. On this occasion, the whole house is cleaned, the floor and yard are smeared with cow-dung and then *gangajal* (holy water of the river Ganges) is sprinkled on the spot where the deceased breathed his last. On the 13th day, obsequies are performed. A Brahmin priest presides over the ceremony. Besides, a number of Brahmins are served with *pukka* food (fried with ghee). After that the caste fellows and neighbours are served with food. On this day, the sons of the deceased have their hair shaved. This rite completes the period of ritual mourning for the lineage members up to three generations in ascending order and three generations in descending order. For the married daughters there is no ceremonial pollution, but if they happen to be present there, on the spot; they also observe mourning along with the other family members.

The above is a general picture of the custom prevailing among the Mallahs. Within the frame of this however, certain amount of variations take place. Three case studies furnished here will illustrate the same.

Case No. 1.—About 18 years ago B.R. died at the age of 70. He was suffering from chronic cough. But, one day all of a sudden he lost his voice and collapsed, without anybody knowing that the end was so near. During the period of illness he was under the treatment of an allopathic doctor of Daryaganj. As there was no improvement, another allopathic doctor of the same area was called. He gave some injection and B.R. regained his consciousness and voice temporarily.

He had three sons and three daughters. He told them that he was to give Rs. 1,000 to a person and was to get Rs. 2,000 from another person. Soon after he became unconscious and passed away. It was about 10.30 a.m.

Immediately after his death a *santra* (grass-mat) was spread on the floor and was covered by a piece of cloth. Then the dead body was placed on the same and was covered with a white-sheet. At the same time a message was sent to the *Nai*, who was staying in the neighbourhood, to go round the various houses and inform the people of the death.

The dead body was given a wash by the male members of the family. It is reported that it is the custom of the community that when a male dies, he is bathed by the male members and when a female dies, she is bathed by female members. After the bath, a piece of cloth was tied around the loins. Another piece of cloth covered the body from head to foot. It was then tied with a rope. While the body was being washed, four persons from among the relations and neighbours took the responsibility for making the arrangements for the funeral. One of them went to Kazi Hauz, near Ajmeri Gate, and purchased a *takhta* or bamboo bier, which was in the form of a ladder. On the *takhta* some quantity of dried grass and straw was spread and then the dead body was placed on it. It was first covered with a piece of cloth brought by the deceased's wife's brothers; another piece of cloth, which was brought by the deceased's sons, was used as a second cover.

At about 11.30 a.m., the funeral procession started. The bier was brought out with the legs of the deceased forward. It was carried by his three sons and a classificatory brother's son of the deceased. After the body was brought out of the room, it was kept in the yard. The eldest son of the deceased took out two balls of dough, each having a copper coin stuffed inside. One of the balls was kept in the right and the other one in the left hand of the deceased. Then the funeral procession started with the four persons mentioned above carrying the bier. After a few steps the bier was carried by other four persons, who again after a few steps were replaced by some other persons. This replacement of person by turn continued till

they reached the cremation ground. The females of the household accompanied the procession up to 50—60 steps; then they came back and sat just outside the house.

When the procession reached Nigambodh Ghat, the bier was placed on a platform made by the municipality for such purpose. The eldest son who had earlier kept the dough balls in the two hands of the deceased, changed the respective positions of the balls. The ball earlier kept in the right hand was transferred to the left hand and *vice versa*. This is called *pind badalna*. Before putting the body on fire, it was carried to the river and dipped in the water. At that time a handful of thatch was taken out of the bier for being used for lighting the fire.

After the pyre was arranged, the eldest son took his bath in the river and put on a new cloth which was brought along with other materials. He put the first firewood on the dead body. Then others joined in arranging the pyre. After the arrangement was over, the eldest son took two anti-clockwise rounds of the pyre. Then he stopped at the place from where he started and putting forward the left foot kept a copper coin under it. Then he lit the pyre. Some quantity of *desi ghee* and *samigri* (insense) were added to feed the fire; simultaneously, the *Acharjya* (the Brahmin priest attached to the burning *ghat*) chanted some *mantras* (sacred formulae). When the body was half burnt, the *Acharjya* informed the eldest son that the body was ready for *Kriya*. At this the eldest son got up, held a long piece of bamboo with his hand and touched the head of the deceased with it. Then all the persons came out one after another, sprinkled water on the pyre, folded their hands and moved away from the pyre. The eldest son gave Rs. 2.50 to the *Acharjya* for his services. Then everybody went to the river and had a bath.

By about 3 p.m. all returned home. Till that time, the women of the household remained outside the house. After the males came back, B.R's sister's married daughter rinsed the place where the bier was kept, with cow-dung solution. Then the four *kandhiyas* (the persons who carried the bier for the first time when the funeral procession started for the cremation ground) sat at the four corners of the place. The other persons sat at

some distance. After remaining silent for a short while, the eldest son of B.R. who was one of the *kandhiyas* got up and went where the other persons were sitting; he folded his hands and told them, "brothers, I have to live and die among you." On hearing this all stood up, folded their hands and confirmed silently what he said and then again sat down.

In the meantime B.R.'s sister's married daughter started cooking food consisting of *chapati* and *urd-ki-dal*. No *ghee* was used in the preparation of these items, and except for salt and black pepper no condiment was used in the *dal*.

Four *thals* (brass plates) containing cooked food were placed before the *kandhiyas*. One empty leaf-plate was also placed in the centre. Each of the *kandhiyas* took a little of the food from the plate given to him with his left hand and placed the same on the leaf-plate in the name of the deceased. After that, each of them took some water in his left palm and moving the hand in a circular manner in anti-clockwise direction poured the water on the food. After this ritual offering, the *kandhiyas* took the food offered to them. Then other members of the family took their food. But, no outsider took anything there.

The next day, the barber went again and informed the people about the time when *teeja* (mourning rite on the third day) would take place.

On the third day, early in the morning the four *kandhiyas* went to the cremation ground. They took with them a *lota* (a small brass vessel) containing about 250 grams of milk. They also took a cloth bag with them. In the cremation ground the *Acharjya* gave them a big iron plate on which they collected the ashes of the deceased. The same were then thrown in the river. A few bones of the deceased were collected in the cloth bag. The bag was then left with the *Acharjya*, who wrote on it the name of the deceased and kept it under his custody.

Then they added some water to the milk brought by them and sprinkled the same on the place where the body was cremated. Then some sweets (*puri* and *halwa*) were given to the

Acharjya who ate some portion of the same on the spot and took the rest to his home. After that the *kandhiyas* came back home. At about 11 a.m., all the members of the household, excepting the married daughter of the deceased, went to the bank of the river. The neighbours and relations also went there. In the presence of all, the eldest son got his head shaved. Then the other three *kandhiyas* followed. The barber was given Rs. 2.50 for shaving the head, and Rs. 2.50 for informing the people. After this all took bath in the river and washed their clothes.

While going to the bank of the river, the members of the household took with them in separate earthen pots some quantities of *gur*, parched gram, sweet and sweetened rice. While taking his bath, the eldest son took the pot, containing sweetened rice, and placed on it some quantities of jaggery and gram and a few flowers. Then he placed the pot on the water and allowed it to jaggery float.

After all had taken their baths, the remaining quantities of parched gram and jaggery were distributed among them. Before eating the same everybody threw a little of his or her share in the river.

In the evening of the same day, the deceased's married daughter and sister's daughter prepared food consisting of *shikran* (curd and brown sugar), light *chapati* and a mixed curry containing seven types of vegetables.

This time also the four *kandhiyas* sat at the four corners of the place where the bier was kept earlier. A *pattal* (leaf plate) was kept in the centre in the name of the deceased and *diva* (earthen lamp) was kept near the *pattal*. When food was given on plates to these four persons, each of them took out a small portion from his plate and put the same on the *pattal* meant for the deceased. Then they took out the *pattal*, the *diva* and a small *ghara* (earthen pitcher) containing water and went to a crossing where they placed the articles. Then they came back home and took the food given to them. After the *kandhiyas* had eaten others also took their food. In the night, before going to bed, one of the members of the household brought some quantity of ash from the hearth, and scattered

the same through a sieve on the place where the dead body was kept. Then the sieve was kept on the ash. In the morning, the sieve was removed and the condition of the ash was observed. There was print of a human foot on the ash, which indicated that the deceased was born again as a human being.

On the fourth day, the eldest son and the sister's daughter's husband of the deceased went to Garh Mukteshwar for immersion of the bones in the Ganges. At the Ganges the eldest son took the bones with some flowers and went to waist deep water and allowed the bones to fall there. After that he fed a Brahmin residing at Garh Mukteshwar.

After they came back, the preparation for performing *terami*, (obsequies for the satisfaction of the mourners that takes place on the 13th day after the death) started. In a way the preparation started even earlier. On the 3rd day after the death, they had sent letters to their relatives staying outside Delhi, giving intimation of the death. A corner of each letter was torn to indicate the inauspicious nature of the message.

For the 13th day *chulha neota* (invitation for feast) had been sent. This implied that all the invited persons were expected to dine there along with all their family members. By about 10 a.m., all gathered in the house of the deceased. Thirteen Brahmins were also invited on this occasion. Before the feast *havan* (fire sacrifice) was performed by the Brahmin priest of the family, for which he was given remuneration of Rs. 1.25. He was also given four pieces of cloth, one pair footwear, one brass plate and one small brass vessel. After the *havan* the Brahmins were first fed. After that, the other guests were fed. The items served on this occasion consisted of *puri*, *halwa* and vegetable curry.

