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SOCIO-ECONOMIC SURVEY
(No. 9 of 1961 Series)

OINAM SAWOMBUNG
(A muslim village)

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1961 CENSUS PUBLICATIONS, MANIPUR

(All the Census Publications of this Territory will bear Volume No. XXII)

Part I-A	General Report (Excluding Subsidiary Tables)		
Part I-B	General Report (Subsidiary Tables)		
Part II	General Population Tables		
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Part IX	Census Atlas Volume		

STATE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATION

1. District Census Handbook

FINAL LIST OF VILLAGES SELECTED FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC SURVEY

Name of Village	Name of Sub-Division
1. Ithing	Bishenpur
2. Keisamthong	Imphal West
3. Khouabung	Churachandpur
4. Konpui	—do—
5. Liwachangning	Tengnoupal
6. Longa Koireng	Mao & Sadar Hills
7. Minuthong	Imphal West
8. Ningel	Thoubal
9. Oinam Sawombung*	Imphal West
10. Pherzawl	Churachandpur
11. Phunan Sambum	Tengnoupal
12. Sekmai	Imphal West
13. Thangjing Chiru	Mao & Sadar Hills
14. Thingkangphai	Churachandpur
15. Toupokpi	Tengnoupal

*Present Volume (No. 9 of the Series).

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FOREWORD

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

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

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

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

- (a) At least eight villages were to be so selected that each of them would contain one dominant community with one predominating occupation, e.g., fishermen, forest workers, jhum cultivators, potters, weavers, salt-makers, quarry workers, etc. A village should have a minimum population of 400, the optimum being between 500 and 700.
- (b) At least seven villages were to be of numerically prominent Scheduled Tribes of the State. Each village could represent a particular tribe. The minimum population should be 400, the optimum being between 500 and 700.
- (c) The third group of villages should each be of fair size, of an old and settled character and contain variegated occupations and be, if possible multi-ethnic in composition. By fair size was meant a population of 500—700 persons or more. The village should mainly depend on agriculture and be sufficiently away from the major sources of modern communication such as the district administrative head-quarters and business centres. It should be roughly a day's journey from the above places. The villages were to be selected with an eye to variation in terms of size, proximity

to city and other means of modern communication, nearness to hills, jungles and major rivers. Thus there was to be a regional distribution throughout the State of this category of villages. If, however, particular district contained significant ecological variations within its area, more than one village in the district might be selected to study the special adjustments to them.

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

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

This gradual unfolding of the aims of the survey prevented my colleagues from adopting as many villages as they had originally intended to. But I believe that what may have been lost in quantity has been more than made up for its quality. This is, perhaps, for the first time that such a survey has been conducted in any country, and that purely as a labour of love.

It has succeeded in attaining that is set out to achieve : to construct a map of village India's social structure. One hopes that the volumes of this survey will help to retain for the Indian Census its title to "the most fruitful single source of information about the country." Apart from other features, it will perhaps be conceded that the survey has set up a new Census standard in pictorial and graphic documentation. The schedules finally adopted for this monograph have been printed in appendices I and II to the monograph on Ithing village.

New Delhi
July 30, 1964.

ASOK MITRA
Registrar General, India.

P R E F A C E

The monographs on the selected villages of Manipur which constitute a 'by-work' of the 1961 Census Operations, are a part of the attempt at what may be described as documentary mapping of some of the less developed villages of India. In selecting the villages of Manipur, the criteria laid down by the Registrar General have been generally followed and care also was taken to see that the major tribes inhabiting the hill areas are represented in the present series of survey. It is rather unfortunate that on account of the unhappy law and order situation in the Sub-divisions of Tamenglong and Ukhru and Mao Maram area, it was not possible to include any village from these three places. This does not, however, detract from the broadly representative character of the villages under survey.

Some of the villages selected for the present survey are situated in the interior hill areas, with very poor communication facilities. The field work in some cases, therefore, involved strenuous marches from the head-quarters of a Sub-division. Language difficulty was also one of the factors that stood in the way of smooth eliciting of information in the case of some of the interior tribal villages. The credit for the commendable field work on which the present series of survey are based should go to the two Investigators Sarvashri S. Achouba and Q. M. Qutabuddin.

The present monograph and the others in the series are the result of a 'labour of love', as the Registrar General aptly put it and if they are of any use to those who are engaged in the number ONE task of rising the level of living in village India, those of us who applied ourselves to the preparation of these monographs with some assiduousness will have the lasting satisfaction that ours has not been a case of 'love's labour's lost.'

I am grateful to Shri A. Mitra, I.C.S., Registrar General and *ex-officio* Census Commissioner of India for his unfailing advice and guidance. I am also grateful to Dr. B. K. Roy Burman, Officer on Special Duty in the Office of the Registrar General (now Deputy Registrar General, Social Studies) for valuable suggestions he made in the preparation of this monograph. On Dr. K. B. Singh who was associated with the work at the later stage, has fallen the burden of preparing the draft of this monograph and of verifying the information and statistics already collected by personal visits to the spot and I am much obliged to him for the keen interest he has taken in the task entrusted to him.

Acknowledgements should also go to Sarvashri Md. Ali, Kh. Naziruddin, O. Dewan, Noor Khan, among others, for giving us valuable information during the course of investigation.

Imphal,
July 10, 1969

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NOTIONAL MAP OF
OINAM SAWMBUNG



SAMUROU VILLAGE

APPROACH ROAD



MOSQUE

MAIN ROAD

MAYANG IMPHAL ROAD

FIELD

RESIDENTIAL AREA

IMPHAL RIVER

APPROACH ROAD



SCHOOL



MOSQUE

RESIDENTIAL AREA

MAYANG IMPHAL ROAD

PADDY



SCHOOL

WANGOI VILLAGE

MAYANG IMPHAL ROAD

CHAPTER I THE VILLAGE

Introducing the village

The name of the village under study is Oinam Sawombung (Muslim). In this village only the Muslim community is found to inhabit. It may be mentioned at the outset that this Muslim village should not be confused with the neighbouring Meitei village of the same name i.e., Oinam Sawombung (Meitei).

Oinam Sawombung lies at the distance of about nine miles to the south of Imphal and the village comes under the administrative jurisdiction of Imphal West Sub-division. According to the 1961 Census, there were 99 Muslim households with a population of 528 persons consisting of 256 males and 272 females. The area of the village is 169.38 acres. Separate area figures for houses, agricultural land, waste land, etc. are not available.

The Imphal river runs along the eastern boundary of the village from north to south. The village is bounded on the east by the Imphal river and Oinam Sawombung (Meitei) village, on the west by Mayang-Imphal road and Naorem village, on the south by Wangoi village and on the north by Samurou and Haoreibi villages. The nearest centres of commerce, Government offices, (e.g. Block Development Office, branch post office, etc) are situated at Wangoi which is a neighbouring village to the south. In addition to Wangoi which is an immediate centre of commercial activities of the inhabitants of this village, there are other important commercial centres in the neighbourhood also and these are Hiyangthang, Lilong and Mayang-Imphal villages. Hiyangthang and Mayang-Imphal are situated along the Imphal-Mayang Imphal road, the former to the north and the latter to the south of the village, both at a distance of roughly three miles from the village. Lilong is also a big village where the Muslim population is considerable, and this village lies at a distance of three miles to the north of the village along the Indo-Burma road. For the purpose of day-to-day commercial activities, the inhabitants of this village frequently go to all these commercial centres. Imphal which is a big town and grooming into a city, is the biggest commercial, administrative and industrial centre where inhabitants from all parts of Manipur including Oinam Sawombung village frequently come on different purposes and activities.

Physical aspects of the village

As has been mentioned briefly earlier, the Imphal river flows north to south to the east of the village. And the village stretches north to south, i.e. the length-side is from north to south and the breadth-side is from east to west. Since the village is situated in the valley, the inhabited and the cultivated areas are located on plain land with a slight depression towards the south. Since the Imphal river is close to the

village, the soil is sandy and suitable for the cultivation of potato, mustard, cabbage, tobacco, and sugarcane among other varieties of vegetables and crops. The soil of the western boundary of the village is loamy and suitable for paddy also. On the western side of the Imphal river, that is, along the eastern boundary of the village, there is the main road of the village. This road lies on a higher level, and it runs between the river and the inhabited area.

On an average, the level of the road is about ten feet higher than the level of the inhabited area. This difference in the levels has one main advantage. That is, during the rainy season, when the river is full to the brim, and when the level of the inhabited area is a few feet below the level of the water, the village road whose level is higher than that of the swollen river, prevents the inhabited areas from being deluged. But again, almost all the households have their gates or entrances towards the said road, and one has to make a little effort in climbing up or down the road. One feels the inconvenience more during the rainy season when the steep entrance becomes slippery.

On both sides of the Imphal river, the upper bank is flat, and during the dry season when the level of the water sinks down below, these upper banks become very suitable for cultivating food crops, and the inhabitants of the village take full advantage of this opportunity every year, and the inhabitants of this village cultivate vegetables on the river banks which is on their side. During the winter season the river is fordable because at most places the water is only knee-deep. But during the heavy rainy days which cover the months of June and July, the river becomes quickly swollen though it seldom could defeat the level of the roads on both sides of the river.

Flora

As regards flora, the village has nothing to be proud of. It possesses the common varieties found in other parts of the valley of Manipur. From a distance the village gives an appearance of partly hidden amidst green foliage.

As one enters the village, one finds that trees and shrubs grow not only along the boundaries of the households but within the compound of the households too. Some of the common species of flora which are found here and there are bamboo, *kabulia*, mango, *khongnang* (Ficus), *kurao* (Erthrina subrosa), plantain, fig, *samballei* (hedge plant) *Samballei* is a very useful plant because when planted in a row, it serves as a natural green fence which is very essential in rural areas in order to prevent stray cattle from spoiling kitchen garden maintained by almost all the households. *Kabulia* is another useful tree. It grows quickly within a short period. The branches of this tree are also cut periodically and they serve as fuel.

Fauna

Since the village is situated in the valley and not far off from the town, wild animals like tiger, are not found. Only domestic animals are found in this village. The most common animal is cattle. Dogs, cats and fowls are also reared by almost all the households. During hot season snakes are occasionally seen on the road, or near the river bank or in the paddy field. Common species are cobra and *lilabop* (typlops). Late at night, howling of jackals can be heard in the village, and this naturally indicates that jackals sometimes come to this village at night in search of prey like fowls.

As regards birds, almost all the common species found in other parts of the valley of Manipur, are also found in this village. One of the species found anywhere in the village during the day time is jungle-crow. Kites are also seen hovering high above in the sky and sitting on branches of huge trees like *khong-nang* and mango trees. Among the smaller varieties of birds, mention may be made of sparrow, swallow, chong-nga (mya), king fisher, and urit (magpie). These small birds are often found in bushes and shrubs and bamboo groves. Apart from these arboreal varieties, terrestrial varieties are also found, and these are ducks, hens, and *urenbi*. The former two are domesticated while the third one is not, and it is found usually in shrubs and marshy lands at the back of the houses. *Urenbi* is a special delicacy of the Muslims and it is often hunted down when in sight.

Source of water

The village is outside the jurisdiction of the Imphal Municipality and there is also no arrangement so far, for providing the inhabitants of this village with potable water. In other words, no public or private hydrants have been installed within the village. At the time of survey only one household was found to have a pond within the family-compound. There are no wells also. However, due to the existence of the Imphal river, the inhabitants do not face any difficulty in getting water for domestic use. Hence, all the households depend on this river for cooking, bathing and washing purposes. During the winter season, the water of this river is very clear, but during the rainy season, when the river gets enough water, the water is muddy and not suitable for cooking and washing. Every household usually preserves the water for a few hours or for even one day to be consumed on the next day. When the muddy water is stored motionless, sediments are formed at the bottom of the pot, and thus clear water is obtained.

Size and number of households

According to the 1961 Census, the area of this village is 169.38 acres. There were 99 households with a population of 528 persons consisting of 256 males and 272 females. This village, being a single-community village, possesses many homogenous traits with reference to customary practices, manners, etc. of all the households. The present survey has covered 40 Muslim households with a total popu-

lation of 226 persons consisting of 112 males and 114 females. In the year 1961 the number of Muslim households as mentioned above is 99 with a population of 528 persons. Taking into consideration the probable increase in the number of Muslim households since 1961, 40 households covered by the present survey may be said to be fairly large and representative for understanding the socio-economic life of the Muslim inhabitants of this village.

Residential pattern

The Imphal river runs north to south along the eastern boundary of the village. The residential pattern of the Muslim households gives a very simple picture because all the households are found to build their houses close to the village path which runs along the western bank of the river. These houses are in one row, and almost all of them face the east. Every household has a big domestic compound, and after building the residential house nearby the middle of the compound, spaces equal to or bigger than the one occupied by the residential house are left on all sides of the house in most cases. These spaces are mainly utilized for cultivating crops and vegetables.

There is no grouping of the houses on any criterion. All the residential houses are found more or less at equal distances from one another.

Communication

Very little can be said of the amenities enjoyed by the villagers so far as the aspects of communications are concerned. The Mayang-Imphal road which is a *pacca* and all-weather motorable road runs along the western border of the village. This is a good road and the main life-line of the inhabitants of the village. There are two main linking roads connecting this *pucce* road with the village road which runs along the western bank of the Imphal river. The distance of this *pucce* road from the residential areas of the village is roughly four to five hundred feet. It is from this *pucce* road that one can go to Imphal and other parts of Manipur.

Mention had been made already of the main village road. This road is wide enough for small vehicles like a jeep to go without any hindrance during the winter in particular. Because, during the summer or the rainy season, the road becomes muddy and slippery, and cattle and bullock-carts further contribute their share in damaging the condition of the road. However, this river-side road runs in both the directions viz., north and south along the course of the river, extending far beyond the boundaries of the village, and thereby serving villagers in their inter-village communication. This river-side road proceeds northward for about three miles and joins the Indo-Burma road at Lilong predominantly a Muslim village. Lilong, as mentioned earlier is also a commercial place now, and the inhabitants of this village often go to Lilong or pass through it on their way to Imphal. Hence, for going to Imphal and other distant places of Manipur the inhabitants of this village may choose either the Indo-Burma road (also known as Parallel road) or the Mayang-Imphal road. Similar to the river-side road of this village, there is also a

river-side road on the other side, i.e. the eastern bank of the Imphal river. These two parallel roads on both sides of the river are connected by a good and jeepable bridge today. Though in the past there was a bamboo bridge, the present jeepable bridge which had been completed during the later part of 1966 has considerably improved the inter-village communication particularly between the two Oinam Sawombung villages (one inhabited by the Muslims and the other by the Hindus).

What the inhabitants suffer from is the unsatisfactory condition of the linking roads. There are two main linking roads connecting the Mayang-Imphal road with the village road along the western bank of the Imphal river. During the rainy days, the condition of these linking roads is far from satisfactory. They are narrow and muddy, and sometimes overflowing small ditches flood some portions of the road also. Besides, the places where the linking roads meet the road along the river bank are very steep because the level of the river-side road is higher than that of the linking roads. As regards communication between neighbours, people usually prefer short-cut routes. So, what actually we find is that passage is very often made at the common border of two neighbouring households by cutting down shrubs and branches of bamboos which grow there. It is all the more convenient if there is only a small ditch instead of thorny shrubs and bamboos between two neighbouring households. One can easily jump over the ditch or a few pieces of logs or bamboos can be placed across it to serve as bridge.

As regards inter-communal communication, i.e. if a Muslim of this village wants to visit a Hindu on the other side of the river, he has to cross the river and enter the Hindu colony. In other wards, a bridge across the Imphal river is very essential for bringing the two diverse communities on both sides of the river closer. For many years in the past, the inhabitants of this village suffered from the absence of a good bridge over the Imphal river. During the dry season when the river is shallow and fordable people used to cross the river on foot. But this was not possible during other periods of the year when the water was deep enough to cross. Households possessing boats might use boats but this was not the usual practice. Before the construction of a strong and jeepable bridge by the Government which had been completed by the end of 1966, the villagers themselves built a bridge with several bamboo poles. The task is a tough one and the Muslim inhabitants of this village were experts in building such a bamboo bridge, which is called locally *Urok-thong* which means "stork-bridge." The name has been derived from the similarity of the long and slender bamboo posts with the thin and long legs of a stork. At five or six places, pairs of posts are erected—each pair of posts resembling a capital "X". Over the tied poles are placed long bamboos extending from one bank to another. Such a bridge slightly shakes against strong currents of water but the villagers are accustomed to crossing such type of bridge with heavy headloads without hesitation though a little slip of the feet may cause fracture of

limbs or even a fatal accident. At present there is no such bridge in this village.

As regards means of transport, people generally walk on foot for short distances of one or two miles. Regular bus services are also available daily at Lilong and along the Mayang-Imphal road. For having a bus-ride one has to go to either of these places. Bicycle and cycle-rickshaw are popular means of transport now-a-days. Double-riding on bicycles is often resorted to, and a person having no bicycle may ask any cycle owner of the village to carry him, or even ask for the cycle if he knows cycling himself. Cycle-rickshaws are very much wanted because it can accommodate more persons and luggages, and those owning or driving it earn regular income also. Some of the bread-winners of this village are rickshaw-drivers. It is needless to say that bullock-cart is another means of transport, because Manipuri village devoid of bullock-carts is a rarity.

Public Places.—Within the village very little is to be said about public places. Mention may be made of the mosque which is the main centre of prayer and religious assemblage of the Muslim inhabitants of the village. There are no monuments and historical relics, and welfare and administrative institutions worth the name.

Burial Ground.—There is no common burial ground for all the inhabitants of the village. About a dozen burial places are found within the village and these places are situated at the front portion of the domestic compounds. Usually there is a burial place for every *sagei*, i.e. group of families having common ancestors or lineage.

Legends.—Oinam Sawombung (Meitei) village which is the eastern neighbour of Oinam Sawombung (Muslim) village is believed to be the parent village of which the present village is the offshoot. Therefore, in general parlance Oinam Sawombung (Meitei) and Oinam Sawombung (Muslim) are treated as a single village divided by the Imphal river and inhabited by the Manipuri Hindus on one side and by the Manipuri Muslims on the other. Even to this day, the inhabitants of the two villages have many common interests whether these are the building of a bridge, construction of a school, reclamation of land for cultivation, or similar such activities concerning the general socio-economic welfare of these villagers.

The word Oinam refers to one of the family names of the Manipuri Hindus. In other words, the two villages were originally a single village of the Oinam families, or at least the village derived its name from the Oinam families who are believed to have settled here from very ancient period. Even to this day, there are a number of Oinam families in both the villages, and the way in which the Muslim families had adopted Manipuri Hindu family name of Oinam will be explained later on. *Sawombung* is a combination of two words : *sawom* and *bung* meaning boar and earthen mound respectively. As to the origin of this name Sawombung, some Muslim elders explained that a dead boar is said to have floated down the Imphal

river and the carcass got stuck at the site of the present village. The inhabitants of this village buried the dead boar within the village and the village came to be known since then as Oinam Sawombung. Such legendary account is known to only a few elders and none can definitely say where exactly the said earthen mound is located.

The present Muslim inhabitants claim that the present village had been a Muslim village for many generations. In this connection it may be pointed out that, as the general history of Manipur reveals,

the Muslims were not the autochthons of Manipur. They came from the west and began to settle in Manipur from about the beginning of the seventeenth century. Heavy influx of Muslims into Manipur also took place during the time of Garib Niwaz—an early eighteenth century Manipuri king. Hence the Muslim settlement in Manipur as a whole is about two to three hundred years old, if not earlier, though it is not possible to spot the exact year or period of Muslim settlement in this village.

CHAPTER II

PEOPLE AND THEIR MATERIAL EQUIPMENT

Ethnic composition

As has been stated earlier, the village is inhabited by the Muslims. They are found settling along the western bank of the Imphal river which flows along the eastern side of the village from north to south.

According to 1961 Census, there were 99 households with a population of 256 males and 272 females. The present survey has covered 40 households, and the number is fairly large and representative with regard to the socio-economic study of the Muslim inhabitants of the village. All the households are found to have been distributed under different family names. There are also households having common family names. The distribution of the households with reference to the family names is shown below:--

Name of Family	Number of Households
Buiyam	1
Khan	1
Khulakpam	5
Korimayum	5
Meraimayum	4
Oinam	4
Sajubam	2
Wangmayum	13
Yumkhaibam	5

Most of these family names are Manipuri words, and they show that the Muslim inhabitants have adopted some of the family names which are found in the Manipuri community. It is quite natural for a minority community like the Manipuri Muslims who have adopted the language and costume of the Manipuri Hindus, to adopt their family names too. The appearance of Hindu family names among the Muslim households does not necessarily suggest that the Muslim households bearing such Hindu Manipuri family names originated from the Manipuri Hindus. But in the case of one Muslim family bearing the family name of Oinam, some interesting informations have been gathered. Oinam is an old Manipuri family name and as stated before, the early settlers in this village probably belonged to Oinam since the name of this village has been derived from this family name. Now, coming to the particular Oinam Muslim family, the head of the family narrated that great-grand-father was a Manipuri Hindu of the neighbouring Oinam village and he belonged to Oinam family. He fell in love with a Muslim girl of this village, took her to wife and converted himself to Islam since it was not customarily possible for him to convert his Muslim wife into Hinduism. With him his family name also came, and his family adopted the

family name of Oinam, and thus his descendants and close kins became Oinam. The position has been examined in respect of all the households, and excepting those households bearing the family name of Oinam, others do not have any tradition that they have originated from the Manipuri Hindus.

Family name and occupation

There is no connection between family names and traditional occupations. With the exception of gold-smithy, all these households can take up any profession irrespective of their family-name. It is not exactly known why the Muslim inhabitants of this village abhor the profession of gold-smithy. From our enquiry it has been gathered that the traditional occupation of the Muslims of this village is agriculture, i.e. cultivation of paddy and other vegetables like cabbage, cauliflower, peas, pumpkins, brinjal, chilli, etc. Even to day, cultivation of food crops is the main occupation of livelihood of almost all the households. The impact of urbanisation as a result of the reconstruction projects after independence throughout the country has brought some changes in the realm of occupation of the Muslim inhabitants of the village. Government service, commerce, and driving cycle-rickshaw are the important non-agricultural occupations in which some of the inhabitants are found to have been engaged. More details in these aspects will be found in a subsequent chapter.

Language

The Muslim inhabitants of this village speak Manipuri which is the *lingua-franca* of Manipur. They are not found to speak any other language. The Manipuri they speak differs slightly from the elite Manipuri in intonation, but the difference is negligible. Besides, in their Manipuri, Urdu words are occasionally found. But most of the inhabitants are not well versed in Urdu, and English knowing persons are very few among them.

Houses and house-types

The residential houses of the inhabitants do not differ from one another in a considerable manner. The Muslim houses, whether they are thatched or *pucca* type, do not differ from those of the Meiteis in appearance. The houses belonging to a few well-to-do families are found to be built with better and costlier materials, but in structural design, these are identical with that of the poor families. No house is built with bricks or stones. Only a few houses have C.I. sheet roofs and a large number of the houses are thatched with "ee" (*imperata cylindrica*). Houses have either two or four sloping roofs. The particulars of the houses with reference to the materials with which they are built, and the number of slopes of the roof, etc. are given in a tabular form as follows:

Table 1

Showing the Types of Houses

	Bamboos and wood structure	Mud and straw plastered wall	Thatched with "ee"	C.I. Sheet roofing	Two sloping roofs	Four sloping roofs
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Number of houses	40	40	36	4	32	8

The type of the house is generally a mirror which reflects the economic condition of its occupants. In this village all the houses under survey have bamboo and wood structure (excluding the roof). Out of 40 houses surveyed, 36 houses or 90 per cent are thatched with "ee". Besides, all the houses have their walls plastered with a mixture of mud, cow-dung and straw cut into short lengths. There are only 4 houses having corrugated iron sheet roofs.

The majority of the houses have two sloping roofs and only a few have four sloping roofs. There are 32 houses representing 80 per cent of the total, having two sloping roofs each and the remaining 8 houses or 20 per cent, have four sloping roofs each. Though larger number of sloping roofs does not categorically indicate higher economic status of its owner, a house having four sloping roofs is a little costlier than one with only two sloping roofs when they are of the same materials, and according to the average rural Manipuri standard also, a house with, four sloping roofs looks more decent.

It has also been observed that the number of houses having only one room, or more appropriately in other words, the number of houses having no partition inside is more than the number of houses having more than one room. Over 67 per cent of the houses do not have any partition inside the house. In other words, a large majority of the houses do not have privacy so far as the internal arrangement of the house is concerned. There are 4 houses having two rooms each, 2 houses having three rooms each, and the number of houses having more than three rooms each is seven. On enquiry, it has further been gathered that among the elderly folks, the importance of partitioned rooms has not been given much attention. Young folks who have heard or seen much of urban life, and who have shown much liking for urban way of living, are found to have given attention towards having separate rooms for the inmates of the house. The following table shows the number of houses with reference to the number of rooms.

Table 2

Showing the number of houses having

One room	Two rooms	Three rooms	More than 3 rooms
1	2	3	4
27	4	2	7

All the residential houses belonging to both the rich and the poor, are built on earthen plinth. The average height of the plinth from the ground is about one foot. There are also houses where the plinth is less than one foot in height. The height of the plinth is a matter of individual choice though it is advantageous to have higher plinth in case of heavy rainfall, flood etc. Basically all the houses are built on rectangular bases, and the frontal part of the house may be on either the breadth-side or the length-side. Most of the houses face the east. There are a few houses facing the north or the south or the west. There is no customary regulation with regard to the direction to which the frontal part of a house must turn. It is out of convenience that the majority of the houses face the east in order to get enough sun-light. Besides, the village path also lies along with eastern part of the residential area.

In the case of residential houses, the erection of the main or first pillar is performed with great care though no elaborate ceremony is associated with it. When a person decides to build a residential house, he usually consults the *maulvi* or any elderly man who is well versed in the ritualities of choosing site, etc. connected with house building. On the particular

day recommended by such person, the erection of the main pillar of the house is done in the following manner.

The householder digs the pit at the proposed site. The depth of the pit in which the main pillar is to be erected depends upon the height of the building required by the householder. Usually the depth of the pit is about 20 inches or so from the level ground. At the time of putting the pillar into the pit, the *maulvi* or the elderly man will hold the lower tip of the pillar and the householder will lift up the pillar by holding it in the middle. If the pillar is heavy, one or two relatives or friends may assist the householder in raising up the pillar and putting it into the pit. The pit is then partly filled up with clods and the *maulvi* or the elderly man pounds the clods with a pestle without touching the pillar with the pestle. After pestling 7/8 times, about half a bucket of water is poured into the pit and the bubbles on the surface of the water are studied by him who gives hints to the householder as to whether the house to be constructed will bring good or bad fortune. After this the pit is completely filled up and pestled so that the pillar remains securely in an upright position.

According to the general belief of the Muslims of this village, it is a bad omen if some bird especially *uchinao* (magpie species) sits on top of the pillar. In order to scar off birds, a long and slender stick is erected close to the pillar. This stick is taller than the pillar, and on top of the stick another short stick is tied across.

There is no specific rule regarding the time gap between the erection of the pillar and the commencement of the construction of the house. Depending upon the means and urgency of the householder, the construction may begin right after the erection of the pillar or several weeks may even elapse until construction works are taken up after the erection of the pillar.

Many of the elderly menfolk know something or the other of building simple and thatched house. At the time of constructing a thatched house, the householder himself, if he is not engaged otherwise in some other activity, helps the housebuilder engaged for constructing the house. But in the case of better houses where costlier timbers and corrugated iron sheets for roofing are used, the householder engages professional housebuilder from the neighbouring areas.

At the time of survey no house was found under construction. However, from information furnished by a number of persons, it is learnt that as in other parts of rural Manipur which have been affected by the rising cost of living; in the village also, the expenditure that a person has to incur while building a house is also increasing. The construction-charge of a two sloping roofed thatched house of roughly 20×30 feet plinth area is around Rs. 300/- or so, leave aside the expenses on materials for the house. The construction-charge is much higher for bigger and better house specially those having C. I. Sheet roofs.

A residential house is usually built in the middle of the household land and there is enough space round the house. As for additional houses either for residence or for other purposes, construction of the same may be done at any convenient place of the household land. All the residential houses have verandahs. Every verandah is enclosed on three sides by the main walls of the house, and the average size of a verandah is roughly one-fifth or one-sixth of the plinth area of the house.

Usually the walls are raised at least one or two feet within the plinth boundary. And hence a space of about one or two feet along the border of the plinth is provided. The eaves are also long enough that the rain-water falls just beyond the plinth area and pillars too are well protected from the rain.

Most of the residential houses have two doors one in the front and the other in the rear. The front door is usually used by the inmates of the house for purpose of going inside or outside the house. The back door is usually used by the housewife busy at the kitchen which is often located at the back portion of the house. On the average, two to three windows are commonly found in all the houses, though more than three windows are found in those houses having more than three rooms each.

Dress and ornaments

Toddlers and young children below the age of four or five years are seen without any clothes on. Their parents too are not particular about clothes of such young children when they are at home. But these young children are seen wearing some clothes like frocks, short pants, etc. when they are taken by their parents or elders to the market or to some functions. Young boys and girls above the age of five years or so are very often seen wearing some clothes either at home or while moving within the village. Young boys wear loin-cloth known as *Khudei*. *Khudei* literally means a towel and this cloth is available in different sizes meant for both adults and young boys. Besides *khudei*, the young boys are seen now-a-days wearing shirts. Shirts and vest are also worn often, and during the cold season, cotton shawl and warm clothes are also worn.

Young girls, on the other hand, wear loin-cloth known as *phanek*. This is an untailed sheet of cloth like the *khudei*, but shorter and broader than the *khudei*, and this cloth is wrapped around the loin by tugging in the outer end of the cloth at the left side of the loin. Tailored frocks are also very commonly used by young girls at home or while moving outside.

Grownup boys and girls and married persons are also influenced by the modern trend of dress that we find in the urban areas of Manipur. Grownup girls and married women wear *phanek*. This cloth comes in different colours and designs, and it is worn either around the waist like the young girls, or above the breasts. In order to cover the upper part of the body, a blouse and a *chaddar* are often used. The womenfolk also wear *kurta* and *burqa* which are worn by the Muslim women in other parts of India. The womenfolk are also fond of wearing ornaments of which mention may be made of bangles, rings, ear-rings, and necklaces. These ornaments are purchased from Imphal or from any nearby market. As for gold ornaments, the villagers go to any goldsmith of Imphal or any nearby village because there is no goldsmith in this village.

Among the menfolk the use of urbanised or western dress is not a new thing. Now-a-days many young men are seen wearing trousers and well-tailored shirts, and leather shoes. During the cold season woollen pants and coats are also worn by them. But elderly males are still found to stick to the traditional dress—the *lungi*, and there are also many old folks who have never worn trousers. The menfolk—both young and old, also wear *khudei* when they remain within the village. It is a narrow piece of cloth covering from the waist to the knees and it is worn more or less in the *dhoti* style. Besides *khudei* and *lungi*, use of *pyjama* is also very common, and one moves with either *lungi* or *pyjama* and a shirt to the market and other distant places. The use of *lungi* by the males and *kurta* and *burqa* by the females makes the Manipuri Muslims distinct from the Manipuri Hindus in appearance. As regards ornaments, there is practically no difference between the two communities with

the exception of *kantha* which is not found among the Manipuri Hindus. *Kantha* is a necklace of round beads of gold.

Utensils

Different types of utensils are used by the inhabitants for cooking and other purposes. These utensils are made of clay, brass, aluminium and bronze. There is no distinction between the rich and the poor so far as the types of utensils used by them are concerned. As for cooking the daily meals, both clay and metal utensils are used. Now-a-days, aluminium utensils are becoming popular because these are cheaper than other metal utensils and durable too, and food is cooked quicker in them. However aluminium utensils are post-war introduction imported into Manipur from other parts of the country. Among the brass utensils, mention may be made of *sanabul* and *tek* which are chiefly used for storing drinking and cooking water. Dishes and cups made of bell-metal are used for serving cooked food. Clay pots which are available in different sizes are also used for cooking the food as well as for storing drinking water. The utensils meant for household purpose are purchased from Imphal or any other market where varieties of utensils are available.

Food and drinks

The inhabitants are non-vegetarians. The main staple diet is rice. With rice they take vegetables, pulses, fish and meat. Fowl is taken more or less regularly if not daily while mutton is the special dish during festive occasions like a marriage ceremony or *Id* celebration. Pork and wine are not taken by the people as these items are not permitted by their religion.