It is to be noted that before the performance of the *havan* nobody, who was not a member of the same lineage, took food in the house of the deceased. In their turn the lineage members up to 3 generations had to refrain from eating non-vegetarian food, entering the kitchens of others and performing marriage and other solemn rites. The eldest son had to observe other restrictions as well. He could not sleep on a cot and had to

wear the same clothes which he was wearing at the time of lighting the pyre.

Case No. 2.—N.R.'s mother, M.K. of Bela Estate, died in 1964 when she was aged about 65. She was suffering from a severe pain in her stomach for about a year and a half. All this time she was under the treatment of a medical practitioner of Daryaganj. When it was obvious that the last moment was at hand, the doctor made a last attempt to save her life. He administered some injections, but it was of no avail. She died at about 12.30 noon.

At the time of her death, N.R. was sitting on her bed with her head in his lap. N.R.'s younger brother and his wife, who were staying with him at this time, were also standing by the side of the bed along with other kins and friends. Immediately after the death, the body was removed to the floor and placed on a mat. Then N.R.'s younger brother went to the house of the family *Nai* to ask him to circulate the bad news among the fellow castemen and other neighbours.

At about 4.35 p.m., the funeral procession started for the Nigambodh Ghat, near Kashmiri Gate. The body was carried on a bamboo bier by four persons. When the funeral procession reached Jamuna, the body was lowered on the river bed and given a dip.

At Nigambodh Ghat, the pyre was arranged and the body was placed on it. As N.R. was the eldest son of the deceased, under the direction of the priest, he offered two dough balls to the manes and then lit the pyre. Others who were present, threw small wooden sticks on the fire. When the body was half burnt, N.R. took a long bamboo pole and touched the head of the deceased with it. When the body was almost completely burnt all those who came to the burning *ghat* left the place. On their way they took their bath in Jamuna. It is to be noted that no woman accompanied the funeral procession.

On the 3rd day after the death, the near relatives of the deceased went to the cremation ground with a red cloth. A portion of the burnt bones and ashes of the deceased was preserved by the priest attached to the burning *ghat*. They collected the same in the cloth, and went to Jamuna. A portion of the collection was immersed in

Jamuna. After that out of the three sons, two got their heads shaved. N.R. shaved his moustaches also. The grandsons of the deceased also got their heads shaved. The shaving of heads was done by a *Nai* who was given Rs. 1.25 per person as his remuneration. After immersion of a portion of the bones and ashes in Jamuna, N.R. and his sister's husband left for Garh Ganga, for immersion of the remaining portion of the bones and ashes there.

On the 13th day *tervi* or *terami* was performed. On this occasion *havan* was performed by the Brahmin priest of the family. The priest was given one plate, one tumbler and one *lota*—all made of brass, in addition to some cash as his remuneration. His wife was given a *saree*, a piece of cloth for the upper garment, and a pair of *chappals*.

A feast was arranged in which the lineage members of N.R. and some other relations, like his sister's husband, daughter's husband etc., were invited. Besides, N.R.'s close relations, he invited 13 Brahmins and served them with *puri*, *halva* and vegetable curry.¹

Till the performance of *tervi*, N.R. and other members of the family were considered to be ceremonially impure and were subjected to many restrictions. They were not to sleep on cots, neither could their womenfolk cook food for others, including the married sisters of N.R. who had come to mourn their mother's death. In fact, during this period N.R.'s wife or his brother's wife did not cook the food of the family. The married sisters cooked the food. No ceremonial impurity was associated with the married sisters, however, they observed mourning with other members of the family.

Case No. 3.—P.B.'s mother died about 10 years ago when she was about 60 years old. She was suffering from stomach-ache for 4-5 years. In the month of Asarh, she asked P.B. to take her to Hardwar for a bath in the Ganges, as she was apprehending that her death was imminent. She died in the month of Kartik on the 11th day after Diwali at about the time of sun set. A few hours

before the death the old woman asked for a bath. Her body was sponged and hair was dressed; then she asked for some tobacco and *pan* (betel). After that she fell asleep. After sometime, in her sleep she passed away. As soon as it was discovered, her body was placed on the floor. The family barber was sent to go round the settlement and inform the neighbours. A wooden *takhta* (bier), about six feet long and two feet broad, was brought from Kazi Hauz near Ajmeri Gate and the body of the deceased, covered with new clothes, was placed on it. And then it was covered with a piece of red cloth. Other close relations also offered new pieces of cloth to serve as shroud. Altogether about 10 to 12 shrouds were received. All of them were placed on the body of the deceased.

At about 9 p.m. the funeral procession started for Nigambodh Ghat. Four persons carried the bier on their shoulders with the feet of the dead body in the front. These four persons were the sons and sons' sons of the deceased. After they carried the dead body for sometime, others lent their shoulders by turn.

Before the funeral procession started two balls of dough were kept in the hands of the deceased. When the procession came near the burning *ghat*, the dead body was kept on the ground and the dough ball in the left hand was put in the right hand and *vice versa*. The orientation of the body was also changed *i.e.*, the head was put in the front. Further, the four persons who originally brought out the body from home came forward. After reaching the *ghat*, the body was given a wash. After the pyre was arranged and the body was kept on it, the eldest son lit the fire. When the body was half burnt, the eldest son touched the head of the deceased with a big bamboo pole.

On their way back, all the participants washed their faces and hands. The women of the household did not accompany the procession; but at the same time, they did not enter the house till the males returned from the burning *ghat*. They remained out at a little distance from the house.

When the men came back, the women gave them water to wash their faces and hands. Then they coated the house with mud and cow-dung.

¹The Brahmin priest who was separately interviewed' however, denied that he or any other Brahmin took cooked food in any Mallah house during ceremonial occasions.

The food for the household members was prepared by P.B.'s sister and was taken by all. On the 3rd day early in the morning, P.B.'s elder brother and P.B.'s sister's husband went to the burning *ghat* where they collected the *phools* (bones and ashes). The ashes were immersed in Jamuna and the bones were put inside a bag and kept with the priest attached to the cremation ground. After that both came back home.

At about 10 a.m., on the same day, close relations of P.B.—both males and females—went to the Jamuna and took their bath. At that time P.B. got his head and face shaved and the other three *kandhiyas* got shaved their head only. However, it is obligatory for other members attending the *teeja* rite to get shaved their beard and moustaches or at least get their one nail clipped.

The whole day the female members did not eat anything. In the evening rice, *chapati* and vegetables were prepared by P.B.'s sister which was taken by all.

On the 4th day, P.B. along with his sister's husband went to Garh Ganga to immerse the bones of the deceased in the Ganges.

On the 13th day, *tervi* or *terami* was performed. Early in the morning the females of the household cleaned the whole house and coated the floor and yard with mud and cow-dung, mixed in water. Then all had their bath. At about 1 p.m. *havan* was performed by a Brahmin by burning mango wood and *samigri* (incense). From time to time the fire was fed with *ghee*. The *havan* was performed in the room where the death had taken place. The wife of the Brahmin priest, who was also present, was given a *saree*, a piece of cloth for upper garment, *jutia* (indigenous shoe) and brass utensils.

On this occasion, lineage members and close relations were entertained to a feast. Besides, as claimed by P.B., 13 Brahmins were fed with *pukka* food, like *puri*, *kachori* and *ladoo* (sweet ball).

Religion

The gods and goddesses commonly worshipped by the Mallahs can be divided into two categories.

In the first category are the gods and goddesses of all India-spread, like *Rama*, *Shiva*, *Krishna*, *Hanuman* etc. In the second category are the gods and goddesses who are more commonly worshipped by the rural folk of the region. These are *Bhairo*, *Bhoomiya Mata*, *Chaurahewali Mata*, *Kalka Devi*, etc.

Some of the deities of the second category are worshipped on the out break of different types of diseases; for instance, in case of out-break of small-pox on epidemic scale, in addition to modern allopathic treatment, some would also worship *Chaurahewali Mata*. It seems that in the past, it was generally believed by the people that small pox was caused by the wrath of *Chaurahewali Mata*. At present many do not appear to seriously believe it. But at the same time, they would like to perform the worship of *Chaurahewali Mata*, as a matter of grace to the collective habit of the community. The particulars of worship of few of the local deities were collected. They are furnished below:

Chaurahewali Mata.—It is worshipped on any crossing, on the first Monday and every Holi. Early in the morning, all the women folk of the locality belonging to various castes go to the place of worship in groups along with their children. They take with them some quantity of turmeric, as well as flowers and sweets. The women mark a round spot with turmeric powder on the crossing and then offer the food and sweets taken by them near the mark, prostrate before the same and come back home. It is interesting to note that they do not bring back with them a part of the food offered to the deity. As pointed by Hubert and Mauss (1964 p. 97) that by offering some object as sacrifice to a deity, a person establishes communion between himself and the supernatural entity. In the present case, the fact that food offered to the deity is left on the spot, without any share being taken by the women, seems to suggest that there is no intention to establish a communion with the deity. The intention appears to be just to propitiate the deity. This seems to mark a stage in the evolution of religion when the spiritual content of religion has still to come to the focus, and the only purpose of the religious practice is to contain the

supernatural forces considered to be responsible for some evil effects on the lives of the persons concerned.

Bhairo.—This deity has a temple behind Red Fort where the people of Mallah community go once in a while to make their offerings. This deity is, however, not worshipped regularly like *Chaurahewali Mata*.

Bhoomiya.—This deity is worshipped by the Mallahs in their respective homes during *Holi* and *Diwali*. At this time, the children of the family come and prostrate before the deity.

From what has been stated in respect of the worship of *Chaurahewali Mata* it should not be considered that the Mallahs always worship various deities for averting some calamity or for getting some reliefs from untoward situation. Sometimes, they perform worship for establishing communion with the world of mystery or for giving expression to their special relations with their surroundings. For instance, many of them consider *tulsi* plant (*Ocimum sanctum*) as sacred and worship it. Their regard for cow also belongs to the same category of world view. Many of the Mallahs are acquainted with the philosophical aspects of religion, as described in the scriptures. They believe in *atman* (an all pervading creative principle). They also believe in *karm phal* or reward or retribution in the next birth for the deeds in the present birth.

Some of the Mallah women were asked whether they believed in ghosts. They laughed and replied that they did not. It is, however, difficult to say whether in the deeper recesses of their minds they do not have any such belief. Earlier accounts show that they have belief in a number of ghosts and spirits and consider that women and children are more prone to come under their influence. There are *Kumhar Ojhas* (witch doctors) who exorcise these evil spirits by performing *jharna phookana* (magical rites). During the present investigation, however, no information on this matter was collected.

The Mallahs living on the outskirts of the city visit the various Hindu temples situated in the city on different festive occasions, like *Holi*, *Dus-*

sehra, *Diwali*, *Janamashtami*, etc. It is interesting to note that Mallahs have a ceremony which appears to be specially related to their traditional occupation of boating. On the 10th day of *Jaith* (May—June), every year, they take a holy dip in the *Jamuna* in honour of the river. They call it *Jaith ka Dussehra*. On this day, they do not do any work in their agriculture fields. This festival, however, is not confined to the Mallahs only but other communities of the area also take part in this.

If this ceremonial bath in honour of the river is left out of consideration, the supernatural world of the Mallahs seems related to the needs and cycle of life of their agricultural neighbours. In other words, though by tradition the Mallahs are a non-agricultural community, they have not been able to free themselves from the ethos of the agricultural communities, at least in matters relating to the supernatural world.

In connection with religion another aspect to be taken into consideration is the sacred spots which exist in the villages where the Mallahs are dominant in number. It is reported that there was a *Shiva* temple in *Bela Estate* which was eroded away by the river in the space of 1956. M.R. of Mallah caste was the attendant in this temple. After the disappearance of this temple, no other temple has been erected by the Mallahs. However, M.R. has saved the *Shiva Linga*, which he has placed on a wooden structure near his home and worships it regularly. The Mallahs of different villages had a common temple in the past. This was the temple of *Sheetla Mata* (goddess of small-pox) at *Patpat Ganj*, five miles from *Delhi* (*Bela Estate*). It is stated that the deity here represents the same deity at *Gurgaon*. On the Western side of *Pushta* of *Daryaganj*, in the *bagichi* (garden) of *Tej Pal*, there is a temple where a *Rajput* is the *sewadar* (attendant). Adjoining the temple, there are also temples of *Shiva*, *Hanuman*, and *Bhairon*. Though these temples are not under the control of the Mallahs, they more frequently visit them because of long association, when no other temple in the city came into existence.

Omens and superstitions

Earlier publications have mentioned that omens, good and bad, are given much consideration by the Mallahs. To sneeze before starting

any work or going out on a journey is bad. To see an empty pitcher before the commencement of any work also is considered unlucky. If any person sees these unlucky signs he comes back and waits for sometime before commencing his work. The howling of a jackal at night is considered to be an indication of an impending death. It, however, appears that in this matter the Mallahs of today live in a twilight of belief and non-belief. During the discussions when mention is made about these beliefs, they just shrug their shoulders. But at the same time, they do not deny that they have an uncanny feeling when they come across any of the omens mentioned above. In a general way it can be stated that there are persons among the older generation who still entertain the above beliefs. On the other hand, there are some among the younger generation who would not take the above beliefs seriously at all. Their attitude may be described as that of positive disbelief.

Festivals

The Mallahs perform a number of festivals which are commonly found among the Hindus living in the rural area of Delhi. Some of the festivals have even all India spread. Particulars of some of the more important festivals are furnished here.

Navratri.—All the 8 households, which were specially studied, perform *Navratri* in their homes at the family level. But they have no idea about the myths and legends connected with the festival as recorded in the standard religious literature. The reasons for the performance of *Navratri*, as given by the heads of eight households belonging to different age groups, are as follows:

Reason	Age group (21-40)	Age group 41 & above
To honour Goddess <i>Kali</i> and appease her	1	1
To win favour of <i>Karoli devi</i> as well as <i>Gaonki Chamar devi</i>	..	2
To win favour of <i>Karoli Devi</i>	..	1
To worship <i>Devi Mata</i> (not specified)	2	..
Do not know	..	1

About the time of performance of *Navratri*, the different persons reported differently. Normally, there are two seasons for performance of *Navratri*, one is performed during 1st to 9th days of the bright-half of moon in the month of *Chait* and the other is performed during the same period in the month of *Aswin*. But none of the informants could give the complete information. The informants indicated different times for the performance. Two persons indicated 9th *Kavar* as the day of performance of *Navratri*. One stated that he did not know exactly when *Navratri* is performed; others made a mention of the different days in the month of *Chait*.

As regards the place of performance of the festival during 1965, five stated that they performed it in their respective homes; two stated that they performed it in *kalkaji* temple, one stated that he performed it in the temple of *Karoli Devi* situated at Hindore town of Karoli Estate in Rajasthan.

As regards the method of performance in 1965, two households stated that they performed the festival by burning of cow-dung cakes in the family house, another household performed it by burning cow-dung cakes in the main household of the extended family. Some of their members observed fast; otherwise they did not have any performance at the family level. One household stated that some of its members visited *Kalkaji* temple.

As regards the category of persons performing the rites, all the households stated that only their female members observed fast or worshipped various deities; others were more interested in feasts than in fasts.

Holi.—It is a popular festival with all India spread, and is celebrated by playing with coloured water and coloured powder. Eight Mallahs were asked what they know about the festival. One person aged 25—40 stated that the *Holi* festival was related to the burning of *Holika* who tried to destroy *Prahlad*, the mythical child devotee of God *Vishnu*. Two persons, aged 40 and above, stated that this festival was in some way connected with *Shiva* but they did not know exactly how. Others could not cite any myth or legend connected with the performance of the festival.

As regards their own motivations for performing the festival, three females, aged 40 and above, stated that they performed it because they thought it would be good for their husbands and children. One female, aged 25—40, stated that she considered that the burning of Holika symbolized the end of evils. Others stated that they were performing the festival because it was their age old custom.

All the eight persons stated that in addition to playing with coloured water they performed worship of certain deities in their respective homes. It appears that the same deities were not worshipped in all the households. Three households made a mention of *Kali*, *Bhawani* and *Gaonki Chamar*, two households made a mention of departed ancestors; others did not specify the deities worshipped on the occasion of *Holi*. Bonfire was made in all the households.

In all the cases the worships were performed by the members of respective families, without assistance of any priest. It was enquired whether on this occasion any ritual was performed at the lineage level or at the village level. The reply was in the negative. Further, it was enquired from the eight households whether any of their members visited any temple at the time of *Holi*. All replied in the negative.

Dussehra.—*Dussehra* is one of the most important festivals of all India spread. According to the scriptures it marks the victory of *Rama* over *Ravana*, the demon king. Out of the eight Mallahs who were asked whether they were aware of the myths and legends connected with *Dussehra*, four were found to know the myth about *Rama* correctly. All these four persons were aged 25—40. Two persons, aged 40 and above, stated that the festival was connected with *Bhawani Mata*. They could not, however, indicate the nature of connection. Two stated that they were not aware of any myth or legend connected with *Dussehra*. Out of these two one was aged 25—40 the other was aged above 40.

All the 8 persons stated that during *Dussehra* they performed some worships at the family level. As regards their personal motivation for performing the festival two persons, both females, stated that they observed it for the welfare of their

respective husbands and children. Three stated that *Dussehra* indicated the end of evil, and they liked to celebrate the occasion. The rest stated that they participated in the festival because it was the custom.

Out of the eight interviewees, one stated that on this occasion he alongwith his wife visited his elder brother, who was living separately and performed the worship of some deity jointly. He could not give the name of the deity. One person stated that on this occasion special items of food were prepared in the home but no worship of any deity was performed. The others stated that they performed various rituals in their homes. In two households, agricultural implements were worshipped; in one household, seedlings of barley were worshipped; in another a lump of cow-dung was given the shape of a square human figure and was worshipped after being placed on the floor. In the other household the departed ancestors were worshipped.

In all the households the worship was performed by either a male or female member of the household concerned without assistance of any priest. None from any of the eight households, included in the sample, visited any temple on this occasion but members of seven households went to *Ram Lila* Ground to see the burning of the effigies of *Ravana*, *Kumbhkarna* and *Meghnath* and also to enjoy the various entertainments.

Diwali.—*Diwali* is the festival of lights all over India. It is performed in the month of *Aswin* (October-November), in many parts of the country. On this day, the goddess of wealth is worshipped. According to Hindu scriptures *Diwali* is performed to commemorate the return of *Rama* to *Ajudhya* after vanquishing the demon king *Ravana*. An inquiry was made among six Mallahs to find out how many of them were aware of the above legend. Three knew the legend, the remaining three did not know. Out of the latter, one stated that in his household *Diwali* was performed as it was the age old custom, two stated that they performed it in honour of *Rama* though they did not know how exactly *Rama* was connected with it.