The people take their meal twice daily—one in the morning and the other at night—though there is no specific time during which both the meals are taken. In those households, for example, where there are office-goers the morning meal is usually prepared quite early. The inhabitants have a simple food habit. Most of the households take, with rice one item of curry of either vegetable, pulse, fish or meat. It is usually on festive and ceremonial occasions that different items of food preparations are taken. Mustard oil is commonly used as the cooking medium. The inhabitants of this village are also hit by the recent wave of scarcity prevalent throughout Manipur. The varieties of food stuffs commonly taken by the inhabitants are as follows :

Vegetables and Pulses : All kinds of vegetables and pulses sold in the market are taken. Some of the popular varieties are brinjal, tomato, potato, mustard plant, cabbage, cauliflower, pumpkin and gourd. Beans, peas, moong and gram are the common varieties of pulses taken by the inhabitants.

Meat : Fowl is taken more or less often, if not daily. This is due to the fact that fowl is less costly and most of the households are also found rearing it at home. Mutton and beef are also taken by the inhabitants but these are usually taken on festive occasions or religious functions.

Others : Milk, in spite of its rich food value, is not a popular drink of the people. This is partly due to the fact that fresh milk is hard to get and price of milk too is high. Fruits are taken often if not daily. Banana, guava, mango, papaya, orange, lamon and pineapple are among the delicious varieties of fruits taken by the inhabitants. The habit of taking tea can be found among the people particularly among the men-folk. There is no tea stall within the village, but there is one at the opposite Meitei village of Oinam Sawombung at the time of survey, and people of this village either go to the said tea stall or prepare themselves at home. Home-made tea is often without milk. Smoking of cigarettes, *biddi* and tobacco in *chillum* is quite popular among the inhabitants of both sexes. These articles are available without difficulty from the village shop or from any other nearby shops.

Beliefs and practices connected with birth, marriage and death

Birth : Ordinarily the fact of pregnancy is indicated by the stoppage of menstruation. It stands confirmed when menstruation remains overdue for more than two months or so followed by nausea and loss of appetite. Until the state of pregnancy has fairly advanced there is no prohibition in the daily routine of work of the pregnant woman. But after the seventh or the eighth month of pregnancy the woman is asked to do only the light work, so that no harm may be done to the foetus. No special diet is prescribed for the pregnant woman though food of extremely bitter or sour taste is avoided.

When the labour pain starts, *maibi* or the *dai* of the village is called. She is an elderly woman who is an expert in cases of child deliveries through experience. She is usually assisted by another woman either from the house of the pregnant woman or from a neighbouring house. At the time of delivery, the menfolk of the house keep themselves away from the scene and child-delivery is an affair of the women-folk.

No special place is assigned for the delivery of the child. Birth takes place inside the house. The sleeping bed is usually avoided in order to spare the mattress and linen from being soiled. The parturient woman lies either on a mat or a low cot during the period of labour. As soon as the child is born, the *maibi* cuts the navel cord with the sharp edge of bamboo, and the after-birth is kept in a small earthen pot. Another earthen plate is put on the mouth of the pot as a cover, and the pot containing the after-birth is buried at the courtyard of the house. The pot is buried on the right side of the courtyard in the case of a male child or on the left side in the case of a female child.

The newly born baby is washed with lukewarm water by the *maibi* and it is wrapped up with clean and smooth cloth. A neighbouring young mother of the village acts as wet-nurse by suckling the newly born baby for three or four days regularly until the mother of the baby is able to feed her own baby. No payment is involved for engaging a wet-nurse because out of a sense of neighbourly duty and friendship the

woman is prepared to give a helping hand under such a circumstance without caring for a price in return.

Just after the birth of the child the father of the child or an elderly male will perform a short act known as *namtahanba* which literally means "declaring the name (of god)". In this act the father will sit close to the baby and utters inaudibly the name of the god. On the 40th day after birth of the child, the family offers a feast to friends and neighbours. On this occasion, the *maibi* and her assistants if any, are invited. If the family is unable to offer the feast on the 40th day under some circumstances, the feast may be given on the 90th day after the birth of the child. Rich families offer sumptuous meal consisting of a variety of meat preparations and sweets, while poor families offer at least one item of meat preparation. On this day, the mother of the young child drinks a liquid preparation consisting of water, honey, and betel leave. Before drinking this a learned person, preferably the *maulvi* will utter invocatory words on it. It is believed that the mother is purified after drinking this potion.

Normally, the diet of the mother is restricted to rice, roasted fish and salt for forty days until the above mentioned feast is given.

On completion of the third month, the rice-taking function is performed. This is not an elaborate function and usually no invitations are extended to friends and relatives. It is a quiet affair of the family, and on this day the mother feeds her baby some sweets and a paste of rice and fish. Since the baby is only three months old, it cannot eat up the things offered, and hence the feeding is just for namesake.

Breast-feeding is normally resorted to until the child is capable of eating solid food. It is from the second year of the child that taking of solid food is gradually being encouraged. When the child is three years old, breast-feeding is discouraged by the mother and thus the child is gradually weaned.

Initiation : According to the Muslim law, every Muslim male is to be initiated through circumcision. The inhabitants of this village consider the circumcision function equivalent to the sacred thread ceremony of the Hindus. The inhabitants regard their initiation ceremony very seriously, and every precaution is taken so that no untoward result may happen to their children after being circumcised. In this village boys between the age of seven and ten years are circumcised by a professional man known as *napit*. Normally this function is performed collectively for a number of boys at a time for reason of convenience. There is no *napit* in this village for performing the said function, because there is a general notion of impurity associated with this profession. At present there is a well known *napit* in Changamdabi village. The inhabitants of this village engage this *napit* for the initiation of their male children. Along with the rising cost of living the amount of money given to the *napit* has also increased to about ten rupees per boy though this fee was below five rupees about ten years ago. In addition to this fee, every family of the boy to be initiated incurs extra expenditure also by way of providing special diet

for the boy. Since initiation is a group function, the families of the boys decide a place where the function is to be performed. Usually this function is performed at the house of some well-to-do person where the initiated boys may be given proper care and attention by the *napit* as well as by the guardians of the boys.

There is no fixed number of boys to be initiated at a time, but normally when there are about seven or eight boys in the village whose age is between seven and ten years the villagers invite a *napit* for performing circumcision. After the function is over all the boys remain together on separate beds. During the convalescent period which normally lasts for about a month, the diet of the boys is restricted to rice, salt and roasted fish preferably *ngamu* fish (*ophiocephalus punctatus*) and a little quantity of lukewarm water. The *napit* does not remain at the house until the boys come round, but he comes as often as possible in order to examine the condition of the boys.

Marriage: In this village two types of marriage are prevalent, namely marriage by elopement, and marriage by engagement. Child marriage is not practised by the inhabitants of this village. Normally when a girl attains the age of fifteen or sixteen years, she is considered to be marriageable. Similarly boys of nineteen or twenty years of age are regarded to have attained the age of marriageable stage. Further details regarding age at marriage will be dealt in Chapter IV.

According to the prevailing custom, persons whose family names are identical cannot marry. That is to say, a man from Oinam family cannot marry a woman from another Oinam family. Similarly a boy from Sajubam family cannot marry a girl from another Sajubam family. As regards cousin-marriage, a boy can marry his father's sister's daughter or mother's brother's daughter. But he cannot marry his father's brother's daughter or mother's sister's daughter. In other words, cross-cousin marriage is permissible while parallel-cousin marriage is prohibited.

As stated earlier, marriage by elopement is customarily recognised. Under normal circumstances, when a girl elopes with a boy, the parents have very little to say against. Elopement may take with or without the knowledge of the parents. When a girl elopes with a boy without knowledge of their parents, the boy does not take the girl to his house direct, but both remain at the house of some friend of the boy, preferably within the village. At the time of elopement which is normally resorted to after sunset, the boy is accompanied by a few close colleagues whose duty it is to look for security and comfort of the new pair. However, when the elopement is performed with the consent and knowledge of the boy's parents, the girl may be brought straight to the boy's house.

The parents of the girl must be informed as soon as possible, though usually information is sent to them on the following day if the elopement took the previous night. A formal meeting of the boy's parents and the girl's parents and other village elders

will take place in order to hear the consent of the girl. The marriage ceremony may take place in either a pompous or a humble manner depending upon the financial position and choice of the families concerned. The solemnising part of the marriage ceremony, whether the marriage is by elopement or by engagement, consists of what is known as *Nikah sonba*. This ceremony is performed by learned Muslim preferably a *Maulvi*; and further accounts of this ceremony will be described later on.

Marriage by Engagement : Marriage by engagement is very elaborate and time consuming activity because it involves a tedious search for a suitable girl by the boy's parents on the one hand and a final decision and approval of the girl's parents on the other. If the boy is educated and his family is quite well-to-do, his parents will look for a girl who is not only beautiful but also well-to-do. After all, human choice and preference are unlimited and unpredictable and they vary from person to person.

Marriage by engagement is not only an affair between the families of the boy and the girl only. It is a social phenomenon involving the Muslim community of the locality. When the proposal has been finally approved by the girl's parents, it is an obligatory duty of the boy's family to distribute *pan* (betel leaves and nuts) to the kinsfolk of the girl's family. This function is called *Sagei-chatpa*. If the boy's family fails to perform *Sagei-chatpa*, the kinsfolk naturally feel offended for being neglected.

After the above function is over, another day has been fixed for the performance of what is known as *Kwakhaiba*, which literally means 'cutting the betel nut'. On the appointed day for this function, a small party from the boy's side goes to the house of the girl. Basketful of articles like *pan*, sweets, fruits, etc. are taken to the house of the girl by the boy's party. This function is more or less a get-together, and the articles brought by the boy's party are distributed among all present. However, there is one short function performed by a woman from either the boy's party or the girl's. She may not be necessarily a relative of the boy or the girl. This woman selects a good betel nut, removes the outer cover and cuts the nut into halves with a sharp knife or a nut-cracker. If the nut is found in good condition inside, and if the two halves are found more or less equal in size, it is considered that the boy and the girl will live long happily as husband and wife. This performance of *Kwakhaiba* is performed just for formality's sake, and even if the betel nut is found in a bad condition after cutting it into halves, the marriage will be performed irrespective of the unfavourable forecast.

A few days after the above function, there will be another function known as *Heijingpot-puba*. This function has been borrowed from the Manipuri Hindus, and it is by and large a get-together of the families and their friends and relatives as mark of announcing the betrothal. A large party consisting of men, women and children from the boy's side goes to the house of the girl. Many articles like *pan*, sweets, fruits, etc. are taken by the party. When

the party arrives at the house of the girl the parents of both the boy and the girl will exchange greetings and all other members invited on this occasion are given a warm welcome. Eatables brought by the boy's party are distributed among all present.

The marriage ceremony known as *Luhengba* is performed a few days after all these functions described above. The marriage date is fixed on any auspicious day convenient to both the families of the boy and the girl. Now-a-days marriage ceremony is not only a joyous occasion but also a noisy one due to the presence of bank-party and loud speaker which in the past were found in the urban areas only. The day of the marriage has been heralded by the noise coming from the loudspeakers through which hit tunes mostly from Hindi films are played on from early morning. The marriage ceremony is performed in the early hours of the evening. In the morning feast is offered to friends and relatives by both the families of the boy and the girl in their respective houses.

The marriage ceremony takes place at the house of the bride. All possible arrangements have been made at the house of the bride so that friends and relative may be comfortably accommodated and well treated. Now-a-days, the procession of the groom's party towards the house of the bride is very often led by a band-party. Engaging a band-party at the marriage ceremony has been the order of the day in the valley of Manipur not only among the Hindus but among the Muslim community too. When the groom's party arrives, mutual exchange of greeting takes place among members of the two parties. A separate seating arrangement has been provided for the groom and a few of his close friends accompanying him. The bride's seating place is kept inside the house and secluded from the rest by providing a curtain or similar such arrangement. All the invitees are served with *pan*, sweets and similar such articles. The solemnising part of the marriage ceremony, as has been mentioned earlier is known as *Nikah sonba*. In this ceremony, the *Maulvi* will go near but not inside the secluded place where the bride and her intimate colleagues are seated. Three men from the girl's side who are known as *Gawah-sakhi* or witnesses in the oath-taking, will be near the *Maulvi*. The *Maulvi* holding the sacred book in his hand, will hear from the bride's side the consent of the bride. This ceremony is a short one and with due prayer, it is concluded. At the time of *Nikah sonba*, all will remain quiet. The marriage ceremony is concluded on the same day, and in many cases, the groom and his party return earlier. When the bride and the groom and their parties return together, the groom has to go ahead of the bride always.

According to the prevailing custom of the inhabitants of this village, a man can have four wives. At the time of survey, only one case of polygyny has come to our notice. Many of the informants, both males and females, are also found to be not in favour of a man having more than one wife. As regards rules concerning divorce, the Muslim law prevails, and the divorce or *talaq* as it is popularly known may be of the first, second or third degree. Under *talaq* of the third degree, it is not normally possible for a

nam to take back his divorced wife unless such a divorced woman has been espoused first by some person and divorce thereafter.

Disposal of the Dead :—According to the prevailing custom, the dead body is buried and never cremated. Death is allowed to take place inside the house. There are several graves in this village, and every grave is exclusively meant for each *sagei* or group of families having a common ancestor. Digging of the grave is considered auspicious, and many volunteer themselves to dig the grave. The grave is about four feet deep and long enough for the dead body to be laid down in a straight and horizontal position. When death takes place, the dead body is washed with water and properly attired. It is then laid on a bier known as *kai* and carried to the grave by four or five men. These men may be members of the family of the deceased as well as friends and relatives who come to mourn the death. When the dead body is laid down in the grave the head must turn towards the north. The *Maulvi* will attend the funeral, and before the dead

body is laid down in the grave, he and other persons who come to the funeral will stand in a line or lines facing the west by the side of the dead body. If more than one line is formed, the number will be an odd number and never an even one. The *Maulvi* will utter prayer known as *janaja* while all remain quiet. When the *janaja* is over, the grave is filled in the following manner.

The mouth of the grave is covered with bamboos which are put as close to one another as possible so that any small articles may not fall in the grave. Bamboo splits, mats, and plantain leaves are then put over the bamboos with meticulous care, and above all these, clods are put. The preparation of the grave in this manner prevents any physical damage to the corpse from other substances and allows the corpse to decay the natural way. When the burial is over, all who come to the grave offer prayer or "*Dua-touba*" for the peace of the departed soul. On the fortieth day after the death of a person, a feast is offered by the family of the deceased to friends and relatives. Before foods are served to the invitees, prayer is offered to God by the *Maulvi* for the welfare of the deceased.

CHAPTER III ECONOMY

The economic structure of the inhabitants of this village is simple. Agriculture is the main occupation of the majority of the households in this village, and almost all the households under survey are found to possess agricultural lands of different but small sizes. Besides agriculture, the villagers are also found to take up other non-agricultural occupations by way of contributing additional income for the maintenance of the households. In some cases, such non-agricultural occupations become the principal occupation of the households concerned and agriculture becomes a secondary occupation. The particulars of principal

and subsidiary occupations will be furnished later on.

Agricultural land is very significant in the life of the villagers. Though most of the households are found to possess agricultural lands, the sizes of the lands are very small and in many cases, the agricultural produces from such small holdings are not sufficient enough for the maintenance of the households. The distribution of the agricultural lands among the land-owning households has been shown in the following table below :

Table 3

Name of household	Total Number of households	Number of households owning lands					Number of household having on land
		Less than 1 acre	1-2.99 acres	3-4.99 acres	5-7 acres	More than 7 acres	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Buiyan	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Khan	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Khulakpam	5	1	4	—	—	—	—
Korimayum	5	2	3	—	—	—	—
Meraimayum	4	1	1	1	—	1	2
Oinam	4	1	1	—	—	—	—
Sajubam	2	2	—	—	—	—	—
Wangmayum	13	1	5	1	—	5	1
Yumkhaibam	5	3	1	—	—	—	1
	40	11	15	2	—	6	6

It may be seen from the above table that out of the 40 households, 6 households or 15 per cent of the total do not have any agricultural land of their own. There are only 8 households representing 20 per cent of the total, each having 3 acres of land or more. There are 11 households each having less than one acre of agricultural land and they represent 27.5 per cent of the total. The number of households each having 1 to 2.99 acres of land is 15, representing 37.5 per cent of the total number of households.

It is evident from the above table that a large majority of the households do not have sufficient amount of agricultural land. There are 32 households who either do not have agricultural land or the size of whose land holdings is less than three acres.

Though agriculture (cultivation of paddy) is the

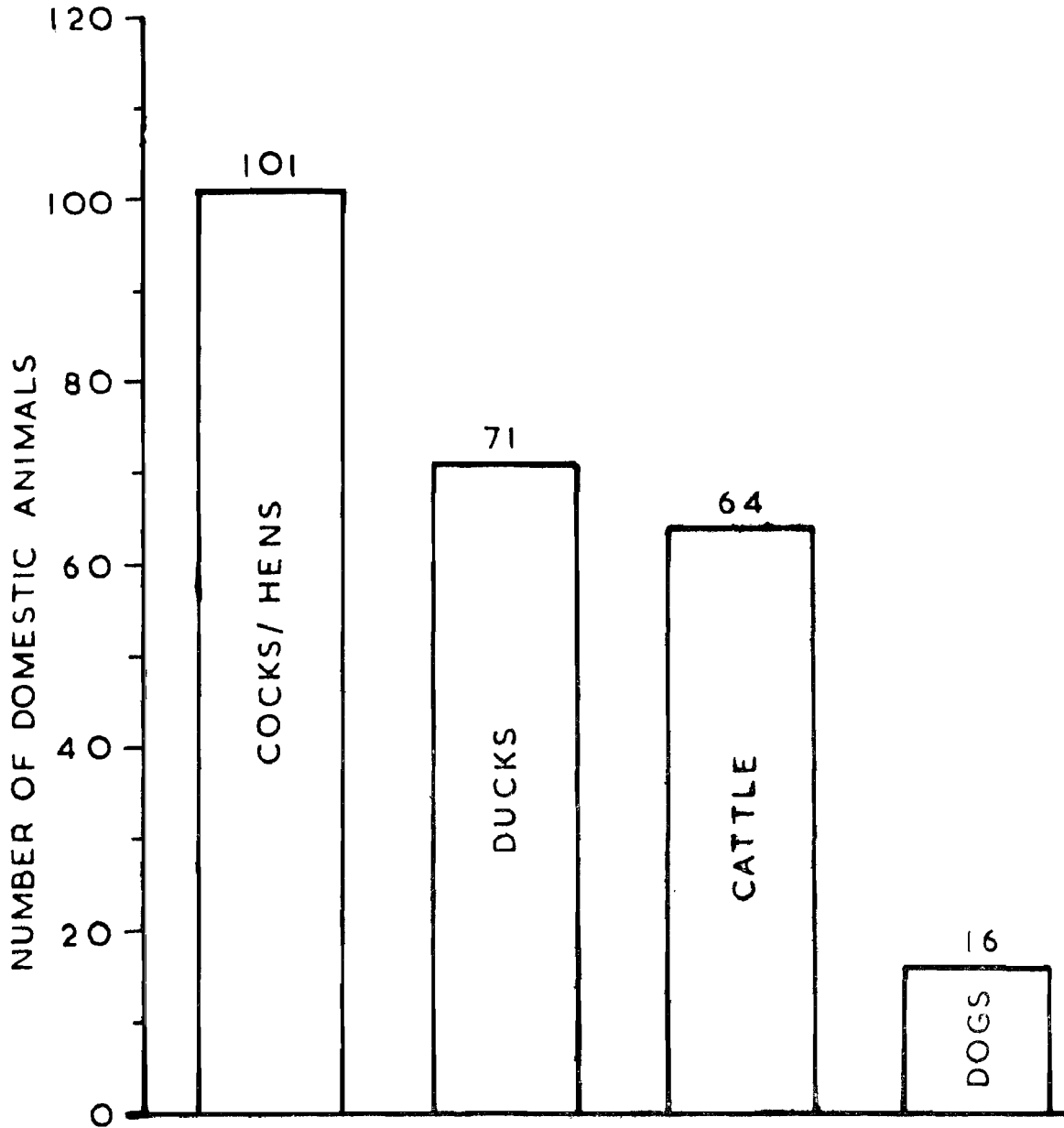
primary occupation of many of the households, other types of occupation are also found being pursued by the inmates of the households. Kitchen-gardening and rearing of domestic animals particularly fowls may be considered the subsidiary occupations of the households. All the households are found actively engaged in cultivating vegetables within the compounds of their respective houses. The yields are primarily meant for domestic consumption and these are sometimes sold in the market whenever necessity arises.

Rearing of domestic animals may be considered an important work in the village. Fowls, cattle and dogs are the only important domestic animals of the village. The following table shows the distribution of domestic animals among the households under survey :—

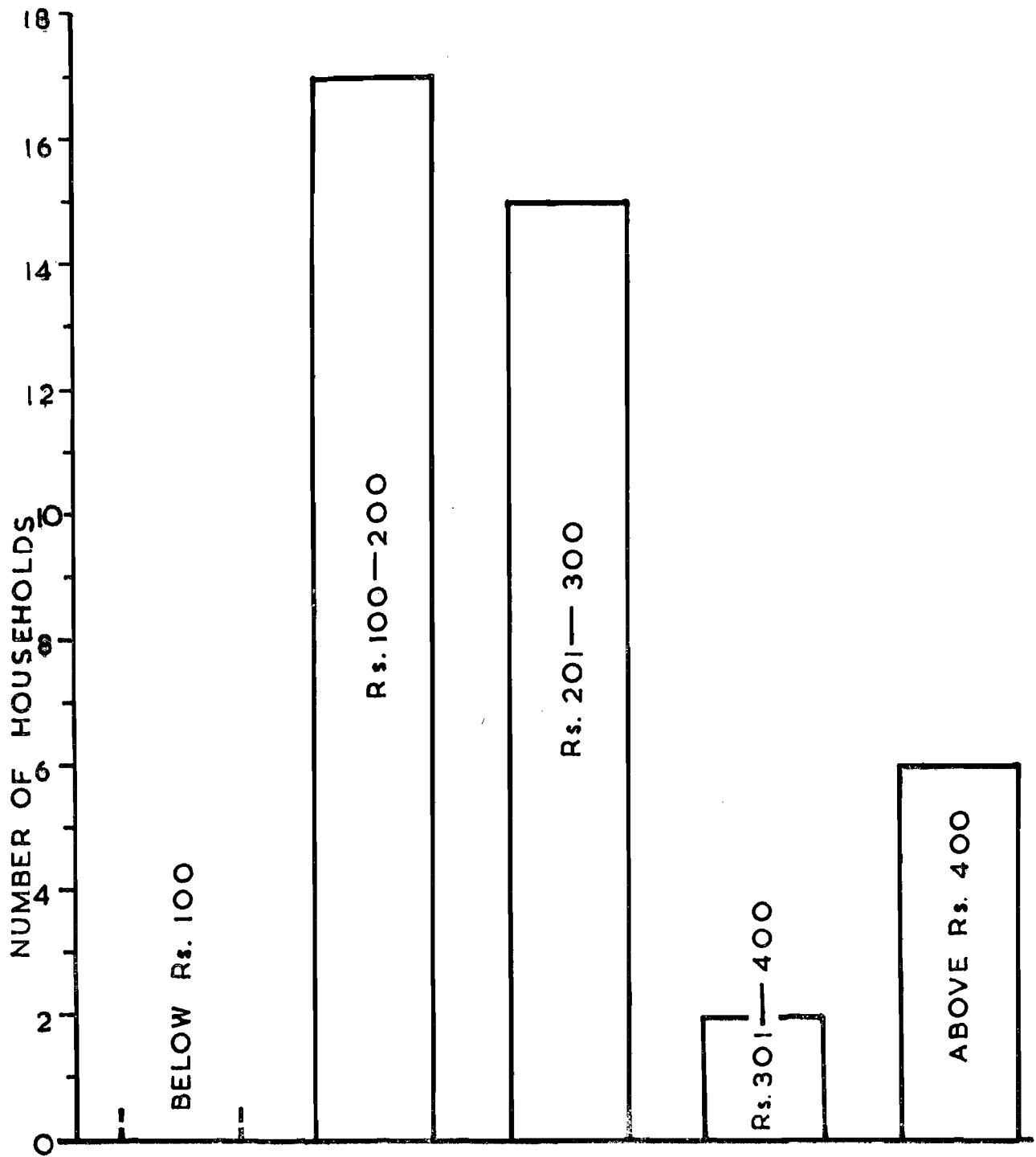
Table 4

Name of domestic animals	No. of domestic animals	No. of HH possessing	No. of HH not possessing
1	2	3	4
Cock/Hen	101	22	18
Ducks	71	18	22
Cattle	64	29	11
Dogs	16	16	24

DOMESTIC ANIMALS



INCOME OF THE HOUSEHOLDS



Except fowls, other domestic animals are few in number. This is due mainly to the fact that the inhabitants have not given keen attention to rearing of domestic animals. The inhabitants of this village are found to be very hard-working. Though agriculture is the main occupation of most of the households its operation is seasonal and it does not keep the people completely engaged throughout the year. Besides, the sizes of agricultural lands of many households are

small which not only requires little amount of labour but also produces paddy far short of the annual requirement of the households. Under such circumstances, the menfolk of the households are found to be actively engaged in other occupations in order to support their families. The following table shows the occupations of at least one male in every household.

Table 5

Community	Principal Occupation	Number of persons	Percentage
1	2	3	4
Muslim	Government service	8	20.0
	Agriculture	16	40.0
	Rickshaw-driving	11	27.5
	Petty business	5	12.5

When we pick up one chief earner from every household the above table has been prepared. It will be found that next to agriculture, rickshaw-driving is a popular occupation. In Manipur when the cycle rickshaws have been introduced as a means of transport, many Muslims are found to have taken up the new profession of driving the rickshaws. All the eleven rickshaw-drivers mentioned above do not own the rickshaws they drive. Under the prevailing condition, a rickshaw-driver has to give two or three rupees per day to the owner of the rickshaw depending on mutual agreement between the rickshaw-driver and the rickshaw-owner. Whatever extra amount that remains after paying the rickshaw-owner, becomes the daily income of the rickshaw-driver. The daily income of a rickshaw driver fluctuates from day to day, but the average daily income per head according to these rickshaw drivers is around eight to ten rupees.

The womenfolk, on the other hand, considerably assist their menfolk in the maintenance of their households. The women take vegetables cultivated at home to any nearby market and whatever small amount they get by selling the vegetables becomes the income of the household. Since the quantity of vegetables cultivated at home is not considerable it is not possible for every woman to go to the market daily for selling the produce, though they go more or less regularly. No statistical account can be authentically given regarding income derived from the sale of vegetables. However, from the information furnished by some of the womenfolk, a woman earns on

an average about four or five rupees per day from the sale of a basketful of vegetables, and a major portion of the earning is also spent on other household consumption goods like salt, cooking oil, fish, etc.

Fishing

Fishing is a subsidiary and minor occupation of the households. No household is found to be actively engaged in fishing throughout the year. Mention had been made earlier about the Imphal river which flows just along the eastern boundary of the village. During the rainy season the inhabitants are found to cast their nets or lay fishing traps in the said river. The catch however is not abundant and it is very often consumed at home. Fishing in the river is resorted to during the day time by either men or women of the households whenever they find time and have a desire for fishing.

Income and expenditure

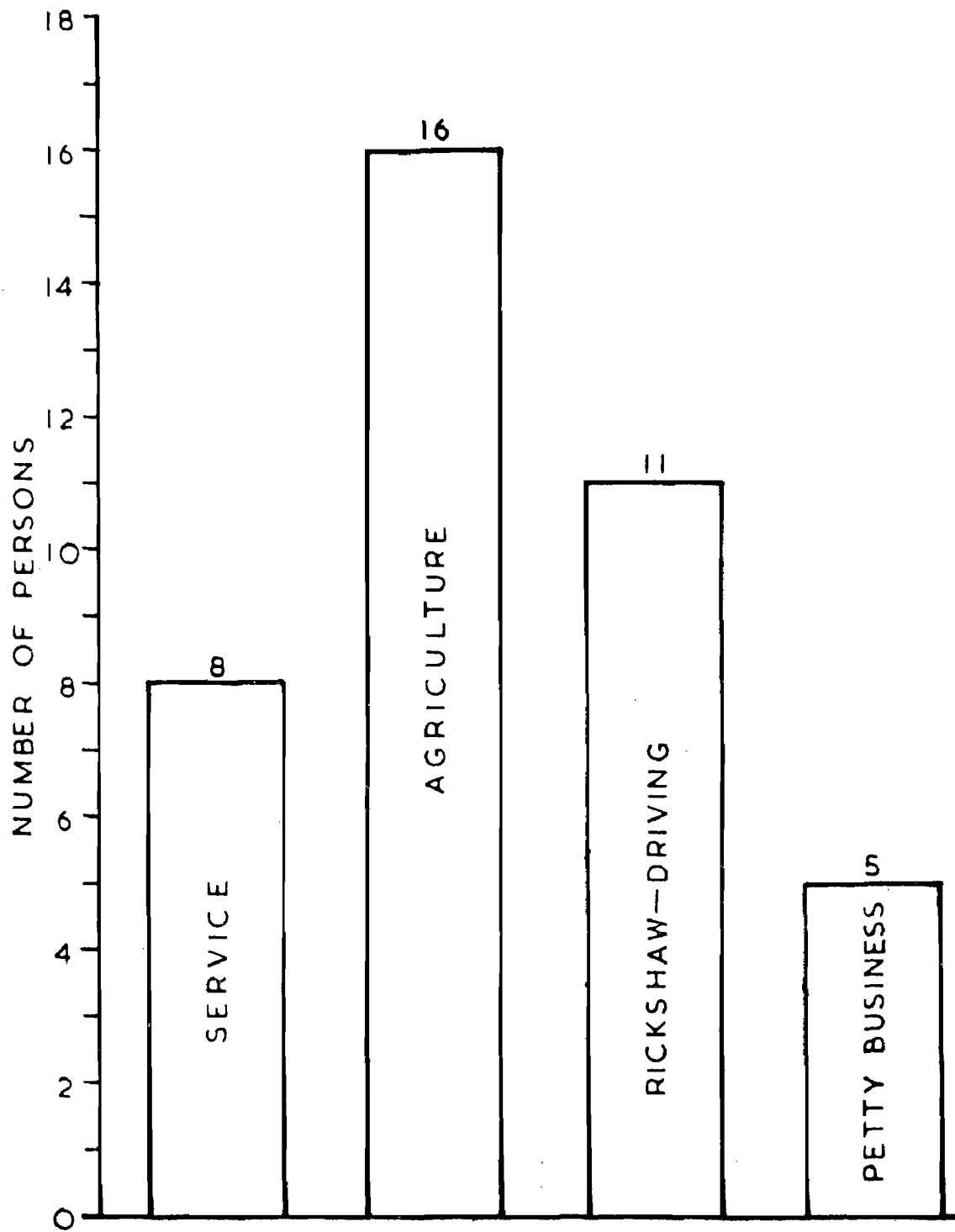
Accurate information and data on income and expenditure of the households could not be collected with ease for the reason that there is a general tendency among the inhabitants to either under-estimate their income or avoid giving any straight reply. Attempt has however been made to ascertain the incomes of the households as correctly as possible. The households have been grouped within broad income-brackets and the details have been furnished in a tabular form below.

Monthly Income	Number of Households	Percentage
1	2	3
Below Rs. 100/-	—	—
Between Rs. 100-200	17	42.5
Between Rs. 200-300	15	37.5
Between Rs. 300-400	2	5.0
Above Rs. 400	6	15.0

The above classification of income has been made on the basis of regular items of income like monthly salary, annual collection of paddy and other irregular items of income derived from rickshaw-driving and

from sale of vegetables, etc. On the basis of the above calculation no household has been found whose income is less than one hundred rupees a month, 17 households or 42.5 per cent of the total earn a

OCCUPATIONS OF HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS



monthly income ranging from Rs. 100 to Rs. 200 each; while the monthly income of another 15 households or 37·5 per cent of the total is between Rs. 200—300. There are only 8 households or 20 per cent of the total whose income is Rs. 300 and above. It is, therefore, clear that 80 per cent of the households have a monthly income of Rs. 100 and above but not more than 300 rupees. As regards the items of expenditure, a major portion of the income is spent on food by most of the households. The amounts of expenditure however differ from house to house depending on the size of family and other factors like possession of agricultural land, for example.

No household has reported to be in debt. Borrowing of small sums, say five or ten rupees from friends and neighbours very often takes place and such borrowed amounts are usually paid back on the next day or within two or three days. Leaving aside the

cases of borrowing of such petty sums, all the surveyed households have reported to be free from debt of substantial amounts.