All the six, whether they knew the legend correctly or not, performed one or the other rite

in their respective homes on the occasion of Diwali every year.

Out of the three, who knew the legend, one belonged to the age group 25—40, and two to the age group 40 and above. Out of the three, who did not know the legend, two belonged to the age group 25—40 and one to the age group 40 and above.

One day after *Diwali*, *Gobardhan* festival is generally performed by the Mallahs of Delhi. This festival is not very common in different parts of India. During group discussions, it was found that some of the Mallahs were aware of the legend associated with the origin of the festival, as recorded in *Bhagavat*. It is said that once *Indra* (the rain god) imprisoned all the cattle; but Lord *Krishna* released them. In revenge *Indra* poured rain in torrents, but Lord *Krishna* protected the world by holding up the mountain *Gobardhan* over his head. The festival is performed in commemoration of this incident.

Though chronologically *Diwali* and *Gobardhan* festivals are linked together, it appears that there is no other metaphysical or mystic nexus between the two in the eyes of the Mallah and their neighbours.

Maha Shivratri.—This is performed on the 14th day on the dark half of the moon in the month of *Phalgun*. According to the scriptures this festival is performed to commemorate the day on which *Shiva* saved the world from annihilation by drinking the poison which gushed out of the cosmic ocean which was churned by the gods and the demons in search of nectar. Six Mallahs were asked to indicate what they knew about the myths and legends connected with the festival. One aged 25—40, stated that it was connected with the birth of *Shiva*. One aged above 40, stated that it was connected with *Har-Parvati*; he, however, did not know exactly how. Two aged above 40, stated that it was connected with *Sankranti*; and two aged 25—40 stated that they were not aware of any myth or legend connected with *Maha Shivratri*.

Excepting one household, all the others performed some rites on this occasion. The adult

females observed fast in all of them. In one household even the adult males observed fast.

Two of the interviewees, both females, stated that they observed fast and performed other rituals for the welfare of the children and husbands; one interviewee, aged above 40 performed it for his own satisfaction. Others stated that they were just conforming to age-old customs.

Rakhi (Raksha Bandhan).—This festival is performed in the month of *Savan* (July-August). On this day, the sisters tie *rakhi* (yarn bands) on the wrists of the brothers; and the latter give presents to the sisters. Eight Mallahs were asked to indicate whether any myths or legends were associated with the festival. None could mention any. But all of them stated that *Rakhi Bandhan* was performed in their respective homes. Four out of these eight stated that they performed this ceremony to indicate solidarity between brothers and sisters. One female stated that it was performed for pleasing the deities and also for the welfare of the brothers. The remaining three stated that they did not know what was the utility of the performance of this ceremony.

As regards the time of performance of the festival, two stated that it was performed on the full-moon day of *Bhadon*. Two stated that it was performed on the full-moon of *Savan*. The rest stated that they could not tell the exact time.

As regards the manner of performance of festival, one stated that on this day the family deity was worshipped by burning cow-dung cakes and then the sisters tied yarn bands on the wrists of the brothers. Seven informants stated that no worship was performed in their respective homes. Only the sisters tied bands on the wrists of their own and customary brothers.

Janam Ashtami.—This day falls on the 8th day of the dark fortnight of the moon of the month of *Bhadon* (August-September). It is considered that Lord *Krishna* was born at the mid-night of this day. Eight Mallahs were asked to indicate what they knew about the myths and legends connected with the festival. All of them could correctly indicate the *Krishna* legend.

Six out of the eight households stated that on this day the adult members of the respective homes observed fast last year. Two stated that in

their respective homes no ritual was performed. Some members from two households out of the six where adult members observed fast, visited some temples in the city or outside the city on this day. Members of one household visited a temple in Daryaganj inside the city; the members from another household visited a temple at Silampur.

Local festivals

Basora.—This festival is performed for invoking the blessings of *Gurgaon-wali Mata*, a goddess associated with child birth and small pox. It appears that *Basori Mata* is considered to be the same as *Gurgaon-wali Mata*, who again is considered to be the same as *Chaurahe-wali Mata*. But in this matter a general consensus does not prevail among the Mallahs. Out of the eight Mallahs who were asked to indicate what they knew about the deity connected with *Basora* festival, six stated that they had no idea. Only two specifically mentioned the name of *Basori Mata*. All the eight Mallahs, however, reported that they performed religious rites on this occasion. When asked about their own motivations for performance of the rites, four stated that they wanted thereby to appease *Chaurahe-wali Mata*; one stated that the motivation was to appease *Bhoomiya Mata*; one stated that the welfare of the children was the prime motive, and two stated that they were performing the rites because their neighbours and relations were also doing the same.

As regards the manner of performance of the rites in 1966, all the households stated that on the day of the festival their women folk took with them small earthen plates containing sweets, rice, sugarcandies, soaked grams and clothes, and went to the crossing of the village where they placed the plates as their offerings to the deity and bowed down on the spot and returned.

Hoi.—This festival is performed one week before *Diwali* by the women of the community for the welfare of their children. It is reported that on this day, they observe fast and listen to some edifying story from a Brahmin priest. They also plaster a portion of the wall of the house with mud in the evening and draw the image of a woman to represent *Hoi*.

Six Mallahs were asked to indicate the myths and legends connected with *Hoi*. None of them was aware of any myth or legend; but all the same they performed some rites in their respective homes. As in other years, on the festival days in 1966, the women of the households concerned performed the *puja* by burning cow-dung cakes and drawing figures of *Hoi* on the walls.

Jaith ka Dussehra.—This is performed on the 10th day of *Jaith* (May-June) every year in honour of the river Jamuna. Mallahs being a boatmen caste it would appear that this festival might be specially related to them but in fact other communities living in the rural areas of the region also perform this festival. Eight Mallahs were asked whether according to them any myths or legends were associated with the festival and all replied that they had no information in this matter. Two replied that they performed the festival for the welfare of their children. One replied that this festival was related to the betterment of crops. Another replied that it was related to the welfare of their animals. Four replied that they performed the festival simply because others performed it.

As regards the performance in 1966, one person stated that after taking bath in the Jamuna, the members of his household visited the house of elder brother, where the worship was performed. Other informants stated that they took bath in the Jamuna and worshipped in their respective homes.

As regards the manner of worship, all the households reported that they did not engage any priest. The worship was performed by the members of the respective households themselves. They placed some grains of *bajra* (millet) on small earthen plates which were smeared with turmeric paste and then prostrated before the same. Afterwards the grains were scattered among sparrows and other birds.

On this occasion, the female members of the households after taking bath in the Jamuna coloured the four corners of their newly purchased *chunnies* (cloth for covering head) with turmeric paste and then handed over the same to their mothers-in-law for wearing. Those who did not have mother-in-law gave *chunnies* to their respective husband's sisters.

The ritual cycle of the Mallahs seem to indicate that though by tradition they are a non-agricultural community, they are very much involved in the ethos of life and world view of the traditional cultivators. At least in the matters related to the supernatural, they have not been able to cut out a separate niche for themselves.

Inter-community relations

The communities living in the neighbourhood of the Mallahs are generally the Jats, Gujjars, Rajputs, Sainis, Kachhis and Chamars. The Mallahs consider the first four to be socially equal to and the last two to be socially inferior. This attitude is reflected in the terms of address that they use in respect of various communities. When addressing a Rajput they would say 'Choudhary' or 'Choudhary Sahib' or 'Bhai Sahib' or 'Aao ji Bhai.' When addressing a Mali or Saini, they say 'Bhai Sahib' or 'Bhai Ji'; only occasionally they use terms of familiarity like 'Kaho Bhai', 'Sunao Bhai', etc. But when addressing a Kachhi, they always say 'Aao Bhai' or 'Kaho Bhai'. Here, it is to be noted that the terms of address having the suffix 'Sahib' or 'Ji' are thought to be more respectable. On the other hand, the terms like 'O Bhai', 'Abhe' and 'Bhaiya' are thought to indicate a lower social status. Within the general pattern indicated above, the terms of address may vary to some extent depending upon the age, intensity of personal contact, social status, economic status etc. One Kachhi and one Saini who were asked about the status of the Mallahs *vis-a-vis* themselves stated that the Mallahs were of the same status as themselves.

The Mallahs claim that the Jats, Gujjars, Rajputs and Sainis accept *chapati* and *puri* from them. They in their turn accept the food cooked by the above communities. But smoking from a common *hukka* is always restricted to own community only. A Mallah is traditionally debarred from taking water from a Kachhi or a Chamar. He also tries to maintain physical distance from a Chamar but never does so in respect of a Kachhi. Though not living in their neighbourhood, the Mallahs are recipient of services from Brahmins, barbers and washermen. The Brahmin priest traditionally serving the Mallahs of Bela Estate lives in Daryaganj near Ghata Masjid. The same person is also the priest of a temple at that place. It is reported that persons belonging

to higher castes also visit that temple. This priest is expected to preside over the ceremonies in the Mallah households on the occasions of birth, marriage and death. Sometimes, instead of this priest, they invite another priest hailing from Bagar area of Rajasthan who has recently settled in Silampur colony to officiate in their functions. The latter person also is a Brahmin by caste. But it appears that his social status is slightly lower than that of the Brahmins who serve as priests in the households of high caste Hindus in the rural areas of Delhi.