Workers and non-workers

Out of 40 households with a population of 226 persons, it has been observed that the population of children is very high. Upto the age of 14 years, the total population of males and females is 100 which forms a little over 44 per cent of the total population. Children below the age of 15 years and adults whose age is 60 years and above may be regarded as non-workers for physical and other reasons. Considering persons between 15 and 59 years of age as potential workers, the following table showing the working and non-working population of all the surveyed households has been furnished.

Table 6

Name of household	Number of household	Workers		Non-workers	
		Males	Females	Males	Females
1	2	3	4	5	6
Buiyam	1	1	4	—	—
Khan	1	1	1	1	—
Khulakpam	5	10	7	6	10
Korimayum	5	5	5	8	8
Meraimayum	4	6	5	6	10
Oinam	4	7	4	2	6
Sajubam	2	2	2	6	2
Wangmayum	13	22	17	10	17
Yumkhaibam	5	8	9	11	7

CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE

As has been mentioned earlier, this village is a single-community village—all the inhabitants being Muslims. Among the households that have been surveyed, a cordial atmosphere prevails. The households are ready to help one another whenever circumstance arises; yet every household tries to be as self-sufficient as possible by working hard. Quarrels among neighbours hardly take place, and the elderly members of the village see that the young members of the village too develop friendly attitude towards others.

Distribution of population by age and sex

According to the 1961 Census, there were 99 households with a population of 528 persons (256 males and 272 females). However, confining our analysis to the 40 households that have been surveyed, there are 112 males and 114 females. Thus there are about 1017 females for every 1000 males. In the

case of the 40 households, the disparity of the sexes is due to an excess of 2 females over the total male population ; yet the difference of the sexes is negligible.

One major handicap experienced at the time of survey is with regard to the exact recording of personal ages. The ages of infants and children had been recorded without much difficulty because the householders could tell more or less accurately the ages of their children without giving much strain to their memory. The literate persons too could tell their own ages, but the ages of elderly folks and others particularly the womenfolk could not be exactly recorded from their own statements. Certain checks were applied so that more or less accurate ages could have been recorded, and these checks were by referring to local events. The following table shows the distribution of population by age and sex.

Table 7

Distribution of Population by Age and Sex

Age-group	Males	Females	Total
All Ages	112	114	226
0—4	15	18	33
5—9	17	21	38
10—14	12	16	28
15—19	11	9	20
20—24	7	10	17
25—29	8	9	17
30—34	10	8	18
35—39	6	8	14
40—44	9	4	13
45—49	5	3	8
50—54	5	4	9
55—59	1	1	2
60 & over	6	3	9

We find from the above table that the population in the age-group 5—9 years is the highest. Again, 99 persons or about 43.8 per cent of the total population belong to the age-group 0-14 years. The population structure shows a gradual fall from the lower age-group to the higher age-group. If we put persons aged 20 years and above under adult population, 107 persons or about 47.3 per cent will represent the adult population, and the percentage of the remaining 119 persons consisting of infants and young boys and girls is about 52.7. This feature indicates that the village possesses the growth potential so far as its population is concerned. Yet, one feature of the

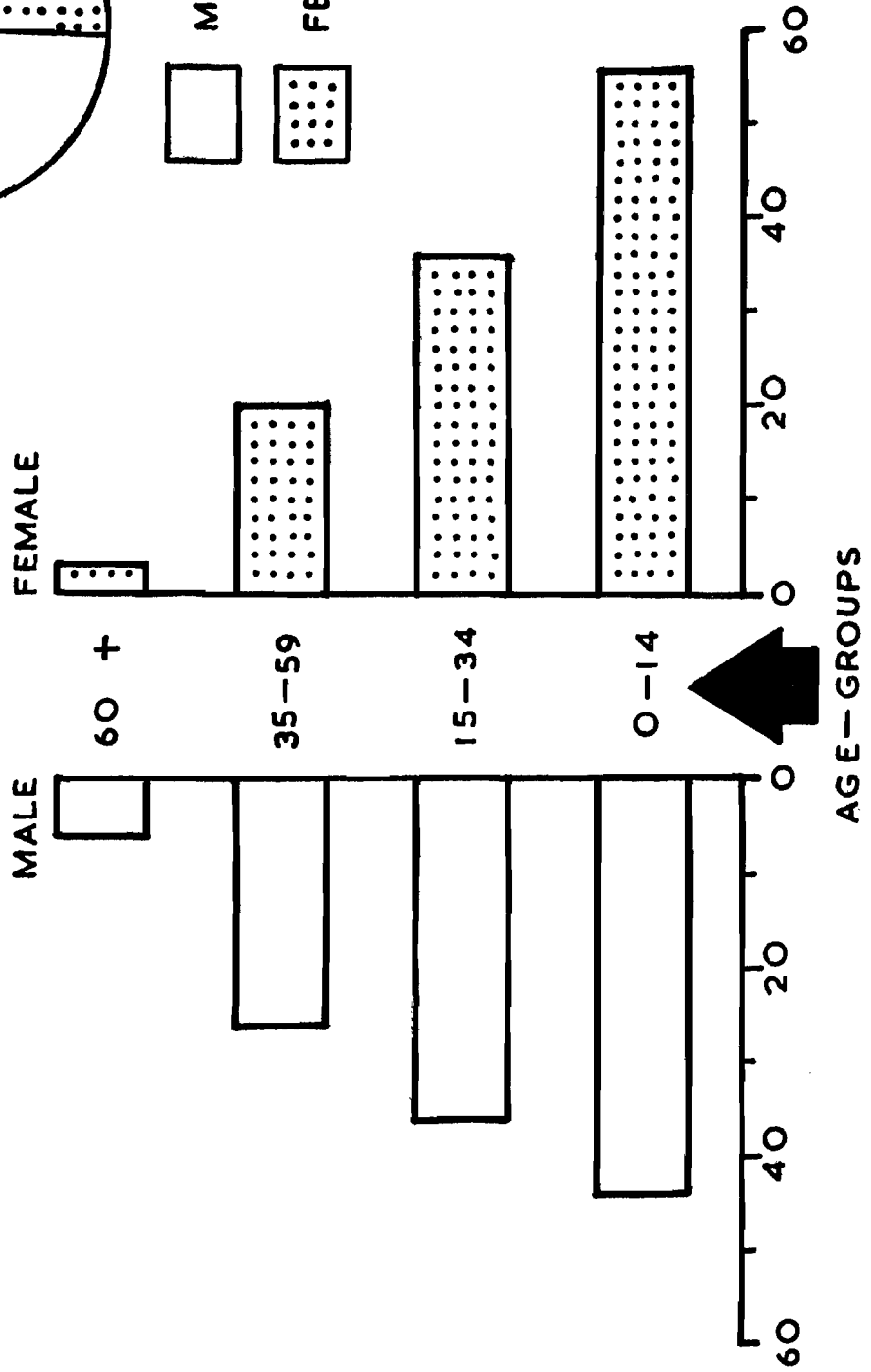
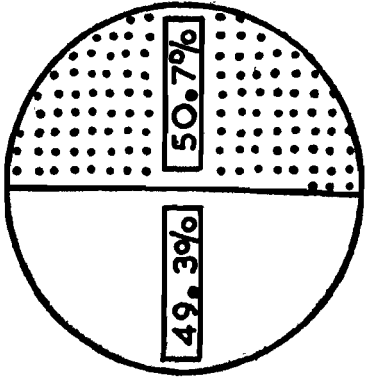
population is that there is little disparity between the numbers of males and females.

Marital status

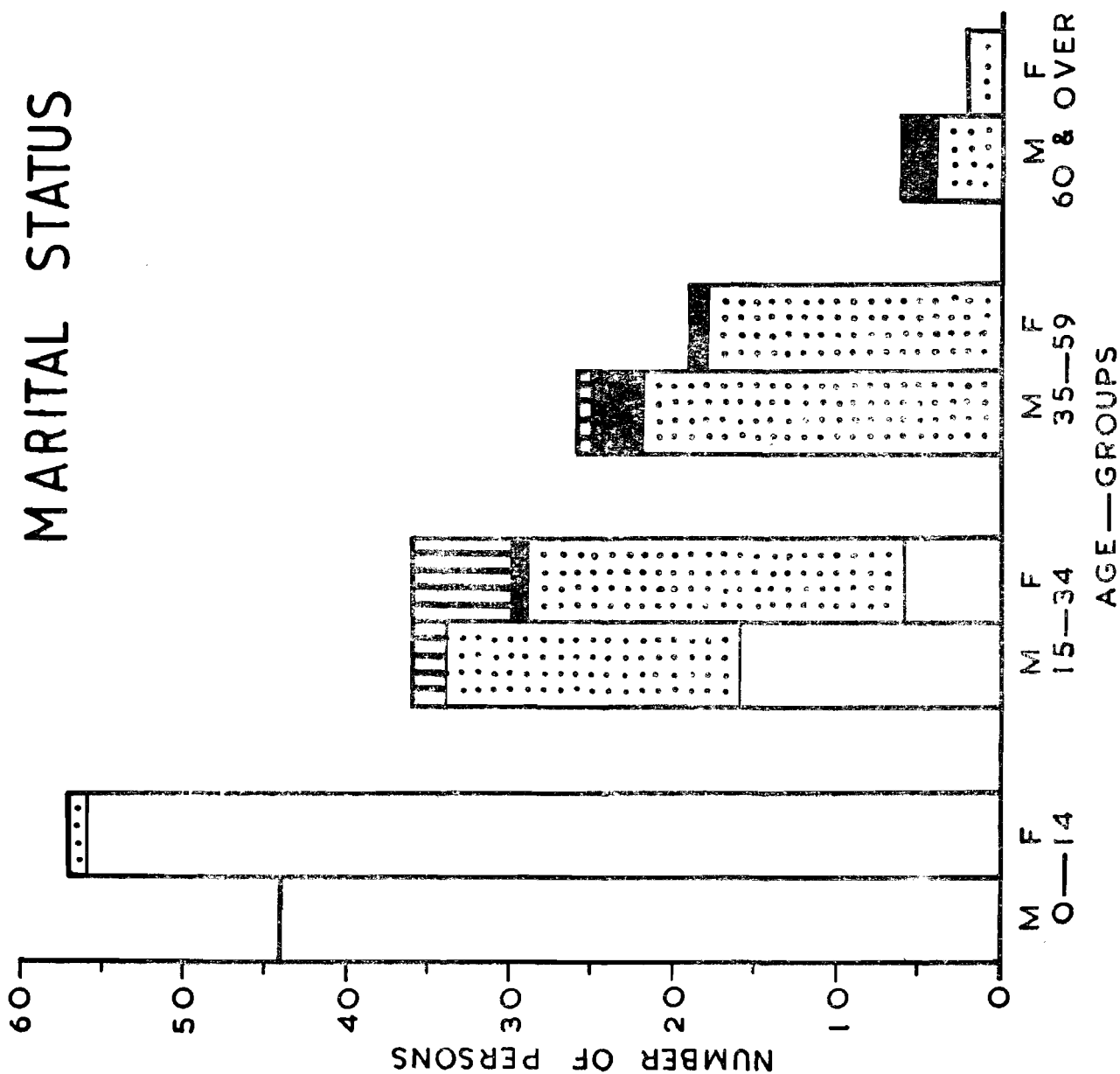
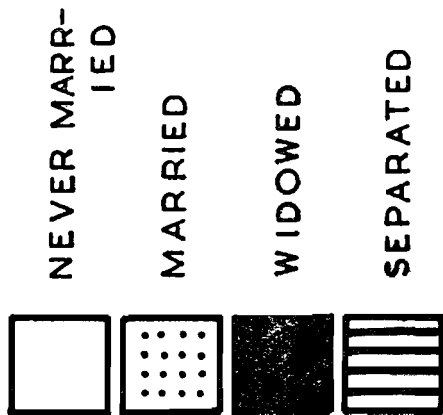
Out of 112 males only 44 are married while out of 114 females only 45 are married. The disparity between married males and married females is due to the presence of one case of polygyny. There are 5 widowers and 2 widows. 3 males and 7 females have been divorced or separated. The table 8 shows the marital status of both males and females under different age-groups.

AGE AND SEX

SEX RATIO



MARITAL STATUS



Type and size of family

Out of the 40 households that have been surveyed, it is found that the number of Joint families is small,

whereas the number of nuclear or Simple type of family consisting of husband, wife and unmarried children is high. The following table shows the types of families and the number of households in each type.

Table 10

Showing the number of Households under each type of Family

Name of household	Type of Family		
	Simple	Intermediate	Joint
1	2	3	4
Buiyam	—	1	—
Khan	1	—	—
Khulakpam	2	2	1
Korimayum	2	3	—
Meraimayum	3	1	—
Oinam	3	1	—
Sajubam	2	—	—
Wangmayum	8	5	—
Yumkhaibam	3	1	1

It will be seen that 60 per cent of the families are of the simple type. The large number of nuclear families is mainly due to the fact that there is usually the tendency among the married brothers to set up

separate kitchens, and naturally separate households. The following table shows the size and composition of all the households under survey.

Table 11

Showing the Size of Households

Name of households	2-3 members			4-6 members			7-9 members			10 members and above		
	HH	M	F	HH	M	F	HH	M	F	HH	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Buiyam	—	—	—	1	1	4	—	—	—	—	—	—
Khan	1	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Khulakpam	1	3	—	1	2	5	2	5	10	1	6	4
Korimayum	—	—	—	5	13	13	—	—	—	—	—	—
Meraimayum	—	—	—	1	2	2	3	10	13	—	—	—
Oinam	1	2	1	3	7	9	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sajubam	—	—	—	2	8	4	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wangmayum	3	5	2	7	15	21	3	12	11	—	—	—
Yumkhaibam	1	1	1	1	2	4	1	5	2	2	11	9

HH—Households; M—Male; F—Female.

There is no single-member household. There are 21 households where the size of household consists of 4-6 persons and this constitutes about 52 per cent of all the households. As regards population also, the number of persons in the household-size of 4-6 persons is the highest with 110 persons consisting of 50 males and 60 females. The number of households of 4-6 persons each is three times greater than that of households of 2-3 persons each. From households of 4-6 persons each, the number of households decreases as the number of members per household increases. Thus, there are 9 households of 7-9 members each and 3 households of 10 members and over.

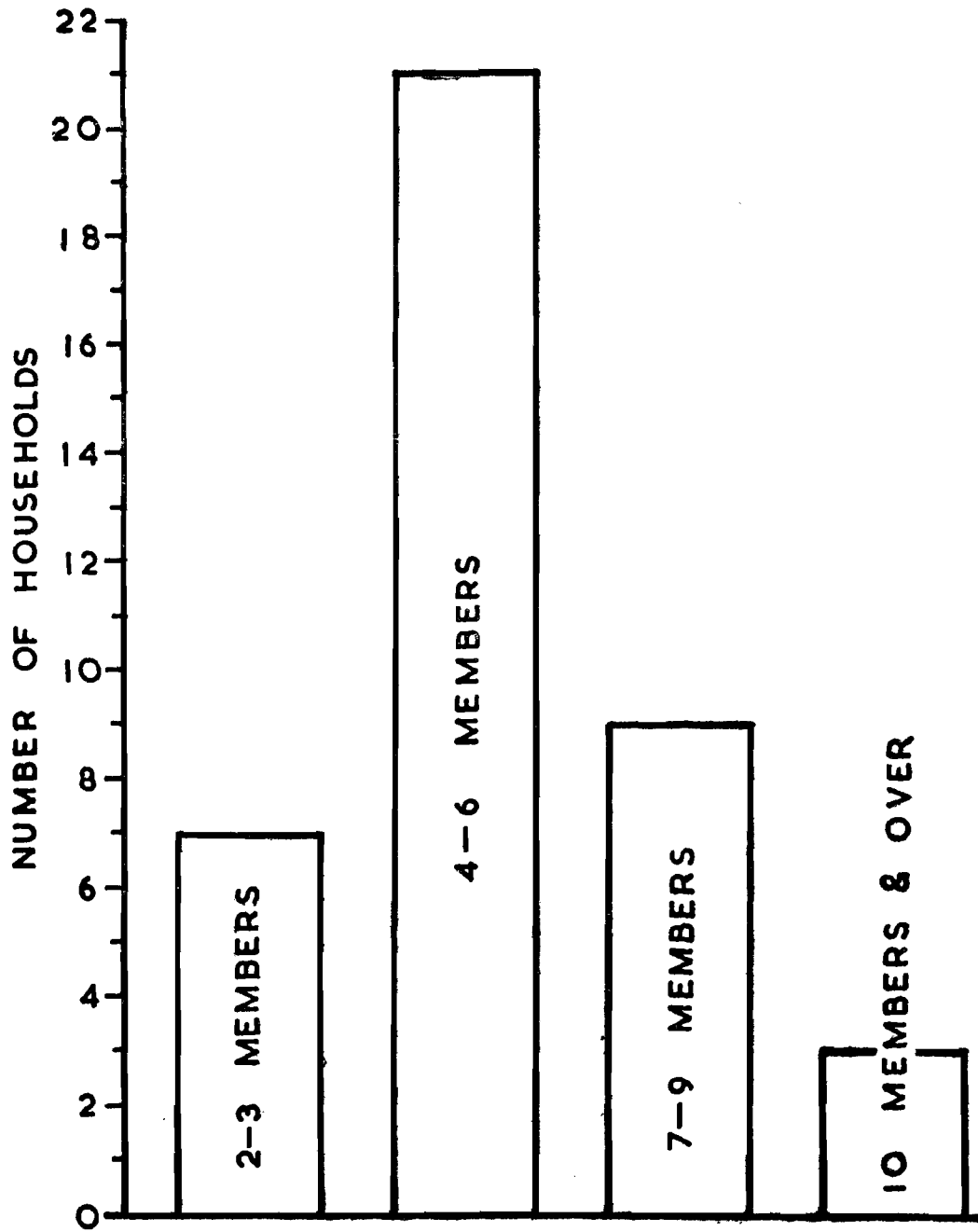
Intra-family relationship

Traditionally the relationship between the members of the household is cordial. Senior members are paid due respect by the younger folks. Children grow

up under the supervision of their elders and they are obedient to their parents and superiors. Children, when they are old enough to work in the field, usually accompany their elders in the cultivation of food crops in the nearby fields. Mothers and daughters are usually very intimate. A daughter seldom hides anything from her mother, and she usually accepts counselling from her mother before and after her marriage.

Brothers and sisters are very intimate while they were young, but as they grow older, brothers are less attached to their sisters. Close intimacy gradually disappears among brothers when they get married and have their own families, but in its place respect for each other develops. Sisters are usually intimate with one another even though they have been married off to different places.

SIZE OF HOUSEHOLDS



The interpersonal relationship between a woman and her senior male in-laws particularly father-in-law and brother-in-law (husband's elder brother) is of distance and respect. In the presence of such a senior male in-law, a woman usually covers her head with a portion of her scarf. A woman is usually intimate with her mother-in-law and sister-in-law.

Traditionally, the position of a wife is considered inferior to that of her husband. Yet, the relationship between a husband and wife is normally characterised by love and dependence. Polygyny, though customarily sanctioned, is not freely resorted to by most of the menfolk, because, with the change of time, there is an increasing reliance upon the wives for the maintenance of happy relationship in the family.

Leisure and recreation

There is hardly any major recreational activity worth mentioning. Leaving aside the children who are found to play here and there most of the time and for whom no specific duties or works have been assigned, all the men and women are found engaged in different works of livelihood. The only form of leisure or recreation of most of the men and women is to while away the time by sleeping or gossiping. The menfolk usually leave their houses for places of their works from the morning and many of them return home late in the evening. The womenfolk are found confined at home doing most of the household chores. They find enough time for rest and recreation. Sleeping or gossiping forms the main feature of rest of the womenfolk. After the nightfall, almost in every family all the members are present, and the chief earners or the heads of the families not only bring the day's earnings but the news from the town too. It is a common sight in winter to find in every house the man and his young children sitting around the fire while the woman is busy at the kitchen. Since the town of Imphal is not very far off, the inhabitants, mostly the males, are found to go to the pictures once a month or so, if not frequently.

Id festival

The only festival which deserves notice is the *Id*. It is a special festival of sacrifice in order to please the God. It is celebrated on the tenth of the last month of Hijri year. On this day in the morning, the inhabitants go to the mosque to offer prayer to God. Fasting is not strictly enjoined on this day, and the majority of the villagers observe fast in the morning, and meal is usually taken after the sacrifice is over.

Goats are usually sacrificed and it is performed by the *Maulvi* who is well versed in sacrificial prayers. Excepting a few rich families, it is not possible for every family to sacrifice an animal for economic reasons. Hence, a few families combine together and sacrifice an animal by sharing the cost equally. After the sacrifice is over, the meat is distributed among themselves and among friends and in neighbours. Every family prepares the best dish within its means, and all the members enjoy sumptuous meals. In the afternoon and evening visiting friends and relatives and conveying good wishes are the usual activities of the villagers. Now-a-days, many boys and girls come to Imphal to see the pictures.

Mosques

There are two mosques in this village catering to the religious needs of the people. One mosque which is situated at the northern side of the village is thatched while the other which lies on the southern side of the village has C.I. sheet roofs. The construction of these mosques has been arranged by groups of villagers by engaging house-builders and by subscribing the expenses involved.

Besides the mosques, there is one *Idga* a platform-like open space where prayer is jointly performed by the villagers on festive occasions like the *Id*. The *Idga* is situated by the side of an approach road which runs through the middle of the village.

Literacy and education

According to the 1961 Census, there were only 75 literate and educated persons consisting of 70 males and 5 females. The achievement of the females in the field of education is considerably poor. Besides, the village is devoid of institutions for higher classes. There are only two primary schools (*madrassa*) in this village where the children of this village get their primary education. The Oinam L. P. School which has been in existence since 1921 stands by the side of an approach road amidst the residential area. The school has two sloping C.I. sheet roofs without any internal partition. It has earthen plinth and mud-plastered walls. By the end of 1968, the school had 4 teachers (3 from this village) and 65 pupils (35 boys and 30 girls). The second school is called Oinam-Wangoi L. P. School. This is a thatched structure built sometime in 1957. It stands at the southern end of this village close to Wangoi village. Hence boys and girls from both the villages attend this school. There were 5 teachers (2 from this village) in this school by the end of 1968.

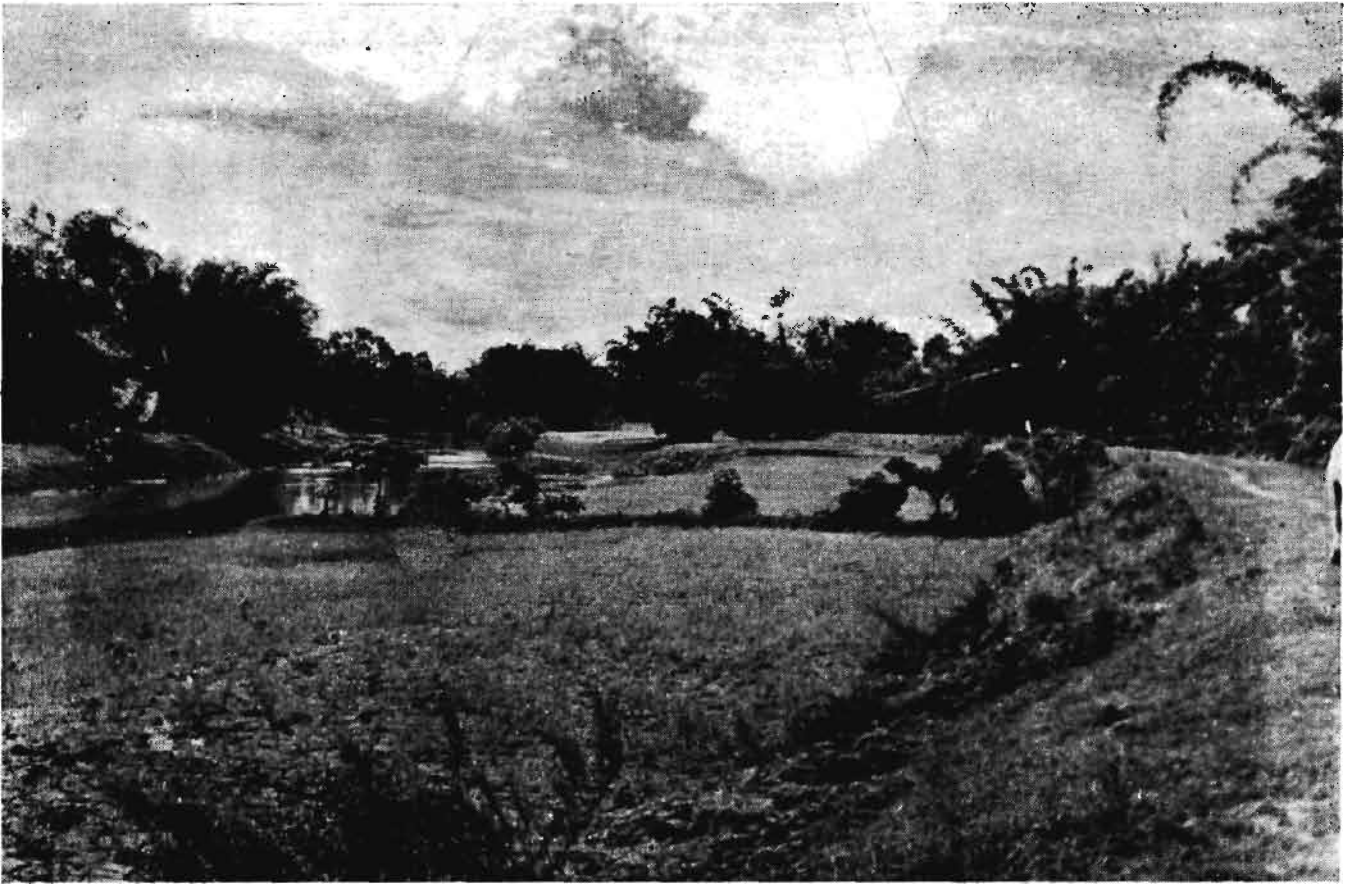
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION

This village is not an isolated one. Around it there are a number of villages inhabited by the Hindus and the Muslims. Besides, the village is situated by the side of a busy and all-weather *pucca* road namely the Mayang-Imphal Road.

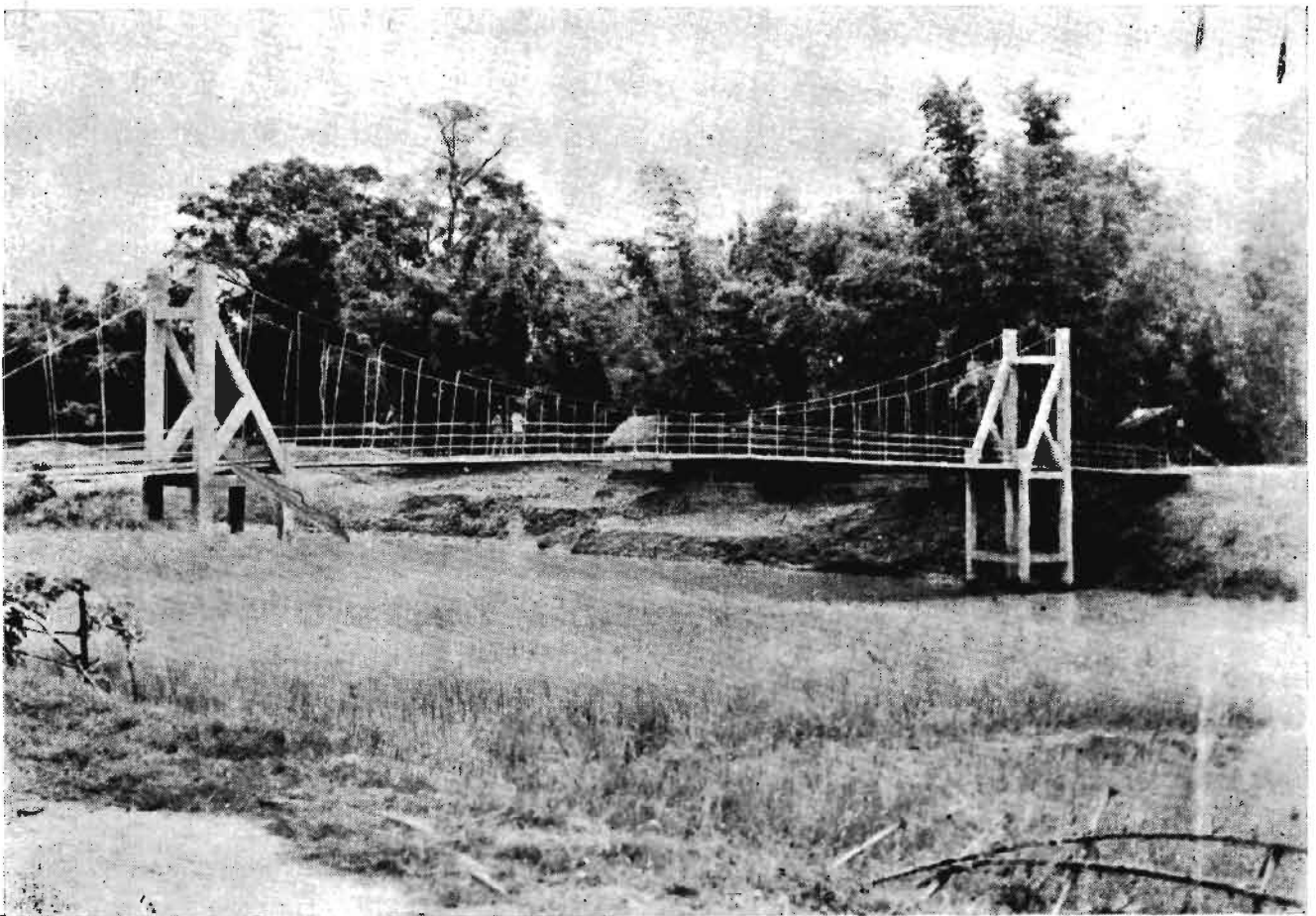
Thus, from the commercial point of view, the inhabitants of this village always have contact with the neighbouring peoples—both Hindus and Muslims, not to speak of their day-to-day intercourses in the urban areas of Imphal. Going to the town has been an indispensable daily affair of most of the chief earners of the households, whether he is a rickshaw-driver, a Government employee, or a petty business-

man. Other members of the households too go to Imphal for purchasing household articles like clothes, utensils, etc. The economy of this village has become urban-oriented, and the villagers are more or less well informed of the daily happenings in Imphal and other parts of Manipur.

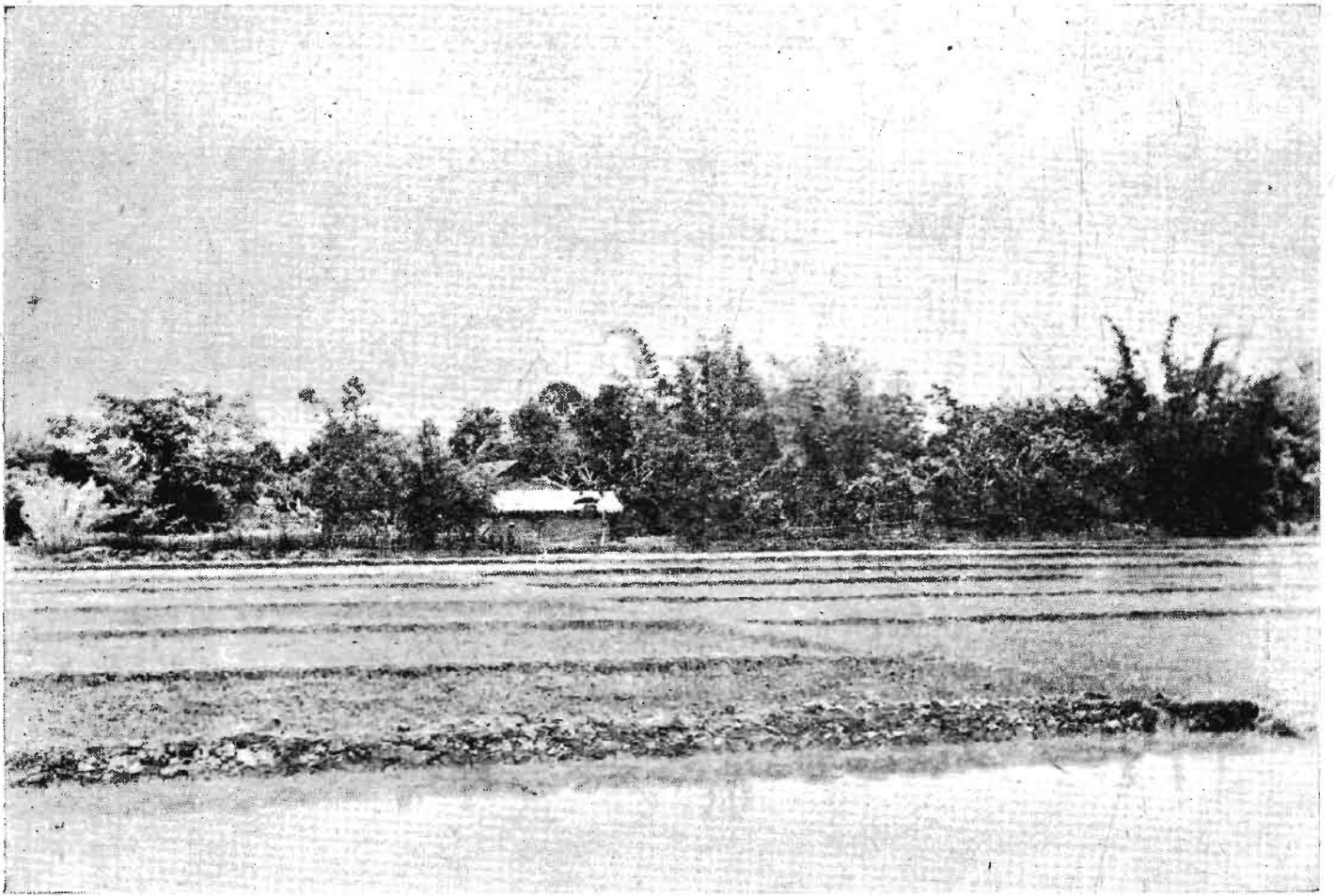
A slow but gradual improvement in the housing conditions of the villagers is discernible. Houses having C. I. sheet roofs are increasing in number. The dress of the people particularly of the men-folk also has been urbanised and some have become sophisticated in their manner and behaviour.