The Brahmin priest of Mallahs was contacted. According to him when he visits the Mallah households he does not take food cooked by them. He takes uncooked vegetables and grains and cook the same himself. A different picture is, however, given by the Mallahs themselves. The washerman serving the Mallahs of Bela Estate, lives at Chandni Mahal, Bangas-ka-Kamara, near Daryaganj Post Office. His services are required on the following ceremonial occasions:

(a) On the sixth day after the birth of a child, on the occasion of *chhatti* ceremony. At this time, the Dhobi washes the clothes worn by the mother of the new born baby. He gets remuneration of Rs. 5 if the new born is a boy and Rs. 2.50 if it is a girl.

(b) During the marriage, the washerman washes the clothes including *daris* or mattresses used by the women folk. He gets cash remuneration of Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 for this service.

Besides the above, the washerman gets $2\frac{1}{2}$ seers of wheat or gram and some vegetables from each household after harvesting as a sort of retainer fee. In lieu of his regular remuneration he is expected to visit Bela Estate once in a fortnight and wash whatever clothes are given to him. It is understood that rarely the Mallahs have spare clothes to give him to wash. The same person also washes clothes of other communities on cash payment. But he has got patron-client relationship (*jajmani* relationship) only with the Mallahs. It seems that he is treated as socially inferior by the Mallahs. According to the Mallah informants the washerman would sit on the ground when a Mallah is sitting on a cot. Besides, he is not served water in the pot normally used by the Mallahs.

The caste barber of the Mallahs of Bela Estate stays at Silampur. His services are required on the following occasions:

(1) He goes round to inform the people whenever a meeting of the panchayat is called. He is paid Rs. 2½ for this purpose.

(2) He is sent to ceremonially invite the people to attend marriage, death, religious discourse and other functions. His remuneration for such duty on the occasion of marriage is Rs. 20; on the occasion of death and religious discourse he is given Rs. 5 each.

(3) He serves the *hukka* (hubble-bubbie) during the panchayat gatherings.

In addition to the cash remuneration, the barber is given some vegetables on various occasions.

Outside the traditional dimensions of inter-community relationship in the context of the local community life, there is another dimension of relationship which is provided by the employment of a good number of Mallahs in various types of establishments in the city. The particulars of such relationship were covered in respect of 10 Mallahs of different age groups. They were asked to indicate the castes of their job mates, with whom they were mostly associated in their jobs situation; they indicated that the job mates belonged to Brahmin, Jat, Jatav, Lodha, Kahar, Muslim and other castes and communities including *Paharrias* or hillmen. The last ones are obviously people who come to Delhi as sojourners from Tehri Garhwal and other areas in search of jobs. But the Mallahs are not aware of their individual castes. An inquiry was made whether the job mates knew that the Mallahs were a scheduled caste, and whether such avoidance affected their mutual relations. Only one person stated that his job mate, who was a Baniya, knew that he was a scheduled caste. But this did not affect their mutual relations in any manner. Others stated that their job mates did not know that they were scheduled castes.

As regards the scheduled caste status of the Mallahs, it appears that they themselves have an ambivalent attitude about it. On the one hand they are eager to enjoy the benefits conferred on them because of their inclusion in the category of

scheduled castes; on the other they feel embarrassed about the low status which goes along with this privilege. Because of this ambivalence, they do not associate with the other scheduled castes in common platforms; but at the same time, individually they come forward and try to avail the various benefits, open to the scheduled castes.

Caste panchayat

The Mallahs living in the Union Territory of Delhi have a caste panchayat of their own to which they refer their various disputes and other matters concerning the caste.

While describing their caste panchayat the Mallahs would say '*char choudhary panchwa Sarbarah*', that is, it consists of four *choudharies* or headmen and the fifth one who is the formal chief of the *choudharies*. This is, however, the theoretical structure. Actually the number of *choudharies* is more and the *Sarbarah* or chief among the *choudharies* is not always the functional chief of the community. Further, it is to be noted that theoretically the posts of chief and *Sarbarah* are hereditary. The eldest son is supposed to succeed to the post of the father. But in this matter also there is considerable divergence between theory and practice.

A *chaudhary* is the representative of his *biradari** or lineage group. All the *biradaris* or lineage groups are, however, not represented through their own *chaudharies*. Only a few dominant lineage groups have their representatives. The four traditional *chaudharies* are: Dal Chand, Panna, Shiv Lal and Manohar. The traditional *sarbarah* is Bhaju Ram. All of them are residents of Bela Estate. The first four persons succeeded their fathers; one of them replaced his father even during his life time, as the father was considered to be unsuitable for holding the post because of some indiscreet behaviour. Bhaju Ram, the *sarbarah*, however, did not succeed his father. He succeeded his mother's father, as his mother's brother—the only son of his mother's father—became a *Jogi* and his mother's father had no close kins to succeed him. Here, it is

* The word *biradari* is used in two senses. In the narrower sense it means the lineage group and in the wider sense it means persons belonging to the same caste. Here the word *biradari* has been used in the narrower sense.

significant to note that though theoretically the members of the panchayat are considered to be the representatives of their respective lineage groups Bhaju Ram, the *sarbarah*, was not representing his own lineage but his mother's father's lineage. It is not certain whether after Bhaju Ram, the post would continue in his lineage or would revert to his mother's father's lineage.

In addition to the four *chaudharies* and the *sarbarah*, there is another person who is also included in the panchayat. He is Nathu Ram, hailing from Agra. About 10 years ago, a number of persons who had earlier migrated from Agra claimed separate representation in the panchayat as they were living in good number in the Union Territory of Delhi. Under their pressure Nathu Ram was accepted as a member of the panchayat as their representative.

The *chaudharies* decide various matters referred to them through the method of consensus which is arrived at through discussions in public. There is no *chaupal* (traditional community centre) for the meeting of the panchayat. Generally the meeting takes place in a vacant spot in Bela Estate. Whenever a panchayat is to be called the Nai (barber) of the community goes round to inform the people. All the persons sit on the ground on one side and the *chaudharies* and *sarbarah* sit at some distance from the general Mallah population, facing them. The complainant and the defendant take oaths, by touching the *Gita* or a pot containing sacred water of the Ganges. After hearing both the sides and also the comments given by the individual participants in the gathering, the members of the panchayat give their decision. If they find that a general consensus has already emerged out through the discussions, they just talk to each other in the presence of other participants and arrive at a unanimous decision and pronounce the same. If, however, the panchayat members find that a general consensus has failed to emerge out among the people, it nominates one or two of its own members to separately consult the disputing parties or their nominees and arrive at some agreed decisions. In such cases the discussions take place out of the hearing of the general public.

What has been described above is the ideal model. In actual functioning it appears that the

panchayat does not always work effectively. It is not infrequently that the panchayat finds it difficult to enforce its decisions.

It is understood that at present there are two more or less crystallized factions within the panchayat. It arose out of a controversy as to whether a man who earlier ran away with a Sonar girl should be allowed to re-enter the community or not. Three members of the panchayat are in favour of allowing his re-admission and two are opposed. As a result of this factionalism, the members of one group do not normally attend the marriages which take place in the households of the members of the other group. It is also reported that after the start of this factionalism a few years ago the full panchayat has never met.

The punishments inflicted by the panchayat take different forms. Some of the more frequent ones are as follows:

- (1) To take bath in the river Ganges,
- (2) To fill the *hukka* (hubble-bubble) for the panchayat members.
- (3) To pay cash fine ranging from Re. 1 to Rs. 51.

A few case studies of deviations from the norms and the reactions of the community to such deviations have been already furnished in different contexts. A few more are furnished here.

About 45 years ago, J.M. from Agra settled in Bela Estate. Before coming here he married a widow who had already a son by her previous husband. When J.M. came to Bela Estate, his step son remained in the father's place of his mother. After some years, when he grew up he was married and came to Delhi in search of a job. He stayed with his mother and step-father. His wife also came to stay with them. But after a few months J.M. was found having illicit relations with his step-son's wife. The matter was reported to the caste panchayat, who decided to ex-communicate J.M. The step-son also turned out his wife after giving her a good beating. But after about five months the wife was taken back by her husband. J.M. also supplicated to the community panchayat with folded hands to take him

back to community. He was asked to take ritual bath in the Ganges and to give a feast to 101 Brahmins. J.M. accepted the decision of the panchayat in principle. He, however, entertained only a few Brahmins and the remaining number was made good by entertaining his caste-fellows. After this he was accepted in the community again.

Three years back, B.M., a young man living in Bela Estate with his father, wife and children, was accused of attempting to rape a married woman living in Silampur. B.M. is a truck driver. On the day of the alleged incident, *Holi* was being celebrated and B.M. had drunk liquor. He went to the house of another Mallah, G.M., whose daughter-in-law was staying alone with her husband's 6 years old younger sister. B.M. sent the latter to the tea-stall to bring a cup of tea and entered the room where the woman was staying alone. After some time G.M.'s daughter-in-law rushed out of the room and shouted for help. People chased B.M., but he managed to escape.

G.M. was advised by his relatives to put the matter to the caste panchayat. But he lodged a complaint with the Police. The matter was taken to the court; but this annoyed the other Mallahs, who felt that G.M. should have approached them before going to the court. Hence, nobody came forward to give evidence against B.M. It was argued by the people that it was not improbable that B.M. went to the room to rub *gulal* (coloured powder) on the body of the woman, as it was the *Holi* day.