1. *The upper bank of the Imphal river*



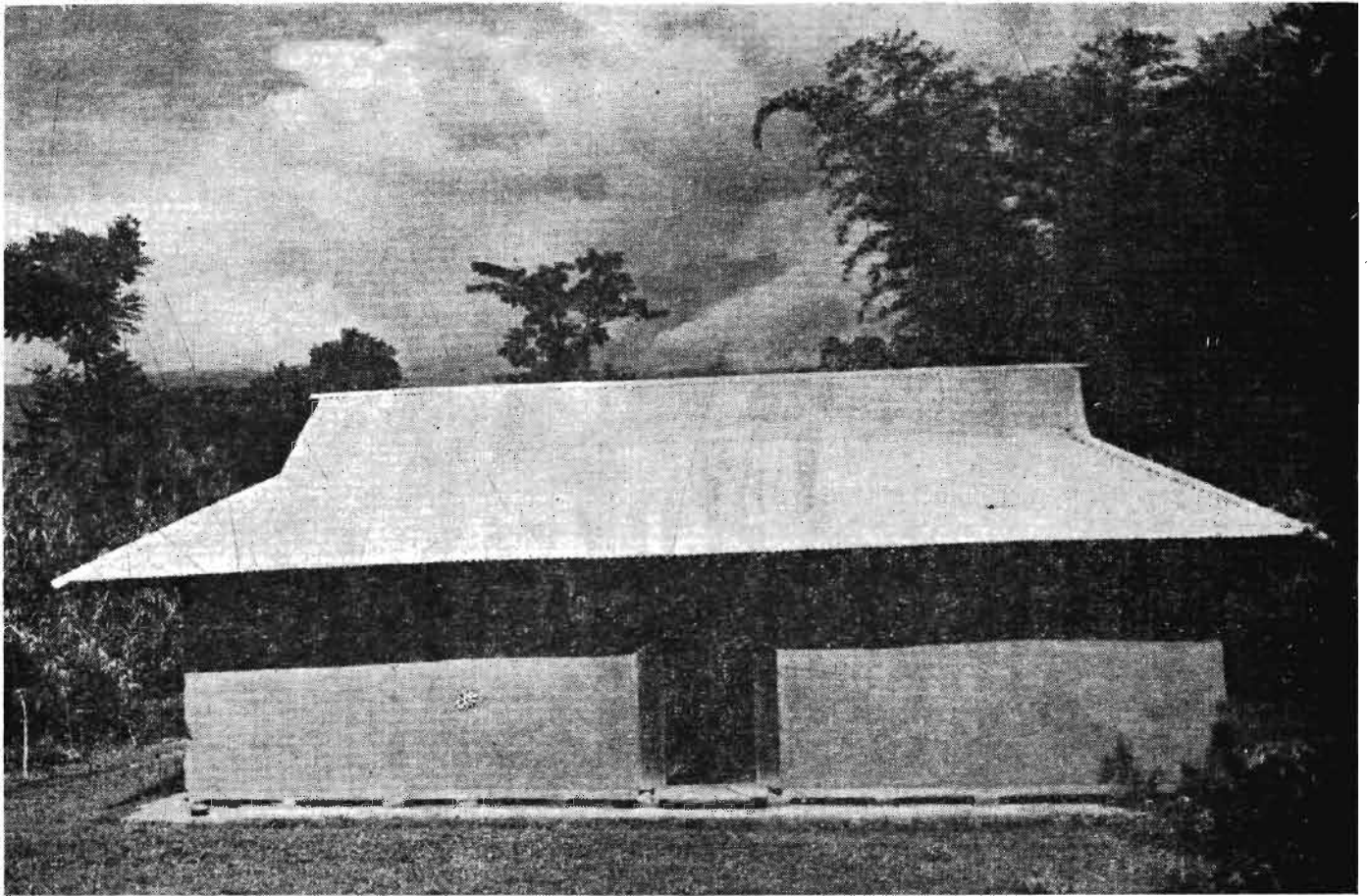
2. *The bridge*



3. Paddy field behind the settlement area



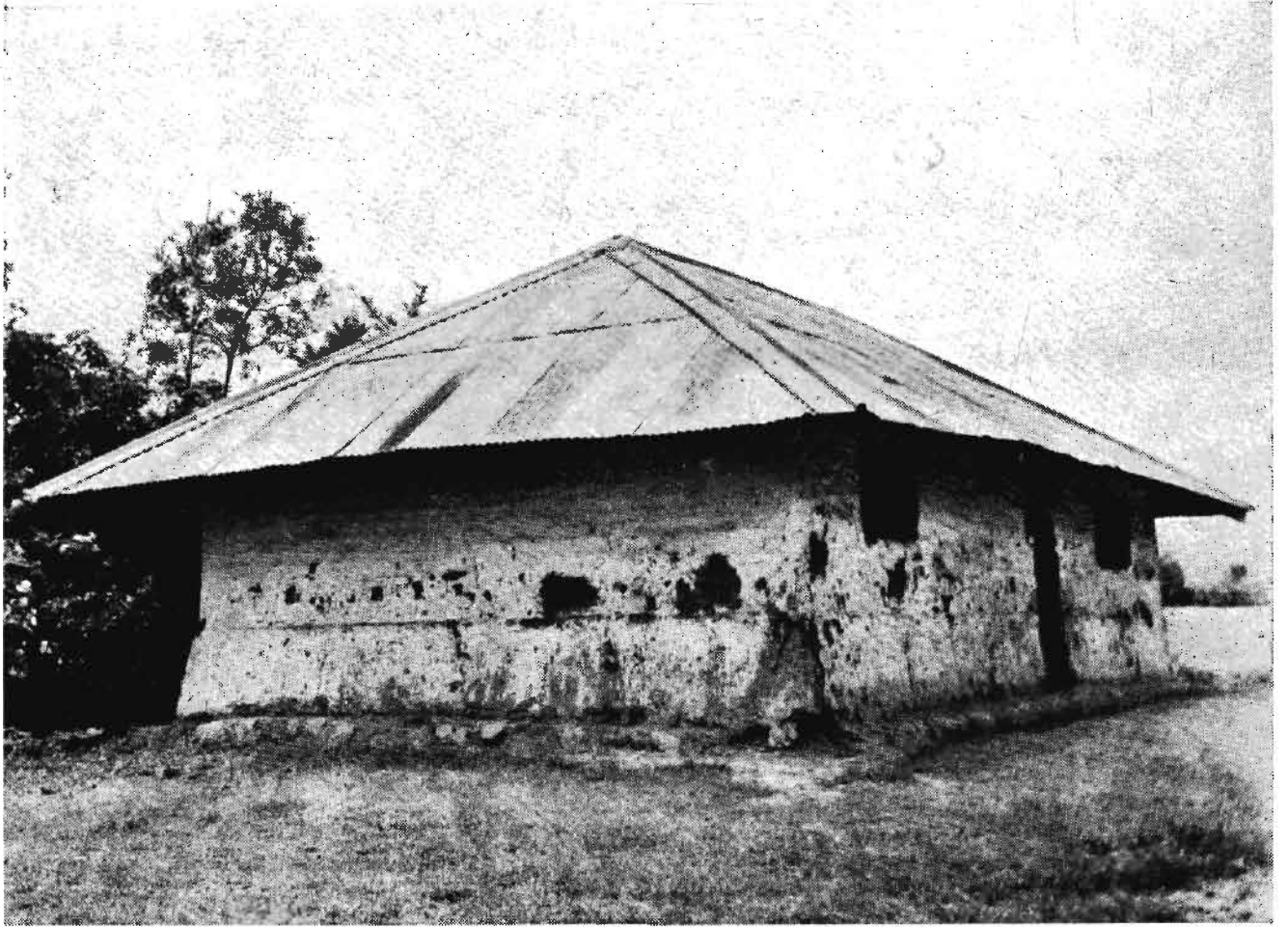
4. Typical thatched house



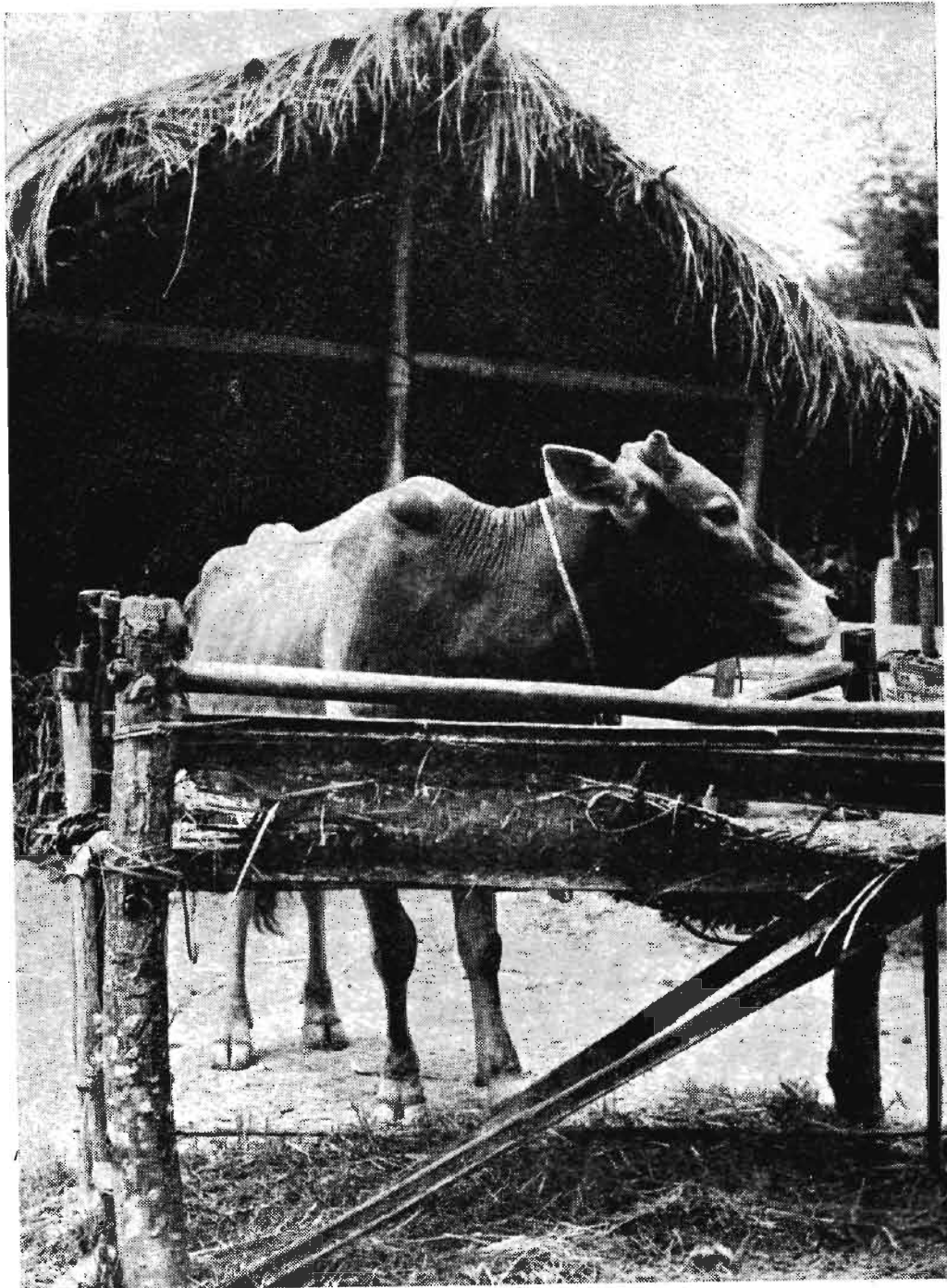
5. *House of a well-to-do household*



6. *The thatched mosque*



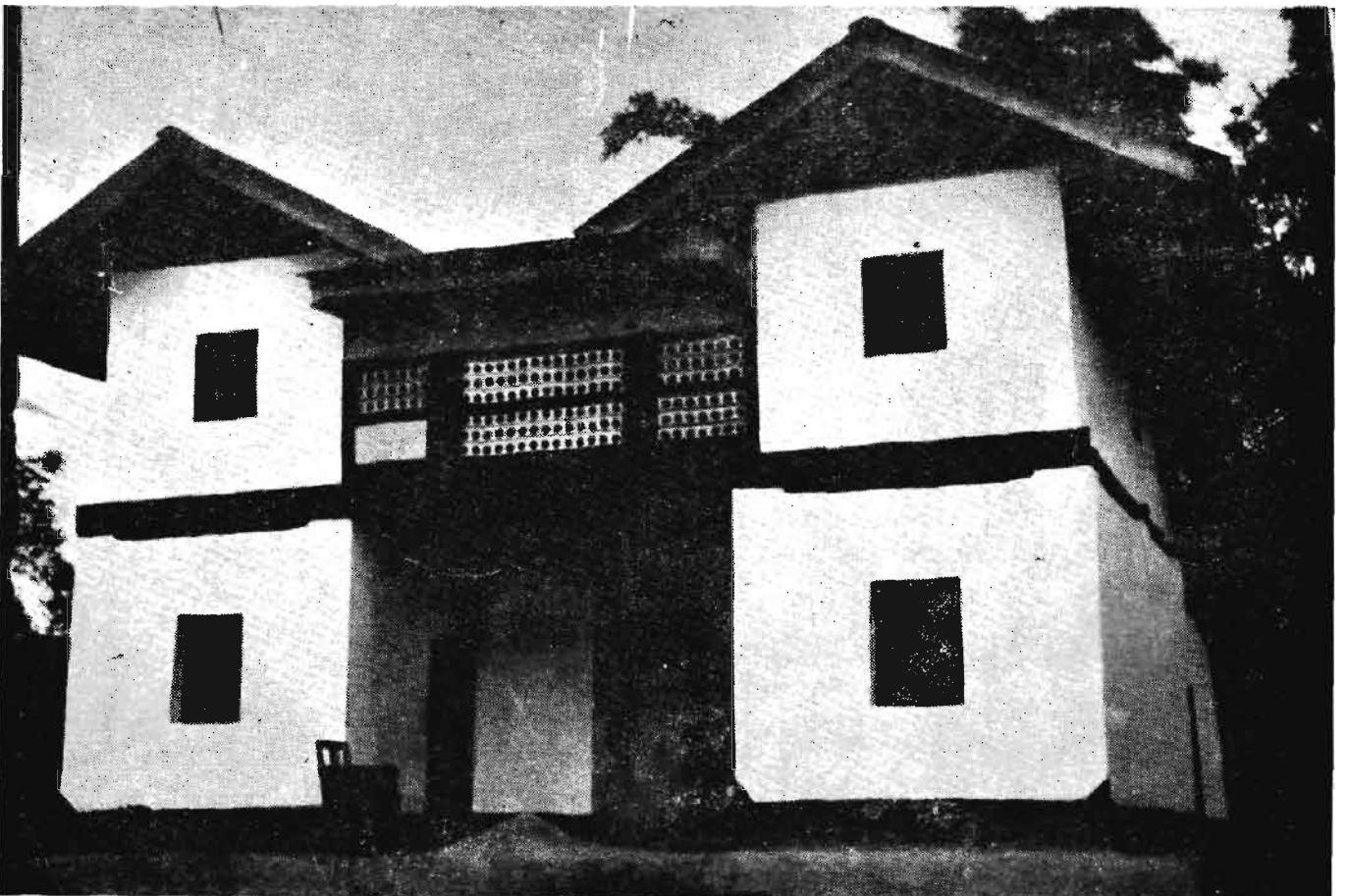
7. The C.I. sheet roofed mosque



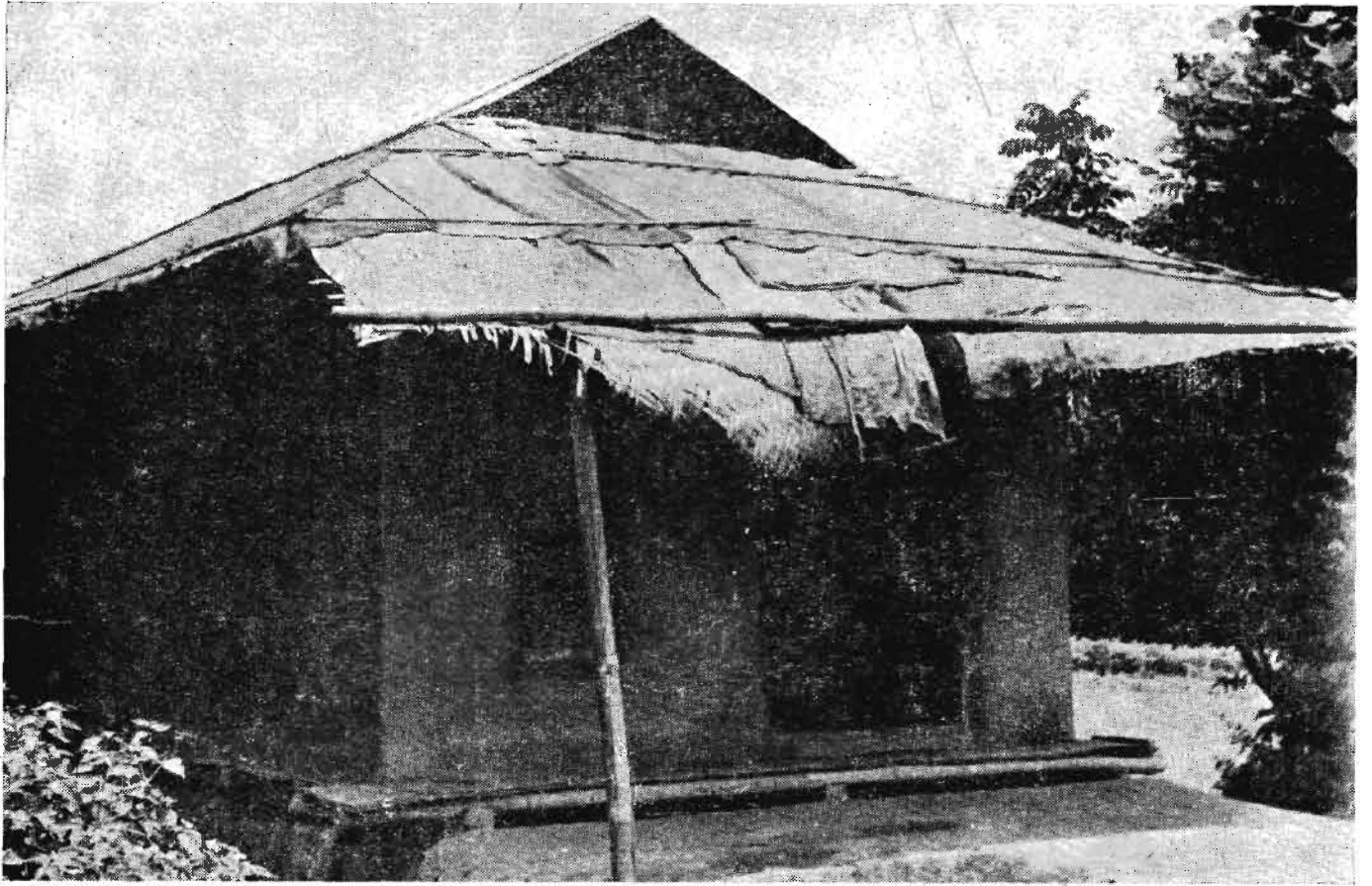
8. *A partner in village life*



9. *Tiny hut of domestic fowls*



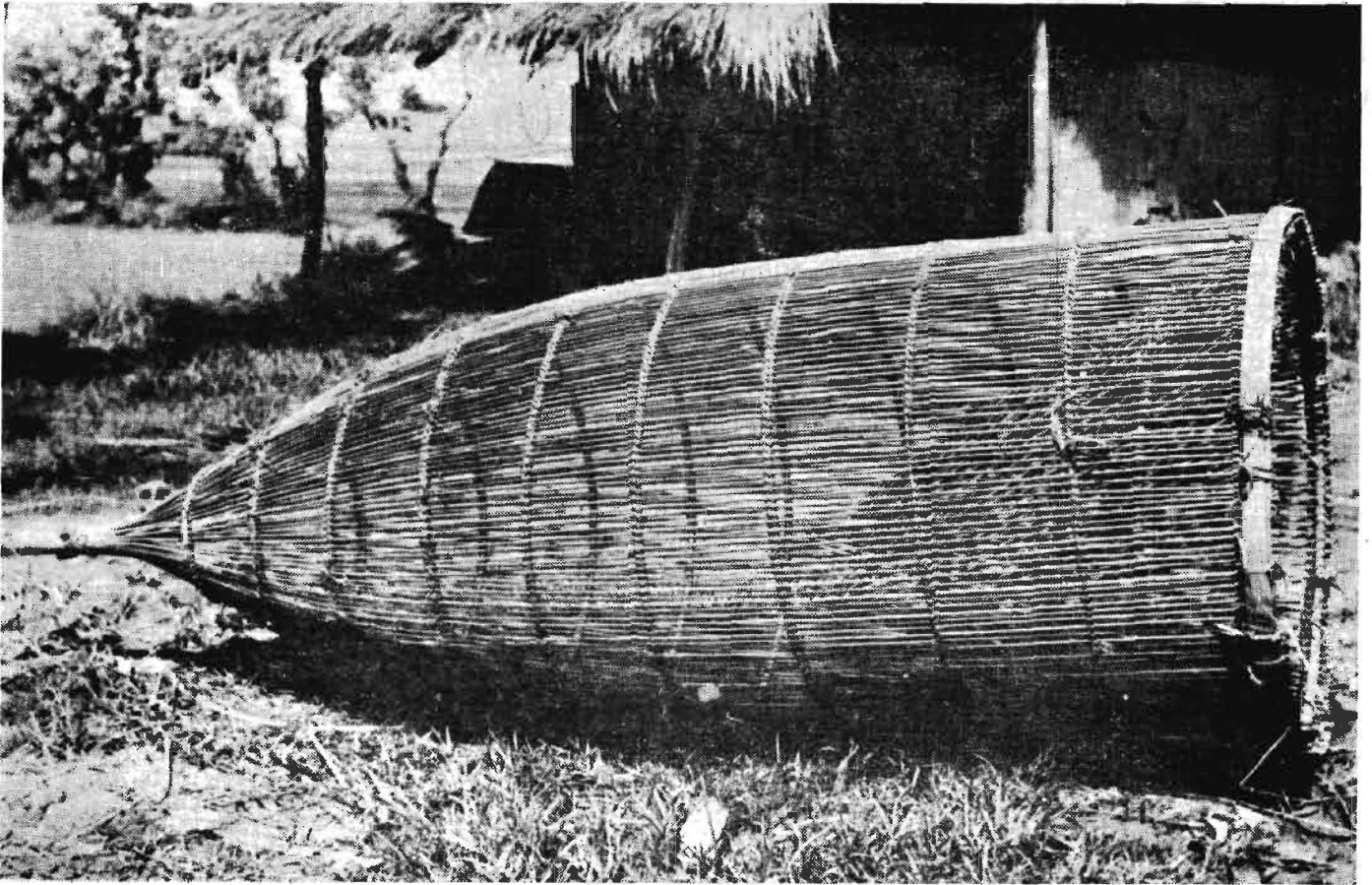
10. *The primary school*



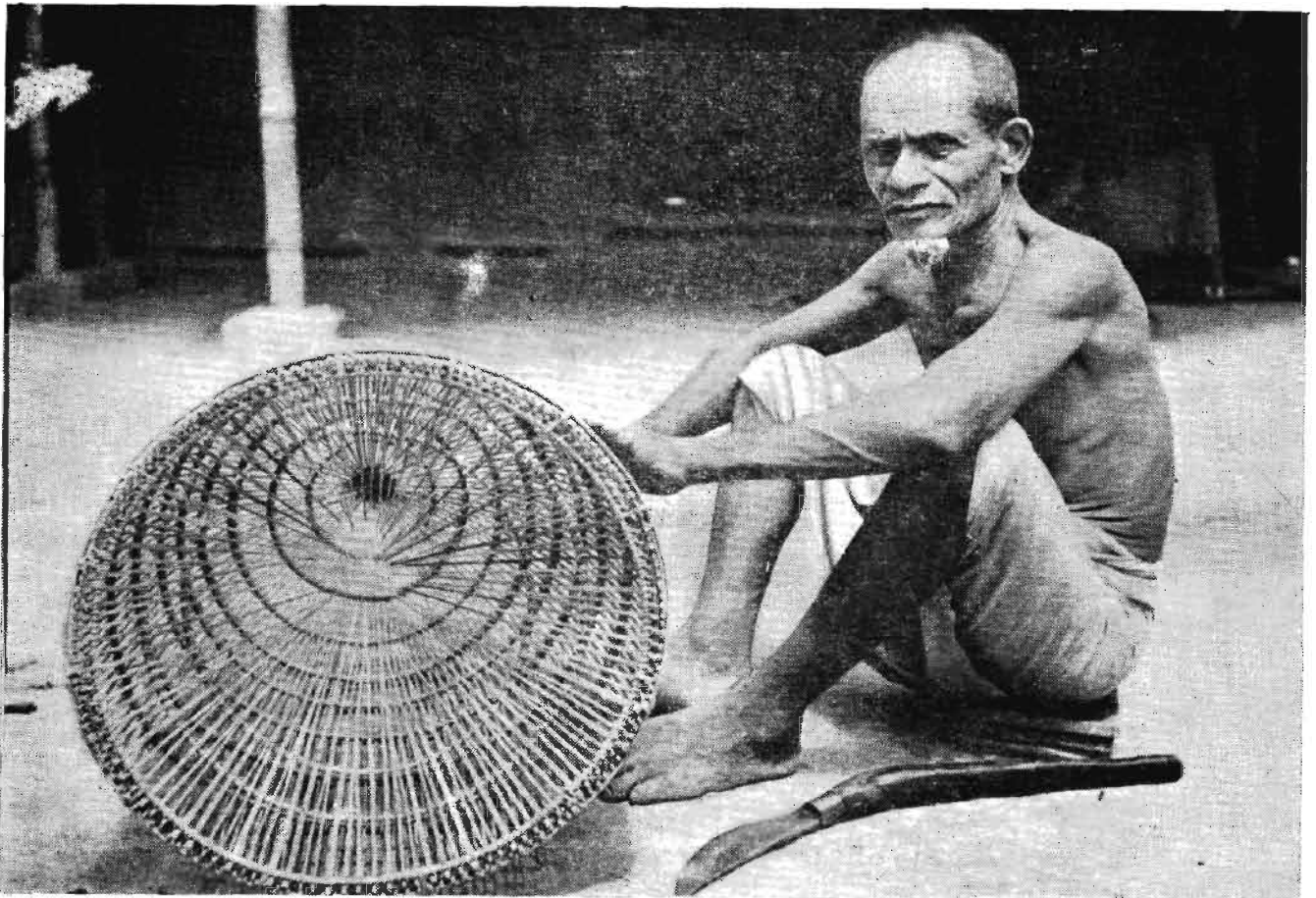
11. *The village shop*



12. *A common scene during the cultivating season*



13. *Fishing trap known as Kaburu*



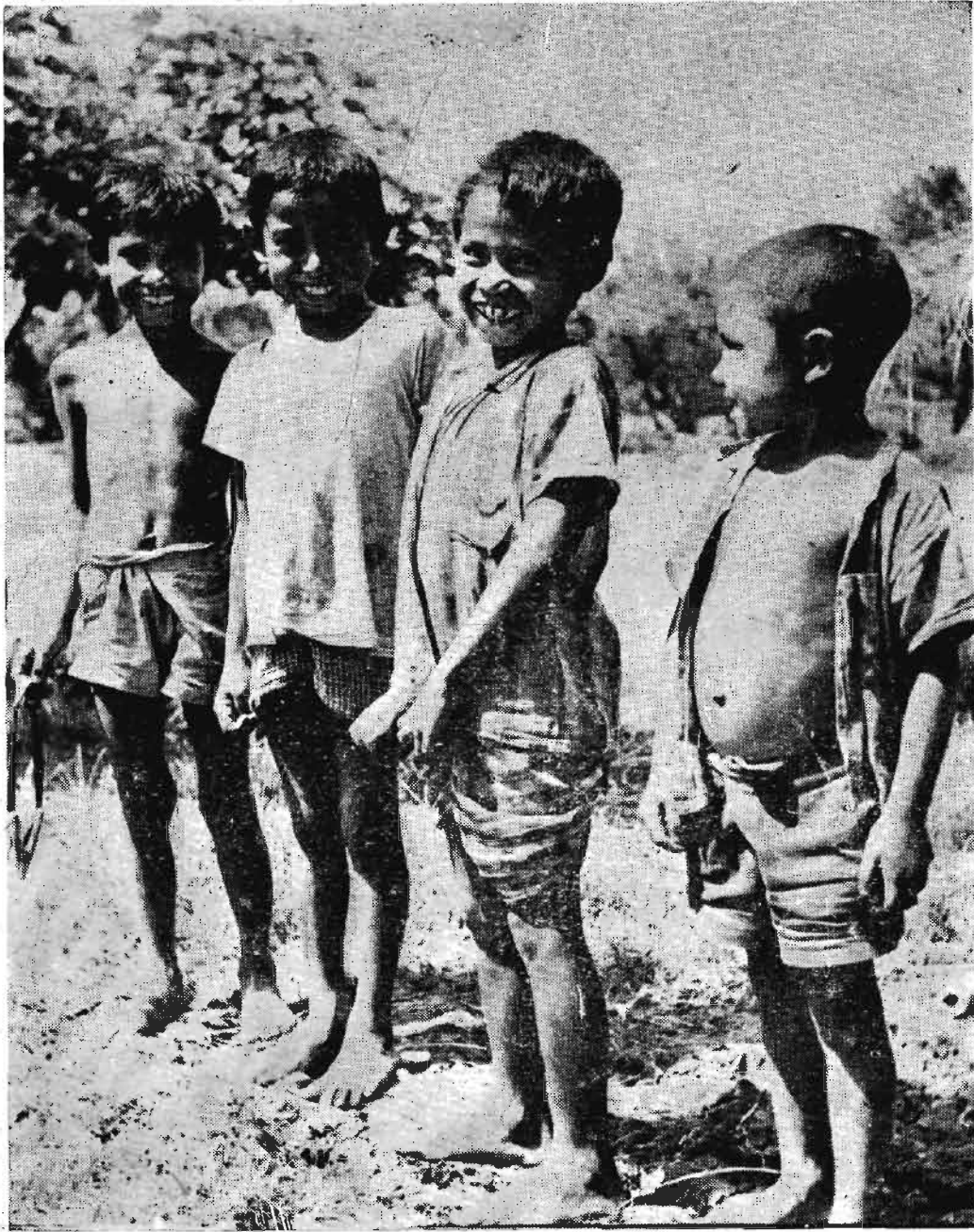
14. *An old man mending the fish trap*



15. A young lady at her loin-loom



16. *An old lady*



17. Kids in joyful mood



18. *A lad and a lady in their customary dress*



19. Usual dress of village belles



20. Girls in their fineries