When G.M. found that he would not be able to get any remedy from the court by ignoring his caste fellows, he submitted the matter to the community panchayat. About 35 persons attended the meeting. It was explained on behalf of B.M. that he had no intention to rape the woman, in any case he was sorry for what had happened. Thereupon, the panchayat asked G.M. to withdraw the case from the court. The matter was thus mutually settled. No fine or punishment was imposed by the panchayat. Here, it is to be noted that the matter took the turn that it did, because of two factors; firstly, G.M. had committed a mistake by taking the case to the court ignoring the community elders; secondly, the fact that B.M.'s father is an influential man, might also be an important factor in this matter.

Special reforms

One special problem which the Mallahs faced for some time deserves mention. It appears that when the traditional occupation of rowing boat became uneconomic, the Mallahs were faced with the problem of earning their livelihood. There was a transitional period before they could completely switch over to new types of occupations. In this transitional period their behaviour pattern was conditioned to some extent by the fact that they had some sort of organised bands in connection with commissariat services under the Mughals. It is stated that many Mallahs took to crime at that period. The Mallahs, who were interviewed in connection with the present survey, contend that this stigma was attached to them through a confusion. People belonging to castes, like Jhimmer and Kachhawa, etc. who occasionally used to do boating were sometimes designated by the general name, Mallah; many of them took to crime and when caught by the police used to give their caste name as Mallah. They even went to the extent of creating alibi in their favour by inducing the Mallahs of Agra and Mathura area to marry their daughters with them.

It has not been ascertained whether there is truth in the above contention. Whatever it may be, the Mallahs admit that their community was for sometime treated as *Jaraim Peshwa* (criminals), under the Criminal Tribes Act.

About 30 years ago, there was an organised move from among the Mallahs to remove the stigma of criminality and to put a stop to marriage with undesirable persons and to improve the conditions of the community. The initiative in this matter was taken by Khem Chand, Gopi Ram and Vijay Singh of U.P.; Paras Ram, Batto, Sham Karan and Bibhuti Ram of Delhi came forward to support the move. The Mallahs of Mathura, Aligarh, Bulandshahar, Gurgaon, Delhi and Agra met in a conference in the village Leharpur, Palwal tehsil of Gurgaon district. After deliberations for three days, the conference decided that any person entering into marital ties outside the Mallah caste would be ex-communicated. The girls who had already been married to outsiders would be considered to have gone outside the community. For determining whether a person belonged to Mallah caste or not, the most important test was the name of

the *gotra* under the Kewat community. Persons having *gotra* names, which were not the *gotra* names commonly found in the community, were to be considered to be outsiders, even though they gave out themselves to be Mallahs. It is reported that in the conference a decision was taken to distinguish the caste Mallahs from others who occasionally claimed themselves to be Mallahs by the name Kewat. The conference also took a decision to send a representation to the government for pleading for their exclusion from the list of the criminal tribes under the Criminal Tribes Act.

A few other matters were also discussed in the conference. It is stated that the conference decided that bride price would be fixed at Rs. 17. Another decision taken by the conference is reported that number of persons accompanying a marriage party should not exceed 21.

It is to be noted that at present, the system of payment of bride-price has been completely stopped among the Mallahs. In fact, as among the Hindu high castes of the region, many of them seem to entertain strong revulsion against the custom. It is reported that the decision to completely stop the system of payment of bride-price has not been formally taken in any meeting of the community, the change has come about imperceptibly during the life time of the present generation. It seems that this crescive growth reflects the growing integration of the Mallahs in the social structure of the agricultural communities of the region.

Biographies of Seven Mallahs

1. N.C.

He is a carefree youngman, aged 20; has dark complexion, trimmed moustaches, and carefully combed hair with excessive use of mustard oil. He is generally clad in white shirt and pyjama. He would be always found chewing betel nuts and gossiping with a friend or a relation. He is employed by an *artia* (commission agent) at *Subzimandi* Daryaganj.

N.C. is the second among the three brothers. All the brothers are married and each is living separately with wife and children. The eldest

brother has four bighas of land on which he grows vegetables near the Jamuna bridge. The youngest brother is living at Daryaganj with him. The house at Daryaganj was constructed by their father late B.R. It is double storeyed *pukka* building. Though the two brothers are living in the same building, their hearths are separate.

Grandfather of N.C. came from Agra and settled in Delhi. N.C.'s father had 3 bighas of land in Bela Estate, with a *pukka* well. But this land was eroded by Jamuna. Prior to death of their father in 1944, all the brothers were living jointly. Later on they separated. The *artia* at Daryaganj, a Mohammedan, under whom N.C. is employed, is having some land near the *samadhi* (cenotaph) of Shastriji, the late Prime Minister of India. A part of this land is cultivated by N.C. and his younger brother K.L. and the produce is divided on share-cropping basis. When N.C. remains busy with his work under the *artia*, he does not work in the field himself; the work is done by hired labourers. This piece of land has been earmarked by the government for being used as the cremation ground for some V.I.P. as and when the need arises; in the mean time it has been temporarily leased out for cultivation.

During the vegetable growing season, life in *Subzimandi* where N.C. works, starts from very early in the morning. His duty hours are from 4 a.m. to 10 a.m. and he gets Rs. 150 per month as his remuneration. The people come with their produce and sell the same to one or the other *artia*. N.C.'s *artia* takes five paise per rupee as his commission for selling vegetables at the prevailing market rates.

N.C. has married a girl from Aligarh. Neither himself nor his wife ever had any education. But his elder daughter is reading in second class in a school. He has another child, a son, who is not yet of the school-going-age. N.S. is aware of the spirit of the time and thinks that it is indispensable for the children to have education.

2. M. R.

"Nobody would be happier than us, if we have sufficient land to cultivate and keep ourselves busy". This is the firm belief of M.R. He has crossed 70 but his erect posture, tall stature and

large grey moustaches give him an aura of distinction. He is proud of his community, and is never tired to tell how once Lord Rama while crossing the river, invoked the help of the wise chief of the community.

M.R. has six *bighas* of cultivable land in Bela Estate. His eldest son is living separately, but three other sons, who are unmarried are living with him. M.R. is always ready to harp on the glory of the past and deplore the dark days that have come. "Delhi has much changed during these years", pointing towards the Rajghat he would continue "Jamunaji used to flow there and the banks were covered with shrubs and reeds. Wild pigs were abundant in these shrubs and the people found a good pastime in hunting them. The houses were more scattered than at present, and the women folk rarely ever visited each other without being escorted by males".

During his young age, once a dangerous epidemic spread over the area. It was known as *Kartik-ki-bimari*. It seems that it was plague. Many people died of it. M.R. also fell seriously ill, but managed to survive. Another event which has left lasting impression on his mind is an inundation of the river which took place about 20 years ago. There was a sudden rise in the water level and within two hours the whole area was submerged. M.R. almost lost his balance while helping his cattle to cross; but somehow he could manage to come out safely. Many people lost their lives at that time.

According to M.R. the most urgent need of the community is cultivable land.

About the changes in his community the most important one, according to him, is that previously the people were not wearing the modern dress as at present. But along with the time the habits of the people are also changing and he knows that he must accept this fact. But he does not understand why more lands are not given to his people, so that they can have a better standard of living.

3. P.B.

P.B. is a middle aged man of 45, living with his wife, one married son and other unmarried children. He is known by the name *bhagat* in his

community. But he is not a diviner or religious functionary. *Bhagat* has become a family title, since the time of his grandfather who was a simple and God fearing person. P.B.'s household is one of the few among the Mallahs, who are vegetarians, not only in theory but also in practice. Besides, no member of his household drinks liquor.

P.B. belongs to *Kharia gotra* and his wife, who hails from Aligarh district in U.P., is of *Gahlot gotra*. P.B. always refers to his wife as *Bhagtain*.

Since 1950, P.B. is living on the western bank of Jamuna along with a few other members of his community. Previously, he had 4 *bighas* of cultivable land which was eroded away by the river. The government has provided him some land at Silampur, where he has constructed a hutment. Normally, he keeps some household goods there. But during the rainy season when the water level in the Jamuna rises, he takes shelter at Silampur alongwith other members of his family.

P.B. grows sugarcane and different varieties of vegetables in his field. He has a well with Persian wheel for irrigation purposes. Sugarcane and vegetables grown by him are sold in the market. He also grows some wheat for consumption in the household. His eldest son has passed Higher Secondary Examination but occasionally helps in cultivation. His wife and other children regularly help him in cultivation.

4. C.S.

A youngman of 20, C.S. is one of the few educated persons of the community. He has passed Higher Secondary examination in the 2nd Division. At the time of the survey he was unemployed. His father is a cultivator who has read up to class V.

C.S. is the eldest among his six brothers and sisters. His next brother, L.S., is aged 18. He read up to V class and then discontinued his studies. His two sisters are also going to school. C.S. was married when he was studying in class VIII. His wife hails from Agra. He is living jointly with his parents and brothers and sisters. C.S. knows that his community is included in the list of scheduled castes. While reading in school

he was not required to pay any tuition fee. After passing the Higher Secondary examination, C.S. did not continue his studies. Though he is not required to pay any tuition fee in college, other expenses, according to him, are too high for his family to bear. After passing the Higher Secondary examination, for sometime he got an employment as sales agent in 'York Scientific Industry', which is producing instruments for hospitals and laboratories. His job was to deliver the goods in different places. For six months, he did this work on a monthly remuneration of Rs. 90. C.S. had got the job on the recommendation of a person belonging to his community who had some connection with this firm. After six months he was retrenched on the ground that his work was not satisfactory. But, according to him the real reason was that the owner of the firm was influenced by his relations to give employment to some other person.

In his leisure time C.S. goes to see movies and meets his friends. He also helps his father in cultivation. According to him his father feels that after having education it is not befitting for him to do manual work in the field. But, he has different idea in this matter.

C.S. has heard about family planning. But, he has never visited any Family Planning Clinic nor is he using any contraceptive. He, however, thinks that it would be good not to have too many children.

C.S. has registered himself with the Employment Exchange. He is, however, finding it difficult to get for himself a certificate to the effect that he belongs to a Scheduled Caste after satisfying all the procedural details, so that he could get the benefit of reservation in services. He is, therefore, feeling very much frustrated.

According to C.S. the most important problem of his community is the low level of education. According to him, the people are still apathetic towards it. The second problem is the lack of hygienic sense and third problem is the addiction to liquor. He, however, feels, that the people are addicted to liquor in order to escape from worries of life. They have multiple problems but they are too poor to enjoy any other costly recreation.

C.S. feels that, notwithstanding so many problems, the condition of his community would have been better, if the people were not conservative and were ready to adjust their ways of life to the modern conditions.

5. K.S.

He is a youngman of 18 and is working in a printing press. He lives in Bela Estate with his parents; he is unmarried and has four brothers and one sister.

His father has two younger brothers who are living separately in other parts of the city with their wives and children.

K.S.'s father owns $1\frac{1}{2}$ *bighas* land on which he generally grows cucumber, brinjal, and other vegetables like onion, spinach and tomatos.

On the whole, K.S.'s family is a fairly affluent one. When K.S. was visited for interview on a Sunday morning, he was washing his clothes near the well in his father's field. He is tall, slim, mild in manners and shy by nature.

He has read up to the 5th class. According to him he could not carry on his studies further, because his father was unable to meet the expenses. Being a member of the scheduled caste, he of course, had not to pay any tuition fee, but other expenses were not negligible. K.S.'s younger brother also left the school after reading up to the 4th class. He is now helping his father in horticulture.

K.S. has been working in a printing press for two years. There is an old cycle in the house but it is not in usable condition. When asked why he was not purchasing a new bicycle, K.S. disclosed shyly that his marriage had been fixed in a village in Aligarh district in Uttar Pradesh and he was saving money to enable him to meet the marriage expenses. His father had taken some loan from the *artia* for meeting the expenses for horticulture. After selling the crops of the current season he would return the loan and then take the loan again from the same person for meeting a part of the marriage expenses.

6. S.L.

He is a man in his thirties. He is one of the *chaudhries* (traditional headmen) of the community.

He is living at Silampur, but his father, mother, two married brothers, two unmarried brothers and one unmarried sister are living in Gandhi Nagar. His father had ten *bighas* of land at Bela Estate. But, it was eroded away by the river about 11 years ago. Since then he has been working as a labourer. One of the younger brothers of S.L. is also working as a casual labourer; another brother is working in a factory. There is no tradition of education in the family. Only one of his brothers has read up to 2nd class in a school.

S.L. married at the age of 19 years. He has two sons and a daughter. The eldest son is working in a wire-net manufacturing factory in Delhi. The second son is reading in a school in 3rd class.

S.L. is cultivating two *bighas* of land at Bela Estate taken on *batai* (share cropping) from a Muslim.

Before S.L. became *chaudhury*, his father was a *chaudhury*; but was removed from his office as he was accused of having illicit connections with a woman. As the office of *chaudhury* is hereditary, S.L. stepped into the place vacated by his father. But, according to S.L. he is *chaudhury* only in name. He is too young and inexperienced to carry much influence among his *biradari* (caste-fellows). Generally, the people approach his father for his advice whenever any occasion arises.

S.L. has no idea about the past of his community. He believes his ancestors settled in Delhi at least a few generations ago.

When asked about the main problems of his community, S.L. mentioned lack of education, and lack of sense of sanitation as the most important problems, which require to be dealt with on a priority basis.

7. N.S.

At the age of 89 N.S. is a sentinel of the past

and a flagstaff of the future of the community. He sits by the side of the road passing over the boat-bridge and sells *bidi* and cigarettes. He also keeps some sweetmeat, *sew* in an old can to attract the children. It is not infrequently that the children passing by the road cast their wishful gaze on the can; sometimes they stop and purchase 5 to 10 paise worth *sew*.

Time goes on easy-gait for N.S. throughout the day, except for one hour beginning at about 9 a.m. During this hour the cyclists pass on the boat bridge like a torrential stream and N.S. remains sitting and gazing as though he is most unconcerned about this passing bubble of time.

He has seen much of life; but even then when asked about his childhood and his parents, he becomes sad and withdrawn for a moment, although his father R.S. was a cultivator who came from Agra with his wife and settled in Delhi. He acquired 4 *bighas* and 3 *biswas* of land near the site of the present power house. At that time it was called Kaithwara. His mother died when he was merely a suckling and his father died when he was four years old. His parents left behind a girl 3 years elder than him. The two children were adopted by C.S., a distantly related uncle, who had no child of his own. According to the standards of the community, C.S. was a well-to-do person. He had three *pukka* houses at Daryaganj, in one of which he himself lived. The other two were given out on rent. He had also some cultivable lands, on which he used to grow brinjal, cucumber, water-melon and other vegetables. N.S. used to help his uncle in the horticultural activities. He, therefore, did not have any time to go to school.

His elder sister, G.D., was married when she was aged 14. Her husband belonged to the same community and was at that time aged 19. He also was an orphan and was working in Delhi as a labourer. The expenses of the marriage were borne by the foster father, C.S., and the groom began to live with C.S. as *gharjawai* (adopted son-in-law).

Two daughters were born to G.D., before she became a widow. After some time she was married with one, R.D., who was also a labourer and who also after the marriage became a *gharjawai*.

At the age of 22, N.S. married a girl of Agra who was aged 13. The marriage feast that was given at that time was a grand affair. It was a *chulha neota*, that is, members of all the households of the community were invited to participate in the feast. The menu consisted of *puri*, *kachori*, *laddu*, *raita* of *nukdi* and curry of cauliflowers, brinjal and potato. In those days, wheat was Rs. 2 per maund and ghee was 50 paise per seer. The total expense on the occasion of the marriage was Rs. 500.

The happiness of the marriage, however, did not last long. The new bride was still maintaining her childhood sporting habits. One day while playfully trying to float a *thali* (brass plate) on the Jamuna along with her age-mates, she was drowned. Some time after that, another tragedy followed. Once N.S. heard his foster father to use abusive language to his sister. At that time N.S. himself was in a sullen mood because of the death of his wife. He quarrelled with his foster father and left his house for ever. He began to live with his grandfather (father's father) along with his sister and her husband. The grand father also was a well-to-do person and had about 80 buffaloes.

During the First World War he joined the army. His duty was to cut grass and load the same over mules. He used to get remuneration of Rs. 15 per month, in addition to food and uniform. For some time he was posted at Meerut and then was sent to Baghdad. But his grand father was very much worried about him. He used to supply milk to some military officers, through whose intervention he could arrange the return of N.S. to India. After returning to India, he stayed with his grandfather and started working as agricultural labourer. At that time he was aged about 25.

At the age of 32, he again married. The bride was a girl of 22. She was a widow living with her blind widow mother. This time also a community feast was arranged, though it was much less lavish than at the first time. The menu consisted of *bura chanwal* and *arhar dal*. N.S. remembers that $7\frac{1}{2}$ maunds of rice was cooked for this feast. This feast must have generated a lot of good-will but the same could not save N.S. from the misfortune which was haunting

him. His second wife died within two years of the marriage. The shock was too great for N.S. He lost his mental balance and one day ran away from his grandfather's house with Rs. 200 in his pocket. He roamed about from place to place, visiting Ayodhya, Kashi, (Varanasi), Calcutta, Puri, Gaya, Dwaraka, Pushkar, and a number of other places. Ultimately, he came nearer home and settled down at Vrindaban. He lived there for 17 years in the company of *sadhus*. Then he went to Gujarat, and met Sita Ram Maharaj, a *sadhu* in the temple of *Ganapati* in Bhadu Estate of Mehsana district. He adopted Sita Ram Maharaj as his *Dharam Guru* who gave him sacred threads to wear.

Time rolled on and N.S. became 78 years old. One day *Dharam Guru* arranged a yagya (sacrifice) lasting for seven days. On the 7th day after the sacrifice was over and the *sadhus* were sitting at some distance from the sacred fire a stray dog intruded into the place. N.S. asked one *Bhagat* (disciple) to drive it away. But, the *Bhagat* reported that N.S. himself could have driven away the dog instead of behaving as if he was the *Dharam Guru* himself. There was an exchange of hot words between the two. Ultimately, the short-tempered N.S. struck on the head of of the *Bhagat* with his club. The *Bhagat* fell down unconscious. After a while, the police came to the spot, but by that time N.S. had made his escape and hid himself under a bush. After the police had left, he was found out by the *Dharam Guru* who asked him to leave the place. N.S. came back to Delhi. Some elders of the community objected to his rejoining the *biradari* as he had become a *sadhu*, but ultimately they relented. N.S. threw away his *Tulsi mala* (garland of sacred beads) in the Jamuna and started to work as an agricultural labourer. This 'youngman' of 78 was not daunted by time and carried on the hard work for seven years. When the boat bridge was constructed he discovered a new field for his adventure. He took to the sale of cigarettes and sweets. N.S. earns enough to fill his belly everyday. His normal diet consists of *chapatis* of *bajra* and vegetable curry. Previously, he was a non-vegetarian. But after becoming a *sadhu* he abjured non-vegetarian food; he still remains vegetarian.

Sometimes he is invited by his relatives to take food with them. But he does not like to be under the obligation of anybody. He is still going strong and hopes to be riding over time till ultimately he is thrown away by time itself.

This story of N.S. is a curious one. Obviously, it is a mixture of truth, half truth, and untruth. But it gives a dimension to some of the deeper recesses of the community and of the individuals belonging to the community.

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ANNEXURE

FRAMEWORK FOR ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

I. Name, Identity, Origin and History

1. Name; synonym; sub-caste/sub-tribe as in President's Order and is in other published sources such as census reports, monographs, etc. grouping with other castes & tribes during various censuses. Affinity with other castes and tribes according to recognised authorities.
2. Etymological significance of the name; names by which the community is referred to by (a) others and (b) itself.
3. Identification of the community by occupation or any other way of life.
4. Myths and legends connected with the origin and history of the community and its segments; historical references and popular beliefs about history and migration of the community.

II. Distribution and Population Trend

1. Area where found; population and concentration in the State and outside; physical aspects of the areas of concentration.
2. Numerical strength in 1961 and population variations during 1901-1961; sex ratio; age-groups and rural-urban distribution in 1961.

III. Physical Characteristics

1. Racial Stock; appearance and affinity with other known communities.

IV. Family, Clan, Kinship and Other Analogous Divisions

1. Family; size (observed & published), Types, residence after marriage, descent, lineage and its economic & religious function and inheritance.
2. Clan/ *gotra* and sub-clans; names, etymological meaning, clustering of clans, belief and mythology about origin, status among clans, clan and regulation of marriage (Preference & prohibition), occupation and clan, clan and rituals, clan & food (restrictions, prescriptions etc.).
3. Others: Phratry, Duel organisation, like moieties etc. as in 2 above.

V. Dwelling, Dress, Food, Ornaments and Other Material Objects Distinctive of the Community

1. Settlement: Village site, location, settlement pattern (agglomerated, nucleated, dispersed, sprinkled, isolated, amorphous, star-shaped, horse-shoe-shaped, linear, rectangular, circular or ring-shaped etc.) and variations; regional pattern *vis-a-vis* pattern of the community.
2. Neighbourhood pattern on the basis of religion, castes (Caste Hindus, untouchables) and tribes etc. with segregations, if any, and the basis thereof.
3. Dwelling unit: Compound, entrance, source of water, the use of different parts of the house (latrine, cattle shed, isolation huts etc.); shape (square, round, irregular etc.); storeys; nature of floor, plinth; wall; roofing; thatching; ventilations and doors; materials used; decorations and embellishments; temporary structures.
4. Dress, including head gear and foot wear—used ordinarily, on ceremonial occasions and special occasions, sex-wise and according to majority or minority; dress of priests and office bearers; variations.
5. Ornaments: use; material used; from whom obtained; variations according to sex and age.
6. Personal decoration: Tattooing; mutilation (chipping of teeth, etc.); hair cutting; how done, purpose, attitude and variations according to sex and age.

7. Food and drink: Materials (staple and other), prescriptions and prohibitions, fuel, utensils, and mode of preparation; practices connected with serving and taking of food; preservation of food and rituals, if any.
8. Equipments connected with economic pursuits, religion and ritual; how procured; material used, construction, manipulation and purpose.
9. Other household equipments. As above.
10. Equipments connected with recording of time, space and weight and their methods of use. As above.

VI. Environmental Sanitation, Hygienic Habits, Disease and Treatment

1. Environmental sanitation, settlement, disposal of night soil, garbage, etc.
2. Hygienic habits: cleanliness of body, teeth, dress, houses, utensils, etc.
3. Diseases: Incidence; local names; interpretation of the causes; symptoms; diagnoses and cure—persons and methods involved.
4. Modern systems of medicine and attitude of the community towards it.

VII. Language and Education

1. Ancestral Language: Classification according to Grierson, persistence of ancestral language and literature.
2. Mother tongue: classification according to Grierson; bilingualism and multi-lingualism, regional language.
3. Information collected during 1961 on language and literature.
4. Education and literacy: Traditional and modern attitude, information collected during 1961—literacy and levels of education.

VIII. Economic Life

1. Economic resources: Land, community land, individual ownership and types of land possessed and land utilized.
2. Forest wealth: Flora and fauna; nature and extent of right in the forest, forest utilization.
3. Fishery, Livestock and others.
4. Working force: Sex wise, urban and rural variations and comparison of the same with the region
5. Non workers.
6. Industrial classifications: Details as collected in the field and comparison with that of the 1961 Census figures; traditional occupation and changes in the pattern; main and subsidiary occupations.
7. Forced labour, bonded labour, patron-client relationship (jajmani), mode of payment.
8. Seasonal migration connected with occupation: recruitment, formation of working groups.
9. Nomadic movement: Cycle and occupational pattern.
10. Shifting cultivation: method, implements and equipments, produce, participation, cycle of rotation, measure to regulate shifting cultivation and its impact.
11. Terrace cultivation: As above.
12. Income and expenditure: Sources of income, extent, expenditure on food, clothing, house, education, social functions and others.
13. Other aspects of economic life.

IX. Life Cycle

A. Birth

1. Beliefs and practices connected with conception, barrenness, still birth, miscarriage, abortion, child death, regulation of sex, etc.
2. Pre-natal and natal practises: Residence, diet, work, taboos etc. delivery place, assistance, equipments used in delivery, position during delivery, severance of umbilical cord (who does and how done), disposal of placenta.
3. Post-natal practises: Confinement and segregation, ceremonial pollution, diet for mother and child, rituals.
4. Protection and care of child and training.
5. Attitude towards birth of child preference about sex, preference about number, segregation of sex, etc.

B. Initiation

1. Initiation ceremony; descriptions.
2. Pre-marital sex relations within the community, outside the community, sanctions and taboos.

C. Marriage

1. Age at marriage for both sex; prohibited degrees of relationship, preferences, widow remarriage (preferences & taboos).
2. Civil status and social status.
3. Types of marriage: Monogamy, polygamy (Polyandry and polygyny).
4. Selection of spouse: Qualities valued (for bride and groom) mode of selection, procedure.
5. Modes of acquiring mate: By negotiation, force, intrusion, elopement, etc.
6. Terms of settlement: Payment of bride price, dowry, service, exchange, adoption, etc.
7. Ceremonies connected with marriage: details including who presides over the marriage and services of functional castes.
8. Statistical data as per 1961 Census.
9. Divorce: Reasons and procedure.

D. Death

1. Concept about death, measures to ensure future well being of the soul, measures to avert harm by the spirits.
2. Methods of disposal: Burial, cremation, exposure, floating on water, etc.
3. Preparations for disposal of dead, informing friends and relatives, treatment of the dead body, digging of pit etc. for disposal; how carried, who carry, who accompany, place of disposal, methods of disposal, norms and taboos.
4. Ceremonies connected with disposal.
5. Death rites: Details.
6. Monuments: Tombs, megaliths, etc.
7. Pollution: duration, restrictions in work, food, dress, shaving, hair cropping, sex life, etc., removal of pollution.
8. Mourning: mourners and duration.

X. Religion

1. Deities: supreme deity, benevolent deities, malevolent spirits, presiding deities of village and other aspects of life including occupation, clans, *gotras* etc.
2. Place of the deities in the regional pattern and Brahmanical and other traditions.
3. Rituals and concepts associated with the pantheon.
4. Spots associated with the deities, pilgrim centres and methods of worship.
5. Religious functionaries.
6. Calendar of festivals and their observance.
7. Concept of soul, hell, heaven, rebirth, transmigration of soul, etc.
8. Sects and denominations: Name, distribution, beliefs and practises, etc.
9. Statistical information.

XI. Leisure, Recreation and Child Play

1. Use of leisure time: For male, female, children and adult; seasonal variation in leisure time.
2. Recreation—their mode and extent, for males, females, and children.
3. Leisure and recreation with reference to work.

XII. Relation Among Different Segments of the Community

Recognised segments—name, basis (territorial, ceremonial, social, prestige, religion, sect, education, age, etc.). Inter-relationship among various segments; status of the segment, status of women.

XIII. Inter-community Relationship

1. Ceremonial relationship: Service By Brahmins, traditional service by castes like barbers, washermen, etc.
2. Pollution by touch or proximity to high Caste Hindus, use of well, admission to temple.
3. Secular relationship: Model for other communities; dominance due to economic resources, political status, social status, etc.
4. Bridge role, buffer role, alliance and antagonism of the community.

XIV. Structure of Social Control, Prestige and Leadership

1. Social control: Levels of social control, community level, regional level, hereditary, special functionaries etc., social control by other agencies.
2. Mode of acquiring offices.
3. Control exercised by traditionally recognised leaders, functionaries of statutory bodies of the region, powerful individuals belonging to the community, etc., at the regional level and local level.
4. Relationship between spheres of social control and agencies of social control.
5. Leadership: For social change, for technological change, for political action and for other organised activities at the community level, regional level and local level.
6. Social prestige: Method of gaining social prestige (by performing ritual, merit of feast, associating with historical association etc.), symbols of social prestige.

XV. Social Reform and Welfare

1. Social reform movements: Intensity; reasons (for raising social status, establishing traditional norms, for westernisation, etc.); History and import of the movements.
2. Social welfare: Agency, religious organisation, community as a whole, Govt., Official and non-official, role of the social welfare measures and impact.

XVI. References cited and Other bibliography